

# NEW!

In part two Phill Price brings us his conclusion on SMK's new PCP

# MATIC

In its natural environment the M22 looked right at home.

Last month, I had a short time to have a look at SMK's new pre-charged pneumatic (PCP), the M22, so this is part two; my conclusion and feelings about the rifle. In keeping with SMK's usual style, this gun offers good value at just under £400, which means that it's head-to-head against some serious, multi-shot PCP competition, such as the Gamo Coyote, Hatsan AT44 and the Walther Rotex RM8, all guns with a proven track records from

prestigious brands. The metalwork is right up there with them all, but the stock looks a little basic in that company, even though it works

*"I guess it was inevitable that SMK would enter the PCP market and their first offering is a strong one"*

perfectly well. I was very pleased to see that steel sling swivels are fitted as standard, something I'd like to see on all rifles. Anybody

who tells you that they're not needed, clearly doesn't spend much time in the real world, carrying a gun. Tired, aching arms

are no aid to accuracy, so bearing the gun's weight on your shoulder makes absolute sense.

Looks are one thing but what

really counts for the dedicated airgun hunter is performance, and the power and consistency of the M22 is spot-on for that job. The .22 on test was launching the Remington Thunder Field Target Trophy pellets (14.8 grains) supplied at an average muzzle velocity of 584 fps, which calculates out to 11.2ft.lbs., plenty to deal with any legitimate airgun quarry. Shot-to-shot variation was 16 fps over 60 shots, which is just fine for a sporting rifle.

## TECH SPEC

Manufacturer	SMK
Web	www.sportsmk.co.uk
Tel	01206 795333
Type	Pre-charged pneumatic
Action	Magazine-fed, bolt action
Length	1140mm (44¾")
Weight	3.5kg (7.7lbs)
Fill pressure	200bar
Trigger	Two-stage adjustable
Stock	Ambidextrous beech sporter
Calibres	.177 and .22

£399.95

The deep grooves in the fore end give excellent grip.



I proved this rifle in the field despite limited time.



The magazine is simple and robust.



## ACCURACY IS EVERYTHING

The most important quality that any serious airgun needs most, though, is accuracy, so it was time to get the targets out and shoot some groups. A key advantage that a PCP has over any spring/piston gun is that it is recoilless, making it far easier to shoot. However, it will still need a good trigger and an accurate barrel to succeed. The reach to the M22 trigger is quite long for my average size, but the first stage is also long, so by the time you feel the second stage, the reach is just right. The metal trigger blade has quite square edges and uses a through-button style safety as you see on Air Arms guns. Although this is rather crude, it works and can be felt whilst on aim to let you know if it's on or off.

As I mentioned last time, the magazine is simple and quick to load and was totally reliable during my test with a variety of pellets. To see which suited the M22 best I tried the Remington as described above; Air Arms Field Diablo,

Crosman Premier, RWS Superdome and, one of my old favourites, H&N Field Target. My test gun showed a clear and immediate preference for the Superdomes and H&N FT, the latter proving to be the most accurate overall. At 16.3 grains it's quite heavy so produced quite a curved trajectory, but landed with a clout. It's an interesting design being a round nose with a shoulder that surrounds the head. This seems to aid energy transfer and I've found them good killers on rats in the past.

At 25 yards I got several ¼" groups which opened out towards ½" in the wind, but it was clear that this rifle has the accuracy to

be a successful hunter at all sensible ranges. With that confidence in my pocket, I was itching to take the rifle hunting, but with time being short as ever, I took a precious moment that was offered. While Terry and I were taking the photographs on a friend's land, we noticed that the squirrels were busy preparing for winter on that beautiful October morning, and as we were shooting photos we had our ears open for the sounds of claws on bark as the tree rats made their way through the higher branches. Not being fully familiar with this rifle's trajectory, though, I wanted a shot no longer than 30 yards, so I was going to have to be patient.

## THERE'S ONE!

Just as we got back to the car I was looking around with the new SIG binoculars (see page 92) when I saw a squirrel digging furiously in a grassy clearing. I grabbed the rifle and filled the magazine, and planned a route - behind a shed, then behind a log pile, and finally slithering up to an inverted boat that had been pulled ashore. As I peeped over the bow, the squirrel was still hard at work burying nuts, having no idea it was being watched. Slipping the safety off, I found the squirrel's busy head hard to get a bead on, so I resorted to a quiet squeak from my pursed lips to gain its attention. As it finally became still, the heavy .22 found its mark and my supper was in the bag.

I guess it was inevitable that SMK would enter the PCP market, and their first offering is a strong one. The price is good, the engineering and metal finish right up there, so all that remains to be seen is its durability in the field. As first attempts go, I say, well done! ■

A very substantial bolt and shaft has a durable feel.

