

tABC field report.
A preview of the EPOCH from Skout Airguns
by Joe Polanco

Having been deprived of one opportunity to attend one of the most significant events to which we look forward each year, we at tABC were gifted with another opportunity of perhaps greater value. Sometimes, the universe is funny like that, but I digress. Lets start at the beginning.

In early January of 2022 *Rossi Moreale* posted a video (*American Airgunner YouTube channel*) of a gun in development which was being introduced to the industry for the first time at Shot Show. Although my past experiences with “new” model guns have, for the most part, taught me to be very skeptical of anything being newly “introduced” to the market, this was different. Many developmental products simply fail to ever materialize, while others manage only to disappoint falling well short of promised expectations. Despite that, this particular project interested me in a way I was unable to dismiss.

Since 2016 I've been writing about, researching and working on finding the quintessential long range pneumatic BR platform. For me this means a gun that eliminates as much mechanical violence as possible while still maintaining supreme accuracy at long distances. To my eyes, the perfect solution has always been to take an electronically controlled platform, eliminate as many of the mechanical aspects of a traditional air delivery system as possible, make the system immediately programmable via an easily understood, self-contained interface and finally marry all that to the perfect barrel system. Am I asking for too much? Well, apparently some folks at **Skout Airguns** didn't think so.

In September of 2022 in search of more information on the gun I had seen previewed, the **Skout Epoch**, I contacted *Darryl Trent* of **Skout Airguns** to see what if any press release information might be available on the **Epoch**. After a very informative conversation, *Darryl* surprised us (*Jerry Kornfield and myself*) with an invitation to tour their manufacturing facility, learn more about what makes the **Epoch** unique in the HPA rifle world and get a hands on opportunity to shoot the gun at distances out to 100 yards in their onsite indoor range. Needless to say my, no arm twisting was involved, I was all in from the get!



We arrived at the **Skout Airguns** facility on Oct.8th just before 11AM and were greeted by *Darryl Trent* who escorted us into what we found to be an extremely highly polished and well organized facility. From the lobby to the offices, through the manufacturing floor into testing and shipping areas everything was exactly what one would expect of a facility that had been running for over three decades. This is one of the keys points that influenced my decision to once again explore a new, unproven product. **Skout** is only the latest division of a company that has been manufacturing pneumatic paint ball guns for more than thirty years. Their accolades in that field are virtually unmatched and it's that very proprietary innovation that they've adapted and refined that lies at the heart of the **Epoch**.

By the end of our short yet comprehensive tour of the facility, which left us all very impressed, we moved on to the main course, our introduction to the **Epoch**.

Although the **Epoch** shares much in looks with virtually eighty percent of the skeletonized platforms in the industry, that similarity is only skin deep. The **Epoch** is revolutionary in the PCP air rifle world. No springs, no hammer, no linkages. Once cocked, the single moving part of the shot sequence (*aside from the trigger which is also electronic*) is their patented, proprietary valve. This revolutionary valve is itself actuated by air and even it only moves 45/1000ths of an inch! What this means is less possibility of failure or need for re-calibration due to vibration, friction and/or the subsequent wear on moving parts. All of this translates into a system that produces far less harmonic distortion which equates to greater consistency and in our world that means better accuracy.



Next, I'll examine some of the features of this new platform and tell you what you can expect to receive should you opt to dive in. The **Epoch** is dual regulated, fully programmable platform. It allows the user to control virtually every aspect of the firing sequence. From adjustment of it's "Max Flo" regulator pressures (*Max Flow regulators can be adjusted up or down without the need to degas*), to the weight of it's match grade, single stage, electronic trigger as well as the guns dwell time (*how long the valve remains opened*), the **Epoch** is capable of immediate on the spot adjustments and delivery of newly adjusted parameters on the very next shot. The **Epoch** also features nickle alloy barrel liners, impregnated with a *Teflon* like derivative (*similar to Robar NP3*) making it more rigid (*about a 30 to 40% increase in the Rockwell hardness of most metals*) and much less susceptible to fouling.

