



MEET THE MK2!

The editor gets first go of the brand new BSA R-10 Mk2 – prepare for change

Regular readers will be well aware of the 'rolling development' deal by now, and this month's test exclusive is the perfect example of that very thing. It's the spanking new BSA R-10 Mk2 and it carries no fewer than 25 upgrades over the previous model. Some of these improvements are major, some minor, and a few positively microscopic, with the rest being changes in manufacturing procedure that bring benefits to the finished article. As a workaday fellow, I'm going to limit my attentions to the more significant upgrades, and their practical effects. Stand by to absorb a series of developments that have rolled into the new R-10 Mk2.

Overview

First, as tempting as it undoubtedly is, don't concentrate on the stock. That sumptuous piece of oiled, right-hand walnut remains pretty much unchanged from the original R-10, and if the 'new' action is all about rolling development, the stock

represents getting it right first time. I'll deal with the R-10's woodwork later; once I've walked you through the major mechanical changes, and that will get underway as soon as I've completed the overview.

The BSA R-10 Mk2 is a fully-regulated, pre-charged pneumatic, 10-shot, bolt-action sporter that runs off a buddy bottle, which can be charged to its operating pressure of 232 bar either in-situ, via a probe connector, or unscrewed and filled using the second adaptor supplied.

The barrel is shrouded and the shroud is tipped with an air-diffuser, which can be removed to take a standard silencer should you require a bit more hush, and not be bothered by wrecking the R-10's looks. Below the barrel, near the union of bottle and stock, you'll find

the distinctive 'toast rack' which has the highly technical task of doing nothing at all, apart from looking better than a straight piece of alloy.

The familiar and finger-friendly Bolas bolt handle sits at the rear of the action block, and activates a removable, rotary, 10-shot magazine. Other familiar R-10 features include the 'go-anywhere' match style trigger, fitted sling swivel studs, adjustable butt pad, rosewood fore end tip, grip cap and spacer, and half an acre of laser cut chequering. Your eyes will tell you that this is a stylish sporting package, and no doubt some of you would consider a stock of this quality a tad over-qualified for the rough-and-tumble of field work, but the real deal is how the Mk2 shoots and handles, which we'll explore as soon as I've

explained those changes I mentioned earlier. Barely time to catch your breath when you're an airgun tester, no?

Changes in the air

Pitching straight in, the R-10's magazine is now self-contained, which means it requires nothing more from the rifle's internals than a touch on an actuator button to operate it. Driven by an internal spring, the new magazine has no effect on trigger function and showed total reliability throughout my test. I had two magazines and took both out in horrendous conditions (not deliberately I may add), and neither the driving rain or sub-zero temperatures could induce a glitch.

Next, the knock-open valve that dispenses compressed air to the breech has been re-designed, and the hammer that activates it now runs at an 'optimised strike pressure' to increase efficiency. You'll already notice the woeful lack of techno-data within this section, and for once it

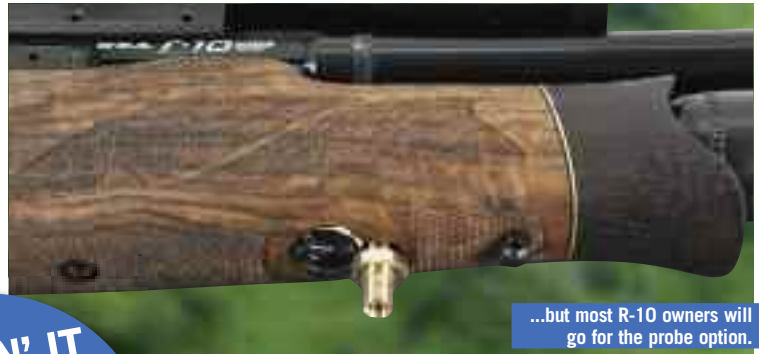
REGULATION
Some swear by regulators, some swear at them, but they promote consistency and that promotes accuracy



It won't miss - so make sure you don't.



Bottle-off charging is available...



