



# S N A P S H O T

**NIGEL ALLEN's take on the Sportsmarketing SKL208 SKELETON HUNTER**

**I**t's the only spring-powered rifle I know of that has a cut-out 'skeletal' butt – and being based around SMK's new, full-powered 208 series of break-barrels, that means the SKL208 Skeleton Hunter has got all the poke you need for the field without weighing heavy in your shoulder.

It's not just a weight advantage that the SKL208's totally unique stock brings. It doubles as a thumbhole, giving you improved control of the very sweet, two-stage trigger and making the

SKL208 an extremely capable long-range performer.

The lack of weight at the back means the SKL208's balance is front-biased – and any target shooter will tell you that's *exactly* what you need for consistent, accurate shot placement. This welcome trait of the rifle is further emphasised by the stylish, blued steel weight fitted to the muzzle.

Considering its awesome power, I found cocking the SKL208 required little effort on my part. I was pleased to see the barrel swings around a chunky bolt, not a pin, too. That means you can tighten things up should the breech jaws become sloppy over time. Not all break-barrels have this facility – but I reckon it's imperative if you want to keep the rifle's accuracy on song. While designed as an out-and-out field sporter, the fore-end has been shaped with a bulbous 'hamster', along the lines of a competition rifle. While this sits nicely in the palm of your leading hand, it's also handy for those awkward, steeply-angled shots. I had no problems elevating the rifle in my shoulder when shooting quarry from the tree-tops. Being ambidextrous, the



*Above, from left: The fore-end features a pronounced 'hamster' to aid grip. The feel of the trigger is improved by the thumbhole grip. The SKL208 has an automatic, resettable safety and the grooved receiver sports a scope arrester.*



a scope to the grooved receiver is mandatory. I opted for SMK's 3-9 x 40 mil-dot which I anchored tight-up against the built-in arrester block

gun's also suitable for both right- and left-handers.

Despite its legal-limit power output, there's not much kick from the SKL208, and most of that's absorbed through the thick, ventilated rubber butt pad. This 'sticks' nicely in your shoulder, so you don't have to battle with holding the rifle on target. At the business end, the steel weight dampens-out your wobble, locking the muzzle on your target during aim and reducing barrel 'flip' after you've let the shot go.

I had no doubts as to the reliability of the safety catch at the rear of the cylinder. It comes on automatically when you cock the rifle and easily re-settable should you abort the shot.

There are no open sights, so fitting

so that it couldn't 'creep'. After all, when you've got a gun that performs this well in your shoulder, you definitely want it perfectly zeroed!



*You can easily steady the Skeleton Hunter's business end thanks to its aimstabilising muzzle weight.*

## FACTS - SKL208

**Action:** Break-barrel  
**Calibre:** .22  
**Length:** 114cm  
**Barrel Length:** 48cm  
**Weight:** 3.81kg  
**Trigger:** Two-stage  
**Safety:** Automatic  
**Stock:** Hardwood, skeletal butt  
**Sights:** N/A  
**Power:** 12 ft/lbs  
**Price:** £219.95