

Three New Survival Rifles from



by Tom Gaylord

You know them for their powerful sporting PCPs, but in 2014 AirForce Airguns is bringing three new survival air rifles to market—the Escape series! Say survival these days, and people imagine the Hollywood image of zombies and world-ending comets. Neither of which has ever happened in all of recorded history. Yet, each year there are hundreds of real events all around the globe that thrust millions of people into real survival situations. Earthquakes, fires, floods, tornados, tsunamis, blizzards and hurricanes are all too real and kill thousands of people who aren't prepared to last until help arrives.

Survival means you have the ability to hold out (eat, drink, stay warm and safe) for at least 3 days until emergency services get organized. And it can often be much longer than that—just ask anyone from New Orleans. In a real survival situation, you aren't going up against lions, tigers and bears (oh, my!) unless you live in a zoo or in places like the Pacific Northwest. But you may have a chance to hunt deer, feral hogs (especially in the South and Southwest!) and other food animals.

Ton Jones

Ton Jones, star of the popular Auction Hunters TV show, was raised in the high desert of southern California, giving him an appreciation for wildlife and the real outdoors. One of the things he does is present survival training at sporting goods venues around the nation. As part of his presentations, he likes to show people the equipment he has learned to trust. Until now, an airgun was missing from his equipment because there wasn't one that did all he wanted. That's where the Escape comes in.



At the 2014 SHOT Show, Ton Jones proudly holds the survival air rifle he helped invent.

On a hunting trip last year with AirForce owner John McCaslin, Ton mentioned the lack of a survival airgun and asked John if putting a longer barrel on the TalonP air pistol might boost its power significantly. John agreed, and the Escape rifle series was born!

Three rifles

There are three separate models in this series—the Escape, the Escape UL (for ultra light) and the EscapeSS, which is the version with baffles in the shroud to quiet the report. All three rifles come in both .22 and .25 calibers. Although they will accept AirForce barrels in other calibers, it isn't recommended because of the interaction with the special Escape valve.



The three survival air rifles from AirForce are the Escape (top), EscapeSS (center) and the EscapeUL.

Ton wanted the most power possible from a smallbore air rifle and still be feasible to pump with a hand pump in the field. The TalonP has a small 213cc air reservoir that makes it easier to fill from a hand pump. Of course, the shot count is less than with a larger reservoir, but Ton wasn't looking for lots of shots. He only wanted one-shot kills with power and accuracy.

And he got it. A .25-caliber Escape with a 24-inch Lothar Walther barrel will generate 97.88 foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle! That's a 43.2-grain Eun Jin pellet moving out at 1010 f.p.s. That should be expected, though, because the TalonP pistol with just a 12-inch barrel already gets over 55 foot-pounds with the same pellet.

He spent several days at the AirForce facility in Fort Worth testing the new rifle during development. Not only did he test the power but also the accuracy of the new gun. He's so pleased with the Escape's performance that he's agreed to put his logo on the rifle. He says it's light enough for anyone to carry all day and powerful enough to get the job done.



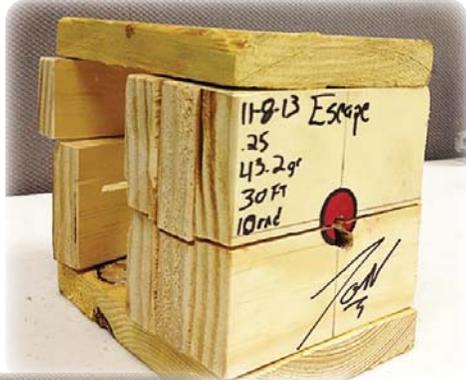
Every Escape rifle has Ton Jones' logo on the frame.

Expect some recoil

The Escape puts out over 80 percent of the power of a .22 long rifle round. Shooting it is similar to shooting a rimfire. It recoils, and the discharge is similar to a rimfire, though more prolonged and not as sharp.

Those familiar with the Condor will have to reassess what they know about air rifles when they shoot the Escape. It's powerful, loud and built to get the job done—period. It's not a backyard plinker. AirForce wanted to see what the penetration was like, so they built several wooden targets, but pellets from the Escape just destroyed them and kept on going.

To test the Escape's penetration, Tom shot the rifle at this wooden target. Unfortunately, all 10 pellets went through the same hole....



...and right out the back! The pellets cracked the target in half. No telling where they wound up!

Tape measure shows more than three inches of wood were penetrated. Clearly, the Escape needs a lot more lumber to stop it.



I wanted to see what the Escape would do firsthand. I already knew it had smashing power, but could such a beast be accurate, too? Well—yes, it can!

I shot several 50-yard, 5-shot groups with JSB Exact King pellets, which are the most accurate in the rifle I tested. The best of six groups measured 0.705 inches between centers, and the worst measured 0.894 inches. This was with the rifle running on No. 6 power setting and with a reduced reservoir pressure. With the heaviest pellets at full-tilt, the five-shot groups opened to 1.5 inches or a little more at the same 50 yards.