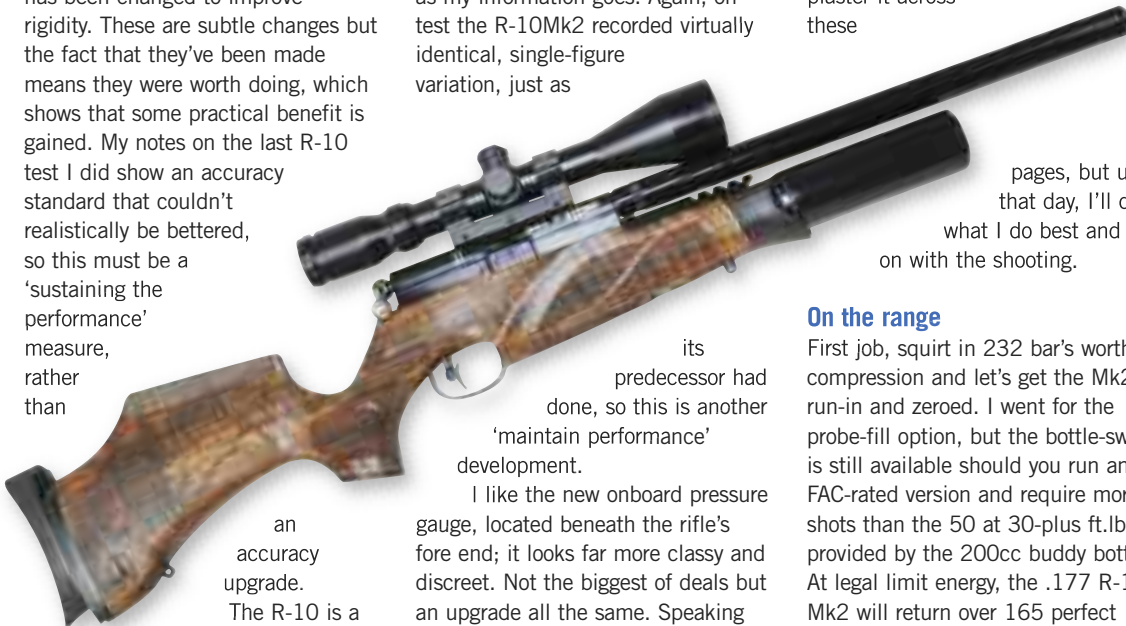
...but most R-10 owners will go for the probe option.

BOTTLIN' IT
 FAC holders will appreciate the ability to swap bottles when more shots are required

isn't my fault. BSA, like every other manufacturer on planet airgun, don't spend thousands on research and development, then serve it all up on a printed plate for the world to copy. So, I'll explain what the changes are and a bit about what they do, but you'll look in vain for blueprints.

The length of the MK2's barrel has been slightly increased, to improve accuracy and consistency, and the design of the barrel shroud support has been changed to improve rigidity. These are subtle changes but the fact that they've been made means they were worth doing, which shows that some practical benefit is gained. My notes on the last R-10 test I did show an accuracy standard that couldn't realistically be bettered, so this must be a 'sustaining the performance' measure, rather than

better with a regulated one. Anyway, the R-10's reg' has now been modified internally to improve its consistency and reliability still further. I know that Belville washers have replaced the coil spring inside the regulator, and that the airflow has been improved, but that's as far as my information goes. Again, on test the R-10Mk2 recorded virtually identical, single-figure variation, just as



fully-functioning banjo pin. There you go, the main agents of changed considered and condensed for you by the least-technical airgun tester in the business. If BSA decides to reveal all about the rest of the seals, platings, retainers, washers and anti-flip bearing assemblies, I'll plaster it across these

shots, with the .22 adding at least 50 to that total. For the record, the test .177 clocked 11.4 ft.lbs. for a super-consistent 9 fps variation over 50 searingly dull shots. A brief firtle with a hex wrench on the one-piece mount had the scope inching along the mounting rail and locked in the ideal position. A handful of clicks later, the groups began to form.

