



PRICE:
£315



Jules Whicker checks out a new compact riflescope from MTC Optics: the Copperhead

MTC has an excellent track record of producing practical, feature-rich riflescopes at very reasonable prices, so when they announced their new Copperhead line, I was keen to put one through its paces. The inaugural scopes are offered in the popular 3-12x44 and 4-16x44 formats. I opted for the latter and decided to use my Anschutz Model XIV .22 rimfire as the test rifle.

Nice and compact?

I'm fond of compact optics as less weight and bulk are always a good thing. Nevertheless, they do present constraints when it comes to getting them mounted, since their reduced length is typically achieved by shortening the main tube either side of the saddle, which limits the spacing between the rings. Often, this is a non-issue, but when the action is similarly tight on space for the clamps, it can prove difficult to obtain the desired head position and eye relief.

Mounting the Copperhead on the Anschutz was a case in point. Firstly,

the short tube meant I had to clamp both rings to the section of the action dovetail behind the ejection port. Even then, with regular Sportsmatch rings, there was just a whisker of overhang on the front ring. Thinner rings would have fixed this, but I opted to fit a set of Sportsmatch reach-forward rings instead. These proved an ideal choice, giving a perfect fit top-and-bottom, minimal height-over-bore, a comfortable cheek-weld and the desired eye relief.

Details

The scope itself is nicely-presented, with a smart copper name-plate on the sides of the ocular bell, a corresponding logo on the parallax turret and a colour-matched ring bearing the specification and maker's name around the rim of the objective. These details would look just as good with a polymer tan or FDE stock as they do with a walnut one.

The Copperhead also comes with and a set of flip-up lens covers. These are sturdy and practical, but inevitably

inelegant, so I used a neoprene cover to protect the scope between outings. A few makers are taking this route these days, and a branded cover would be an attractive addition to the Copperhead package. That said, you can't argue with the flip-ups, as they do the job and keep the price down.

A closer look

The control layout is familiar, modern and with a couple of nice touches. The ribbing on the turret dials, fast-focus dioptre and zoom rings gives a good grip, and the combination of classic styling and consistency across the controls adds to the scope's visual appeal.

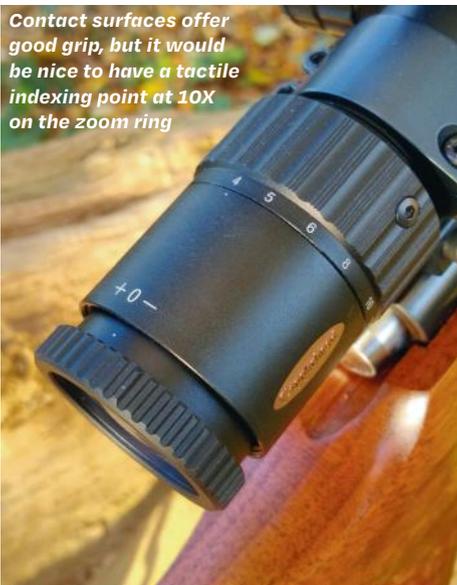
The left-hand turret conventionally combines an inner parallax-adjustment dial with an outer rheostat. Parallax is quoted as 10m - ∞, but can be set as close as 6m @ 14x magnification. There are 6 intensity levels for the illuminated reticle, with 'off' positions between each setting, so you can reactivate

your preferred setting with minimal fuss. The intensity range is good, dimming enough for twilight use, and just bright enough at the top end to facilitate quick acquisition and tracking of targets in regular daylight.

Satisfying, too, are the windage and elevation controls. The turrets are of the lift-to-unlock, push-down-to-lock type, safeguarding their zero, and the dials can be trued after zeroing with a coin. The turret height offers both ample grip and a good-sized scale of click values. Clicks are 0.01 MILS (MOA versions are not available), with 6 MILS per turn and just under 3 turns available. In my case, optically-centring the scope put my first shot within 3cm of point-of-aim at 50m, a sure sign that scope, mounts and rifle alike are performing as specified.

Helpfully, the dials describe the 0.01 MIL click values as the easier-to-understand, 1cm @ 100m, and are numbered in clicks rather than MILS. This makes applying adjustments based on point-of-impact or firing solutions from ballistic apps easy.

MTC's brand-new AMD2 reticle is also a pleasure to use. Only the central, floating 0.5 MIL cross lights up (in red), which I prefer to full-reticle illumination. At 9, 12 and 3 o'clock, bold duplex-type bars direct your eye to the centre of the reticle, transitioning to fine crosshairs for the final 5 MILS, for an unobstructed view of the target. At 6 o'clock, meanwhile, the line is fine all the way to the bottom and shows 15 numbered stadia, 1 MIL wide per MIL and 0.5 MILS wide per half-MIL. You don't get more logical than that. Windage guide-dots are also provided, with a dot at each MIL from 2 to 5



Contact surfaces offer good grip, but it would be nice to have a tactile indexing point at 10X on the zoom ring



A floating illuminated cross helps you centre the reticle against complex backgrounds

forming a chevron 4 MILS wide at its base. Much less intrusive than a full 'Christmas tree' design, it's a quick and practical means of calculating horizontal drift and hold-off.

Tracking was satisfying, too. I was able to work the turrets hard without the scope drifting off zero, and the click values were as close to 0.01 MILS as my testing setup could measure. My only gripe here is that the second-focal-plane (SFP) reticle is scaled to give true values at 10x, rather than at full 16x magnification. This allows MTC to use the same reticle in both the 4-16x and 3-12x models, keeping costs down, but obliges you to observe fall-of-shot at lower-than-maximum magnification. Additionally, the lack of a tactile reference at 10x requires you to take your eye off the target image to set the zoom ring visually. A screw-in throw-lever would be nice too. Nonetheless, this is still a lot of scope for very reasonable money.

All of the above is nothing without optical quality, of course, and this is where the Copperhead really impresses. Images are large, bright and sharp, plus the colours are true, with no 'fringing'. The optical quality is retained right up to 16x.

Conclusion

Overall, the Copperhead is a great-looking compact scope that really satisfies. Some budget optics leave you feeling frustrated at not being able to see your target properly, and apprehensive about being able to hit it consistently. Not the Copperhead. It proved to be the perfect match for my Anschutz, but I would happily put it on my foxing rifles too, since the contours of the objective and ocular bells readily accept both front and rear add-ons, and light-transmission to the latter leaves nothing to be desired. The bottom line? A scope like this might leave you wondering why you would pay more! **GM**



The elevation and windage turrets feature push-locking to safeguard your zero, plus clear markings in increments of 1cm @ 100m

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Name:	MTC Copperhead 4-16x50 F2 Rifle Scope
Field of View :	7.9-1.9m @ 100m
Eye Relief:	90mm
Clicks/Mils Per Revolution:	60/6
Max Turret Adjustment:	+/- 115cm @ 100m
Length:	274mm
Weight:	690-grams
Price:	£315
Contact:	MTC Optics – www.mtcoptics.com

