

Setting Sights on Lynx



I jumped at the chance when Michael Rogers, who heads the very well-known South African company Lynx Optics, offered me three scopes from their new Professional LX II series for testing. Like all other Lynx scopes, LX IIs are made in Japan, sport excellent optics, and sell at competitive prices. The new products were a 1.5-5x32, a 3-10x40 and a 4.5-14x42 with an adjustable objective for parallax/focus correction. Lynx also sent a 1-3x20 and a prototype of their yet to be released, 1.5-4.5x24 which sports a 30mm tube and an illuminated reticle. This one will be available within four months. These arrived a little too late for range testing but I did test them for clarity; parallax and I checked the eye-relief.

I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the LX II models. Because we do not have the specialist equipment, the time and the expertise necessary to conduct strictly objective technical tests on the properties and quality of optical

lenses, our 'tests' are somewhat subjective but we trust are no less useful to our readers. I used a Leupold 4.5-14x40LR and a Swarovski 4-12x50 as controls for my tests and after spending quite some time looking at various objects from 15m right out to almost 400m, found that the clarity and definition of the Lynx 4.5-14x was slightly superior to the Leupold's. The 3-10x and the 1.5-5x scopes also matched the Leupold's optics although eye position with the 3-10x Lynx was more critical than with the Leupold at maximum magnification. In poor late afternoon light the Lynx models again matched up to the Leupold but the Swarovski was obviously superior and so it should be, because its retail price is about three times higher than the Lynx's.

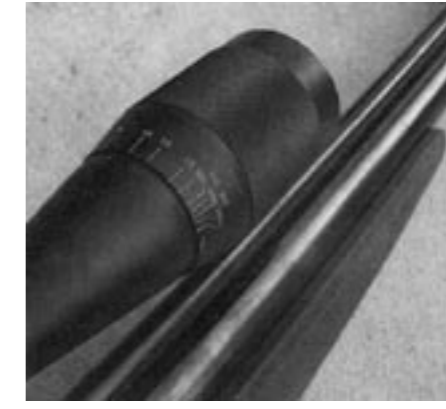
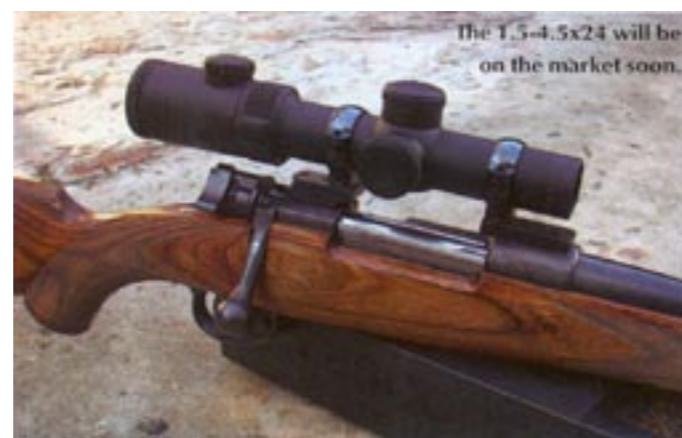
Although the Lynx scopes made a good first impression, the eye-relief of all three models was a disappointing



75mm at maximum magnification. (The Leupold's was 95mm and the Swarovski's 85mm.) This shorter eye-relief does not make sense, especially on the low-power variable which I assume was developed for big-bores that kick much more than ordinary hunting calibres. However, the 1-3x and the new 1.5-4.5x have very generous eye-relief (95 and 120mm respectively at the highest and lowest magnifications) so they should keep you out of the Half-moon Club, should you be scoping a calibre with attitude. (Lynx is investigating the possibility of lengthening the eye-relief, but this is no easy adjustment.)

I was hoping to test the 1.5-5x on my .375 but this scope's short tube (the front section) prevented me from moving it back far enough to get a full field of view. The same was true for the 3-10x which I tried on my .308 Win Mauser. Lynx promptly sent me extension-type front bases which worked fine for the 3-10x on my .308; but the Lynx rings were not compatible with the custom bases on my .375. As I was reluctant to fit new bases to the .375, I mounted the 1.5-5x on my .22 Hornet. Another small problem with the 3-10x was the diameter of the ocular bell — measuring 40.6mm it was wide enough to cause the bolt-handle's stem to just touch it. The Swarovski 4-12x's ocular bell measures 38.9mm — small enough to allow the handle to clear the scope. Manufacturers (and scope buyers) should give more attention to such 'seemingly small' matters.

