

The Walther Terrus



The Terrus is a man-sized air rifle with a comfortable and cleverly designed ergonomic stock.

by Paul Miller

The firm of Carl Walther has been in the business of making high-quality firearms for more than 125 years.

Carl and his son Fritz introduced their first semi-automatic pistol in 1866 when this sort of technology was very much in its infancy. The Walther dynasty started with Carl marrying the daughter of another renowned firearms-making family at the time, and the rest is history.

Over the years, this company has become legendary for the quality of its sporting, competition rifles, air rifles and handguns.

It also produced some of the earliest calculators in the 1920s and ramped up firearm production enormously leading into the Second World War. In the 1950s, Walther created the famous Walther PPK pistol that James Bond was so fond of using in the various movies featuring Secret Agent 007. This compact pistol became a favourite around the world with police and security forces.

As a young guy growing up, the name Walther always conjured up images of sheer quality. For a young student with limited

money, Walther firearms sold for prices that seemed astronomical to me. I had a neighbour with a super-accurate Walther bolt-action sporting rifle in .22 Hornet with a Kahles 4x scope. At the time, I thought he was the best equipped and therefore had to be the most well-heeled shooter I had ever met. I mean, let's face it, he owned a Walther! I was thrilled with my first Brno Model 2 when I saved long and hard to buy that, but I've always wondered where that lovely Walther ended up when the old chap passed away. With someone who appreciated it, I hope.

Today, Carl Walther is a huge operation in the German city of Ulm. It has a high-tech production facility and research centre that keeps it at the forefront of firearms technology. Walther caters to the sporting/target market, as well as police and military applications. A look at the Walther website (www.waltherarms.com) is pretty mind-boggling when you see what the company has developed over all these years.

Chris Papps, from the Walther importers Frontier Arms in South Australia, kindly provided a new entry-level Walther air rifle called the Terrus for us to put through its paces. This is a modern-looking break-barrel spring-powered firearm with a futuristic black synthetic stock. It is very cleverly proportioned so that the stock is both comfortable to grip but well-balanced for offhand shooting. Halfway along the fore-end features a swelling that is the same on both sides and it provides a comfortable grip for both right- or left-handed users.



The futuristic-shaped triggerguard and well-located trigger adjustment screw.

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Holding the rifle is further enhanced by an unusual moulded chequering called Hi Grip, which covers all the spots on the fore-end and pistol grip where you are likely to hold the rifle. The Germanic Monte Carlo-style comb of the stock is quite high and puts your eye directly in line with the sophisticated open sights. It also provides a nice head position for a low to medium mounted scope, which a rifle of this quality certainly warrants.

The rear sights are highly adjustable both laterally and vertically and feature TruGlo fibre-optic sights. These are very effective with fluorescent green dots on the rear-sight and a fluorescent orange dot front-sight, which look good under any lighting conditions but are especially effective in bright light. There is no hood to protect the front-sight.

The trigger on the rifle is the Walther XT, which is adjustable for first stage travel and is quite light and very responsive. The pawls are made from hardened steel, which bodes well for the longevity of this mechanism. The safety is automatic on this rifle, so when you cock it, the safety automatically engages. Being on the tang at the rear of the compression chamber is very convenient and much like using a shotgun safety catch. It is nice design, which makes the safety easy to disengage with your thumb with the rifle mounted ready to shoot.

Although the Terrus is Walther's entry-level air rifle, it is not a 'toy'. It is a man-sized firearm weighing about 8lb with a scope installed and has a very nice heft and balance. The test rifle came in .177-calibre and it is also available in .22. It is powerful and capable of driving .177 pellets (dependent on weight and profile) at about 850fps, while the .22 pellets will travel at about 650fps. It took a few shots for me to get



Cocking occurs at more than 90 degrees. The futuristic stock with its swollen fore-end is really comfortable for shooting offhand.

used to the strength required to cock it, but once I had this figured out, it was a pleasant shooting experience throughout the test.

A quality rifle like this needs a quality scope to help bring out its full potential. Powerful spring-loaded air rifles can destroy average scopes because of the forward and rearward recoil these mechanisms exhibit. All scopes are designed for rifles that recoil rearwards, but higher quality scopes also allow for forward motion to protect their reticles and adjustments. Scopes designed specifically for air rifles are therefore

additionally robust to cope with this form of two directional recoil.

My all-time favourite scope for an air rifle that is to be used in the field is the compact Leupold 3-9x33 EFR rimfire model with the extended focal range. This scope is designed specifically to withstand those potentially scope-damaging forces that air rifles exert. This scope is also perfect for high-quality rimfire rifles and I've even seen them on compact centrefires as well. The extended focal range allows perfect focus on all powers from as



Quality English Sportsmatch mounts are needed on powerful air rifles to stop rearward slippage caused by the double recoil effect from the spring-powered system.

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close as 10m to infinity. For serious air rifle competitors, Leupold also makes an EFR version of the 6.5-20x40 VX3, which is a great scope, but is meant more for high-end competition shooting air rifles and target rimfire rifles. I didn't have either of these at hand for this test, so substituted a 4.5-14x0 adjustable objective scope, which I could adjust to about 15m and this worked fine at 15 and 20m.

The other issue with air rifle vibration is the need for a very secure mounting system. Mounts that would be perfectly secure on a .22 will almost certainly move backwards on an air rifle, so we need to look for mounts that are air rifle-proof. The best ones I know are made by British company Sportsmatch. They have a very robust look about them and can be had in one- and two-piece versions. They really lock up solidly to protect your scope and keep it in place and zeroed. I learned this lesson the hard way many years ago when I put a Leupold scope on a powerful air rifle with its usual rimfire mounts; after a few shots, it had moved back along the dovetail and flexed enough to leave slight ring marks on the body of the scope tube. I was not happy and nor would you be.

With the scope and mounts in place,



I found that the Walther Terrus shot superbly. It did nearly as well with the open sights, but I always use a scope where possible and the Leupold fine duplex reticle and rock-solid Sportsmatch mounts really brought out the best in the Terrus. Air rifles are essentially short-range firearms,

but within their limits, they can be effective on small pests such as close-range rabbits, feral pigeons or rats and mice in the shed. The more accurate they are, the more satisfying they are to use, and the Terrus was satisfying indeed.

I'm often amazed at the quality of entry-level firearms today when compared to only a few years ago. The Walther Terrus is an impressive rifle and considering it is made in Germany and has such a famous heritage, its \$495 price tag seems reasonably priced indeed. The Terrus would be ideal as a training rifle for young or old shooters alike where lots of shooting and trigger practice can be had at little cost. All in all, the Terrus is a great package and highly recommended. ●



Specifications

Manufacturer: Carl Walther, Germany

Model: Terrus XT break-barrel spring-powered air rifle

Distributor: Frontier Arms

Calibre: .177 (tested), .22

Safety: Automatic

Barrel Length: 445mm (17.5"), 1/2" UNF thread on end to accommodate muzzle brake where permitted

Overall Length: 1110mm (43.5")

Weight: 3.3kg (7.5lb) bare.

Stock: All Weather synthetic

Sights: Open sights, TruGlo fibre optic

Mount: 3/8" standard dovetail

RRP: \$495