

A TON OF FUN

Phill Price is impressed with a Chinese copy for the very first time

The Chinese have no shame about copying products designed in the West, and most often they're a very poor second choice, but sometimes they take an original idea and make an interesting version. The Sports Marketing DB3 on test is an unashamed copy of the ground-breaking Weihrauch HW77, albeit in a much lighter and more compact build. In essence, it's an under lever with a sliding breech like the Weihrauch, although that's where the similarities end. The DB3 is slender and lightweight with a short stock, suggesting that

free travel until you feel the link engage the piston and begin to compress the main spring. From there, the force needed is quite modest, due in part, I expect, to the long (15") lever and the small spring. **SLIM FIT** To fit a piston inside a sliding breech, which is itself inside a slender main cylinder, the spring must be of very small diameter indeed. Despite this the DB3 makes good power, showing 500 fps with Remington Thunder Field Target Trophy .22 (15 grains) which calculates to 8.32 ft.lbs.

"it's got enough clout to dispatch rats around the yard if you can deliver an accurate shot"

it's targeted at junior shooters. To load this interesting rifle, you first unclip the under lever from the plastic muzzle assembly. I was surprised to see that there's 11" of

Now this isn't your 'full-power hunting gun', but it's got enough clout to dispatch rats around the yard if you can deliver an accurate shot. In fact, in some



The stock is short but the trigger reach is quite long.

environments it could be the ideal power level. If you're shooting feral pigeons and rats inside sheds, 12 ft.lbs. can be too much wallop and cause damage to the shed walls behind the pigeon. A lower power .22 pellet might well stay inside the bird. The DB3's stock is a kind of honey colour and quite plain apart from some pressed chequering

panels on the fore end, which are more aesthetic than practical. The butt features a ribbed rubber pad for a little extra security in the shoulder. The length of pull is 13¾" as you'd find on a gun designed for junior shooters, but the reach from the pistol grip to the trigger blade is on the long side, even by adult standards. SMK is not alone in this



Despite the short pull length, the DB3 is usable by adults.



The under lever simply clips up into its holder. Left: The open sights have fibre-optic inserts. Far Left: The breech opening is generous making loading easy.

dimension, something that I find sad. Mastering a well controlled trigger release is one of the key elements of a good shot, and struggling even to reach the blade won't help that.

CAREFUL LOADING

With the spring cocked, the loading port is opened, giving quite good access to the breech. As with all guns of this kind, it's vitally important that you hold firmly to the cocking lever as you press a pellet into the rifling. The consequences of the sliding breech slamming forward to catch your finger and thumb are too horrible even to think about. The rifle has an anti-bear trap mechanism, which means that until the under lever is fully forward, the trigger cannot fire. Like all safeties, this is welcome but should never be trusted. The breech has a male conical shape and the sliding breech has the corresponding female taper in its synthetic seal. This is quite different from the other sliding breech designs on the market.

The trigger's action is heavy as befits a rifle in this category. Guns like this are often used by complete beginners because having a light trigger could be dangerous. This needs a decisive pull to release, so there's no danger that a novice might fire it by accident and cause harm. The manual says that it's adjustable, but I left it well alone. At our gun club, Bisley, many of the

members buy guns like this to strip and tune, and often when they've finished tinkering, the rifle's true potential is revealed and this proves the point about just how good they are.

AMBIDEXTROUS

The manual safety is situated in front of the trigger guard so that it can be disengaged from the firing hold. It's also naturally ambidextrous in this location, to

suit the ambi' stock. Care must always be taken when operating a safety so close to the trigger blade, but all the same, I like this location and found it excellent in use.

I didn't know what to expect from the firing cycle so I was pleasantly surprised to find it quite smooth, with only a small amount of spring noise evident. There was plenty of smoke from the oil dieseling in the compression cylinder. The Chinese seem to prefer oil to grease for lubrication of this area, but don't worry; it soon settles down and the smoke dies away.

Accuracy was also good, and at garden distances I was soon finding my target with almost every shot. This clever little rifle is excellent value for money and offers a lot of appeal for close-range work, be that back garden plinking or vermin control in and around buildings. ■



Cocking force was light due to the long lever.

TECH SPEC

Manufacturer: Sports Marketing
Web: www.sportsmk.co.uk
Tel: 01206 795333
Type: Spring-piston
Action: Sliding-breech under lever
Length: 41½"
Weight: 7.2lbs

RRP £99.95