

Significantly Different

Pete Moore is seriously impressed with the new range of moderators from Sweden

Fullbore moderators, with few exceptions, are much of a muchness. If properly designed and manufactured they all do the same job to a greater degree! I gave up worrying about decibel levels years ago when testing, truth is they either do or don't reduce the rifles discharge to safe levels, and your ear will tell you quick smart! However they all differ in tonal quality and depending on materials and design will all sound different.

These days given a moddy works the priority is weight and size with 500 grams (1lb 1oz) now being considered as heavy! Let's face it we all load up our rifles with bipods, bigger/better stocks and optics and adding another 1 lb + to the package can be the straw that breaks the camel's back. As balance, handling and even shootability can go out of the window. But given the usefulness of a moderator we are loath to take them off and tend to live with what we have.

GETTING INTERESTING

I first heard about Aim Sports aimZonic moddy a few months ago from Alan Rhone, he would be importing them and yes they were significantly different. Heard that before, but always worth looking at new ideas. Light is their watch word here with two models the Compact and the slightly larger

Plus, at 260 grams (9.1 oz) and 310 grams (10.9 oz) accordingly. Dimensions were good too with the Compact at 133 x 42mm adding 118mm to the barrel. The Plus is 150 x 49.5mm and adds 135mm.

The design appears simple and is certainly different, the outer body is a black-anodised, formed aluminium alloy with the necked-down base of the Plus making it look like a drinks bottle. At the back end is a common thread with screw-in stainless steel adaptors for normal and spigoted muzzles in a number of thread sizes. Alan Rhone also has blanks if your rifle has something different! But the concept allows you to mix 'n' match between rifles.

So far not a baffle in sight! Inside is an aluminium alloy insert that makes it all work, which I describe as a venturi arrangement (small end at the muzzle). It's smooth and slight curved on the exterior, inside are six chambers that get progressively larger as the venturi widens to the exit. In effect you have a hollow cone set in the body shell. Where this assembly exits at the front of the body gas is also allowed to escape around the bullet aperture by what is described as a 'bypass valve'.

CRUNCH TIME

On firing the gasses expand into the interior and start to cool and reduce in pressure with

some venting out of the bypass valve, which further reduces pressure. As the bullet enters the baffle stack gas is bled into each chamber continuing the moderating effect. Noise reduction is a quoted 20-23 dB (Compact) and, 23-26 dB (Plus). All well and good, but now time for Aim Sport to put their money where their moddies are...

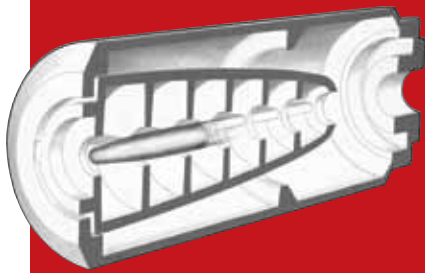
Alan sent me four examples; two Compacts in 5.7mm/.224" and 6.7mm/.260" and two Plus in 6.7mm/.260" and 7.7mm/.308". The range covers the following bore sizes - .224, 6.7mm, .308, .338 and 9.3mm and no magnums, but the choice is versatile enough. Each unit has all these written on it with a dot next to its individual calibre.

For testing I used the following rifles - Mauser M03 in 223 Rem with a spare barrel in 6.5x55 Swedish, CZ527 custom in 6.5 Grendel and Savage Model 25 in 17 Hornet. For control/contrast I had a MAE/PES reflex (223), Hardy Gen III (17 Hornet), Ase Ultra Compact (6.5)

SURPRISED AND IMPRESSED

Call me cynical, and though well presented I was not expecting miracles from the aimZonic. I did not get miracles; instead these little cans matched their larger brethren shot for shot on sound suppression ability. In all cases the tone sounded flatter, not louder, which is perhaps a perception thing, with my Mk 1 ear! The one that put up





Schematic of the aimZonic's baffle or venturi system, unique is the fact some of the gases are vented out of the front using a pressure-reducing 'bypass valve'



.670" Compact against Ase Ultra Jet-Z Compact both used on 6.5 Grendel, the aimZonic really improved handling



.224 Compact compared to MAE reflex for .224" calibres

more of a fight was the 10.2 oz Hardy Gen III and I was hard pushed to tell the difference. Though to its credit the aimZonic had a .224" bore over the 17-spec tube of the Hardy.

Where it also tells is in handling. On my Grendel, which though small and light is very imbalanced with its all-steel Ase Ultra Jet-Z Compact up front, hardly surprising! Putting the aimZonic Compact on made a significant difference. Equally on my Mauser M03, with its all-steel body it's at least 1 lb heavier than most rifles in its class. Adding a moddy has always been a pain, but neither the Compact (.223 Rem barrel) or the Plus (6.5x55mm barrel) were an overt burden.

The other aspect of weight effect came through on my 223 Rem M03 barrel, swapping out the MAE reflex for the Compact saw the point of impact (POI) rise about 12".

In fact on or off the POI hardly changed. Equally heat build up, which on some cans will put up a haze in a few shots that ruins the sight picture. Yes the aimZonics got hot but they also cooled down quickly too.

TOUGH ENOUGH

Good kit no doubt, but how long will they last? Aim Sports gives a 5-year, unconditional guarantee and does not stipulate a round count, so they must be confident. They suggest a yearly cleaning with paraffin or a sonic bath. But the ease of unscrewing the body off the muzzle adaptor and giving a squirt of oil is brilliant. I am very impressed and will be adding two aimZonics to my arsenal, a .224 Compact (14x1mm with spigot) for my M03's 223 barrel and a 6.7mm Plus with 1/2 x 28 UNEF adaptors that will service both my 6.5 Grendel and 6.5x55 M03. Prices are very competitive too.

Aim Sport have just finished a reflex-type called the Cyclone and Allan has a couple of examples, which he will be sending me after the BSS. Here's what he says: "The concept is brilliant, the back section is not calibre-dependent so you just remove the thread nut off the moderator, screw in the connecting adaptor and fit the back portion. The connection nut is vented straight into an additional chamber and makes quite a difference to recoil, muzzle flip and noise. The rear chamber is separated from the barrel by a sleeve. The only issue is certificate-wise as technically the rear portion could be called a moderator in its own right."



7.7mm Plus in comparison to TLD muzzle-mounted moddy both cut for .30" calibres



It's easy to swap moderators as the barrel bush/thread is easily unscrewed from the main body, on the left is a 14x1mm with spigot if you prefer



On a 17 Hornet the .224 Compact was near identical weight and effectiveness to the Hardy Gen III

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	aimZonic Compact and Plus moderators
Type:	Muzzle-mounted
Prices:	Compact £249, Plus £279 (inc VAT)
Contact:	Alan Rhone, 01978 66 00 01 www.aimsport.se

↑ FOR
Well priced,
compact and effective

↓ AGAINST
Nothing

→ VERDICT
Price and performance
makes them hard to beat,
reflex model coming

A new kid on the block, the Aim Sport aimZonic (centre) pleasingly small and light they punch well above their weight