The 4.5-14x features an extended parallax-free facility which enables the shooter to use it at 15m — ideal for air-



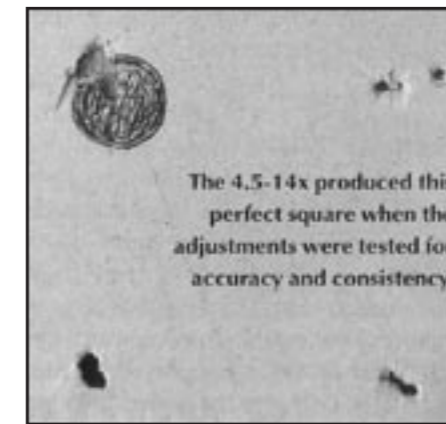
Left: Lynx's new 1.5-4.5x24 (top). Like the 1-3x20 (centre), its eye-relief measures 120mm at maximum magnification. The mounted 3-10x40 is shown for comparison. Centre: The 4.5-14x Lynx can be set parallax-free at 15m - ideal for air rifle use. Right: The dials are finger adjustable for easy operation and sport the so-called 'zero-storing' facility.

gun use — and I therefore mounted this scope on my Air Arms 5400 rifle. Due to the generous tube length (15.5cm) I was able to move the scope back far enough to take care of the short eye-relief.

With the scopes mounted on rifles I could easily check whether they were parallax-free at the 100m standard. This was done with the magnification set at maximum and minimum and I am happy to report that all five passed the test. The 4.5-14x's parallax/focus adjustment was then tested at various distances (confirmed with a Leica rangefinder) alongside the 4.5-14x Leupold which has a side-mounted or saddle focus, parallax adjustment.

In this test the Lynx also did well but the calibration seemed to be slightly off at the longer distances for my eyes. For example, I had to turn the objective bell past the 200m marker to get it properly focused at that distance. This is not a serious problem — I have experienced the same with a Swarovski — the numbers on the bell are actually just a guide. The Leupold has markers but no numbers on its focus drum — a clever way to overcome the calibration 'problem'. Anyway, the Lynx did well enough to satisfy me and it focused right down to a true 15m.

The Professional LX II scopes feature finger adjustable turrets for easy operation and with the help of a collimator I had the centre-fire rifles on paper at 100m and the air rifle at 15m in no time. Some minor adjustments were made to get the scopes properly zeroed and then it was time for our standard test — checking the accuracy and consistency of the adjustments. This was done at 50m for the centre-fires and 25m for the air-gun by firing two shots (three with the air rifle), adjust the dials 40 clicks to the right, fire two shots, adjust 40 clicks



down, 40 left and 40 up, each time firing two shots. The idea is to construe a perfect square. All three scopes did very well in this test. All the test models have the so-called 'zero storing' facility. Once you have sighted-in the scope, pull upward on the dial to disengage the drum from the internal mechanism. It will now rotate independently of the mechanism which allows you to turn it to the zero position. Then push the drum downward until it engages the mechanism again. Storing the zero makes it easy to return to it if you have had to make adjustments for say, long range shooting.

I also fired one shot each at all the different magnification settings and none of the scopes showed any evident change in zero. Unfortunately the obviously limited range tests do not allow me to comment on durability as I normally fire only 20 to 40 rounds during a standard scope test. However, the Lynx scopes seemed to be of good quality and I was really impressed by their optics. During my tests (34 shots with the .308 and 30 with the Hornet) the Professional LXs held their zeros perfectly. I did play a lot more with the 4.5-14x, constantly changing the magnification and the focus ring and must have fired well over

200 pellets — no problem either with this one.

Lynx's little 1-3x is a light, compact model that will appeal to those who carry their rifles more than they shoot them. The 1.5-4.5x is a chubby and fairly heavy scope for its size with a large ocular bell, measuring 43mm at its widest point. Mounting this scope low on some rifles might present a problem. However, because of the 30mm tube it sits "higher" in the rings and just cleared my .308's bolt-handle. I particularly liked its duplex reticle which comes with an illuminated dot. When switched off for daytime use, the reticle looks like a standard crosshair but when illuminated only a red dot appears at the junction of the crosshair legs. On many scopes the whole reticle lights up which is counterproductive because the illumination is usually too bright and thus prevents you from seeing the target.

The only way to test durability is to use a scope for at least a year and then report on its performance, something which I hope to arrange with Lynx after having one of their high magnification scopes fitted with a long range reticle.

Well, apart from the short eye-relief and the slightly fat ocular bells, the Lynx scopes made a good impression. The suggested retail prices for the test models are: 1-3x20, R2600; 1.5-4.5x24, R5000; 1.5-5x32, R3500; 3-10x40, R3400 and 4.5-14x42, R4100. Lynx scopes are stocked by dealers country wide and with local backup at hand I think these scopes represent good value for money. The Professional Series scopes have a lifetime warranty which is limited to the original purchaser and only applies to products purchased in South Africa.

For information on your nearest dealer phone Lynx on 011-792-6644.