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TIKKA T1x MTR

This affordable rifle impressed Chris Parkin no end and has now been added to his wish list. Has he finally discovered a rimfire that will achieve the magical half MOA?

The fear after seeing any product prototype is that, having loved it, it will be altered by the time it finally reaches full production. After first trying out the Tikka T1x at the factory in October 2017, it was a bit of a nervous wait until I could get my hands on the final product back home and get it out in the field.

BELOW: A Picatinny rail add-on gives a little more length and mounting versatility for larger scopes and night vision kit

I tried out the .22 rimfire version in Finland, but a .17 HMR was to arrive with me here in 16"/400mm barrel format. The cold hammer forged tube shows a ½" capped thread at the perfectly crowned muzzle for a moderator, with an 18.5mm muzzle diameter tapering outward back to the reinforce. It retains quite a heavy barrel

look but without excess weight, and, as muzzle velocity figures proved, nothing is lost from this cartridge in the quest for shorter handling capability. The blued barrel remains matt in finish, without the lustrous deep polished blues seen on high-end rifles, but frankly with enough quality showing through on a practical hunting gun. It resisted any rust spots in the hours out in the rain, even while being stored 'carelessly' in a rifle case for several more without so much as a wipe over (after which it got a proper clean and was stored back in the safe). This is a working gun, not a show-off queen.

At 22.5mm, where it enters the action, the barrel's unusual secret is that there is a toe-like projection beneath it which allows the shorter upper action length of a Tikka rimfire to use the same footprint as its larger T3x brother. This opens up a world of compatibility with any T3x stock accessory range, or any other compatible stock/chassis, and I have already seen a few personal projects take full advantage of this capability. You won't

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PICTURES: CHRIS PARKIN

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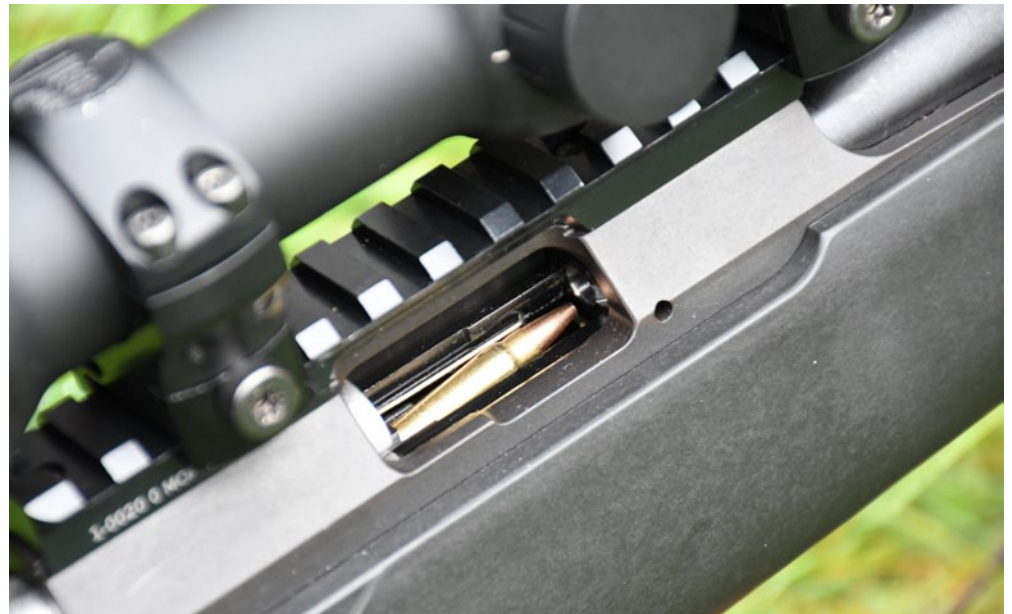
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ABOVE: Note the sprung extractor on the far receiver wall

really notice the clever action design unless you take it out of the stock, and Tikka have even gone to the extent of fitting a fillet-like spacer in front of the moulded inlet to form a closer relationship while still floating the barrel. It is becoming popular to have a rimfire similar to a full PRS precision rifle build for practice and ingraining position, trigger technique and gun handling at a lower ammunition cost. So, if you have a Tikka centrefire, this is a very appealing factor for the T1x.

