weight assembly locates over the muzzle after the removal of the barrel shroud (jobs easily done with hex keys).

The shroud combines the internal compensator to deflect muzzle blast back into the void, where it escapes from vent holes just forward of the barrel/breech knuckle. In my trials of the prototype, I found this a really effective system for quietening report and reducing muzzle flip – though even with the compensator/shroud arrangement removed for open-sight use, the TAICHI was still easy to ‘follow through’ with; the foresight assembly adds enough weight to anchor the muzzle during the firing cycle.

Part of the TAICHI’s accuracy potential can be attributed to its direct-to-breech loading system. Its single-shot action allows you to ‘feel’ your pellet directly into the rifled breech, and a rotating cover at the back of the action block makes the whole loading process extremely shooter-friendly. And the cocking process is equally as simple – just pull back the rear hammer with your thumb and the TAICHI’s ready to fire.

Full-production versions of the new TAICHI are due to hit the UK’s shores in July and, having spent only a short time with these prototypes, I must say I’m really looking forward to getting one from that first batch to test – not least because the first 200 pistols come complete with a special certificate to mark them as the ‘first edition’, adding collectibility to what is clearly an already desirable CO2 airgun!
The wraps have come off a hard-hitting CO2 pistol from AirForceOne – the TAICHI. Having had some range time with the pre-production prototype, Nathan Kingsley reports...

While the majority of CO2 air pistols tend to be licensed copies of well-known firearms, the new TAICHI is very much its own gun. Available with a black, red or blue-anodised action, it certainly stands out from the crowd. Moreover, it's stacked out with features, the main attraction being that it's one of the most powerful CO2 air pistols currently on the market.

Incredibly, it can deliver up to 40 shots with a maximum output of 5ft/lb from a single, standard 12-gram CO2 capsule (inserted into the front of its under-barrel gas reservoir) – and that’s in .177 calibre, to boot! I’m told by AirForceOne that a .22 TAICHI will follow later in the year, too – so I'd expect an even higher shot-count from that bigger bore version.

The TAICHI isn’t just about being a powerhouse, though. Its recoilless action combines with a rifled barrel, super-comfortable, ambidextrous stippled polymer grip and a sweet ‘slide-back’ trigger to deliver tight groups downrange – and its high power/accuracy attributes certainly extend the target distances usually associated with your typical 2+ft/lb gasser.

While my favoured discipline is garden plinking, there’s no doubt that the TAICHI’s got the kind of performance that would make it suitable for the close-range despatch of pests. And whatever job you assign it, there’s a choice of sighting to suit.

The £239 TAICHI is supplied with a comprehensive toolkit and spare seals, but devoid of sights. However, the breech block is 11mm-grooved to take either a scope, reflex or laser – and to mark the launch of the pistol, the TAICHI's distributor, The Shooting Party, is offering a £40 upgrade of either a PAO Topaz 2x20 Pistol tally, 1x30 red/green Dot Sight or PAO Red Laser for just £20 – and the £259 combo price is all-inclusive of five Gold Gas capsules, 500 Panther pellets and fully paid delivery to the gun shop of your choice.

Fans of ‘irons’ are catered for, too – because AFO are also providing a fully adjustable open-sight kit as a £30 option. The rearsight slides onto the breech’s dovetails, while the foresight/muzzle