

## DBA VHD 8x42

Ray Scally (November 2015)



I have to confess at being a bit of an optics nut having owned or at least looked through most models available to the birdwatcher over the last 30 years. As a result I relished receiving and reviewing the latest Opticron top end offering shortly to be released.

Already being an Opticron owner 10x42 DBA and 7x42 BGA I was particularly keen on this review. On opening the pack I was immediately struck by the compact size and general feel and build quality of the binoculars which is to a very high standard, the rubber armouring maintained a vertical lined effect reminding me of the older

DBA model but that is where the similarities end. The binoculars are the open bridge design which seems to be the most amenable and favoured design.

I have two viewing criteria when purchasing binoculars, normal two handed viewing, and singled handed viewing while field sketching or walking the dog on the lead. The compact form and balance of the binoculars made all these viewing positions perfect, the open bridge design allowed me to get a good one handed grip around the barrel. The rubber armouring has a matt non slippery feel and the focus wheel position made one handed focussing a dream, the armouring is also much more substantial around the objective lenses than past Opticron models protecting the threaded barrels from impact.



The only item that I first questioned on my first out of the box look was the twist up rubber covered eyecups, the intermediate positions didn't lock into place firmly and seemed to have a bit of give in them so I imagined that they would be moving a bit during use, but to my surprise once positioned I had no issue with them at all, they stayed in position on an intermediate setting for the duration of field use. The eyecups are very comfortable on the eye socket with nice rounded edges.

The focus is very smooth and precise with 2 turns between the focusing extremities, the dioptre adjustment is also housed on the focus wheel and once set was forgotten about. The optical quality was a big surprise and on my first view through the binoculars I asked myself if I would be able to tell them apart from other top of the range binoculars it was so good, the image was extremely sharp with excellent colour saturation and a very neutral if not absent colour cast. When viewing branches against the sky chromatic aberration was non-existent. I used the binoculars in most lights and found the light gathering superb. In rainy dull conditions the binoculars didn't let me down, the sharp image was very good indeed.



The binoculars come cased with a rain guard and neoprene comfort strap which also has quick release plastic catches, the rain guard is the standard hard plastic type which has been issued with past Opticron DBA models, the case was not available at the time of the review.

It is difficult to categorise binoculars into the low/ mid to high end bracket as the upper end cost of binoculars seems to be spiralling into the thousands, so the question would be would I consider these if I had no budget, the answer would be yes, I cannot see any major gain with spending double the money and to put it simply if I was told that these binoculars were my last pair I would indeed be very happy!

*Ray Scally is a birdwatcher and artist widely published in ornithological journals and books and is well known for his recent work illustrating the two Birding Frontiers Challenge Series best-selling identification books, Autumn and Winter. Other publications include The Ultimate Site Guide to Scarcer British Birds by L G R Evans, Rare Birds Where and When Vol. 1 by Russell Slack and British Birds Magazine amongst many others. Ray exhibits annually at the Spurn Migration Festival and is currently working on The Birds of Spurn by Andy Roadhouse. When he's not at Spurn, Ray can be found birding in his East Cheshire square.*