

WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT ...

... is what it does for you. The Editor finally gets to grips with the Daystate Delta Wolf

I wasn't comfortable with last month's Editor's Test. The weather wrecked plan after plan to really push Daystate's high-tech, high-price, high-performance flagship Delta Wolf, and with my club ranges closed, I even locked myself in a friend's redundant factory unit to secure a bit of shelter. It was horrible. This fully-electronic, features-packed rifle was never designed to be wedged on a long-abandoned work bench, to send pellet after pellet through an echoing hull of a building, into paper targets. That exercise proved the clinical accuracy and shot-to-shot consistency of the Delta Wolf, but little else. This extended follow-up test will do more than that, by examining, in an entirely hands-on way, what this rifle offers and delivers. Let's get into it.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As I said last month, this is by far the least photogenic rifle I've ever seen, so don't judge its visual appeal on what you see here. The Delta Wolf is a compact, chunky, combination of matte-black alloy and carbon-fibre, relieved by slots, ports and cutaways, and after six weeks of having this rifle in my life, its looks have grown on me. Of course, any rifle that shoots well automatically becomes prettier, and the Delta Wolf scores highly in that category, too.

GETTING SET

With a run of good weather, I was finding excuses to get out with the Delta Wolf as often as I could, and the first thing I discovered was that its handling evolves extremely quickly. By this I mean that the rifle soon makes it obvious what works best.

That scope-mounting 'bridge' can be shifted back and forth on its extra-long rail to accommodate your required eye relief, and this can be fine-tuned by moving the scope rings themselves along the bridge mount. All in all, there's a huge range of adjustment, and that demands to be used to produce perfect eye-scope alignment.



NO IFS OR BUTTS

The test rifle was supplied with an optional adjustable butt pad, and I kept that fitted throughout most of my tests. At £161.98, this is not an accessory to add on a whim, but I guess if you haven't baulked at the Delta Wolf's £2,450 asking price, you might be up for one. The optional butt pad allowed me to 'hang' the rifle from my shoulder and let my hands play the supporting/guiding role I prefer. With an all-up weight of just over 8lbs, the Delta Wolf is inherently stable without being too hefty, and the drop-down grip and slab-sided cheek piece naturally prevents 'rotation' of the rifle, which in turn combats cant. A spirit level would reassure the shooter that the rifle is vertical, but I managed perfectly without one, so that's one accessory that isn't a necessity.

BOTTLE BANK

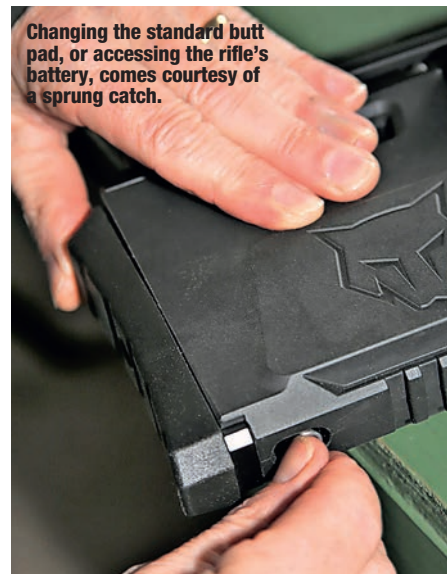
The carbon-fibre buddy bottle provides comfortable control up front, and whilst the page of white advisory text on the tank looks a tad 'industrial', it's a necessary evil these days and I didn't really notice it. Far more importantly, that 480 cc bottle is good for over 400 shots at 11-plus ft.lbs. In the test rifle's .177 calibre, which will translate to over 450 shots in .22. All shots are precisely regulated to emerge from the rifle's muzzle within 10 f.p.s. of each other, according to the Delta Wolf's built-in chrono', and its readout can be checked on the screen on the left-hand side of the rifle's butt.

MUZZLE NOISE

Daystate offers its OdB silencer as another optional extra, and although that adds a sturdy >>



The optional butt pad allowed me to shoot the way I prefer, and that sold it to me.



Changing the standard butt pad, or accessing the rifle's battery, comes courtesy of a sprung catch.

£99 to the overall price, I'd consider it a wise investment. Unmoderated, this isn't a particularly quiet PCP, but the addition of a silencer changes the game completely. Not only that, I feel far more comfortable with a length of silencer between my leading hand and the muzzle.

FINGER ON THE TRIGGER

This is an all-electronic rifle, with a trigger to match, and that means setting can be fine and precise. Those settings must be entirely practical, above everything else, and suited to the conditions under which the rifle will be used. Fingers are affected by cold, and trigger settings should never be too light for safety and efficiency. Should you go 'over precise' with the available adjustments, this rifle will catch you out and release a shot just before you intended. I'm not talking about the rifle going off on its own, here, but shooting a fraction of a second before your trigger finger authorises it. At this

level of technology, only perfect settings can be the norm. All trigger-adjustment instructions are there in the handbook, so take the time and trouble to maximise the benefit of what you've bought, trigger or otherwise.