Lifting the action from the stock requires a 5mm Allen key to remove

twin action screws fore and aft of the trigger guard/magazine area, and you will notice that the tang at the rear of the action projects a little further backward than is usual. Again, there is no ergonomic detriment – all this is what makes the T1x so good.

There are twin dovetails for rimfire scope mounts, although I fitted a Britannia rail for more overhang length compatibility with night vision sights through the winter. Everything is machined straight and smooth, so you will have no problem aligning regular scope mounts.

The action is octagonal in profile with alternating radiused and flat facets to allow a regular Tikka trigger mechanism to fit at the rear, with a smart new well that takes the 10-round magazine. Avoiding the need for a new stock mould, Tikka have certainly put the money into tooling up for a superb magazine design – it is easy to load from the top with the rounds staggering naturally as they drop in with no hassle at all. Rim overlap is never a factor and the light spring follower tension is almost non-existent in what appears to be an absolutely market-leading

BELOW: Tikka triggers are known for their excellent feel straight from the box



design. The mag is incredibly easy to slot into its open-mouthed tapering well, with a sprung catch at the front allowing one handed removal. It will not falter or jam in any way, no matter how carelessly you fumble it into location in darkness with cold hands. With only about 10mm standing proud below the stock's underside, it's unlikely to snag or limit manoeuvrability of the gun in any way. You get a full-size bolt release button to the left side of the fully enclosed action with just a small cut-out for brass ejection.

The under-slung aluminium trigger housing shows a 7mm-wide, vertically ribbed steel blade, enabling Tikka's characteristic single-stage 1.2kg trigger pull without any creep. This one broke at 1,400g and, although sounding heavy, it was comforting to place a solid finger pad on it and squeeze for immediate effect with zero over travel. There is a good reason a lot of rifle builders like the Tikka T3x action, and the trigger's basic design, even before aftermarket compatibility, is certainly one of them.

The bolt shows the usual precise Tikka feel with excellent machining and surface finishing for a light, smooth stroke. It won't jam when handled at speed, and I have tried really hard to make it stutter in transit... not possible! The feed nose on the underside of the bolt-face aligns exactly with the magazine's rear wall cut out to feed rounds smoothly (it is almost controlled feed in fact) before they enter the chamber with the single right-side extractor claw clipping fully over the rim. The bolt locks at the rear with a single lug as part of the 60mm teardrop capped handle. This requires just 45° lift to open and cock the action, with plentiful primary extraction and strong grip on the case rim, before reaching the extent of its 27.5mm rearward journey and throwing the spent brass free. A fixed ejector sits below the left side bolt-raceway, with a further long spring like the Sako Finfire's in the left-hand receiver wall. This is an excellent rimfire action for speed, smoothness, functionality and magazine feed, and it does not damage the delicate .17 calibre bullet at any time going into the breech.

Tikka's T3x stock needs little introduction. Its arrival saw only a slim, solid plastic butt plate supplied, which I swapped for a thicker Tikka unit to increase length of pull. It's perfect for smaller shooters to start off, but I dislike plastic butt plates for being



\\ AN EXCELLENT ACTION FOR SPEED, FUNCTIONALITY AND MAGAZINE FEED //

slippery and never locking into position well. All that aside, twin screws are a 60-second job to whip out and swap the range of Tikka accessories onto this stock. Grip elements can be changed over but, crucially, the injection-moulded polymer stock is made in one piece and remains stiff along its axis, allowing the barrel to float regardless of shooting position.

