

PRODUCTS

THE MERLIN XS

Alastair Whittingham is wowed by a wizard of a bow



What is the most memorable part of shooting the Merlin XS? Is it the blistering pace mak-

ing it one of the fastest short to mid draw length compound bows available? Is it the balance of the bow in the hand which is slightly biased to make the upper limb tip back towards the archer? Is it the incredibly solid stop that does not jar like other bows, as it is generated on the cable not on the limb? Is it the total lack of torque driven by the riser design and its interaction with the cams? Is it the positive snappiness on release with the almost flat limb technology giving limited vibration while still giving positive feedback? Is it the 'forgiveness' that the bow has due to its large bracing height compared to other speed bows? (A very respectable 7" on the bow I was shooting.) Is it the responsive aiming due to all of these things making this as stable as any bow I have ever shot and rivalling the Hoyt Ultra Elite in this aspect?

The answer is all of the above.

The real forte of the XS is in the short-to-mid draw length area. I have been shooting a 27" AMO draw length 60lb bow, which is delivering 290fps with a 300gn arrow. This compares to the 260fps out of the Apex 7, 280fps with the Prestige and 275fps with the Ultra Elite, all at the same specifications. Claudine Jennings has been shooting her XS since early July, with a 275gn arrow and 24.5" AMO at 45lb. She is getting 255fps as compared to the 235fps with the Hoyt Vtech. Like me, she has found that this increased speed allied with the greater bracing height (again 7") has improved her scores.

For many people with short draw lengths or small peep-to-arrow measurements, where speed is an issue to attain the longer distances, this bow offers unprecedented consistency due to the larger bracing height over most speed bows. I say consistency where some may say the bow is forgiving, as what is definitely true is that the XS is a very 'honest' performing bow. For many of the small bracing height 'speed' bows, there is a criticality that can leave the archer scratching their head as to the cause of wild shots. Claudine has said, since shooting 1350 with the XS, that small failures in form, which are to be expected during the long and often inclement days we have had this summer, are not punished unnecessarily.

So is this bow uniquely for those archers with short draw lengths looking for increased performance to allow comfortable shooting of the FITA distances, both at field and target? Definitely not. James Forbes, among others, has shot the XS to success both nationally and for Great Britain at 28" AMO.

This is a surprising bow in the present market. Not because it is innovative in its limb, cam and riser design – that is hardly surprising in a market where major American manufacturers have a new bow on the market every year – but in the fact that it works as a complete package. Ben Jones has designed a bow that is not clever just for the sake of being clever, every innovation brings something positive to the performance or feel. Whether you like the idea of a short axle-to-axle bow (33") or like the look of it (that tech bar is in the right place on the front) it would be a very silly archer who discounted the bow without trying it. And believe me, once you have tried it you will struggle to discount it.



Gents: 60lb, 300gn arrow			Ladies: 45lb, 275gn arrow		
Bow	Bracing height	Bowspeed (fps)	Bow	Bracing height	Bowspeed (fps)
Merlin XS	7"	290	Merlin XS	7"	255
Prestige	6"	280	VTech	6"	240
Apex 7	7"	260			
Ultraelite	7"	275			