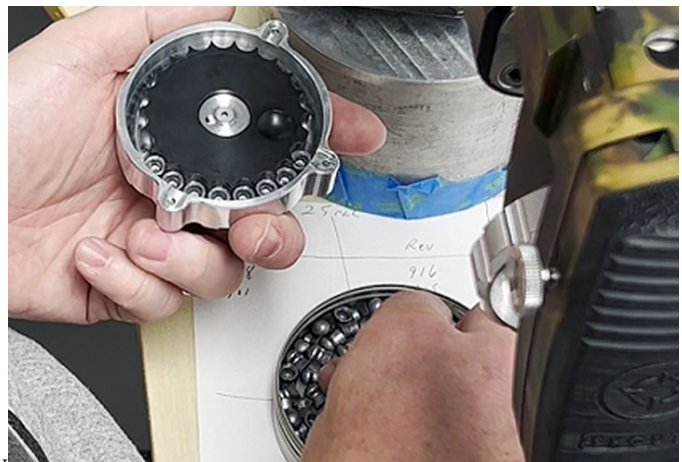
Speaking of liners, we all know how many of our guns tend to be very pellet picky, requiring us to shoot specific brands, weights and alloy compositions in order to get the best results. Skout is addressing this directly by providing (*notice I said PROVIDING not offering*) three, **ten land**, carbon fiber sleeved pellet liners, each featuring a different "bite ratio" with every gun. So, although you'll still be likely to get your best results from one specific pellet, the range of pellets that may provide those results will be substantially expanded.



Additionally, each **Epoch** will feature a 580cc 300psi carbon fiber bottle, a fully color coordinated aluminum alloy magazine which itself features magnetic closure and automatic seating, and is compatible with a wide range of pellets and slugs. Also featured is an adjustable cheek riser, a 20moa Picatiny scope rail and a color coordinated suppressor (*Neither the magazine nor the suppressor in this preview model had been anodized*). The entire package will arrive in a custom made, commercial grade hard shell case. The **Epoch** will be available in either of two barrel lengths. The shorter a 25" (635mm) barrel as well as the 35" (890mm) which was on the gun we previewed and pictured.



Capable of a full caliber changes in less than five minutes, near future accessories planned for release shortly after the guns debut include caliber kits, (*three caliber specific carbon fiber wrapped liners, a carbon fiber barrel, a pellet probe and a magazine*) and various grip options both of which should be almost immediately available. An inline barrel tuner and several different rail extensions are also in discussion at the time of this printing.



So, onto what everyone really wants to know. How did the **Epoch** perform? Well, first and foremost Jerry and I are benchrest guys and I more so than Jerry am specifically focused on 100 yard BR so for me there was little point in fooling around and shooting the gun at shorter distances. Fortunately the folks at **Skout** had no problem or reservations about moving immediately to their 100 yard indoor range where the gun was setup and ready for testing. There are several videos that we'll be releasing shortly after this article (*links will be provided in the group when they become available*) that will give a more in depth account of just how well the Epoch performed, but suffice it to say, that the very first shot I took with the gun resulted in a slightly off center bullseye on a standard 3" Shoot-n-See target. Subsequent shots proved equally as gratifying for all three of us (*myself, Jerry and Ryan*) and we were able to spend about an hour with the gun shooting 30 caliber JSB 44 grain pellets at 100 yards and finally moving on to 65 grain slugs shooting at 937fps and the results on a 50 gallon barrel were pretty devastating for the barrel.



The resultant energy, 127 ft-lbf, was enough to drive the slug through the barrel, positioned at 50 yards and onto the steel backstop another 50 yards further downrange. A total of 5 shots created 3 nickle size holes on the front side of the barrel and only two ragged golf ball sized holes on the back side. I assume that at least one pellet managed to escape through one of the holes left by it's predecessor. Suffice it to say, that if power is one of your concerns, the **Epoch** will certainly not disappoint.

Beauty, power, accuracy and infinite adjustability are what the folks at **Skout** have strived to deliver and from what we were able to glean during our visit, they're certainly going to deliver on all of it. Okay, admittedly I'm an addict, but no amount of reform or rehab could have kept me from plunking down my cash and I simply can't wait for **Epoch** to arrive. We'll have more for you on **Skout** and their epic **Epoch** in the days to come so stay tuned.



Skout Epoch Pre-production test bed model. 30 caliber; 890mm ten land 1/38 twist electronic PCP rifle.

Video 1: <https://youtu.be/uvBaNUvY9nw>

Video 2: <https://youtu.be/26pB3hvsnHo>

*Left plate: Joe's first shot with the Epoch.
Right plate: Jerry's ten shot .07" group with the Epoch.*

