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A MORE CONSIDERED VIEW

The editor has had a month to become acquainted with the new approach offered by the new MTC SWAT Prismatic scopes. Here's what he's discovered

It's 'old dogs and new tricks' time at the Airgun World editorial office, and as far as I'm concerned, that's always a good thing. For the past month, I've been out and about with a pair of the brand-new MTC Optics SWAT Prismatic scopes, in pre-production prototype form, and as you may have read in our last issue, these sights are like nothing else on the market.

To recap for a moment, 'SWAT' stands for 'Super-Wide-Angle Technology' and both the Prismatic 12 x 50 and the Prismatic Atom 10 x 30 offer a field of view which is a staggering three times wider than a conventional scope. These are fixed-magnification scopes, but thanks to their unique design and lens configuration, they can focus right down to 6 metres, thereby offering the best of both worlds – a huge field of view for easy target acquisition and general range awareness, plus enough magnification for pinpoint placement of every shot.

DEDICATED PCP SCOPES

The SWAT Prismatic scopes have been purpose-built to be used on pre-charged pneumatics, so that PCP airgunners don't need to pay for anti-recoil technology required by live-ammo firearms and spring-piston air rifles. Not only that, but without recoil to contend with, the user can position their eye much closer to the ocular lens, which also helps to exploit the 'SWAT' technology. Scopes built specifically for PCPs can only be an advantage, and MTC Optics assure me that there are many more of these in their development pipeline. For now, though, let's run through what I've learned about using these highly innovative optics.

A MOUNT REVOLUTION

The first major lesson I learned about the SWAT Prismatics, was what an incredibly clever feature they had underneath them. That mounting base is nothing short of genius. The totally bombproof ring clamp that holds the



Low light performance was everything any hunter could need. The optics of these SWATs are genuinely impressive.

scope body is impressive enough, but it's the MOA calibrated 'ski ramp' base that takes the major applause. This base allows you to optically centre your scope at whatever range you choose, and anyone who has had to pack mounts with slivers of tin or foil will appreciate what a fine thing this is.

For the uninitiated, an optically centred scope has its elevation turret set right in the middle of its adjustment range at a specific distance, chosen by the user. Target shooters who 'dial' for range much prefer to have their scopes optically centred, and many will be wondering, as I did, why on earth this 'ski ramp' system hasn't been developed before.

MTC Optics has a patent on it, and I can certainly see why. It's worth developing as a separate product, and it wouldn't surprise me at all if that happened.

SWAT PRISMATICS IN THE FIELD

I prefer to shoot on a fairly high magnification, so I concentrated my efforts on the 12 x 50 model, and once I'd mounted and zeroed it on this month's Editor's Test rifle, I just went mooching around my nearest shoot, plinking away at anything that caught my fancy. Previously, off the bench at my club range, I simply set the SWAT's focus wheel to match whichever target I was hammering and forgot



That 'ski ramp' optical centering system is an absolute revelation. No wonder MTC has it bound in a patent.



Even Alan, a veteran shooter, was impressed with the SWAT Prismatics. Old dogs really can learn new tricks.

about it until I needed to explore another range. This was different, more dynamic, and I needed to think about what I was doing before I lined up the target. Yes, as I thought, I was having to change the way I did things.

THINK, FOCUS, SHOOT

For instance, before stalking up to a rabbit feeding 30 yards from a clump of tussock sedge I intended to use to screen my approach, I set the scope's focus to 30 yards before setting off on the approach. That particular 'rabbit' was actually a dock leaf, but the system will be the same for the real thing.

Of course, you could wait until you're in your final shooting position before pre-focusing the SWAT, or even do so with the scope to your eye and the rifle on aim; it's entirely up to you, but the 'before stalking' system worked best for me and that's what I went with.

RETICLE PREFERENCE

The 12 x 50 I used for the majority of my exploration had MTC's celebrated SCB2 cross hair configuration as standard, and although I can see why this high-precision design is so popular, I'm an uncomplicated chap and I preferred the Atom's enhanced mil-dot reticle.

Both reticles carry 10-stage illumination as standard and I found these needed very little candlepower to make them perfectly visible in low light, and obviously even less in darkness.



These scopes are offered with a wide variety of mounting options, including dovetail-to-Picatinny adaptors.

OVERALL VERDICT

These SWAT Prismatics really are 'different'. That combination of fairly high magnification and extra-wide view is an impressive feature, no doubt about it. Coupled to an equally impressive low light performance, a high build quality, and the fact that these scopes will never adversely affect the balance or handling of whatever rifle they're mounted on, and you have the very real potential of a breakthrough, game-changing product.

The test prototypes have to go back – I'm waiting for the courier as I write – but I've booked another session as soon as the full production examples are available, and this old dog is really looking forward to making those new tricks work even better. ■

The super-compact Atom offers 10 x magnification and a performance that belies its size.



I took the 12 x 50 SWAT out in some hideous weather, but it handled it without a problem.

TECH SPEC

SWAT Prismatic 12 x 50
Magnification: 12x
Objective lens: 50mm
Eye relief: 17.3mm
Parallax range: 6m - infinity
Adj. per turret click: 0.1 MIL (1cm @100m)
Crosshair: SCB2 multi-aimpoint, 10-stage illuminated
Tube diameter: 42mm
Length: 156mm
Weight: 460g

RRP £480

TECH SPEC

SWAT Prismatic Atom
Magnification: 10x
Objective lens: 30mm
Eye relief: 14mm
Parallax range: 6m - infinity
Adj. per click: 0.1 MIL (1cm @100m)
Crosshair: MD5 mil-dot, 10-stage illuminated
Tube diameter: 34mm
Length: 123mm
Weight: 300g

RRP £375