

SCOPE TEST

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Zeiss have tweaked their Conquest V4 scopes to make them airgun-friendly, and Mat Manning reckons that's great news for anyone seeking out a high-performance scope



KEY SPECS

- FROM:** Zeiss
(www.zeiss.com)
- MODEL:**
Conquest V4
- PRICE:** From £895
(model tested £995)
- LENGTH:** 350mm
- WEIGHT:** 670g
- MAGNIFICATION:**
4-16x (6-24x also available)
- FOV AT 100M:**
9.5m to 2.4m
- TUBE DIAMETER:**
30mm
- OBJECTIVE LENS:**
44mm (50mm also available)
- RETICLE:**
60 Illuminated (numerous other options available)
- TURRET ADJUSTMENT:**
¼ MOA
- EYE RELIEF:** 90mm
- PARALLAX:** side dial down to 10 yards
- FEATURES:**
Ballistic stop elevation turret, illuminated reticle, excellent optical quality

Shooters with serious money to spend aren't afraid to go the extra mile when it comes to splashing out on high-performance equipment. You can hardly blame them because, as with most things in life, you get what you pay for when it comes to shooting gear, and that applies to optics.

One problem faced by hunters and target shooters who want to invest in top-quality optics is that this equipment has been made for use with powder-burning rifles. The result is that the best telescopic sights tend to be parallaxed for ranges beyond the distances that most airgunners are likely to be shooting over, so they aren't really fit for purpose.

That's no longer a problem for airgun shooters who want to treat themselves to a Zeiss scope though, as the acclaimed optics manufacturer's Conquest V4 scope range now parallaxes right down to an airgun-friendly 10 yards.

And, with prices starting at £895, these optics are friendlier on your wallet than you imagine. That still amounts to a significant investment, but when you take their quality and performance into account, those who can afford it will be buying something special that will certainly deliver the goods in the field or on the range.

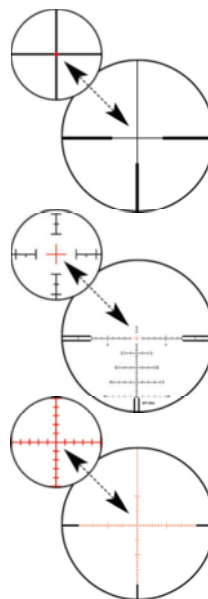
AN OPTICAL OVERVIEW

The Conquest V4 range is available in 4-16x44, 4-16x50 and 6-24x50 formats. Add to that a remarkable choice of reticle configurations, and it's safe to say that just about every airgunning need is covered.

I was sent the £995 4-16x44 60 Reticle Ballistic Turret model to test along with the flagship 6-24x50 ZMOAi T20 Reticle Ballistic Turret variant, which goes for £1,250. Both are good, but I have spent most time using the more affordable model so I'll focus on that one for this review.

I stuck with the 44mm objective lens model because the usual reason for upping lens size is to improve light transmission, but the brightness of the smaller scope's sight picture was remarkable – so good that I didn't feel the need to upgrade.

These scopes boast 90 per cent light transmission, which is one of the big gains enjoyed by shooters who opt to spend a little more on their optics. ➔



The scope in the test featured the uncluttered 60 reticle (top) but the Conquest V4 range offers numerous other options including the ZBi (centre) and ZMOAi-1 (bottom)



The zoom ring is stiff enough not to turn unintentionally but is grooved to ensure a good grip when making adjustments

The Ballistic elevation turret enables you to set a stop position to ensure an exact return to zero after dialling-in

Even with a compact 44mm objective lens, light transmission is remarkable

Build quality is excellent and the Conquest V4 is waterproof and nitrogen-purged to stop it fogging up

The Conquest V4 has lovely clean lines and oozes quality. Weighing in at 670g and measuring 350mm in length, I would describe the 4-16x44 model as a mid-sized scope. Although it's not super-compact, it still looks perfectly at home on a bullpup or stubby carbine.

These scopes are made in Japan to exacting standards and it shows. They are also tough and are properly waterproofed and nitrogen-purged to stop them from fogging up in damp conditions. Covered by the Zeiss limited lifetime transferrable warranty and five-year no fault policy, you also get peace of mind as well as a very fine telescopic sight.

Excellent image quality is the result of several factors, starting with high-quality glass. The 30mm tube also plays its part as do the lens coatings, which all help to optimise that all-important light transmission.

Zeiss uses a special six-layer T-Star multi-coating and it seems to do the trick – it is also apparent as a subtle red/amber hue on the outside of the objective and ocular lenses. Apart from being bright, the image through the scope is also crystal clear and very sharp right to the edges.

Reticles have become a serious selling point in the optics market over recent years, and the Conquest V4 range has all bases covered, from a conventional crosshair to

tree-shaped setups and several other arrangements with sophisticated aim-point layouts to ensure precise pellet placement over varying ranges and when shooting in a crosswind. The selection of reticles offers a choice of different thicknesses so there truly is something for everyone.

