

FIRST GUN

MOD. 15 - FACTS

Importer: Sportsmarketing ☎ 01206 795333.
Action: Spring-piston.
Calibre: .177 (4.5 mm.) only.
Cocking: Break-barrel.
O/A Length: 920 mm. (36.25 ins.).
Barrel Length: 369 mm. (14.5 ins.).
Weight: 2.05 kg. (4.5 lbs.) (unscoped).
Stock: Hardwood.
Trigger: Two-stage, non-adjustable.
Safety: Automatic, resettable.
Length of Pull: 310 mm. (12.25 ins.).
Sights: Hooded foresight post, fully-adjustable rearsight.
Power: 570 f.p.s. (174 m/s) with SMK Air Gun pellets.
Price: £69.95.
(SMK 4 x 28 scope - £24.95).

MYLES' SCORE: 
DAD'S SCORE: 

Sportsmarketing's Super Grade range of spring-powered 'adult' air rifles is very highly-rated amongst airgunners who want good quality sporters that are well engineered, powerful and accurate, but which don't cost an arm and a leg. Also in this impressive Super Grade line-up is the Model 15 Junior's rifle, which sports all the top-end features of its bigger brothers, but which has been 'down-sized' to suit younger airgunners and those starting out in the sport. In fact, many gun shops across the length and breadth of the UK recommend SMK's Super Grade 15 to shooting and non-shooting parents prospecting for a first gun for their sons (and daughters). Retailing at just £69.95, it's certainly in the right price bracket - so let's see what one teenager and his Dad have to say about this compact break-barrel...

Junior Test Report by:
MYLES HENRY

Myles Henry, shooting the SMK Super Grade. See what this teenage airgunner thinks of SMK's junior air rifle over the page.



**WE TEST
HARDWARE
FOR YOUNGER
AIRGUNNERS**



**THIS MONTH:
THE SMK SUPER GRADE 15**

PARENT POINTS - What Dad

You can instantly tell if a youngster likes an airgun just by watching them shoot it – and though Myles initially thought this junior-sized rifle might be a little small for him, it soon became clear that the SMK's dimensions were absolutely perfect.

Coming at it from an adult's perspective, the Model 15 is not only fantastic value, it's also a superbly-engineered rifle that does everything you'd require from a youngster's 'first gun'. Its weights and measures are easy for teenagers to manage, giving them every opportunity to improve their shooting skills... and see that they're doing so.

The fully-adjustable open sights are excellent for such an inexpensive rifle – and I was well impressed by the standard of engineering throughout. In particular around the breech block, which features a bolt and locking screw (*pictured right*) to keep things from getting sloppy with use.

I was also very pleased to see that this junior model came with a modest power. This meant Myles had no problems cocking the break-barrel action – and dealing with the rifle's relatively soft recoil. It also made me feel comfortable for him to shoot it in the garden (under my supervision).

The trigger's pull-weight, though non-adjustable, offered a good



The excellent, fully-adjustable rearsight and, right, hooded foresight post.

I had two first impressions of the Super Grade 15. First, its quality of finish looked just like my Dad's rifles and, second, I was worried it might be a bit small for me (I'm 1.67 metres tall). However, once I'd had a few shots, I realised my 'second' first impression was wrong – but my 'first' first impression was definitely right!

The best news of all was that because my step-Dad felt at 'ease' with its relatively low power output, I was allowed to shoot it in the garden. This meant I had lots more sessions with it than if I'd had to go down to the farm each time.

Although I whizzed through the first tin of 500 pellets, I didn't get arm ache because the Super Grade 15 is dead easy to cock – and that also meant that Dad didn't have to do it for me.

Some ammo was hard to press into the breech with my thumb, but .177 SMK Air Gun pellets went in fine. Apparently, a tight breech helps the rifle's accuracy,



The Super Grade's receiver is grooved to take a scope (above), and has an automatic, resettable safety catch (below) at the end.



At under £25, SMK's lightweight 4 x 28 is a worthy accessory for the Model 15.



reckons to the SMK MODEL 15

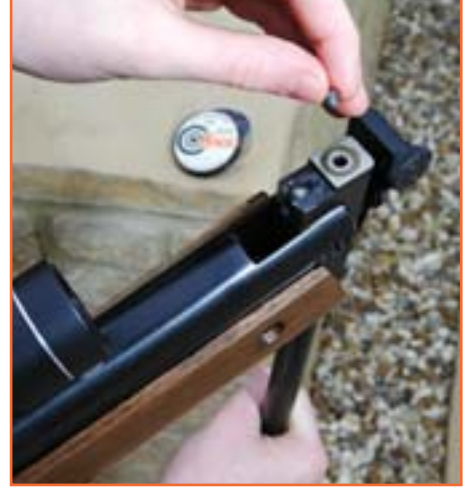
compromise between safety and technique – and I witnessed Myles extract a good proportion of the rifle's accuracy potential once I'd bolted SMK's £24.95, compact 4 x 28 telly onto its grooved receiver.

