



Elegantly crafted



Chris Parkin admires the quality and simplicity of Meopta's new R2 2.5-15x56 RD scope

For over 80 years Meopta has taken pride in manufacturing optics for industry, military and consumer markets in the UK. Despite a superb reputation for quality and value for money, Meopta seems to slip below the radar too often, yet it continues to innovate and impress. I spoke with UK importer Viking Arms at the British Shooting Show back in February and organised getting one of the brand new R2 scopes on test. It has been getting the hard treatment for three months now.

A 2.5-15x56 specification suits the UK hunter very well. It sits in the centre of what one might deem suitable for a hunting rifle, but covers a lot of bases; 2.5 is just about suitable for the occasional driven game trips abroad, but the maximum 15x magnification, coupled with a fine reticle, is ideal for longer shots, even onto smaller targets. With a 56mm lens up front, this scope gives you the ability to focus 25 per cent more light through the tube onto your eye, compared to commonly standardised 50mm scopes, making it immediately attractive to a

dawn or dusk hunter. It allows a full 7mm exit pupil at 8x magnification, which in low light and shorter range conditions gives a field of view capable of intercepting a flighty fox, or that extra split-second peek at a deer reacting to shot placement.

Meopta machines all its tubes in-house. The objective bell slinks down seamlessly into a 30mm aluminium one-piece body tube, with a central saddle for the finger, adjustable dials and side illumination control. Windage and elevation dials both reside below elegantly cannellured caps, all finished in matt anodised black with a bead-blasted texture.

The dials are calibrated in firm 7mm at 100-metre clicks, corresponding very closely to 0.25in at 100 yards, and show anti-clockwise for 'up' and 'right'. With 80 clicks per turn and just over three rotations, the total offered is nearly 1.7 metres at 100 metres and I found no trouble zeroing the optic on my rifle.

The MeoTrak turrets don't follow the current fashion for dialling at range for hunting, but the clicks are very decisive and, most importantly, it does track perfectly. I had the sporting rifle shooting out to beyond 300 yards in .308 and was pleased by the ability to tweak and twiddle to my heart's content, yet return accurately every time to zero. It did require a little more concentration to avoid getting lost in the turns, but there is an adjustable zero marker on the turret that, when pressed down, allows the dial to rotate back to set the zero mark and hence direct you 'home' in the future. On a scope really intended for a true sporting rifle, I thought it a great compromise.



Moving further along, the tube curves smoothly out to a larger diameter of 45mm mounting a 39mm eyepiece lens with +/-3 dioptre adjustability on the rubberised fast focus eyepiece. The zoom ring, running from 2.5 to 15, shows similar profiled ribs to the dial caps, with a fin sitting vertically upwards at 12 o'clock when 8x magnification is set. That's a nice, fast reference in the dark for near maximum exit pupil size. One downside to this fin is that when you are at lowest magnification, perhaps standing and operating your bolt very rapidly, it sits to the right side of the tube and might just rap your knuckles. But perhaps I am being a bit petty, as it really depends on your bolt handle position.

Thankfully, Meopta have really hit the nail on the head when it comes to reticle design and choice. The latest 5/6/7/8/10x erector tubes have really forced manufacturers to carefully consider reticle designs to be compatible with such optical versatility and Meopta's glass etched 4c really doesn't disappoint. Set in the second focal plane, three thick bars at three, six and nine o'clock diminish to hairline size as they approach the centre and point across a small gap, leading your eye to the central dot. Covering a tiny fragment of the visual field of approximately 10mm, depending on magnification, it allows precise shots on small game at long ranges without causing you to subconsciously peep around a reticle obscuring your target. A fine bar also extends vertically upward.

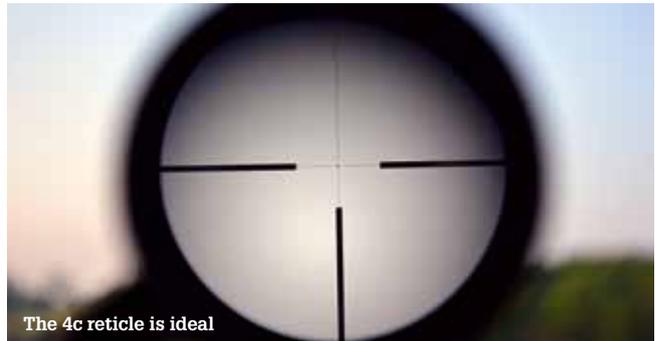
In low light and heavy cover, the knob to the left of the central saddle shows eight illumination intensity settings with intervening 'off' positions to allow fast, intuitive and straightforward control. Intensity doesn't flare, even on the eighth setting, and it is just a flick of the wrist if you find yourself rapidly demanding brightness alteration. To me, this perfectly embodies the KISS principle (Keep It Simple, Stupid) and gets full marks.

A coin slot in the cap uncovers the supplied CR2032 battery. Parallax is not adjustable and is set at 150 metres. The scope comes with two rubber eye caps, which remain attached. The best bet is to slide them along the tube, away from the lenses, and allow them to fall to the non-bolt side of your gun.

Optically, the scope is fantastic at this price and comfortably falls into my 'European zone' for all light conditions with a warm, rich and sharp image. The reticle never seems to fade, even as the eyes become tired. Resolution easily allowed use of a one-inch dot for zeroing, happily quartered at 100 yards on 15x magnification.

The MeoLux lens coatings performed as promised and chromatic aberration was virtually undetectable across the whole flat field of view. The MeoDrop coated lenses formed droplets of water that ran off surfaces with a quick flick of the rifle. I tended the scope carefully on test but the MeoShield anti-abrasion lens coatings are likely entirely trustworthy.

Meopta's claim of 95 per cent light transmission throughout the whole tube is quite believable. The only claim I found dubious was the '90mm' eye relief, which was actually nearer 100mm – but who's complaining? It certainly didn't shrink and grow with magnification change and always presented an easily accessible exit pupil. ■



The 4c reticle is ideal



Perfectly simple illumination controls



Simply depress either dial to rotate the indicator to zero



A sleek design, free from any unwanted fuss

Technical Specifications

- Model: **Meopta MeoStar R2 2.5/15x56 RD**
- Objective lens: 56mm
- Magnification: 2.5-15x
- Reticle: 4c
- Maintube: 30mm
- Exit pupil diameter: 3.73-11mm
- Eye relief: 90mm
- Field of view: 2.5-14.9m at 100m
- Focal plane: 2nd
- Dioptic compensation: fast focus, +/-3
- Click value: 7mm at 100m
- Total adjustability: 1.7m at 100m
- Parallax correction: fixed
- Weight: 650g
- Length: 353mm
- Guarantee: 100 per cent waterproof and fog-proof with 30-year transferable warranty if registered at time of purchase
- Price: £1,376
- Importer: Viking Arms ■ 01423 780810
- www.vikingshoot.com