

FIRST GUN



**WE TEST
HARDWARE
FOR YOUNGER
AIRGUNNERS**

THE CO₂ SMK QB78 DELUXE

A much improved version of the XS78C02 model, you'd be hard pressed to tell that the new SMK QB78 Deluxe is made in China if it wasn't imprinted onto the side of the rifle's action!

Fully deserving of its 'Deluxe' name tag, this latest CO₂-powered offering from Sportsmarketing has a much-improved and better-finished stock, complete with a soft-rubber recoil pad, a 'golden' trigger blade and bolt, fibre-optic sights, a superior exterior and a slicker internal action – yet it still gives you change from £130!

It's also lightweight, compact and beautifully balanced, making it ideal for a teenage young gun – although this mid-power sporter boasts a specification that makes it the sort of rifle you'll never grow out of... nor want to!

Let's see why Sportsmarketing are so convinced their new golden gun is going to appeal to both lads... *and* their Dads!



QB78 DL - FACTS

Maker:	Industry Brand, China.
Importer:	Sportsmarketing ☎ 01206 795333.
Action:	Single-shot, twin CO2 capsule.
Calibre:	.22 only (5.5 mm.).
Cocking:	Bolt-action.
O/A Length:	1,010 mm. (40 ins.).
Barrel Length:	530 mm. (20.75 ins.).
Weight:	2.6 kg. (5.75 lbs.).
Stock:	Beech sporter.
Trigger:	Single-stage, three-way adjustable with brass blade.
Safety:	Manual, lever type.
Length of Pull:	362 mm. (14.25 ins.).
Sights:	Fibre-optic opens, fully-adjustable.
Power:	8.4 ft. lbs. (11.4 J) (quoted); 10.2 ft. lbs. (13.8 J) (tested).
Price:	£129.95.
MYLES' SCORE
PARENTS' SCORE

often hear grown-ups saying that things from China aren't very well made, but nearly all my best possessions – my computer gaming consoles, MP3 player and mobile phone – are made there... and you don't hear me complaining!

And if this QB78 Deluxe is anything to go by, I'd say the Chinese are every bit as good as making airguns as they are at electronic gadgets.

To me, the QB78 Deluxe doesn't look like a 'first gun'. In fact, with a lovely, slim stock, gold-coloured bolt and trigger and no plastic bits to be seen anywhere, I think it looks far *too* good to be a first-time airgun.

Because it runs off CO2 capsules, a pair of which go into a tube under the barrel, the whole rifle looks much slimmer and less 'bulky' than most of the airguns my mates use.

To be honest, I didn't know much about CO2-powered guns, but they're actually far less complicated than spring-powered models and they have the added advantage that they fire without any kick in your shoulder. This makes them a lot easier to hit the target with.

You have to use two CO2 capsules, which you must insert into the tube back-to-

THIS MONTH:



The fibre-optic rearsight is (finger!) adjustable.

back, so that the neck-ends get pierced when you tighten up the end cap. This doesn't need much effort, though you might need an adult to help you unscrew the cap and release any pressurised gas at the end of the shooting session.

Like the Norica Titan I recently tested, the QB78's open sights have fibre-optic inserts in them, making it a lot easier to line up the front sight in the back sight's notch. You simply get the glowing red dot in between the two green ones – easy!

The back sight can be adjusted for up/down and left/right movement. Because there are no thumbwheels, you'll need a coin – but I found that by pressing down with your thumb, the slotted screws turned easily enough. Just as well, I'm the sort of teenager

Below: The QB78 is powered by two, 12-gramme CO2 capsules which you insert back to back (left and middle) before piercing with the screw-on cap (right).



AIRGUN LAW FOR YOUNGER SHOOTERS



UK airgun laws are very strict indeed, with specific rules for younger shooters who are aged under 18 years – the VCR Act Oct 2007 has changed the law to 18 years or older for purchasing an airgun.

If you are between 14 and 17... You may not buy or hire an airgun or ammunition, nor receive either as gift, but you may borrow an airgun – and the ammunition must be bought for you by someone over 17 (ideally, by your parent).

