

RRP
£957MINI
TESTIn-depth, independent
reviews every monthANSCHÜTZ 1517 DELUXE
THUMBHOLE IN .17 HMR

Chris Parkin falls head over heels for a sweet little thing called Annie...

The Anschütz 1517 Deluxe Thumbhole Walnut rifle must be high on the list of guns that you should own at least once.

Anschütz guns are a bit like those cars that you have to have owned to be able to call yourself a real petrol head!

It is easy to forget that for many shooters, myself included, much of our hunting is rabbit control-related, and although we may get the chance to

venture off elsewhere on a regular basis with bigger guns, the joy of owning many guns isn't important. Most shooters want one premium gun that does what they need it to every time and combines pleasure of ownership with daily functionality.

On paper, the 1517 seems to tick all the boxes in terms of the 18" barrel length (455mm), threaded ½" for a sound moderator and with finishing

ABOVE: Blued steel and attractive walnut shows graceful charm but totally up to date in ergonomics, barrel support and balance

standards that are first rate in the rimfire world.

The 19mm barrel swells minimally to join a cylindrical action of 29mm diameter. It's topped with 11mm dovetail rails (threaded inserts are present for Picatinny rail addition) for scope mounting. The barrel's crown is recessed 10mm back inside the barrel and cannot be seen, or damaged easily and perhaps this is the first hidden secret to performance? A single-lugged rear locking bolt of 16.3mm diameter runs smoothly inside the bolt face, which carries the expected twin extractor claws. A fixed ejector blade set into the action runs within a slot below the bolt head to flick cases out as it reaches fully rearward in its stroke. A groove under the shank of the bolt prevents the front third of the three-section bolt from rotating; the bolt stop is disengaged for disassembly with a simultaneous press of lever snugged alongside the left side of the action and a pull to the trigger blade. This 8mm-wide blade carries vertical serrations to aid grip from the index finger pad as it reaches »

LEFT: No surprises here – an easily recognisable bolt face design that works well



« **TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS** 

OVERALL LENGTH: 36.75"/930mm
WEIGHT: 6.4lbs/2.9kg
MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 4+1
TRIGGER: Single stage, 1,200g (42oz)
BARREL LENGTH: 18"/455mm
STOCK MATERIAL: Walnut
LENGTH OF PULL: 14.25"/363mm

forward from the vertical pistol grip of the thumbhole stock.

Cycling the action is superb: a deft combination of mechanical and metronomic repetition yet somehow without any feeling of force or aggression. The 25mm spherical bolt handle sits 38mm away from the shaft with a sweeping curve to the rear, positioning it directly above the trigger blade. As your index finger draws out of the spacious trigger guard, it can flick the bolt up and open through its 60-degree lift. It remains spaciouly distant from the scope's ocular body allowing the rest of your chosen fingers and thumb to fully wrap it and cycle the

RIGHT: Bolt release catch is petite and hard to manipulate with gloves or cold fingers



gun which never snags. Given the company's target rifle credentials, it's hardly surprising to find great adjustable triggers on an 'Annie'. This one is engraved below the woodwork to say 'gunsmiths only' to adjust but I didn't feel the need anyway. It is a single-stage pull but with a slight creep before the break. You will not feel the

creep unless you are looking for it as there is no hint of grittiness within. It moves 1mm at the blade's tip with the feel of a first stage of a two-stage pull, but suddenly, 'click', it's gone. I won't term it a surprise release because it is totally predictable. It seems to be weighted perfectly to the softness of the flesh on my finger pad; they both compress in synchronisation for what I can only describe as perfect symbiosis between metal and flesh. Yes, perhaps a little poetic, but it really is rather different yet somewhat special in 'feel'.

\\ THE MONTE CARLO CHEEKPIECE IS A STANDOUT FEATURE FOR ME //



I would visually judge the walnut to be of a Grade 2/3 standard and all machining and shaping throughout carries what I would describe as 'angled curves', blending mathematical shapes with organic forms. The thumbhole is almost impossible to shoot lefty, but it is possible in an emergency. Anschütz do offer full left-handed rifles, though – I just like to be able to improvise with rimfires. The barrel floats fully all the way from the schnabel fore-end tip right back to the action where the cylindrical action sits into a snugly fitting inlet. It bears pressure only at each end of the action where the two slotted screws tension it in place. The bottom metal is metal, folded but well blued and finished glossily like all the rest of the steelwork. I squeezed four rounds into the metal magazine, which releases from the gun with a catch to its rear at the base. The feed lips of the magazine are intricately shaped and should no doubt be thanked for the faultless feeding of rounds into the chamber – there was no scraping, scratching or deflecting the bullets in their case



mouths as they were driven forward. Could this be where the Anschütz has its secret gains? The accuracy on paper was not really any better than the best, with all rounds falling with the same

ABOVE: The action cycled both 17gr V-Max and 20gr XTP ammunition without fault

LEFT: Magazine release catch situated at the rear to drop the steel unit into your hand

grouping and point of aim every time, just below the magic 1" (25mm) at 100 yards (91m). The Annie just didn't throw flyers... The cocked firing pin extends from the rear of the bolt with a seemingly weighty shroud on the end that snaps sharply back to battery with a good 6mm run when fired; this ensures firm and solid strikes on the rimmed primer every time.