At 35 yards, using Air Arms Field, Daystate Heavies, Defiants and Daystate's new Li pellets, this new rifle will have the holes in a paper target overlapping. Then again, so could the previous model, and so can all of the R-10's rivals. Here's why BSA have developed the 'maintain performance' upgrades. Rifles of this class absolutely must produce top accuracy – and keep doing that under field conditions.

pages, but until that day, I'll do what I do best and get on with the shooting.

On the range

First job, squirt in 232 bar's worth of compression and let's get the Mk2 run-in and zeroed. I went for the probe-fill option, but the bottle-swap is still available should you run an FAC-rated version and require more shots than the 50 at 30-plus ft.lbs. provided by the 200cc buddy bottle. At legal limit energy, the .177 R-10 Mk2 will return over 165 perfect

its predecessor had done, so this is another 'maintain performance' development.

I like the new onboard pressure gauge, located beneath the rifle's fore end; it looks far more classy and discreet. Not the biggest of deals but an upgrade all the same. Speaking of small deals, I couldn't allow this run-down of the R-10's improvements to pass without mentioning the new and radically enhanced ... banjo pin. Apart from being something to do with the cocking/loading bolt, I have not the slightest idea what a banjo pin does when it's at home with its hat on,

but you've got to love that name. From now on, I'm going to insist that every rifle I own has a

an accuracy upgrade.

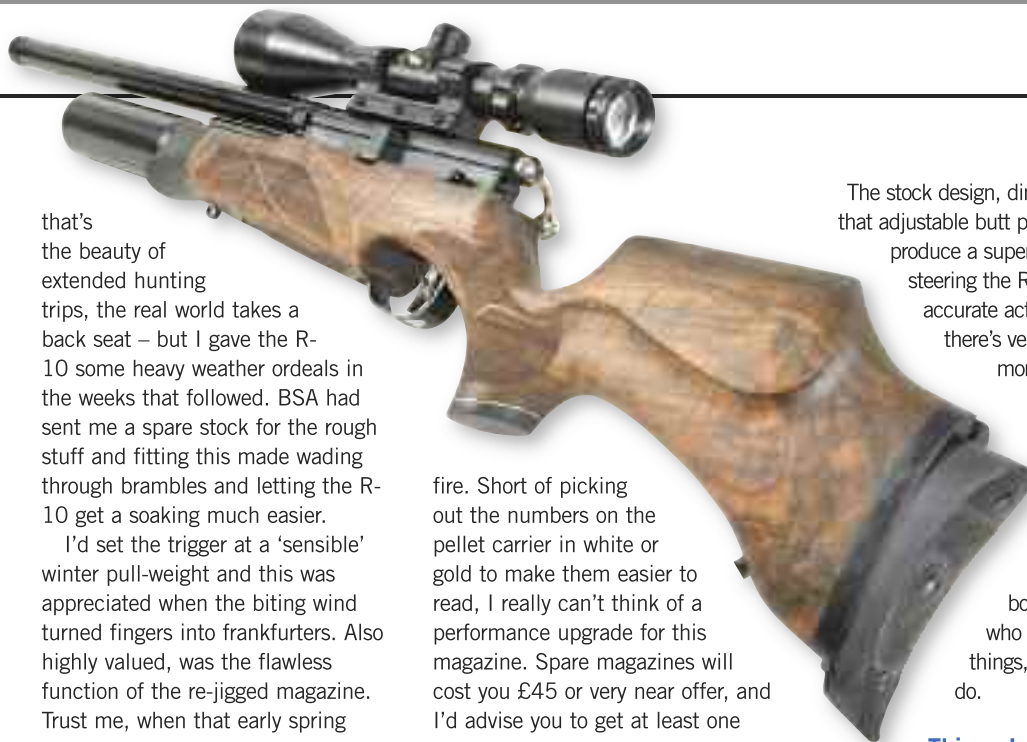
The R-10 is a regulated rifle, which means that air is fed to the breech in precisely metred amounts, which improves consistency and soothes the brain of sad people like me, who couldn't outshoot a good non-regulated rifle, but still feel



Extra moderation is available if looks don't matter that much to you.



