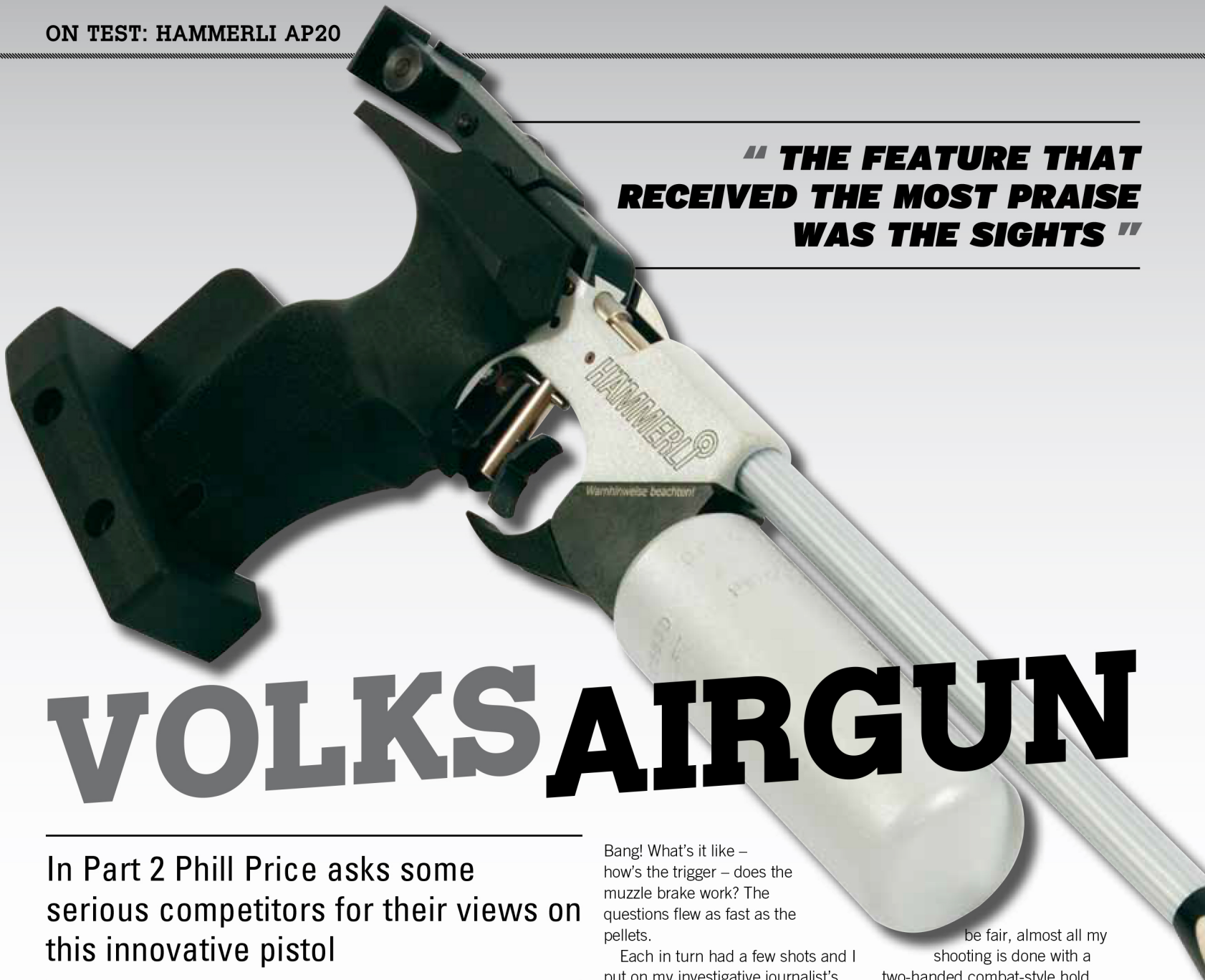


“ THE FEATURE THAT RECEIVED THE MOST PRAISE WAS THE SIGHTS ”



VOLKS AIRGUN

In Part 2 Phill Price asks some serious competitors for their views on this innovative pistol

Last month we brought you a quick overview of the new Hammerli AP20 target pistol and, as promised, this month we're bringing you a follow-up on how this innovative pistol fared in its natural environment. Let's be clear right up front, as much as I love pistol shooting, I know as much about 6-metre match shooting as Olly Murs knows about singing, so I went to my local club and offered the AP20 to some of the regulars who know their stuff. This gave the opportunity for them to shoot it side-by-side with their regular rides, which is a tough challenge for any newcomer to a highly competitive environment.