Studs are fitted front and back for sling or bipod, and the underside trigger guard, another polymer moulding, is spacious, allowing gloved fingers to safely operate the trigger. Clumsy gloved hands and fingers are well catered for here, yet it's hard to

forget it remains a delicate handling rifle, requiring only fingertip pressure to operate any function in warm weather too. The comb is slender and shows no additional cheekpiece, but is versatile and ambidextrous to shoot (although no left-bolt model is available yet).

Tikka's familiar steel recoil lug sits at the front of the action's underside with the bottom metal clipped firmly into place below it, with respectable mould lines and tolerances that put other injection mouldings to shame. The action features two grub screws that I haven't fiddled with, but I suspect these are what lock the barrel tenon into position in the action for



PROS

Tikka build quality and T3x modularity

Mechanical excellence in every aspect

£200 cheaper than I thought it would be

The dedicated magazine design and engineering says a lot to me about Tikka

CONS

Nothing at all

ABOVE: Chris tried – and failed – to fumble the magazine into its well. Nice!

BELOW: Although a rimfire action is shorter, Tikka have left a toe-like projection beneath to remain dimensionally identical to the T3x



possible future barrel change options (I am seeking further information on this, so we shall see).

The final functional control is the two-position safety catch sitting to the right of the polymer bolt shroud and

cocked action indicator. It locks the bolt with the trigger 'safe' in the rearward position. 'Fire' is enabled by rolling it forwards, silently, under your thumb, where its distinct serrations avoid any slippage that would cause



VERDICT

This rifle epitomises what can be done when hundreds of years of gun making experience and intelligence are perfectly combined with modern manufacturing capabilities, without undue accounting compromises. Truly a fine rifle I'd be happy to own, and well worth every penny.

ABOVE: 13 3/4" worked well, with fast handling allied to the grip size and short bolt travel needing minimal force

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LEFT: Conventional rimfire dovetails need rubber bungs removing before a rail is fitted

LEFT: I'm no fan of smooth plastic butt plates, but swapping to a rubber pad is straightforward

that undesirable 'click' sound to spook game. With the 20mm recoil pad in place, the rifle sits firm in the shoulder with a 13 3/4"/350mm length of pull, suiting handling versatility on a rimfire. You might want it a tad longer to truly match your centrefire.

There is a wonderful familiarity in the handling of this rimfire. The short bolt-throw, minimal mechanical input, ideal reach to trigger, length of pull, stock profile – and the fact that it's just like a full-sized rifle that many of us are familiar with – make the whole set-up feel really intuitive.

I ran with Hornady 17gr V-Max and 20 XTP ammunition, the latter of which I generally find to be the more consistently accurate of the two, which was the case here. Both easily stayed sub-MOA when the wind wasn't disruptive, and a significant round count through this gun has shown an easily cleaned barrel not prone to heavy fouling, with a clean every 50 rounds being satisfactory to maintain its capabilities.

The more important factor of this significant test round count is that I wanted to shoot this gun far

more than I needed to. I liked shooting it – I felt the ergonomics and accuracy made the shots easier to make, and installed transferable skills within my

technique. Some rimfires

are guns I can cope with temporarily, but this is one of those few rimfires that I enjoyed shooting and it is going on my list of guns I would like to own. After all that ammo down the barrel, guess what – the accuracy improved! The average velocities stabilised were 2,548 fps for the 17 grain and 2,462 for the 20s. I may have just found one of those .17 HMRs that will do the magical 1/2 MOA, more than just once, in my own hands. **RS**

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

OVERALL LENGTH: 852mm

BARREL LENGTH: 400mm / 16" (cold hammer forged and threaded 1/2")

WEIGHT: 2.4kg

TRIGGER: Single-stage adjustable 1-2kg

MAGAZINE CAPACITY: 10+1 detachable magazine

SCOPE MOUNTING: Dovetails with threaded holes for additional rail

STOCK MATERIAL: Injection-moulded polymer

LENGTH OF PULL: 13" and upward with optional recoil pad thickness