



Carbine Corker

When it comes to air rifles, short barrels are the way to go says Terry Le Cheminant

It's often said that size doesn't matter. Well, when it comes to airguns, size definitely does matter; that's if trends in airgun sales are anything to go by. More and more shooters are buying carbines because the shorter barrel makes them more wieldy in tight hunting situations.

The 'carbine' isn't a new idea. Way back in the nineteenth century carbines were used by the cavalry and artillery because they are smaller and easier to handle than a rifle, at close quarters. The same principle holds true for airgun carbines in that they're good to use in the confines of a farm building or from a hide.

Matt, the editor, reviewed the Diana Model 280 rifle just over a year ago, but with the carbine version now available, I thought it was a good opportunity to re-visit this excellent springer that is a bargain as well.

Trigger

This time I will tell you more about the new T06 trigger system developed by Diana and rolled out across most of the Diana rifle range. It's a genuine two-stage mechanism and works incredibly well. If you're kicking yourself for having already bought a Diana with the old T05 trigger, don't worry as it is available as an upgrade from Ruag Ammotec.

Anyway, back to the T06 unit. It's a four lever mechanism. This probably means nothing to most of us, but the important thing is that it gives the trigger a lighter pull, a clean and predictable let off point, whilst maintaining a safe level of sear engagement.

"For those of you who are like me and just want to know what the trigger is like in practice; it's great"

The trigger mechanism is also fully adjustable. Regular readers will know my philosophy of leaving well alone when it comes to triggers, but the more experienced shooter might like to know how to adjust it all.

There are three adjustment screws. Two screws in the trigger blade alter the first stage of the blade travel and the point of the start of the second stage of travel. At the rear of the trigger blade is a third screw; this adjusts the pull weight from 300g to 380g for the first stage and from 400g to 500g for the second.

I've probably bored you with these technical details, so for those of you who are like me and just want to know what the

Short barrels make carbines ideal for hunting in confined places, but are equally good in open country

Two Stage Advantage

The benefit of a two-stage trigger over a single-stage trigger is that the shooter can take up the first stage, hold, then follow-through with the shot when the sight picture looks right

trigger is like in practice; it's great. Like Matt said, the T06 trigger probably rivals the legendary Weihrauch Rekord trigger in terms of quality.

The 280 has a reasonably quick lock time and very little 'twang' when fired. I was also impressed at how little recoil there was, especially as the rifle is quite light. I imagine this is down to the 280 having a fairly light piston.

Having a fairly light recoil - that's not at all sharp - aids accuracy. The 280 was getting pretty good groupings at fifteen yards using the open sights and with a Walther telescopic sight fitted I was getting good groupings out to 30 metres. These groupings tightened up (as with all spring guns) when the action had bedded in a bit. ➔

SPECS

- Manufacturer: Diana
- Distributor: RUAG Ammotec UK
- Tel: 01579 362 319
- Web: www.ruag.co.uk
- Type: Break barrel Sporter
- Stock: Beech, ambidextrous
- Length: 37.5 inches or 952mm
- Weight: 7.5lb or 3.4kg
- Trigger: Two stage adjustable
- Calibre: .22 (tested) .177
- Prime Purpose: Hunter/ plinker
- Safety: Auto re-settable

Cost £290RRP



Long and the Short

Many shooters think that a short barrel won't be as accurate as a longer one. This is largely untrue on airguns and I can tell you that the Diana carbine was punching groups as tight as its rifle equivalent.

However, having a short barrel means that cocking a break barrel carbine is hard work as the shorter barrel provides less leverage. It's possible to cock the 280 carbine fairly easily, but when you add a silencer, then the 280 is fairly easy to cock.

Although the barrel is short, the 280 carbine is an adult size rifle. The stock

dimensions and weight distribution would suit even quite a large adult, but what I really like about this rifle is its low overall weight. Carrying it around all day in the field would be no problem. This is unusual for a German airgun as most of them are very heavy. I was told by someone in the know that the Germans tend to make heavy airguns because their customers think weight is a sign of good build quality. Again, this is something that's not entirely true as light weight materials these days are just as strong as heavy weight stuff.

"The beech stock on the Diana feels as solid as a fence post and will stand the test of time"

The Model 280 carbine is very well built. You can tell this by the finish of the rifle and the smoothness of the action. One thing I would liked to have seen on this

Above top: Le Chem really rated the Diana Model 280 carbine and the new T06 trigger is a peach

Above bottom: With a silencer fitted, the 280 is the perfect hunting companion

Above right: Cocking the rifle required some effort, but the end result was some impressive groups

Lock Time

Lock time is the time it takes from the sear release of the trigger mechanism to the pellet being exiting the barrel

rifle is a hinged cocking arm. As it is, the 280 has a large amount of forestock cut out to allow for movement of the cocking arm; this weakens the stock to a certain extent and can cause the wood around the link to split, in time. Having said that, the ambidextrous beech stock on the Diana feels as solid as a fence post and will stand the test of time.

The Diana Model 280 carbine costs around £290 which is quite expensive, but this is a premium airgun. It has an excellent trigger, superb German engineering and is a joy to carry in the field. ■