Their first impressions were, to be

honest, a little cool. "Why does it look like that?" and "that's a funny grip" but I chose not to answer. I was more interested in how it performed. I'd taken the time to move the reservoir into the forward position making the pistol more muzzle heavy, something I was sure would appeal to my target audience, namely a load of slightly well-padded, middle-aged blokes. Now, I know that's not a fair representation of the target shooting community over all, but it is a fair representation of my friends.

After much fondling, poking, head scratching and tweaking with Allen keys, test dummy number one stood on aim on the firing line while the collected pals held their breath.

Bang! What's it like – how's the trigger – does the muzzle brake work? The questions flew as fast as the pellets.

Each in turn had a few shots and I put on my investigative journalist's cap, trying to gain some consensus. At first I just wanted them to keep shooting. I deflected questions about cost and future upgrades. I said, "Don't think – shoot!" This was because I wanted to get lead down range. It was important that these regular club shooters should focus on maximising their scores rather than worrying about the ins and outs of the technical details.

They quickly settled down and began to concentrate on how the AP20 felt on aim and as the shot was released. I was interested to see if there was any noticeable muzzle flip and to be honest, looking over their shoulders, I couldn't see any. However, when I was shooting it the recoil was noticeable to me. Now, to

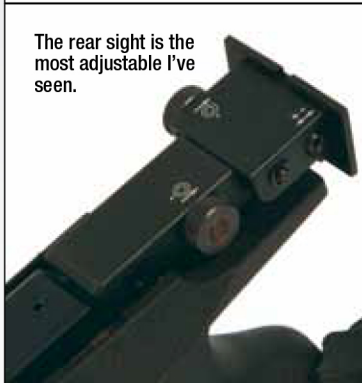
be fair, almost all my shooting is done with a two-handed combat-style hold originally designed to take the full-bore recoil of firearms, so the subtle nudge of an air pistol goes unnoticed, but in the single-handed hold it was apparent.

The muzzle weight will clearly help reduce flip and I noted that it was drilled laterally to deflect the high-pressure air sideways, reducing the dreaded jetting effect. The guys felt it too but assured me that it was about the same as their existing guns. No worry there then.

The standard grip is incredibly clever, being adjustable and fully ambidextrous and with a few twists of the Allen key everybody was able to get comfortable. Now, it's clear that it can never give the ultimate support that a 3D fully ambidextrous walnut



With the reservoir in the forward position you add this neat trigger guard.



The rear sight is the most adjustable I've seen.



The barrel weight doubles as a muzzle brake.

one can, but these can be bought and added to the gun later in your career if you choose. These are available from small to extra large, right- and left-handed, so everybody can be catered for. Optional trigger blades are available as well, but I heard no complaints about the standard unit, which has plenty of adjustment.

They're so adjustable that it takes a few minutes to understand every option. However, it was the width adjustable rear

sight notch that was most praised. Everybody has their own preference as to how they like their sight picture to appear and the guys were setting the rear width to suit themselves and then rotating the front element to suit, and in this way they were able to get things just right.

At the end of the evening, we adjourned to the debriefing suite (the pub) and I asked the guys having fired a reasonable number of

well-aimed shots, what they really thought. Without exception they liked the Hammerli and felt that it was a serious competitor. The adjustability impressed everybody and the ability to be upgraded to a higher specification appealed too. Its nearest competitor is around £300 more and looks more serious from the box, but the price difference will make many people want a look at the Hammerli. As a club pistol I'm sure it will be a huge success, because it can be tailored to suit just about any member, from the youngest to the biggest, with just basic tools in a few minutes. There's no doubt in my mind that the positive reaction the guys gave me will be repeated across the country. ■

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Manufacturer:	Hammerli
Importer:	John Rothery Wholesale
Web:	www.bisley-uk.co.uk
Model:	AP20
Weight:	900grams
Barrel length:	250mm
Overall length:	415mm
Shots per fill:	140
Fill pressure:	200 bar
Maximum power:	7.5 joules
Price:	£725.00