

megatest FX VERMINATOR

Mega Test



FULLY-FLOATING BARREL

Match quality, threaded for a silencer and fixed at the breech only for competition-standard accuracy

PROBE CHARGING

No spanners, no clip-ons, just a beautifully engineered self-sealing brass probe that makes charging this rifle an almost effortless task

SQUARE-SECTION FORE-END

Fore-end design has squared base for secure rested shots – something that's only possible with pre-charged power

OPTIONAL SILENCER

More compulsory than optional, *this* silencer is the one to go for. Whisper quiet and ultra-light, it's the ultimate sound investment and well worth the extra £48.00



INSIDE THE BOX THERE'S THE RIFLE IN TWO SECTIONS, PLUS THREE 8-SHOT PELLET MAGAZINES, MOUNTS, PROBE CHARGING ADAPTOR AND AN OPTIONAL SILENCER THAT ISN'T OPTIONAL AT ALL

The Verminator arrived, fresh from its check-up at Ben Taylor & Sons' workshop, and I was pleased to see that the high grade, synthetic storage case had been retained. Not only retained but improved, with the addition of a component-hugging foam interior that keeps everything secure during all sorts of unfair jiggling and shaking. I know this, because I unfairly jiggled

and shook the test rifle as part of its field trials, up to and including leaving it in

the flatbed of an ancient Landrover while crossing the roughest fields in Surrey.

Although I very nearly didn't survive this, and the smart briefcase gun-box wasn't quite so smart with scratches on it, the Verminator walked away unscathed and perfectly on zero, which was the whole point of the exercise.

Inside the box there's the rifle in two sections,

plus three 8-shot pellet magazines, a set of mounts, a probe charging adaptor and an optional silencer that isn't optional at all, unless you've already got a silencer, because without one this rifle (like all unsilenced pre-charged airguns) makes a hell of a row on discharge. No, I'll go further; even if you've got a spare silencer, unless it matches the optional one offered by BTAS – and that means in terms of lightness





FITTED CASE

...Shown here and specially designed for the Verminator. Recessed sections protect all components, no matter how rough the journey

ADJUSTABLE HEEL-PLATE

Rubber recoil-pad slides up or down to provide perfect degree of adjustment for head height in relation to scope

TAKE-DOWN FACILITY

Air bottle/stock assembly screws into place to complete the rifle and charge the action. All components fit into custom-built case....

INTEGRAL TRIGGER GUARD

Moulded as part of the high-impact synthetic stock/grip to blend in with the lines of the grip itself and the fore-end

FINGER FRIENDLY PISTOL GRIP

Pistol grip for rock-steady hold on aim, finger-grooves moulded into design for safe, sure hand position



A SYNTHETIC-STOCKED, SIDELEVER-ACTION MULTI-SHOT TAKE-DOWN RIFLE WITH A BUDDY-BOTTLE BUTT

and silencing ability – I’m saying stump up the extra £48. Remember, this rifle was designed with this particular silencer fitted. If you change the mix, make certain it doesn’t contain any compromise ingredient.

The mounts supplied are more important than first meets the eye, and ‘meeting the eye’ is what they’re all about. These are high mounts, designed to bring the scope right onto your line of vision with the minimum of head-shuffling. Don’t bother with low mounts, unless you’ve no neck, or you’re called Kev Hughes and you

such that the real issue here is with the scope’s effect on balance. I’ll be swapping this scope for a higher-mag’ model because I want to take the Verminator on some rabbit stalking trips, but having already used it in close-range sessions on rats and ferals, I can confirm that stubby, wide-angle scopes work extremely well on this rifle.

My first couple of attempts at threading on the Verminator’s butt section took longer than they should have, as I cross-threaded the union once or twice. Then I realized that a slightly

Butt section attached, silencer screwed home, scope fitted, time to charge the tank. This is merely a matter of attaching the filling probe to your preferred air supply – this rifle fills via pump or divers’ tank - and injecting 200-bar’s worth of compression into the bottle. An on-board pressure gauge allows you to keep an eye on your supplies and is extremely handy, but when charging any rifle, I prefer to use the ‘big’ gauge on the tank or pump to monitor input. In any event, always charge any airgun slowly, ‘trickling’, rather than blasting air into the chamber, or you’ll risk causing a build-up of heat and a non-filled ‘fill’ of air.

