



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer: Hammerli
Importer: John Rothery Wholesale
Web: www.bisley-uk.co.uk
Model: AP20
Weight: 900 grams
Barrel length: 250mm
Overall length: 415mm
Shots per fill: 140
Fill pressure: 200 bar
Max. power: 7.5 joules (5.8 ft.lbs.).
Price: £725

VOLKS AIRGUN

Phill Price takes a first look at a new pistol from Germany

Here's something you don't see every day: a brand new competition pistol. It comes from Hammerli in Germany which is part of the huge PW Group that also owns Umarex and Walther. It seems to me that they wanted the most versatile and adjustable gun you could ever imagine, while keeping within the rules, to the extent that the trigger is set to ISSF regulations right from the factory.

The general layout is familiar with one obvious exception. The stumpy compressed 'Pro-Line' air reservoir can be fitted 20 degrees to the rear from vertical or horizontally forward, which clearly gives a big change in balance. The 'weight rearward' position might well suit a junior, and the forward position, an adult. This is just part one of the huge list of available adjustments. To reposition it, you remove four socket-head screws from the triangular, 'pressure reducer' block and then refit it in the new position.

It's a job that only takes a few minutes, and Hammerli includes the tools you need in the kit.

UP OR DOWN?

With the reservoir in the low position there's an option to fit a reach forward bar that accepts sliding weights which allow you to customise the pistol's balance. With the reservoir in the forward position you need to fit a small, plastic trigger-guard extension for obvious safety reasons, and it only needs a single screw, but it does show the incredible attention to detail

in the gun's design. The reservoir is aluminium and runs at 200 bar so will easily be filled from a common 232 bar tank. There's no pressure gauge built in, but a large screw-in unit comes with the kit, and the reservoir can be fitted and removed at any time just with hand pressure; no tools needed.

Next, we come to the fibre-reinforced plastic grip which, in standard form, is a work of genius

and despite appearances is fully ambidextrous. The palm shelf is in two parts which are independently adjustable from each other. The core of the grip is ergonomically-shaped with finger grooves and a subtle thumb shelf on both sides. The adjustable elements can simply be removed and flipped to

accommodate left-handed shooters in a matter of minutes. This makes the AP20 the ultimate club pistol because in just a short while, it can be set up to suit almost anybody.

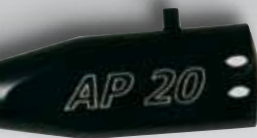
PERFORMANCE

However, unless it has the right level of performance nobody is going to be interested, so the action, trigger and sights are the same standard as Hamelin's top match pistols. The 250mm-long barrel is also made to the very highest standards assuring first-class accuracy. On the subject of the barrel; another area of adjustment, or should I say customisation, is the choice of six 'Spectral' barrel sleeves or jackets that allow you to swap colours to make your pistol stand out from the crowd. The black one is fitted as standard, which you can swap for pink, lime green or day-glo orange if you feel so inclined.

I have to confess that I wasn't inclined to give the test pistol a day-glo barrel, but it takes all sorts, I suppose. I couldn't find any technical reason for the jackets, so I guess they must just be for fun and that's fine of course.



Tools, accessories and 'barrel jackets' are all included.



LEVER ACTION

Cocking the trigger and opening the action to accept

a pellet is done by lifting a lever up and back, which stops in the vertical position. Here, you can see the probe that seats the pellet with its 'O' ring seal. It is immediately noticeable that the area to drop the pellet in is pretty small, so you'll need to pay attention to what you're doing. The effort needed to lift the lever is negligible so there will be no fatigue worries during a long course of fire. The lever can also be swapped from side to side to suit left-handers.

The trigger blade is, as you'd expect, fully adjustable for reach and orientation as well as for travel and pull weight. There's an adjustable stop position too. As with all good match air pistols, the mechanism allows 'dry-firing', offering the chance to practise at home when you don't have time to get to the range, and it's a function that serious shooters value highly.

TOP-QUALITY SIGHTS

High-quality sights are another area that competition shooters never scrimp on and the AP20s are large and bold with, of course,

stacks of adjustability built in. The broad rearsight is adjusted in the usual manner for windage and elevation with neat little knurled thumbwheels that move with clearly defined, audible clicks. The sights become more novel in how they're adjusted, in terms of the width of the front element and the width of the rear notch. The front sight is actually an irregular triangle that's mounted on a round post that you unlock with an Allen key and then rotate to show the width you prefer. At the rear, the flat plate that forms the blade is actually in two pieces and can be adjusted closer or further apart, again giving you total control of the image. This is by far the most innovative open-sight set-up I've ever seen.

The barrel weight is ported to act as a muzzle brake which dissipates the high pressure muzzle blast laterally eliminating muzzle flip.

For those who'd like to upgrade their AP20, there's a list of accessories. These include anatomical '3D' walnut grips and Slim-Line air reservoirs plus the Expert trigger assembly.

Next month we'll continue this review with some feedback from competition shooters who'll give their impressions. ■



The standard grip is ambidextrous and adjustable.



You can even adjust the width of the rearsight notch.

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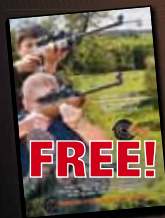


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