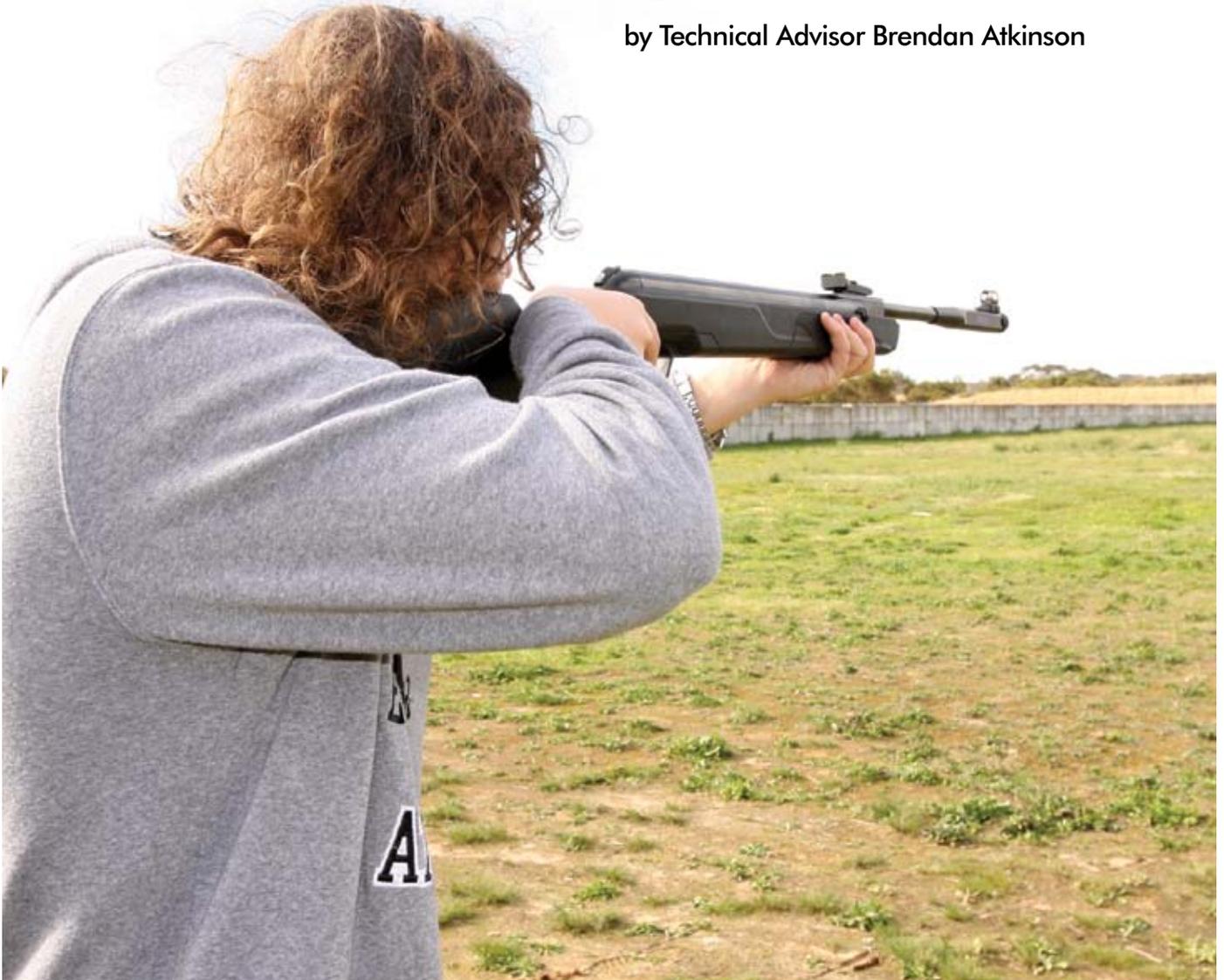


# Walther's LGV Challenger Ultra

by Technical Advisor Brendan Atkinson



**T**he decision to purchase a high-quality air rifle usually leads a shooter to a handful of well-known brands, mainly from Europe and the United Kingdom. There, you will find companies that have been producing high-quality air-powered guns for more than 50 years. German manufacturer Walther is right up there with the best of them - some might even argue leading the pack.