SHOOTING THE DELTA WOLF

With everything set up to suit your needs, it's time to load a magazine and get shooting. This magazine system is sophisticated but easy to use, which is a good balance to have on such a vital component. I covered the magazine loading procedure last month, and that, too, is fully explained in the Delta Wolf handbook, but for now, please accept my assurance that it's pleasingly simple and all but impossible to mess up.

Once the loaded magazine has been slotted home and the effort-free sidelever pushed forward to load a pellet and seal the breech, simply flip up the safety catch and you're ready to shoot. After the first shot, each back-forth shuttle of the Daystate's sidelever cycles another pellet, and carries on doing so until all 13 of the .177 calibre magazine have been launched. So far, so basic; now let's study things a little more closely.

SOUND OBSERVATION

As the Delta Wolf fires, there's a noticeable 'clunk' from the hammer system in the rifle's butt. This goes on with the shooter's ear right next to it, so any internal noise would be pretty much impossible to hide completely. When I began shooting the test rifle, this sound was far more noticeable than it is now, and I'd go as far as to say that it isn't a factor. Why mention it? Because it might well flag itself up to a new buyer as it did to me at the start of this test.

LIVING WITH A DELTA WOLF

This rifle runs off two power sources; one is its tank of compressed air, the other a lithium polymer battery, and both will require the

occasional recharge. In terms of the rifle's air supply, the gauge on the left-hand side of the action will keep you informed of any top-up requirement, there. In the real world, most of us give our PCPs a reassuring injection of compression before each session, no matter how much is left in the rifle. That's a good thing, in my opinion at least, because it means you're always shooting from the same state of charge, although because this is a regulated rifle, that shouldn't matter. I still do it, though.

On the subject of charging, once a week, I plugged the Delta Wolf into the mains, via the charging cable supplied, until that all-revealing screen told me that the on-board power supply had reached 100%.

Apart from keeping the magazine and air-charging connectors clean and free from grit, that's it as far as required TLC goes. This may be a super-technical sporter, but looking after it, and using it, couldn't really be much easier.



It's about as hi-tech as it gets - but so easy to use and look after.



I'd be opting for a 0dB moderator, no doubt about it.

Photos will never do it justice, but it shoots beautifully - and that's what matters.

An entire magazine's worth of pellets collide with a piece of rotten timber at 47 yards.

VERDICT

This Daystate Delta Wolf is an awful lot of gun, for a big ol' chunk of money, and like all superguns of this design, it's actually a platform upon which to build your shooting needs, rather than 'just' a rifle. Remember, in high-power, FAC certificated form, you can specify a range of calibres, adjust the muzzle energy from 5 ft.lbs. to a seriously potent 95 ft.lbs., and even swap calibres via the rifle's barrel-change facility. There's that built-in chronograph that lets you monitor those options, and I for one can't wait to get behind an FAC-rated Delta Wolf, and push its performance envelope as far as my meagre talents allow.

Yes, it's expensive, of course it is, because the Delta Wolf is a 'flagship' project, where RRP meets specification, not the other way round. What has emerged from months, that turned into years, of ground-breaking development, is a truly remarkable shooting machine that can be tailored to be what you want, and need, it to be.

Having researched the history behind its creation, and now that I've spent a solid month shooting the result, I have to admire the process and the product. Congratulations, Daystate; as far as flagships go - you've really pushed the boat out with this one. ■

TECH SPEC

- Model:** Delta Wolf sub-12 ft.lbs. model
- Manufacturer:** Daystate
- Country of origin:** UK
- Type:** Fully electronic, pre-charged, multi-shot, sporter
- Calibre:** .177, .22, .25, 30
- Cocking/loading:** Sidelever - reversable by user
- Trigger:** Electronic 2-stage, adjustable, with manual, resettable safety
- Stock type:** Black anodised alloy, ambidextrous, with drop-down grip and adjustable cheek piece and butt pad
- Weight:** 3.1 kg (6.8 lbs) Rifle only
- Length:** 700 mm (34 ins)
- Barrel:** 430mm (17 ins), 600 mm (23.6 ins) for FAC models
- Fill pressure:** 240 bar
- Shots per charge:** 400-plus in .177, 450-plus in .22 at sub-12 ft.lbs.
- Average energy:** 11.3 ft.lbs. (Up to 95 ft.lbs. In FAC models)
- Contact:** www.daystate.com

RRP £2400