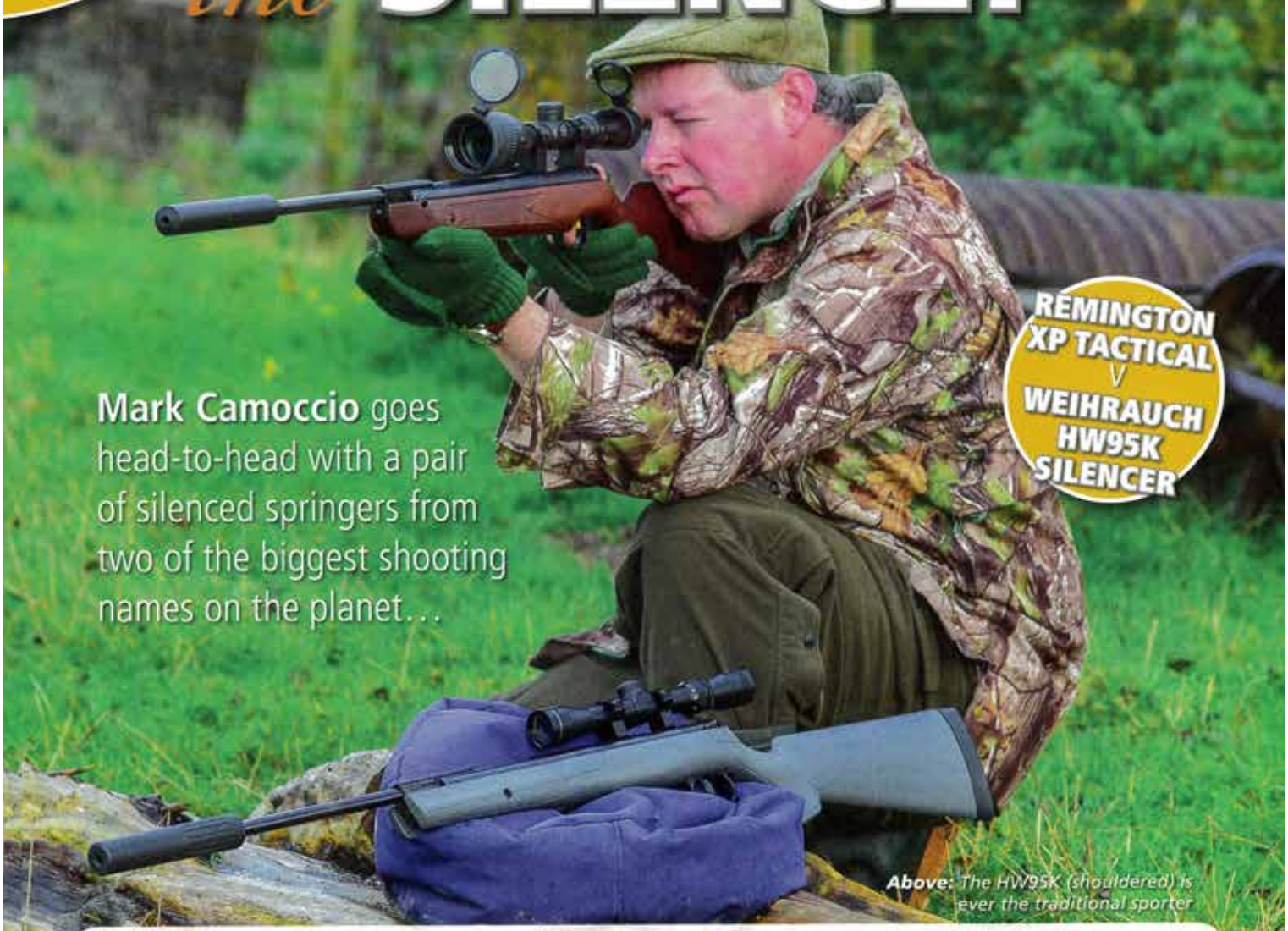
Breaking the SILENCE!

REMINGTON XP TACTICAL V WEIHRAUCH HW95K SILENCER

Mark Camoccio goes head-to-head with a pair of silenced springers from two of the biggest shooting names on the planet...