You may use an airgun on private premises without supervision provided you have the consent of the landowner/tenant, but you will commit a criminal offence if any pellet strays beyond the boundary of the land over which you have shooting permission.

Consideration must be given when travelling to your shooting ground. You cannot carry an airgun – which must be unloaded and, preferably, be in a case – in a public place unless you are supervised by someone who is at least 21 years old. You must have a reasonable excuse for carrying an airgun in a public place – such as travelling to a shooting club, a gun shop or to land over which you have permission to shoot.

If you are under 14... Additional rules apply to shooters in this age group. Parents who buy an airgun for use by an under-14 must exercise control over it at *all* times, even in the home or garden.

You may not buy or hire an airgun or ammunition, nor receive either as gift, but you may borrow an airgun and use it on private premises with permission from the landowner/ tenant *provided* you are under the constant supervision of someone who is at least 21 years old.

You cannot carry an airgun in a public place; any airgun which you intend to shoot must be carried by the supervisor at *all* times.

Both you and your shooting supervisor will commit a criminal offence if any pellet strays beyond the boundary of the land over which you have shooting permission.

Notes:

- A public place is anywhere where the public is allowed to go – e.g. roads, streets, footpaths, public parks, play areas and canal towpaths.

THE CO₂ **SMK QB78 DELUXE**



Above: Cocking the golden bolt.

Right: The golden trigger blade. Note the 'F' and 'S' safety markings on the guard.

Below: The manual safety lever (on the other side of the guard), shown here in the 'on' position.



who can't keep money in my pocket for long!

Even with the maximum adjustment, I found that my shots struck high under 15 metres – but because of the QB's recoilless

action, it was no problem to place targets further away and I could easily spin tin cans at 25 metres.

I found this rifle to be pretty effortless to shoot. The only energy you need is to push the bolt forward to load a pellet; there's no barrel or underlever to cock, or pump-up handle.

It's also very easy to take aim with, because it weighs just 2.5 kilos – so I was able to shoot quite well when standing. That



said, my steadiest position was when lying on the ground – or resting my forearm on a solid object, something you can't do very well with a recoiling airgun.

One thing I disliked about this rifle is that it had a long reach to the trigger – though I'll grow into it soon.

Another gripe was that my step-Dad was just as happy shooting it – so whenever we went shooting, I spent a lot of my shooting time watching *him* with it!

PARENT POINTS

The quality of finish of the QB78 Deluxe is superb – and I would have no problems splashing out £130 on this model for a young gun. To be truthful, SMK's new, .22 calibre CO₂-powered rifle has just as much to offer the experienced shooter as it does a rookie one.

For a youngster, the rifle is well balanced, with good sights and a very user-friendly, recoil-free action. The trigger – claimed to be a single-stager, though I was able to set it to two-stage operation – has a perfect feel and let-off for a novice shooter... although anyone small may find it a bit of a stretch, both in terms of pull-length and trigger reach.

I wish I'd learned on fibre-optic sights – I love 'em; they make acquiring the target so much easier! We couldn't set the opens low enough to shoot close targets. As the barrel wasn't bent, I suspect this was due to the rifle's power – it recorded over 10 ft. lbs., a lot more than the manufacturer's claim.

Power at this level, combined with the recoilless firing cycle, would make this a handy little rifle for close- to mid-range pest control – and while Myles' groups at 15 metres were generally 60 mm. diameter, I regularly grouped inside an inch with Milbro Select (and open sights). This is a *very* capable CO₂ rifle, for sure.

Although using two gas capsules means twice as much expense, the high power and excellent capacity of over 50, full-powered shots per 'gas-up' makes it worthwhile.

The QB78 Deluxe definitely deserves the luxury of a scope. I'd opt for one of SMK's budget-priced 4 x 32 tellies... and I'd probably add SMK's tailor-made sound suppressor so that we could shoot to our hearts' content in the garden without annoying the neighbours.

With its high standard of finish and excellent performance, I think this is not only an excellent 'first gun', but a superb second one for any airgun enthusiast... of any age!

"I think it looks far too good to be a first-time airgun..."



Test Report by:

MYLES HENRY

