

CROWNING GLORY

The editor concludes his test of the unique FX Airguns Crown with some uncharacteristic advice

I have been so energised by exploring the capabilities of the FX Airguns Crown, that I've picked it up and played with it at every opportunity. Full-on shooting opportunities have not been quite so frequent as I'd like, due to a combination of rotten weather and my own work commitments, but time and again, I've had the Crown in my shoulder, so the handling could be tested ... and enjoyed.

As you'll see elsewhere, I've also been testing Daystate's Red Wolf Serie Rosso, which is by pure coincidence the rifle that most resembles the Crown in terms of handling and low-effort aiming characteristics. Air Arms' Ultimate Sporter is pretty close, too, but it's my dearest wish that all 'serious' sporters will one day offer this commendable standard of fit, balance and adaptability.

BASIC NUMBERS

The stinky weather didn't ruin the least-liked aspect of my testing program, though. Oh yes, the interminable chrono' sessions could take place indoors, so no problem there, until my veteran chrono' gave up the ghost and started acting up. I switched to a shiny new one, and all was well, if just as boring as ever. I shot three, 100-shot, strings, using .177 Air Arms Diabolo Field straight from the tin, and the 11.6 ft. lbs. I'd already established remained rock-solid throughout. I then switched to my precious prepared stash of Fields, and with

no extreme speed readings or 'blips' to distort the f.p.s. average, I recorded an incredible 7 f.p.s. variance over the first 50 shots. In real-world terms, that's nothing, apart from perfection.

CAPACITY

The Crown's 480cc buddy bottle air reservoir provides 450 usable shots in .177 and 420 perfect ones, so the recommendation has to be to run it to 400 shots, just to keep everything easy to remember and ticking over at peak performance. No one using the Crown in sub-12 format will do this, of course, because we usually top up before every shooting session, but the FAC-rated Crowns will make full use of the rifle's tremendous capacity.

FAC OPTIONS

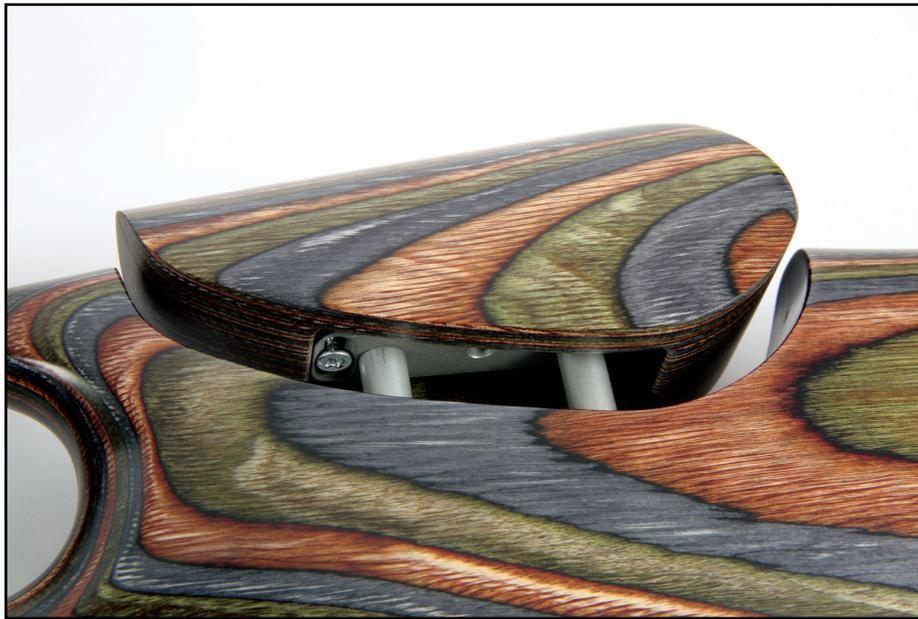
With .177, .22., .25 and .30 calibres available as optional extras within the Crown's easy-change barrel design, I really need to test these high-power formats. This will take time to organise and carry out, plus it's not the kind of thing that can be rushed, so it'll happen when I can sort it. I might be able to squeeze in a visit to FX headquarters in Sweden within the next two months, and that would sort everything at a stroke, thanks to the availability of the company's indoor range and the optional barrels being on site, too.