Above: The HW95K (shouldered) is ever the traditional sporter

This month's springer pairing is particularly interesting. Both break-barrels, they hail from big name manufacturers with proud reputations to maintain – and while one model is a relative newcomer, the other's a proven old stalwart.

Weihrauch HW95K needs no introduction, having earned its place in the German gunmaker's illustrious HW line-up; the test model is the 310-S version, with a 310mm barrel and silencer.

Squaring up to it is one of the latest variants Remington's recently released Express – a rifle that's caused quite a stir. This XP Tactical version also sheds open sights in lieu of a silencer, but it comes to the market significantly cheaper than its rival. Game on!

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I was mightily impressed with the original, wooden-stocked Express – and with four new variations now available, Remington are certainly striking with a hot iron. Although the colour of XP Tactical's synthetic stock may look a little drab, its ultra-thin grip and forend give the rifle a distinctive profile.

Weihrauch's 310 HW95K model is ever the traditional sporting rifle, with a smart, fairly slimline look that's well presented. Despite its high standard of finish, though, it's hardly the most distinctive of profiles.

Both models come with silencers as standard – but, given it's over an impressive £130 cheaper, the Remington also includes a 3-9x32 scope and mounts.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★☆☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★☆☆

With the Remington XP Tactical, you get a 3-9x30 scope and mounts in the bargain





The Remy's textured pistol grip curves at the bottom lip



The HW95K's receiver has arrestor holes for a pinned mount



Plenty of grain shows through the lacquer of the Weihrauch's beech stock



The Remington's silencer (top) and the Weihrauch's (bottom)

TAKING STOCK

I particularly like the feel of the Remy's thin pistol grip because of the way it curves in at the bottom. The forestock is pleasantly swelled with a nicely shaped tip – but although it's a half-decent ambidextrous design, I'm no great fan of its featureless butt. Surely, some form of cheekpiece definition would have been easy to achieve at no extra cost? That said, the grippy feel and texture this dense stock exudes *does* add overall appeal to the XP Tactical – although it has a much longer-than-average pull length.

The quality of the Weihrauch's beech timber is such that plenty of grain shows through the medium brown lacquer. The full-powered HW95 model was introduced many years ago as a lightweight alternative in an otherwise 'heavy' stable, and its weight loss is reflected in the scaled-down, thinned-out woodwork. Though very neatly executed, I think the laser-cut chequering is a far cry from the HWs of old – it's much shallower by comparison. Like its opponent, the HW95K's butt also lacks a cheekpiece, but its ambidextrous configuration is still very functional.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★☆☆☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★☆☆☆

SCOPING UP

The Remy's 3-9x32 telly is pretty much a starter package – but although its sight picture is rather average, let's not forget the attractive all-in price. You could splash out on a very tasty optic (if you desperately wanted to), and still pay less than for the Weihrauch.

I noticed that cross-pin indents were machined into the Remy's receiver, into which could be located an anti-creep pin beneath your mounts (or with a separate arrestor block). Doing this would, of course, mark the action.

Though there's no scope with the Weihrauch, the HW95K's receiver has purpose-built holes for a pinned mount, so that would never be a problem.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★☆☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★★☆

COCKING CYCLE

The Remington's silencer – which is bonded onto the barrel – is a big help in cocking the rifle, and it offers a comfortable grip during the operation. Like the original Express I tested a few months back, the cocking action is easy and fairly smooth, suggesting spring guides are used in the internal set-up.

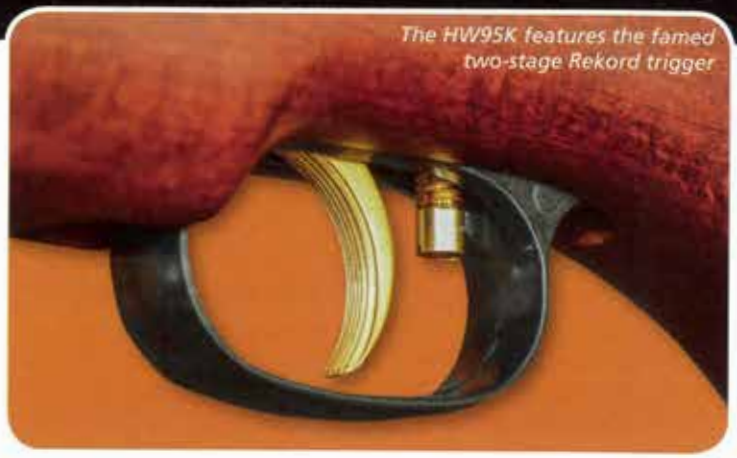
Cocking the HW is also an effort-free affair with even little less spring 'graunch' during the stroke. Again, its silencer – threaded to the barrel on this gun – is a useful cocking aid… though I did find it had an irritating tendency to unscrew over longer sessions. I reckon the addition of an O-ring placed at the shoulder would stop this from happening – a simple DIY remedy if the manufacturer can't contemplate it in the future. I can't complain too much, though – that silencer is a Weihrauch, considered a market leader.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★☆☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★☆☆

