

Tim Finley has fun with a budget-priced but beautifully bonded single-stroke pneumatic pistol, one of Dr. Beeman's best

can't deny I've a bit of a pistol passion and like to indulge my craving on a regular basis - which is why this month's fix is a real fizzer.

Dr Robert Beeman, a well-known name to all true real airgun nuts, has been the man behind many airgun developments and this is one of them. In fact SMK, the importer for Beeman products in the UK, has been bringing in the Beeman 2004E air pistol for over a year now - though I first saw one being used in our region's winter league.

Actually, I thought it was a HW40 until I saw Beeman engraved on the side and from that moment on I watched fascinated as the guy shooting was knocking down more than his fair share of targets.

BEEMAN BADGE

I promised myself a test as soon as a gap in the schedule arrived and here it is. As I mentioned, the 2004E has similarities with the HW40, since Dr. Beeman has worked with Weihrauch to produce many air rifles and pistols, selling them in the USA under their own brand name. Hence, the Beeman P3 is essentially a HW40 made in Germany for export to America under the Beeman badge.

The Beeman 2004E is different. It is made in China to the same spec as its European and US cousins - but considerably cheaper than either of them. Only, I must stress, cheaper. Beeman do not and have never made *cheapo* airguns; the 2004E is not a dodgy copy, it's simply a more affordable version of the P3/HW40.

The 2004E pistol is a single-stroke over-lever pneumatic pistol in .177 calibre with open sights incorporating an adjustable rear notch sight. Constructed from tough space-age moulded polymers, with metal rigid inserts for added strength, the 2004E is well built and sturdy.

CHARGE OF AIR

To cock the pistol, the dummy hammer at the rear of the action is first pulled back with the thumb, which allows the top section of the action to be pulled up and open to a full 160° swing. As you do this, the metal cylinder which is revealed can be heard sucking in its charge of air.

A pellet can then be loaded directly into the breech end of the barrel, also exposed by the opened action-frame and held within it. Loading may seem a bit fiddly at first but with practice the action becomes easy.

The air you heard being sucked in by the cylinder now has to be compressed, by closing the action/lever and locking it down into its starting position.

One brilliant feature of the 2004E is the automatic safety catch, on the left hand side of the action, just above the trigger. This is set on cocking



Beeman with delight

THE 2004E IS A SINGLE-STROKE OVERLEVER PNEUMATIC .177 PISTOL CONSTRUCTED FROM TOUGH SPACE-AGE MOULDED POLYMERS

and the silver sliding catch has to be pushed forward by the right thumb to reveal a red dot before the pistol can be fired. It can also be reset at any time.

I tested pistol with the 8gr round-head SMK pellets supplied and, over the chronograph, the pistol gave very consistent readings at 392 to 396fps - which equate to 2.73 to 2.78ft.lb - and which is just right for FT pistol shooting.

Once the chrono had been checked it was up to the 6-yard range in my loft. Here, I got to know the Beeman a bit better and appreciated that the grip is outstandingly comfortable for both right and left handed shooters.

PASSED RATHER WELL

The sight picture is 190mm (7.5in) long and having positioned the adjustable rear sight, I zeroed the gun at 6 yards and set about the accuracy testing - which it passed rather well! Well enough, that is, to print regular 5-shot groups in the 11 to 10mm centre-to-centre mark, using SMK's own brand of

(4.75in) 11mm wide scope rail, designed to accommodate any of the widening range of pistol-based scopes, red-dot and hologram sights. I chose a red-dot sight, but found it a little tricky at first to close the top lever with the sight in place at the rear of the rail, for fear of pushing down too hard on the top of the sight and damaging it.

Only a brief bit of thought was needed for me to manage nicely, after I moved the sight well forward on the scope rail, which meant I could push down on the rear open sight assembly - which is spring-loaded and designed to absorb the pressure - to close the action.

FEARS UNFOUNDED

Despite this, I must confess, I was still wary of pushing down strongly on the rear adjustable notch sight, when using the pistol just with the open sights, but the zero didn't change, so my fears were unfounded. Group sizes at 10 yards, by the way, came down significantly when the red-dot sight was in place - but that's just what you'd expect to happen.

At this price, the Beeman 2004E is hard to beat. And with no CO2 bulbs to keep buying, it's cheap to run, too. Not just as an introduction to pistol shooting, but for even more serious stuff, it's a clear winner!

BEEMAN 2004E PISTOL AND ACCESSORIES
Many thanks to John Nash and Sarah of SMK

pellets, which at £2.99 for 500 are undeniably cheap but certainly provide cheerful results.

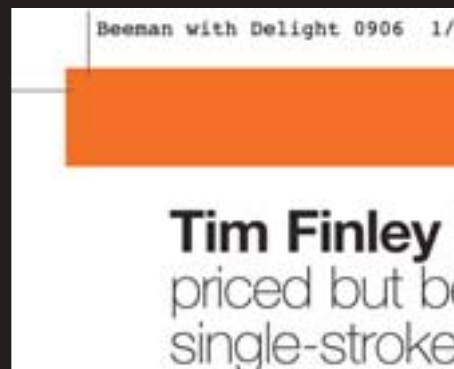
The pistol is totally recoilless and even the three neat forward-facing slots of the muzzle brake seem to enhance the fact. And the trigger also enhances this accuracy. Billed in the blurb as a 2-stage trigger, in reality it's a single stage with a spring-loaded pseudo first stage, but whatever the reality of the action, it is very light and even with only a very little creep on the second stage which assists its predictability. I found it a joy to use.

UNFAIRLY PICKY

By the way, just to show I'm not being unfairly picky here, *real* 2-stage triggers move the sears on the first stage. Even the latest Walther FT rifle has a pseudo 2-stage trigger, so it's a deception that's practiced at every level!

Next, I took the pistol to the my outdoor range, set a test zero card at 10 yards, and those same SMK roundheads easily shot sub-1in (25mm) groups, which again was not what I was expecting with such a basic sort of pellet. Just to prove the point, I had to try more 'up-market' slugs and I won't deny the results were better, but the SMK's are fine for plinking and, essentially, so is the 2004E, so why ask for more?

Another feature of the gun is a 120mm



Specification	
Manufacturer:	Beeman
Distributor:	SMK
Model:	2004E
Type:	Single-stroke pneumatic pistol
Calibre:	.177
Action:	Over-lever
Sights:	Post-Notch, adjustable (with dovetail optical sight-ramp)
Trigger:	2-stage
Safety:	Automatic
Overall length:	235mm (9.25in)
Barrel length:	172mm (6.75in)
Weight:	0.82kg (1.8lb)
RR Price:	£69.95
Contact: 01206 795333	