

OPTICS TEST

In-depth, independent reviews every month

# THE HAWKE COLLECTION



Paul Austin pulls together a great selection of optics from one of his favourite brands

## FRONTIER APO BINOCULARS

For quite some time, Hawke's Frontier ED X binos have been my preferred choice when it comes to top quality optics in the £400-600 price bracket and for good reason, thanks to their combination of exceptional optics and affordability.

Hawke have now pushed the boat out that little bit further with the new APOs. In terms of build, there's very

little change, other than a slightly narrower bridge, a simpler textured grip and the more traditional dark olive-green colour scheme.

In general, the APOs have a more subtle look and feel with the brushed chrome styling of the ED X replaced by the green and blacks of the APOs. Overall, it's a more subtle/subdued design across the board, but like their predecessors, the new model ships

with a similar selection of lens covers, a comfortable carry strap and a hard case for added protection.

The big question is: are they better? Answer: yes, they are, but it's a close call. It's only after really close inspection of the image that you start to spot the difference; it's subtle, but the longer you use them, the more these subtle improvements add up to the additional £200 on the asking price.

They're not perfect. The multi-position, twist-up eyecups are a bit indistinct, and I'd like a bit more of a click between each stage, in a similar vein to their predecessors, but to be honest I always spin them up to full height anyway, so perhaps it's a bit of a moot point.

In terms of colour rendition, brightness and contrast, there's very little in it, if anything. There's no perceivable difference in chromatic aberration or fringing, a flaw that neither optic suffers from. Where the APOs score slightly higher is resolution.

It's the granular detail where the APOs steal the crown. There's just a little more crispness, and a touch more detail to the subject – a factor that can be crucial for hunters. If you're looking

AVAILABLE FROM  
[uk.hawkeoptics.com](http://uk.hawkeoptics.com)



**FRONTIER APO 8X42**  
**PRICE: £629**

*LEFT: The new Frontier APO is arguably the best mid-level bino on the market*

PICTURES: PAUL AUSTIN



**HAWKE VANTAGE RED DOT 1X25 (3 MOA)****PRICE: £85****HAWKE ENDURANCE RED DOT 1X30 (3 MOA)****PRICE: £169**

at a complex image, whether it be in woodland or out on the hill, that little added touch of clarity can be very important when glassing your prey. It's pretty tough to spot a brownish critter on a brownish background and it's in these situations where the APO's enhanced resolution pays for that added £200 investment.

**RED DOTS & REFLEX**

Red dots and reflex sights are great fun to shoot, but you do need to know how to use them. With either type, the trick is to change your shooting style.

simpler of the two red dots on offer, but it does everything you need, if perhaps not quite as slickly as it's more expensive counterpart. It has a lower profile than its fancier cousin, shipping with a dovetail mount as standard along with a Picatinny conversion mount if required.

Operation is simplicity itself, with a large dial offering off/on plus 11 levels of illumination to the 3 MOA central red dot sitting in the 25mm objective lens. To zero the optic, you simply unscrew the windage and elevation covers, adjusting the small inset turrets with a

*ABOVE: The set and forget design of the Vantage alongside the easy adjustment of the Endurance*

the gun than its counterpart, being a slightly more refined optic that's easy to adjust on the go with the wider 30mm ocular adding a touch more field of view. The Endurance also ships with a quick-release Picatinny mount making swaps that little bit easier.

**HAWKE MICRO REFLEX**

I'll be honest. The Micro Reflex is probably my favourite of the bunch. You can pop it on any rifle for driven game applications, just like its counterparts, but I use it as a quick aiming alternative for close encounters. This tiny little reflex can be nuzzled in the gap between your day scope's turrets and zeroed close in at maybe 20 to 30m.

If a surprise fox or bunny suddenly pops out of a hedgerow, you just tilt the rifle, align the dot and take the shot. I've seen many a miss at extreme close-range because day scopes are invariably set up for distance. In close-range situations, there's no time for adjustments or extreme holdover, assuming you have any idea what it might be at such close range. When time's short and the pressure's on, this little reflex provides the perfect point-and-click companion for any day scope. **RS**

## \\ WHEN THE PRESSURE'S ON, THIS LITTLE REFLEX PROVIDES THE PERFECT COMPANION FOR ANY DAY SCOPE //

Red dot/reflex shooting is much more akin to shotgun shooting than rifle shooting. Your focus has to be on the target, not on the crosshair; this is crucial if you want to make the most of them.

It takes some getting used to, but the trick is to focus solely on the target with both eyes open, sliding the dot in your peripheral vision over the kill zone, and then just pull the trigger, very much in the style of a swing-through technique with a shotgun.

It offers a blistering-pace method of targeting fast moving game at close range, which is why red dot and reflex sights are so popular for driven game shooting. You don't have to worry about parallax adjustment; it's just point and shoot. Great fun once you get the hang of it! Hawke have a number of very affordable red dots and reflex options, so let's take a look...

**HAWKE VANTAGE RED DOT**

The Vantage is the cheaper and

supplied tool, although a small screwdriver is equally effective, and you're good to go. Simple but effective. A perfect low profile 'set it and forget it' option.

**HAWKE ENDURANCE RED DOT**

The Endurance is a slightly more refined affair, aimed at AR15 or chassis-style rifles, as denoted by the taller mount providing the correct alignment for rifles with direct recoil via parallel/flat stock design. Screw-cap covers protect the elevation and windage turrets, but on the Endurance they're more traditional dials that can be adjusted by hand.

Illumination control is also a bit more subtle with two buttons on the top of the device offering on/off plus eight power levels to the 3 MOA central dot. The Endurance does a more subtle job of illumination at the lower levels, so is probably the best option for early starts or last light shooting.

A little heavier and slightly taller on

*BELOW: The tiny Micro Reflex with its rubberised protective cover – a very handy little add-on*

**HAWKE MICRO REFLEX DOT (3 MOA)****PRICE: £139**