The safety catch, which automatically comes on when you cock the rifle, is a great way to get a young gun into the habit of using a safety – and it can also be reset without having to re-cock the rifle. I was slightly disappointed there was no anti-beartrap – though the auto-safety effectively 'blocks' the trigger to avoid any accidental discharges during cocking.



The finish of both the wood and metalwork was exemplary – so much so that I noticed Myles frequently casting admiring glances over the rifle as he was 'polishing' it over with an oily rag after each shooting session!

This is an excellent first air rifle for any youngster.



Loading the break-barrel action. Thanks to its modest power, cocking the Super Grade 15 is also 'teenage-friendly'.

you squeeze through to actually fire-off the pellet.

Dad told me the trigger was excellent for a junior's rifle – and although I don't know a lot about triggers, I certainly didn't have too any problems snatching the shots 'off'. The gun's hardly got any kick to throw you out, either – plus there's a rubber butt pad to help keep it in firmly your shoulder.

It seemed that the more I got used to the rifle, the more my scores improved – and Dad was happy that I

which I can believe as I shot some very good scores on paper targets.

The rifle comes with really cool open sights – and my step-Dad showed me how to 'set' them using the numbered thumbwheels. I had to adjust the top wheel to bring the pellets 'up' into the bull – but I could leave the left/right sidewheel alone because the shots went dead-on. Dad said that this was because the barrel was so well aligned (which he was most impressed with on such an inexpensive model).

Each time the rifle's cocked, the safety catch at the end pops out, with a white dot to show it's on. It caught me out a few times as I went to pull the trigger... and nothing! However, I soon got into the habit of thumbing off the safety once I was on aim – and the good thing about the Model 15 is that if you don't take the shot, you can pull the safety back out again, to 'on'.

Although the trigger looks a long way forward in its guard, because it's two-stage, you have to pull it back half-way first. Then, you feel a definite stop-point which

The SMK Super Grade Model 15 – an excellent 'first' air rifle for any teenager.

The trigger is ideal for young, rookie hands.



wasn't learning any 'bad habits' with this rifle. In fact, it wasn't long before he felt my scores justified a scope – and because the Model 15's receiver has grooves, he bought me an SMK 4 x 28 telescopic sight as a reward for my efforts!

AIRGUN LAW FOR YOUNGER SHOOTERS



UK airgun laws are very strict indeed, with specific rules for younger shooters who are aged under 18 years – the VCR Act Oct 2007 has changed the law to 18 years or older for purchasing an airgun.

If you are between 14 and 17... You may not buy or hire an airgun or ammunition, nor receive either as gift, but you may borrow an airgun – and the ammunition must be bought for you by someone over 17 (ideally, by your parent).

You may use an airgun on private premises without supervision provided you have the consent of the landowner/tenant, but you will commit a criminal offence if any pellet strays beyond the boundary of the land over which you have shooting permission.

Consideration must be given when travelling to your shooting ground. You cannot carry an airgun – which must be unloaded and, preferably, be in a case – in a public place unless you are supervised by someone who is at least 21 years old. You must have a reasonable excuse for carrying an airgun in a public place – such as travelling to a shooting club, a gun shop or to land over which you have permission to shoot.

If you are under 14... Additional rules apply to shooters in this age group. Parents who buy an airgun for use by an under-14 must exercise control over it at all times, even in the home or garden.

You may not buy or hire an airgun or ammunition, nor receive either as gift, but you may borrow an airgun and use it on private premises with permission from the landowner/tenant provided you are under the constant supervision of someone who is at least 21 years old.

You cannot carry an airgun in a public place; any airgun which you intend to shoot must be carried by the supervisor at all times.

Both you and your shooting supervisor will commit a criminal offence if any pellet strays beyond the boundary of the land over which you have shooting permission.

Notes:

- A public place is anywhere where the public is allowed to go – e.g. roads, streets, footpaths, public parks, play areas and canal towpaths.