TRIGGER AND SAFETY

Previously, I criticised the Express's plastic trigger – but the blade of the XP Tactical's is metal. With a flat, ridged surface, it feels good to use. There's a little creep in its two-stage let-off, but overall the unit is way above average for this style of rifle. The only negative is there's no user manual explaining how to adjust it.

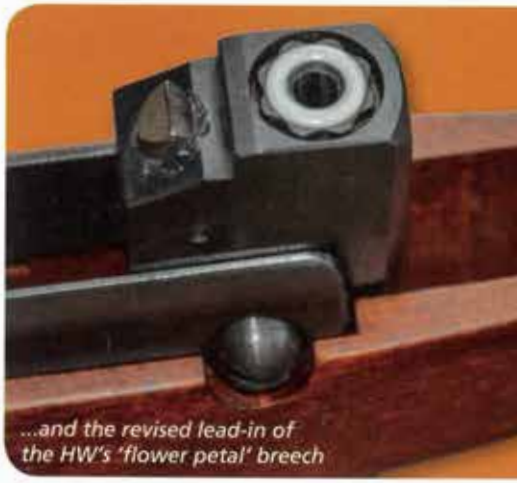
But, of course, it's up against the Rekord – Weihrauch's legendary two-stager that comes part and parcel of the more expensive HW95K's componentry. Years old in terms of design, it still takes some beating on a sporting springer; pull weights can be reduced and a very tailored let-off can be found to suit even the most pernickety of shooters.


The HW95K features the famed two-stage Rekord trigger


To reset the safety catch on the Remington, simply pull the lever!




The XP Tactical's breech...


...and the revised lead-in of the HW's 'flower petal' breech

As for safety systems, neither of these rifles have anti-bear traps fitted – so each can easily be decocked. Both also feature automatic safety catches – but I was a little concerned that the one on the test rifle that Remington supplied me occasionally failed to engage. The Weihrauch's pop-out button worked faultlessly. In terms of resetting, you simply have to pull back the Remington's, but life's more complicated on the HW. To re-engage it, the barrel needs to be drawn all the way back again.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★☆☆

HANDLING

Ambidextrous stocks have now all but taken over these days, and the sleek synthetic offering from Remington here epitomises just how good they can be; it has a really nice feel in the shoulder. Yes, that straight-line butt and hard rubber pad do nothing for the aesthetics, but balance and poise are here in spades. Synthetics usually have a cheap look about them, but the density and texture of this composite material is the Remington's saving grace.

Weihrauch's ambi grip is a compromise but, to be fair, does the job on what is a standard, no-frills sporter configuration. I like the look of the reddish brown butt pad, but in keeping with the Remington, it could still do with a little more 'give'. And while its slim forend tip looks neat, I reckon it could do with being fuller for your leading hand to properly get hold of.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★☆☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★☆☆☆

CONSISTENCY

These days, I'm often amazed at the consistency a modern-day springer's powerplant can return – and this .22 calibre Remington XP Tactical certainly proved the point. Ten-shot strings over the chrono varied by just 12fps with JSB's Air Arms Diabolo Field.