THE .177 TEST RIFLE

Meanwhile, I'm just under 1000 pellets into my testing with the legal limit Crown in .177 and I hope I have some practical advice for potential purchasers. First, as I've stated

The FX Airguns Crown - worth rearranging your life for.





This is a great performance advantage - please make the most of it.

previously on every occasion I've tested a rifle with an adjustable stock, you must, must, dedicate hours to getting that gun fit as near perfect as possible. Now here's where I change my tune a fraction, and suggest the inclusion of something I've always nagged you about resisting at all costs. That 'something' is compromise and I'm going to devote the rest of this test to explaining my apparent U-turn. Yes, you read it right; I'm suggesting you think about compromising with the set-up of the Crown, and here's why.

BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS

Obvious stuff first. If you're shooting from one position, there's an optimum rifle set-up for

that. Shooting from a bench shapes your body in a different way compared to standing, kneeling, sitting and prone stances, so unless you reset the rifle for each position, you're compromising to some degree or other. After putting in some heavy range time with the

"I'm going to devote the rest of this test to explaining my apparent U-turn"

Crown, I've realised there are only two options for those wishing to shoot at peak efficiency, and that should be all of us. This fact of shooting life applies to all rifles with adjustable stocks, not just the Crown.



Set the hex-head screw to provide a 'sliding fit'.

QUICK-CHANGE

First, as mentioned, you can adjust your rifle's butt pad and cheek piece for each position. As the Crown stands, you'll need a hex wrench to shift the cheek piece and the pad vertically, but the latter can simply be tightened to a

'sliding fit', so a swift change of set-up won't be a problem as far as shoulder contact goes. For the cheek piece, you'll need to replace the hex-head grub screw with a finger-friendly one, and I know that all sounds like an immense

I'm really looking forward to further exploration with the FX Crown. .



Set your standards to the max.



The option to explore other calibres will be taken up as soon as re-organisation allows.





If you're in the market for something remarkable - you need to get next to this rifle.

hassle, but we're talking optimum performance here, and a couple of seconds' worth of input isn't unreasonable. That said, most shooters will go for the next option – compromise.

SET FOR THE BEST

First, decide which stance you use most and set up the rifle for that. Again, take all the time you need to get this perfect and use the

adapt the rifle to your most effective stance, rather than the other way round.

When that's done, note the position of the butt pad and cheek piece, then do the same for your second most-used stance. Finally, set the rifle's adjustability between the two ideals, and train the hell out of yourself so that the small compromise you've introduced

dumping it all on one. I hope that makes sense, and that you'll give it a go.

VERDICT

If you can afford an FX Crown, get yourself next to one and handle it. If you have an FAC or intend to make the move to high power, my advice is the same. This is a breakthrough shooting system in more ways than one, and I'll be rearranging my life to explore its full potential. These are exciting times to be an airgunner, that's for sure. ■

“the small compromise you've introduced has minimal effect on your efficiency”

method of shouldering the rifle (uncocked and unloaded), with your eyes closed, getting yourself comfortable, then opening your eyes to check everything's aligned. This way, you'll

has the minimal effect on your efficiency. Now I've tried this, I can state with confidence that a minimal degree of compromise on both stances is better than

It offers a truly impressive combination of handling, versatility and pure accuracy.



TECH SPEC

- Model:** Crown
- Manufacturer:** FX Airguns
- Country of origin:** Sweden
- Price:** £1899
- Type:** Pre-charged, regulated, multi-shot, sporter, with removable buddy bottle reservoir
- Calibre:** .22, .177, .25, .30
- Cocking/loading:** Sidelever
- Loading:** Via removable, rotary multi-shot magazine (21-shot for .177, 18-shot for .22, 16-shot in .25 and 14-shot in .30)
- Trigger:** 2-stage, adjustable, match type
- Stock type:** Ambidextrous, thumbhole laminate, with adjustable cheek piece and butt pad
- Weight:** 3.85kg (8.5lbs)
- Length:** 975mm (38.3 ins)
- Barrel:** 500mm (19.7ins)
- Fill pressure:** Max 250 bar
- Shots per charge:** 400-plus in .177, 450-plus in .22
- Variation over 50 shots:** Average 9 f.p.s.
- Average energy:** 11.6 ft.lbs.
- Contact:** A.S.I. on 01728 688555

RRP £1899