Loading the Verminator’s 8-shot magazine can’t be done incorrectly, provided you keep your thumb on the raised ‘pip’ in the centre of the mag’ and push in each pellet until it ‘clicks’ under the rubber retaining band. Then, with the safety-catch on, just pull back the sidelever – it stays back without being held – lift and slide back the

magazine holding pin, slot home the mag’ from the right-hand side, close the pin, then the sidelever, and you’re a flick of the safety away from firing.

You’re also about to discover how good the Verminator’s trigger is. This 2-stage adjustable unit is sportingly curved and capable of all required settings, up to and including those too sensitive for my use in the hunting field. Set your triggers carefully - not for use on benches whilst testing, but for those days when fingertips are chilled and digits are clumsy. A sporting trigger should be capable of high-precision but it must never be a liability in the field. Here endeth the sermon. For now at least.

We’re all ready to go now and two things impress from the very first squeeze of the properly-set trigger. First, this rifle comes onto aim like something someone’s built especially for you. Secondly, it’s so quiet and fuss-free on firing that

come from Wales. Kev has been surgically altered via a head-butt from a speeding Audi, and may well be able to use low mounts, but the rest of us won’t. Trust me on this, I’ve tried it.

The test rifle came with a standard-length, 3-9 zoom scope fitted, but thanks to those high mounts, barrel-clearance is

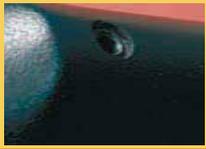
‘angled’ approach is required and within minutes I was attaching butt to action in seconds. If any resistance is felt while screwing these components together, go no further and above all, don’t think a little force-feeding will sort matters. It won’t – it’ll mangle the threads. Just do a few test-assemblies and you’ll soon suss it.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

megatest FX VERMINATOR

ADJUSTABLE BUTT-SECTION

Offers alteration of length, angle and height of butt-pad at the turn of a screw. Hi-impact synthetic compound is warp-free and weatherproof, plus comfortable to the touch in all temperatures



MOUNTS SUPPLIED

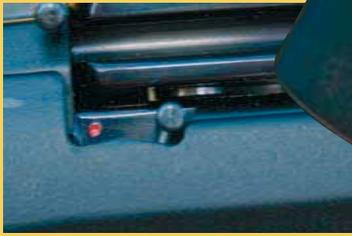
You'll need high mounts to make the most of this rifle's handling, and to make magazine changing easier, so they're supplied as part of the package

AMBIDEX-TROUS STOCK

Both left and right-handers will feel equally at home with the Verminator's stock and drop-down pistol grip, and the good feelings continue with 'warm to touch' surfaces made from modern high-tech polymers

POSITIVE SAFETY CATCH

Slick rocker-lever safety readies the Verminator for action, keeps trigger and firing system inert and locked for safety in the field – and on the range



SIDELEVER ACTION

Slick and speedy back-forth action cocks and reloads rifle in a split-second, without taking rifle from aim if required



REMOVABLE 8-SHOT MAGAZINE

You get three with this rifle, one in the action and two spares, and you'll have no problem loading and using them



you'll want the proof of a chrono' to convince you it's doing the power. Let's examine that pointability factor first.

At just under 2.5kg, this is a light rifle. Furthermore, most of its weight is toward the rear and totally supported by contact with your shoulder. This lack of apparent weight takes your mind off supporting the Verminator and keeps it focused on aiming it. No verbal description can possibly do justice to the 'feel' of this rifle. The only way to truly know how 'immediate' it feels is to pick it up and shoulder it. *This* will be the main feature that seals a sale, because it makes you want to shoot and own a Verminator.

I took the test rifle to my club at Bisley and had it zeroed within 20 shots. The final five of those 20 shots formed such a tight group that I had to go downrange to check that I wasn't missing the card completely. I wasn't missing, and neither was the Verminator. I'd just shot a one-holer at 35

yards, without really trying. In the company of my clubmates, I deferred my usual chronograph test session (any excuse to avoid the bore'athon) and set about the varied selection of knockdown targets.

I connected regularly with 40mm kill zones right out to 50 metres, and so did Sid, one of Bisley's veteran airgunners, who was most impressed with the accuracy and shootability of the Verminator. I was even more impressed when I finalised the adjustments of the rifle, with tweaks to the trigger setting and a subtle re-alignment of the ambidextrous butt section.