Chambering AADFs in the Weihrauch highlighted the revised chamfer that the German gunmaking ace now machines at the breech. Distinguished by a 'flower petal' profile, the new breech lead-in allow pellets to slip in easily for a much more comfortable loading procedure – but the downside is that you can't tell if you're 'breeching' a slack or tight round. With pellets straight from the tin, the HW95K returned a 19fps spread over 10 shots – still highly creditable for a springer.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★★☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★☆☆

OVERALL BUILD

Just like the last Express, the XP Tactical variant's machining and finish doesn't disappoint. Okay, closer inspection will reveal a moulding seam running underneath the synthetic stock, and plastic trigger guard – but the stock-to-action fit is perfect. And engineering-wise, everything feels solid and tight.

As for the HW95K, it's another classic example of Weihrauch's esteemed gunmaking prowess. Its rich blueing is deep – just that little bit more polished than the Remington's – and even that lack-lustre chequering can't detract from an impressive level of machining, fit and finish throughout. Weihrauchs are still set apart from most of their spring-powered rivals.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★☆☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★★☆

FIRING CYCLE AND ACCURACY

On my 30-yard test range, the Remington's report was most noticeable by its absence. Add a slick action as the piston gets underway once the trigger is pressed and it highlights just how much detail Remington has gone into at the design stage of this model. Even though it uses a ball-catch closure at the breech (as opposed to the Weihrauch's meatier

Below: *The XP Tactical (shouldered) feels well proportioned and solidly built*



sprung-plunger arrangement), the downrange results certainly belied its price tag. Once I got the hang of the trigger's creep, I was regularly able to score sub-10mm c-t-c groups.

By contrast – and rather surprisingly, I must say – the Weihrauch's firing cycle was positively 'twangy'; there was plenty of spring resonance going on. That said, recoil was actually quite modest, making it an enjoyable gun to shoot.

Of course, its superior trigger meant top accuracy was slightly easier to extract than its rival, and after a brief period of familiarisation, I was able to post several identical groups to match the Remington.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★★☆
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★★☆

VALUE FOR MONEY

Remington has its Express range produced in China to keep production costs down, and with that 3-9x32 scope, mounts and silencer thrown in, it's an absolute steal at the price.

Weihrauch's name alone means the HW95K is a strong contender for anyone's money – especially when it comes with the famed Weihrauch silencer into the bargain! Cast-iron build quality and a level of performance to cope with pretty well anything means it, too, is great value for its own, higher asking price. Though guns like the Remington have to be considered formidable competition, Weihrauch is still the sought-after brand that it is for good reason.

For me, both these guns offer outstanding value for money.

Remington XP Tactical ★★★★★★★★★★
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S ★★★★★★★★★★

Right: *Weihrauch's name and its famed silencer help make the 310-S model the winner here*



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

MODEL	XP Tactical	HW95K 310-Silencer
MANUFACTURER	Remington	Weihrauch
UK DISTRIBUTOR	Sportsmarketing www.sportsmk.co.uk	Hull Cartridge www.hullcartridge.co.uk
ACTION	Spring and piston	Spring and piston
CALIBRE	.177 and .22 (tested)	.177 and .22 (tested)
COCKING	Break-barrel, de-cockable	Break-barrel, de-cockable
OVERALL LENGTH	1,168mm	1,143mm
BARREL LENGTH	440mm	310mm
WEIGHT	3.54kg (incl. scope)	3.18kg (excl. scope)
TRIGGER	Two-stage, non-adjustable	Two-stage, adjustable
SAFETY	Automatic, resettable	Automatic (re-cock to reset)
SIGHTS	Remington 3-9x32 scope and mounts	None
STOCK	Synthetic sporter, ambidextrous	Beech sporter, ambidextrous
LENGTH OF PULL	381mm	356mm
TYPICAL POWER	11.6ft/lb with AADF	11.3ft/lb with AADF

FINAL VERDICT

Remington XP Tactical	**81/100**
Weihrauch HW95K 310-S	**83/100**

I must say that this pairing provided very enjoyable break-barrel airguns. The HW95K has more than earned its enviable reputation down the years, and the 310 Silencer model is a natural evolution of an excellent sporting air rifle.

But I can understand why the Remington Express has been ringing the tills so loudly since it was launched – and this XP Tactical model, which feels well proportioned and solidly built, is not only a great option to the original Express, but also an ideal alternative to the traditional sporter *genus* in general. It may not be quite such a polished all-rounder, but you can't fault its performance – and it may even have tied on points if my test rifle's safety catch had been more reliable.