SYN SEAR

Phill Price tries an unusual underlever



SMK has a huge range of airguns with something from every style, from Co2 replicas to powerful, break-barrel springers. An interesting model recently caught my eye, the SYNDB3, which has the option of wearing a synthetic stock, so I thought it would be well worth a look. It takes its design cue from the classic HW77 which was the first rifle to use this clever system. In order to maximise accuracy, the designers wanted to use a fixed barrel, rather than the more common break-barrel type. The idea is that if the barrel is held rigidly in line with the cylinder and the scope, there's no chance of misalignment creeping in.

However, the challenge was how to load the pellet. Many systems had been tried in the past, such as tap loading, but that had its drawbacks, so a second cylinder running inside the outer cylinder was conceived. As the rifle is cocked, this slides back exposing the breech, and as the under lever is closed, the cylinder goes forward and seals against the breech, whilst the piston is held back by the trigger. It's a simple and rugged design that has many advantages over more conventional layouts.

ANTI-BEAR TRAP

One concern with this idea was that if the trigger failed while your fingers were in the opening, they would be injured, so 'anti-bear trap' mechanisms were added to reduce the chance of an accident. These block the trigger completely, preventing the rifle from firing even if the trigger was pulled. However, I believe that you should always hold the under lever firmly while cocking any rife of this type. You simply cannot be too safe.

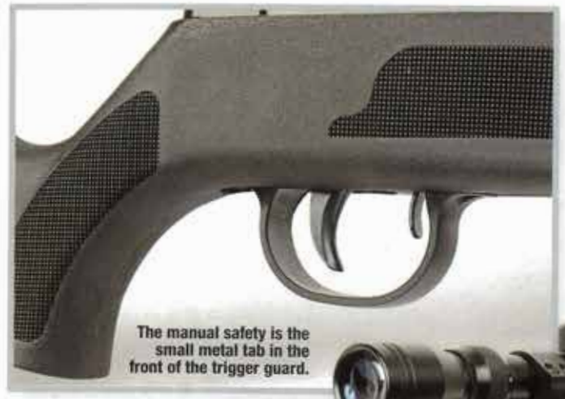
The SYNDB3 is a full-size, adult rifle that's expected to make 550 fps in .22, which means around 9½ ft.lbs. at the muzzle. This is quite powerful for a plinker, so those looking to send the tin cans spinning should be happy. The rifle was delivered to me with a 3-9 x 50 scope in high, double-clamp mounts. The reason for choosing high mounts was to offer enough clearance for the large, 50mm objective lens. Open sights were also fitted, but despite the windows in the mounts, they cannot be seen once the scope is fitted.

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The stock has quite a low cheek piece, like the majority of guns in this class, and because of this the high mounts wouldn't be my choice. I'd choose an SMK 4 x 32 on very low mounts to get better cheek contact with the stock and save a few pounds in the process. Their 4 x 32 is a great little scope, plenty good enough for plinking and for my money better suited to this rifle. Synthetic stocks aren't affected by rain or the damp and are often stronger than wooden ones so are a good choice for beginners. »



We could be looking at the perfect plinker, here.



The manual safety is the small metal tab in the front of the trigger guard.



Here we see the inner cylinder retracted.

"Accuracy testing was done from my home range, shooting from the sitting position"



This SYN DB3 is plenty of gun the money.

The open sights have fibre-optic inserts.

"Once I'd adjusted to the trigger a little I was getting groups of around 2½" with the occasional flyer"

THUNDER POWER

I chronographed the rifle with the Remington Thunder Field Target Trophy .22 pellets supplied, which are very high quality, so I expected good things. The average velocity was 534 fps 14.6 grains for a muzzle energy of 9.24 ft.lbs., just as advertised. As the rifle beds in I'd expect that figure to rise slightly

Rifles at this very modest price have basic triggers which are set quite heavy and this gun was just the same. My pull gauge read 7lbs as the trigger broke, which is pretty heavy, but typical of rifles at this price point. Where this weight is beneficial is that it greatly reduces the chance of young or inexperienced fingers firing the rifle accidentally. In front of the metal trigger blade is a manual safety that's controlled by a slim metal tab. Once it's on, you feel it the moment you reach for the trigger and you can easily disengage it while on aim. This means it can stay on until you're ready to shoot.

Accuracy testing was done on my home range, shooting from the sitting position using a very soft hold, at a distance of 20 yards. I feel this is a typical plinking range and what this rifle was designed for. Once I'd adjusted to the trigger a little I was getting groups of around 2½" with the occasional flyer, which is good for a rifle in this class and probably says a lot about the quality of the pellet.

This is a bargain price for such an advanced design of rifle and offers a lot of value for your money. ■



Remington's Field Target Trophy pellet is very well made.

TECH SPEC

Manufacturer SMK Ltd
Web www.sportsmk.co.uk
Tel 01206 795333
Model SYN DB3
Type Spring-piston
Action Sliding breech, under lever
Length 1040mm (41½")
Weight 3.5kg (7.2lbs)
Trigger
Two-stage
Stock
Ambidextrous synthetic sporter