Walther's new LGV Challenger Ultra is a spring-piston-type break-barrel air rifle - a design that most shooters have had some

experience with. One of the first of these to bear the Walther brand was the LG51, which proved to be extremely popular. It is a matter of record that in 1966 the Swiss Team won the gold medal at the World Championships using Walther rifles - the model was the LG55M.

The original LGV was introduced in 1964 and remained largely unchanged until recently. Like all things, modern technology has permitted companies 'to build better mousetraps', and at the end of the day, the shooter has to be the beneficiary from the

improvements. In 2012, a new LGV was released to the market, and in Australia, it was first shown at the SSAA SHOT Expo in Sydney by Walther's Australian distributor Frontier Arms from Adelaide.

## The air rifle

Improving a break-barrel spring-piston air rifle required considerable attention to the hinge and lockup system for the barrel, which is critical for accuracy. The secret to accuracy in all firearms lies in everything being exactly the same shot after shot - in

## Walther's LGV Challenger Ultra



**The Walther LGV Challenger Ultra .177-calibre air rifle in profile.**

other words, repeatability. Walther uses a wedge-lock system to anchor the barrel. Once locked up, it can only be unlocked manually. The impact of firing the rifle does not affect the barrel position in that instant of time between the spring impact and the pellet leaving the barrel.

Much work has been done on the propulsion system, namely the piston and spring. The spring is made from a special tempered

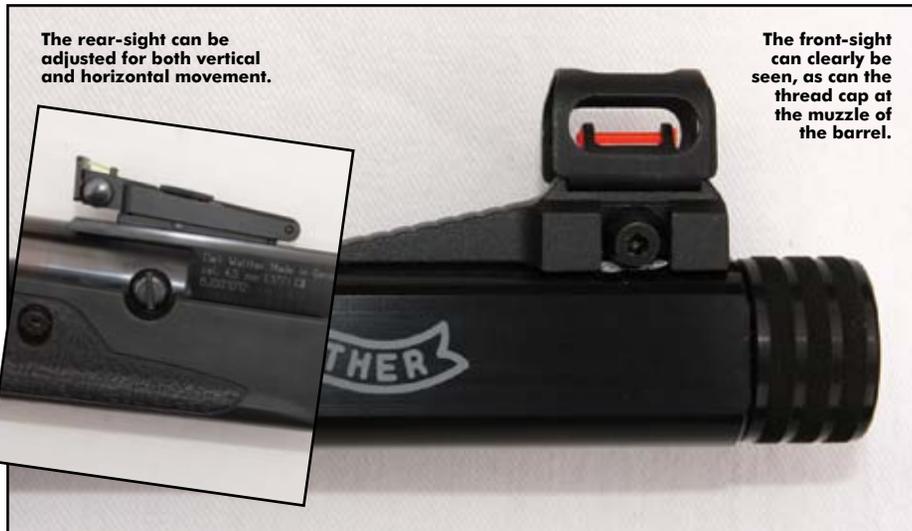
valve spring wire, with the aim of giving very long life. The ends are ground off to ensure straight movement, and the LGV incorporates a rotary piston movement, claimed to absorb the torsion forces of the spring. The piston does not make any contact with the cocking rod or the cylinder walls (unlike other types). This is achieved by using low-friction synthetic material piston rings. To remove metal-to-metal contact, synthetic



**The fibre-optic sights were very easy to use and required only minimum light to be effective.**

material is used extensively throughout the spring and piston area. The big plus from all of this is a greatly reduced level of vibration, which can be an accuracy killer in conventional air rifles.

The trigger is adjustable for weight of pull and the first stage of travel, but I was quite happy with the way it was set from the factory. There was zero creep and a crisp let-off. Perhaps if I was doing more precision work with this unit, I would lighten it off a bit.