The review scope is a second focal plane model and the reticle is known as the 60. This is a lovely, fine crosshair with slightly thicker outer elements on the bottom and sides. Although it sounds quite basic for shooters who are accustomed to busy modern reticles that are awash with aim points, I actually really liked the



The finger-adjustable windage turret on the review scope turned with clear stops, each click shifting point of aim by 1/4 MOA

uncluttered arrangement and it certainly helped in terms of fast target acquisition.

After a short session on the range, I was soon able to distinguish the amount of holdunder and holdover required at various distances, and it's surprising how quickly you learn how to work it out in proportion to the size of your quarry's head. In the field, this translated into fast, fuss-free shooting and I have to say that it's a reticle style that I am sorely tempted to return to.

FIELD-FRIENDLY FEATURES

Although a simpler reticle can have its advantages, illumination is always a handy feature, and the central point of the 60 crosshair can be illuminated for improved contrast against dark targets. This one boasts 10 degrees of brightness, making it easy to find the perfect level to match the conditions without creating unwanted glare. It is controlled by a very positive outer dial on the left-hand turret.

Staying with the left-hand turret, the inner dial serves as the parallax adjustment wheel and turns very smoothly with just the right amount of resistance.

The dial ensures sharp relief from that all-important 10 yards out to infinity. It is not marked with distances but that's not an issue as



Clearly marked and set to just the right level of torque, the zoom ring is grooved and even features a raised lug for improved grip

shooters who buy a scope of this quality are likely to want to add their own precisely calibrated distance markers so they can accurately estimate range when the target snaps into focus.

The right-hand turret serves the usual purpose of windage adjustment. Screwing off the cap reveals a finger-adjustable dial that turns with remarkably positive clicks, each of which adjust point of impact by ¼ MOA – the multi-aimpoint reticle designs are calibrated to correspond with these adjustments.

This scope features the simplest windage turret setup in the range and there are others which feature what Zeiss describes as an “External Locking Windage Turret” which pulls up for fast adjustment and snaps back down to lock it in position.

One very neat feature on the review scope is the Ballistic Turret. This is the elevation turret, which is clearly marked, uncovered and can quickly be clicked up or down for rapid ¼ MOA adjustments.

This turret features 80 MOA travel and a very useful rotation scale indicator. The “Ballistic” feature refers to a ballistic stop which enables you to set exactly where the turret stops – that means you can dial-in for different ranges and always be assured of an exact return to your set zero.

Although this turret is uncapped and doesn't need to be lifted to turn, the clicks are positive enough to avoid any unintentional adjustment.

Moving back from the turrets, we come to the zoom collar. The torque is set high so it takes a fair amount of effort to turn, but I much prefer this over a loose dial and the outer wheel is ridged for improved grip and even has a raised lug to ensure that you can get a proper hold of it, even in the wet or when wearing gloves.

The 4-16x zoom range on the review scope provided all the magnification I needed for a wide variety of hunting applications. I had it on 10 or 12x for most of my outings, only winding it up to 16x for some long-range bipod work with an FAC-rated gun.

The lower settings give a wider field of view which can help with fast target acquisition – they would also make for a slightly brighter sight picture but the clarity of this scope is so good that I didn't actually find



The elevation turret has fast adjustment and also boasts a Ballistic stop feature to ensure an exact return to zero, while the left-hand turret incorporates the reticle illumination and parallax dials



Multi-coated lenses ensure excellent optical performance and deliver brilliant light transmission even with the smaller 44mm objective lens

myself needing to wind down the zoom at dusk. For shooters who want serious magnification for absolute precision when carrying out extreme long-range hunting or target work, there is a 6-24x option.

True, this optic does cost more than most airgun shooters are prepared to pay for a telescopic sight, and the only extras it comes with are a key to set the turret lock, a battery for the illuminated reticle, a

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At the rear of the eyepiece is the ocular focusing ring, which you only need to adjust once to get the reticle pin-sharp. Like the other dials on this scope, it is stiff to turn and I find that very reassuring as it means you don't have to worry about it drifting once set.

After using this scope for several weeks, I can confidently say that it is very close to being the perfect airgun optic. It is incredibly hard to find fault with it, although I have no doubt that fingers will be pointing at its price tag.

lens cloth and a set of bikini-style lens covers. But I'm reassured by the lack of fancy gimmicks and extras because it

means all the money spent is going on optical quality and essential features that have been designed and built for optimum performance.

The Zeiss Conquest V4 is not for shooters looking for affordability, but it amounts to very good value. If you don't believe me, try looking through one for yourself.

Airgun shooters lucky enough to afford one will get their money's worth as they'll be investing in a scope that will be at the front of the pack when most of its cheaper rivals are either outdated or broken. ●

THE AIRGUN SHOOTER VERDICT

“Zeiss for airgun shooters at last! Those who invest in this high-end scope will be buying a very fine optic and one of the sharpest, brightest sight pictures available”