

KX 3-9X42
BODY TUBE 1"

Prices from
£785

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Brand **Loyalty?**

Ever a fan of Europe's oldest scope manufacture, **Pete Moore** checks out Kahles new budget-orientated Kx range

A Kahles variable for under £800; are they mad? Here we see the new Kx 3-9x42, so will the name and price make you want to buy one?

You know the world is changing when established companies start to offer cheaper versions of their existing products saying that they are as good with just a few minor changes to the economy of production. In the army we called this value engineering and in some cases it really worked. So to optics, as this year at the IWA I noted with interest that both Zeiss and Kahles were showing budget models, specifically aimed at the entry level user. Interestingly both said essentially the same thing; 'the potential buyer can now get our name in a cheaper package that will encourage them to support the brand as they progress.'

Saving money is always good, but by the same token telling the

potential consumer that a gold-chip company who have always based their reputation on quality and ability is offering a cheaper product might not be such a good idea! Schmidt & Bender led the way with their small range of Hungarian-built scopes. Here everything remained the same, with money saved on labour costs alone. But in the case of Kahles and Zeiss I was told certain economies were implemented on lens coatings and finish to be able to get the price down to more acceptable levels.

Optimised or proprietary?

I now have both the Kahles Kx and Zeiss Duralyt scopes for testing. To be fair I will be doing them separately so this month it's the turn of the Kx as it arrived first, though the Duralyt can be seen in Gun Tests on the new Blaser R8 Professional, with a full review in the issue after (January 2011).

The Kx offers three models – 3-9x42, 3-10x50 and 3-10x50i (illuminated) all with 1" aluminium bodies with 2nd focal plane reticules; on test is the 3-9. As a comparison to a standard Kahles I used my old 3-10x50 Helia CT, which I first took to Africa in 2005, which has been going strong ever since. Visual changes are minimal with slotted rather than knurled turret caps. The rubber gripping ring on the magnification is now alloy and if anything the Kx's matt finish feels a tad rougher than the CTs.

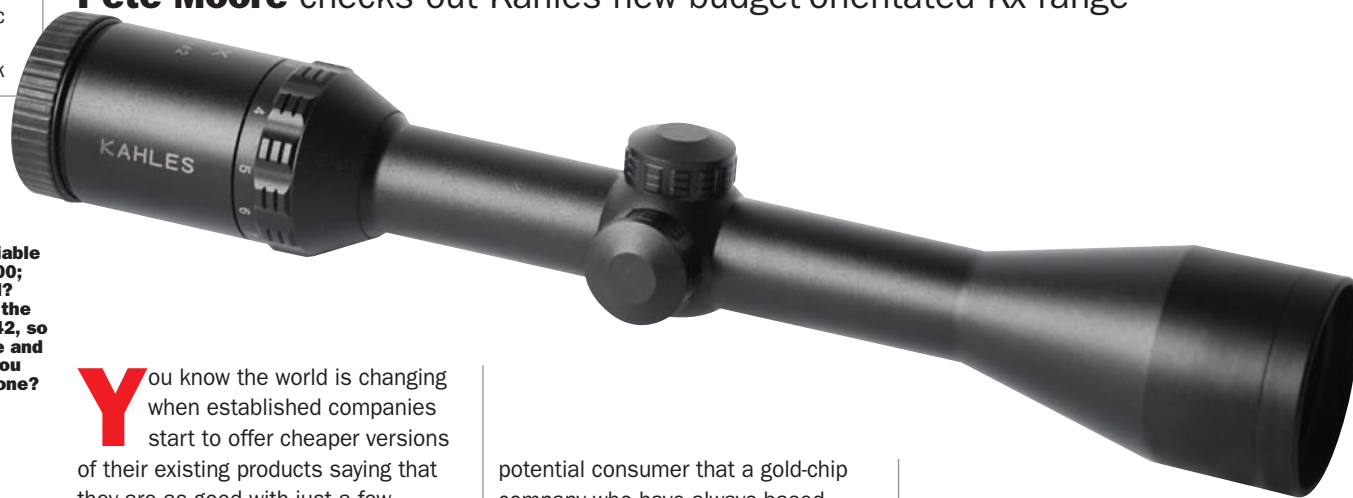
Turrets are the same with a raised bar for your finger and thumb, which I have always found a bit low and awkward to use. Given the Kx was made primarily with the US market in mind the click values are 1/4" @ 100-yards, as opposed to the European 1cm @ 100-metres (.36" @ 100-yards). So offering a fraction more precision. This translates into 48-clicks per turn (12") and four full rotations (48") in both windage and elevation.

Not a lot in it!

Kahles say of the Kx: 'Optimized AMV coatings provide nearly loss free transmission in the critical spectral range of light, around 520 nanometers, thereby obtaining the last reserves from the fading shooting light.' With the originals they state:

{ TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS }

- Kx 3-9x42**
- Body tube 1"
- Click values 1/4" @ 100-yards
- Clicks per turn 48
- Full rotations four
- Length 12"
- Weight 14oz
- Twilight factor 11.2-19.4
- FOV @ 100 yards 36.6-13
- Exit pupil 0.51-0.19
- Price £785
- KX3.5-10x50 £888
- KXI 3.5-10x50 £1095
- Contact RUAG Ammotec UK Ltd, www.ruag.co.uk



Left - Kx, right - my old 3-10x50 CT, optical quality and ability is near identical on both models with the CT being perhaps a tad crisper...



KAHLES 3-9X42 KX

'proprietary AMV coatings optimized to maximum light transmission between 500 and 540 nanometers for superior low light use. Initial tests in daylight showed the CT was just a bit crisper/brighter than the Kx with both set to the same powers. To be honest unless you did this side-by-side it was hard to see the difference.

Though not tested here the illuminated version (Kxi) uses a traditional rotary rheostat on the left of the saddle and not their more sophisticated, Automatic light system with its gun angle sensors as found on my CSX 1.5-6x42. Though it does offer an automatic 2-hour shut down facility.

Lit or not

In terms of reticules the Kx range offers two - the standard 4A with three thick posts at 3, 6 and 9 o'clock that stop before the middle with a slimmer, centre cross coming down from 12 o'clock. The lit one is called the 4 Dot and is similar to the 4A with a more open centre and illuminated dot in the middle. In terms of cost this will add around £200 to the bottom line...

There's little doubt in my mind the Kx is an efficient design that certainly appears to perform near as well as comparable models from their original range - Helia C, CSX and CBX. Plus the brand loyalty thing could well work out too. It's also considerably cheaper to the tune of £200, but even then that puts the basic 3-9x42 at a quoted £785. With the 3-10x50 at £888 and

the 3-10x50 I at £1095. Certainly good for Kahles prices, but I wonder if it's enough to entice first timers looking for a quality, European optic? We shall see!

On that point so can you! Elsewhere in this issue is a free entry prize draw to win the Kx 3-9x42 courtesy of UK distributors RUAG Ammotec UK Ltd.



Turrets appear identical, but the finish feels a tad rougher

↑ FOR

Good quality optic at considerably lower cost

↓ AGAINST

Prices might be too high to tempt the target audience

→ VERDICT

Opens up top quality European optics to a wider market