Two more Escapes

The other two Escape rifles have shorter barrels, so their power is less than the Escape but still more than the Condor. The EscapeUL has an 18-inch barrel that's also thinner to further reduce weight. The rifle weighs just 4.25

lbs. by itself; yet in .25 caliber, it outputs up to 79.46 foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle. It's several inches shorter and several pounds lighter than a Condor, yet produces about 15 foot-pounds more muzzle energy.

The EscapeSS has a shrouded 12-inch barrel inside a long frame that's filled with three high-tech plastic baffles. They're a tight fit inside the frame of the gun, and a Belleville washer keeps tension on them so there's no rattling sound.

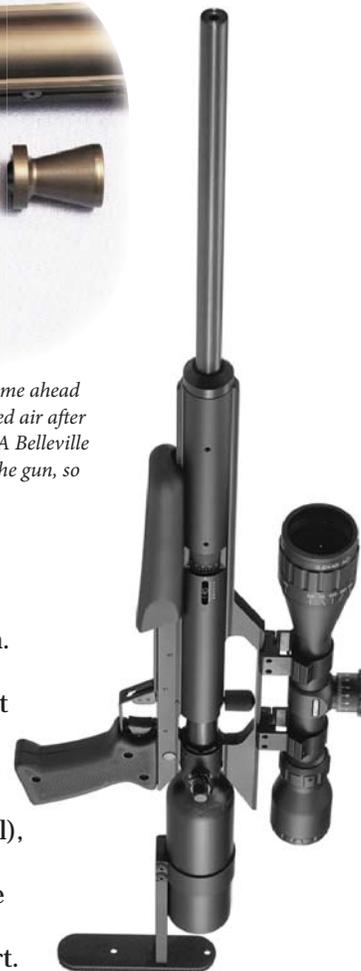


Five JSB Exact King pellets went into 0.702 inches at 50 yards. This is the best group, but none of the six I fired was larger than 0.894 inches. This pellet is very reliable at power setting six and has proven to be the most accurate .25-caliber pellet tested in this rifle.



Three high-tech baffles sit inside the frame ahead of the muzzle. They divert the compressed air after it leaves the barrel, reducing the report. A Belleville washer keeps tension on the baffles in the gun, so there's no rattling.

While the EscapeSS has a reduced report, don't think of it as the perfect backyard plinker for suburbia. Unless you also shoot .22 rimfire in your backyard, treat this little rifle like it belongs in the field! With a maximum power above 55 foot-pounds (the same as the TalonP pistol), the .25-caliber EscapeSS is a serious hunting airgun. Those baffles in the frame just take some of the edge off the report.



(Cont. on page 20)

Speaking of calibers

I've reported only the performance of the .25-caliber rifles. The .22 rifles are lower in power because the heaviest pellets in that caliber are much lighter than those in .25. The Escape in .22 shoots a 32.4-grain Eun Jin pellet at 971 f.p.s., for a muzzle energy of 67.85 foot-pounds. Expect the other two rifles to perform similarly.

Bottom line

These three air rifles are not for casual shooters. A Condor gives more flexibility, and a Talon SS is better suited to suburban shooting. These three are for shooters who want to get off the grid and avoid ammo shortages, high prices and every other civilized encumbrance. For those who want to just grab it and go, here are three affordable choices for serious airgun hunting.

Quick summary

Rifle	Calibers	Weight	Length	Sale price
Escape	.22 & .25	5.30 lbs.	34.5" - 39"	\$627.00
EscapeSS.	.22 & .25	4.30 lbs.	27.75" - 32.25"	\$617.50
EscapeUL	.22 & .25	4.25 lbs.	28.5" - 33"	\$579.50

My thanks to Ton Jones, who freely shared his thoughts on the new rifles. Thanks also to AirForce Airguns (AirForceAirguns.com, 877-247-4867) for providing these three rifles for an extended test and to Pyramyd Air (PyramydAir.com, 888-262-4867) for providing pellets for testing.

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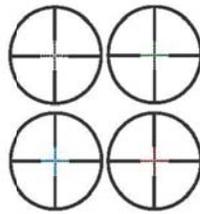
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MODEL	MAG	EXIT PUPIL	RETICLE	OBJ DIA	FOV	EYE RELIEF	CLICK	LENGTH	WEIGHT	AO
CS873950AO	3X-9X	10-5.6mm	Mil-Dot	50mm	39.3-13.1'	3.3"-3.1"	1/4 MOA	13.5"	22 oz.	5 yds
CS8741650AO	4X-16X	10-3.1mm	Mil-Dot	50mm	22.4-5.6'	3.3"-3.1"	1/4 MOA	15.2"	25 oz.	10 yds
CS8762450AO	6X-24X	8.3-2.1mm	Mil-Dot	50mm	15.2-3.8'	3.3"-3.1"	1/4 MOA	16"	26 oz.	15 yds



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