



SNAP SHOT

ON TEST

NIGEL ALLEN's take on the SMK Super Grade XS19

Sportsmarketing made its name supplying budget-beating airguns that have introduced countless shooters to our sport. With the launch of the Super Grade XS range, SMK raise the stakes in terms of pure performance, but the real trick is – the budget-beating element is very much still there!

The SMK Super Grade is a sturdily-made, break-barrel, spring-piston sporter that produces over 11 ft.lbs. of power in .22 calibre. This Chinese-made rifle echoes the design and sturdiness of its European counterparts and offers genuine field performance for an extremely realistic price.

'Walnut' stained hardwood is the stock material of choice and, considering the sub-£160 retail price of the XS19, it really does look the part. The raised cheekpiece has been designed as a working compromise between the head-alignment needed for scope use and open sights.

You'll find no panels of chequering to assist hand contact, although the contours of the SMK's woodwork do promote secure, positive handling and this rifle has already acquitted itself remarkably well in the UK's changeable climate. Despite its bargain pricing, the Super

Grade XS19 carries some decidedly up-market features.

Small but significant details abound, such as the rifle's tension-adjustable breech bolt which compensates for long-term wear, and its articulated cocking link that negates the need for an over-long, and potentially stock-weakening, slot in the fore end.

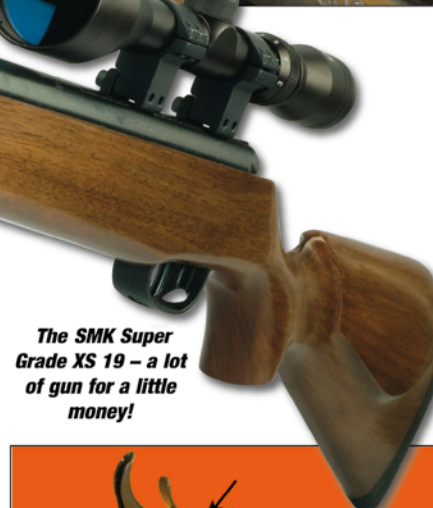
Then there's the automatic, 'anti-beartrap' mechanism, which guards against the rifle being fired during loading, plus that crisp, adjustable, two-stage trigger of course. There's plenty more to come from this gun, though!

Open sights may be ignored in favour of scopes by the vast majority of shooters, but a good set of 'irons' still have a role to play in short range situations. Provided there's sufficient light to allow both foresight and rearsight to be seen clearly, hunting standard accuracy is perfectly possible with open sights, – especially when they're as good as the ones fitted to this rifle!

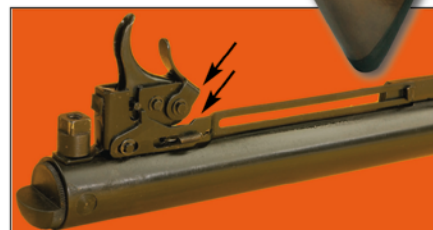
Scope grooves are also provided, so both sighting options are covered, making the Sportsmarketing Super Grade XS19 a 'best of both worlds' rifle – and that tag applies in more ways than one!



The Supergrade XS19 sports hooded foresight...
...and a fully-adjustable rearsight.



The SMK Super Grade XS 19 – a lot of gun for a little money!



The trigger/safety unit and anti-beartrap link which ensures the gun can't inadvertently go off whilst loading. Top security from SMK!

SHOOTING TIP

THE SUPER GRADE XS19's weight-to-power ratio means that it's a lively performer – so you'll need to adopt good 'recoil management' for best results. Use a 'forgiving' hold, letting the rifle roll naturally in your shoulder without undue interference. Grip the stock hard, or pull it into your shoulder too tightly will produce inconsistent results and accuracy well below what this hard-hitting sporter is capable of.

FACTS - XS19

ACTION: Spring and piston.
COCKING: Break-barrel.
LOADING: Direct to breech.
CALIBRE: .177 (4.5 mm.);
.22 (5.5 mm.).
LENGTH: 1092 mm. (43 ins.).
BARREL LENGTH: 410 mm.
(16.1 ins.).
WEIGHT: 2.83 kg. (6.2 lbs.).
SIGHTS: Fully-adjustable opens.
STOCKS: Hardwood (walnut stain).
TRIGGER: Two-stage, fully-adjustable.
SAFETY: Manual.
POWER: 11.+ ft. lbs.
PRICE: £159.95.