The Bolas bolt is retained, and for good reason.



that's the beauty of extended hunting trips, the real world takes a back seat – but I gave the R-10 some heavy weather ordeals in the weeks that followed. BSA had sent me a spare stock for the rough stuff and fitting this made wading through brambles and letting the R-10 get a soaking much easier.

I'd set the trigger at a 'sensible' winter pull-weight and this was appreciated when the biting wind turned fingers into frankfurters. Also highly valued, was the flawless function of the re-jigged magazine. Trust me, when that early spring

fire. Short of picking out the numbers on the pellet carrier in white or gold to make them easier to read, I really can't think of a performance upgrade for this magazine. Spare magazines will cost you £45 or very near offer, and I'd advise you to get at least one

The stock design, dimensions and that adjustable butt pad combine to produce a superior means of steering the R-10's match-accurate action, and there's very little

more you can ask of a sporting rifle. The fact that this one looks as good as it does is a bonus for those who appreciate such things, and most of us do.

Things I don't like

I hate the R-10's trigger guard, because it looks plain without being understated and classy, and I'm no fan of that front sling swivel stud, which my supporting hand can't avoid. I can't see a way round that front stud, and personally, I'd swap it with a flush-fitting version as soon as possible.

The channel in which the butt pad runs has sharp points top and bottom, and I'm bored with moaning about these on most rifles. Give yours a swift stroke or two with a file to make them benign, then keep the butt pad assembly clean and running smoothly for immediate adjustment in the field.

Ideally, in addition to a single shot loading option, I'd have a



The new magazine is entirely self-contained.

subtle palm rest at the base of the R-10's grip, so I could totally relax my hand and make the best use of that fantastic trigger system. Finally, BSA should develop a new silencer which slides over the shroud, rather than sticking out and making the rifle too long and 'leggy'. Oh, yes, and there should be an optional synthetic stock for the totally tactical, entirely practical, punters.

Verdict

The R-10 Mk2 offers a mouthwatering combination of performance, precision, practicality and style. At a quid short of £750, it's up there with the big boys in terms of price, and it's no slouch when it comes to performance. In short, this is a genuine contender for your sporting rifle budget, and an example of rolling development I wouldn't hesitate to recommend. ■

“IT DOESN'T FEEL HEAVY ON AIM, JUST SOLID AND DEPENDABLE”

(yeah, right) wind comes whipping in, manually loading .177 pellets is no easy job. Loading the magazine, however, was no problem at all, just a matter of rotating the knurled, numbered pellet-carrier against its spring tension, and dropping a pellet into each empty chamber. As the final chamber is loaded, the pellet carrier is held in position, ready for the magazine to be inserted into the left-hand side of the action. To secure the mag', simply slide the keeper pin toward you, then close the bolt to make the R-10 ready to

spare to smooth out those swap-over moments, when you need a shot and waiting for a full magazine reload isn't an option.

Weights and balances

At an all-up weight of 9lbs, including the BSA Essencial 3-9 x 50 scope and one-piece mount, the R-10 Mk2 is no lightweight, but then again it doesn't feel at all heavy on aim, just solid and dependable. Yet again, the Mk1 R-10 felt the same and BSA clearly wanted to retain the rifle's inherent stability.



Note how the low-profile magazine permits the use of a one-piece scope mount.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Model: R-10 Mk2
Manufacturer: BSA Guns (UK) Ltd
Country of Origin: U.K.
Contact: 0121 772 8543
Type: Pre-charged, multi-shot sporter
Calibre: .177, and .22
Cocking: Bolt-action
Loading: Removable, rotary magazine
Trigger: Two-stage, multi-adjustable, match type
Safety: Manual, resettable, lever type
Sights: Scope rail only
Stock Type: Oiled walnut right-hand sporter
Weight: 3.7 k. (8.1lbs. unscoped)
Length: 953 mm (37.5 inches)
Barrel: 385 mm (15.2 inches)
Shots per 232-bar charge: .177 – 165-plus. .22 – 225-plus
Options: High-power models for FAC holders

Price: £749. Includes magazine and two charging connectors.