**The rear-sight can be adjusted for both vertical and horizontal movement.**

**The front-sight can clearly be seen, as can the thread cap at the muzzle of the barrel.**



**The LGV Challenger Ultra air rifle is perfect for a younger person learning to shoot.**

## Walther's LGV Challenger Ultra

The short 40cm barrel is fitted with a muzzle weight, which also incorporates the protected bead front-sight. This sight can be removed if a scope is fitted. The barrel in front of the sight is threaded for accessories. The rear-sight is also located on the barrel, just above the hinge part of the action. The rear-sight is adjustable. One of the best things about these sights is the fibre-optic dots: two at the rear and one at the front. These are highly visible, which makes aiming very easy.

The barrel is unlocked by raising the lever that protrudes from the front of the stock. At the other end of the metalwork is a safety device that automatically locks the trigger when the barrel is unlocked and cocked - a usual feature of break-barrel airguns.

The synthetic HI-GRIP stock has a good feel to it, and has stippling on the fore-end and pistol grip. There is also a recoil pad, and the whole item is finished in a dull black finish.

That's the nuts and bolts of the LGV Challenger Ultra, so now it was time to see just how it would perform with a variety of pellets.

### Accuracy testing

There was no scope supplied with this rifle and as I didn't have a suitable air rifle scope on hand, I thought I'd try the rifle with the open sights first and see what eventuated. Many years ago, when I had perfect vision, I did all my air rifle hunting with open sights.

The claimed velocity for this air rifle varies depending upon which country it is sent to. The Australian review rifle has 23 joules and 295mps, which is slightly less than 1000fps with standard weight pellets.

I obtained some suitable pellets to put through the LGV Challenger Ultra, which included JSB Match Diabolo 8-grains and JSB Exact Standard 8.4-grain pellets. To test for the best accuracy, I also included some RWS Meisterkugein 8.2-grain pellets.

The paper target testing showed that this rifle will hold five rounds at less than 26mm at 20m without too much trouble. Not surprisingly, the RWS match-grade pellets shot the tightest groups, while the JSBs also shot tidy clusters.

There were a number of pest birds around at the time of the review that needed some attention. I normally hunt with a .22-calibre air rifle when the need arises to cull feral pigeons and the like. The .177-calibre, however, surprised me in the rapid and humane manner in which the target birds were despatched. There are plenty of videos on the internet showing

With the barrel open, the substantial hinge and lock can be seen - both are crucial to accuracy.



the prowess of air rifles both in .177- and .22-calibre on small game.

Two notable things became obvious during the range testing. Firstly, loading the rifle requires a bit of effort when pulling the barrel down, and this may be beyond some younger shooters. However, this should not be a problem, as they should be under adult supervision when shooting. Secondly, this rifle is relatively quiet when firing. Walther claims 'Super Silent Technology' and while I wouldn't say it's actually silent, the low noise level and lack of vibration does make the rifle a pleasure to shoot.

### Summary

If you are looking for a quality break-barrel air rifle, then the Walther LGV Challenger Ultra might just be the one for you. It is very well made and shoots with enough accuracy to satisfy most hunters. The open sights are adequate for some uses, but fitting a decent scope and mounts will extend the accurate range considerably.

The LGV Challenge Ultra Rifle retails for around \$650 and is available in .17- and .22-calibres. For more information, talk to your local gunshop or visit [www.frontierarms.com.au](http://www.frontierarms.com.au)

These groups were shot from a rest at 20m using both JSB and RWS pellets.

## Specifications

**Manufacturer:** Walther, Germany  
**Model:** LGV Challenger Ultra  
**Distributor:** Frontier Arms  
**Calibre:** 4.5mm (.177) tested; 5.5mm (.22) also available  
**Action:** Spring and piston break-barrel with lever release  
**Barrel:** 400mm rifled  
**Trigger:** Match-grade, adjustable  
**Sights:** Post front and adjustable rear, fibre-optic type  
**Stock:** Synthetic  
**Overall Length:** 1095mm  
**Maximum Width:** 54mm  
**Weight:** 3.8kg  
**RRP:** \$650