My only mechanical criticism of the gun is that the safety positioned above the trigger to the right side of the receiver does not lock the bolt closed. Given the likelihood of carrying loaded rimfires, the longer fast-fire capable bolt handle can get easily nudged and clicked up to a half-cocked position. Even if it doesn't fully open and dislodge the unfired round from the chamber, it's about the only negative I can find so I feel forced to mention it, although it probably wouldn't be an issue in day-to-day handling. The catch itself is blued and smooth without any serrations, so not easy to disengage silently with a rolled-thumb motion.

A 25mm (1") thick ventilated recoil pad is seamlessly blended into the matt-finished walnut. It sits well into the shoulder, the ventilated areas not helping non-existent recoil absorption but certainly allowing the rubber to mould to your shoulder pocket. I particularly liked the Monte Carlo cheekpiece that remains tall and slender, sweeping over the stock like a crescent rather than a mound. This keeps your head high, upright and, most importantly, doesn't require you to roll your head over the top of it to align with the scope. Your cheek and



PROS

Metronomically reliable magazine feed

Impeccable finishing standards

Delicate balance and great ergonomics from the stock for a right-hander

A .17 HMR that seems to negate ammunition variability

CONS

I wish the bolt handle locked closed on 'safe'



Bolt operation to cycle the action is 'best in class'



\\ SHOOTING PRONE OR FROM ANY IMPROVISED POSITION IS ASSURED //

the underlying bone sit alongside it, rather than on top of it, but the top edge just aligns the bone to locate it correctly every time. It really is a standout feature for me with its asymmetrical offset. Yes, the offset is part of what makes it less ambidextrous but I have seen stocks try to copy this format and fail on both accounts, at least the Annie does one thing very well rather than two things badly. It is superb. The blended shape of the deeply recessed thumbhole is more detrimental to ambidextrous

capability anyway... but I will drop that topic now.

The walnut is machined out of the centreline below the cheekpiece to reduce weight and improve balance, but probably more the former than the



Almost too good to be considered diminutively as a 'rimfire', this is a rare combination of a shooter's rifle that brings great pride in ownership with its looks and feel of inherent quality. It is functionally and ergonomically superb with somewhat mysterious capabilities to overcome flyers that often hallmark this calibre.

latter as a heavy barrel adds it back, up front. That is not to say the gun is disappointing from any freehand or improvised position though; the squared fore-end gives plenty of grip without your fingers on the barrel and both here and the grip show skip-line chequering with a rosewood cap too. Studs are solidly fitted fore and aft for a sling or bipod. Shooting prone or from any improvised position is assured with length of pull at 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". This is ideal for me but I might say the reach to the trigger blade is a touch short for utter perfection. Although perhaps a hallmark of the more fixed, vertical position, a thumbhole seats the hand in, but this is a small comment rather than an actual criticism. This is not a hand-tailored suit; but for a factory 'average' for the average shooter, it is very good.

I have been using the Anschütz 1517 on and off for six months now and have grown to have a great appreciation for it. It does one thing no other .17 HMR does: it seems to transcend ammunition variability and shoots everything just that little bit better. I can't tell you exactly why, but it just does. Like it's .22 RF brethren, there are no significant holes in the Anschütz design rhetoric, build quality or functionality that would give any sympathy to inaccuracy. **RS**

BELOW: In use at night with a NiteSite RTEK Wolf, it made short work of rabbits from a Primos two-point gun rest



CONTACT

RUAG
01579 362319
www.ruag.co.uk

ALSO USED

RIFLESCOPE

Minox ZX5i 2-10x50 riflescope with #4 reticle
MINOX, 01494 481004,
www.minox.com

NIGHT VISION

NiteSite RTEK Wolf night vision add-on,
01556 503587, www.scottcountry.co.uk

OTHER KIT

Swillington Shooting Supplies for Hornady ammunition, Wildcat Whisper sound moderator, Primos trigger sticks/two-point gun rest and Sportmatch scope rings, 01132 864097 www.swillingtonshootingsupplies.co.uk