The latter adjustment comes courtesy of a hex-head screw on top of the cheekpiece. Loosen the screw, slide the butt in, out, and to the degree of rotation you prefer, then lock the screw to fix it in place. The rubber butt-pad slides up and down, although this requires the removal of the butt over-section from the buddy-bottle to give access to the

butt-pad locking nut.

Obviously, it makes sense to adjust the pad before setting the length and angle of the butt. Most importantly of all, once adjusted, this rifle fits, points and handles even better, making a positive feature even more so.

Not normally a fan of drop-down pistol grips, or foreshortened front-ends for that matter, I found myself ignoring my prejudices and just getting on with the shooting. I think this is all down to the balance and weight-distribution of the Verminator. The rifle points so well that you're really only resting your hands, instead of using them to steer the gun.

When I finally got round to doing the chrono' test, I managed 100

recorded shots using FX pellets straight from the tin, clocking an average variation of 11fps. Returning to the chrono' after a further 100 shots – tediously ticked-off as each mag'-full was used – I found a 6fps drop from that average, indicating that the claimed 200 usable shots was indeed the working figure. In the reality of the hunting field, of course, this is all a nonsense, because nobody, not even the luckiest lamper on the planet, fires 200 shots without a break, and a re-charge while he's at it, but it's great to know that running out of air isn't an issue with this rifle.

I found the sidelever action easy to flick back and forth, even with the Verminator on aim, and

Mega Test

technical SPECIFICATION

Model: FX Verminator	Calibre: .22 and .177
Manufacturer: FX Airguns	Cocking: Sidelever
Distributor: Ben Taylor and Son	Loading: Via removable rotary magazine
Country of origin: Sweden	Trigger: 2-stage adjustable
Price: £639.99 incl. fitted case, probe adaptor and three magazines	Sights: Scope rail only
Type: Pre-charged 8-shot, autoloader sporter	Stock type: Adjustable, ambidextrous synthetic sporter
	Weight: 2.49kg (5.5lb) unscoped
	Length: 695mm (27.3in) without silencer
	Barrel: 254mm (10in)

contact 01223 872655

THE FX VERMINATOR IS DESIGNED AND BUILT AS A FULL-SPEC SPORTING RIFLE. IT CAN BE TAKEN DOWN FOR STORAGE AND TRANSPORT, BUT I THINK IT SHOULD BE JUDGED ON ITS POTENTIAL AS A SPORTER, NOT A TAKEDOWN

TWO-STAGE ADJUSTABLE TRIGGER

Choose any let-off setting from 'match' to 'firm' with total confidence. No creep, no hesitation, just a proper sporting trigger

BUILT-IN PRESSURE GAUGE

Air-pressure monitor gauge is integral to system and allows immediate visual check on reservoir status and optimum power levels



the whole tried-and-tested autoloader system is just that – proven beyond doubt. I've a small gripe against the magazine fixing pin, which could rotate if brushed by foliage or the shooter's hand, but this had no effect on the reliability of the system during my tests. I'd also prefer a 'blanked' pellet bay in the magazine, so that you'd know you'd run out of shots *before* you fired fresh air at a rabbit, but apart from these there's very little to whinge about with this rifle.

The fully-floating barrel is just 10in long, threaded and capped for a silencer. Ben Taylor personally re-profiles the Verminator's silencers to make sure each is perfectly aligned with the bore. Each rifle is then accuracy checked and power tested before dispatch. Reassuring stuff, especially when you know how picky Ben Taylor is about anything mechanical.

The FX Verminator is designed, built and priced as a full-specification sporting rifle. It can be taken down for more convenient storage and transportation, but I think it should be judged on its potential as a sporter, not a takedown. This is a rifle with massive appeal, and that appeal doubles and trebles if you get the chance to pick one up and shoot it. It can be used effectively by left-handers, provides two-ton of shots and is as accurate as anything out there. Rats or rabbits, close-up or max range, the Verminator can handle it.

Beware of one aspect of this airgun's appeal, though. If you can't afford one, or spending that amount of money would cause a row at home, whatever you do...*don't* pick it up...

I FOUND THE SIDELEVER ACTION EASY TO FLICK BACK AND FORTH, EVEN WITH THE RIFLE ON AIM