

Opticron Aurora BGA VHD 10x42

Xavier Riera (October 2021)

Some weekends ago this autumn, during an outing to the Serra de Prades Natural Park, I had the chance to thoroughly test the new Japanese-made Opticron Aurora BGA VHD 10x42 binoculars and the truth is that I was pleasantly surprised.

The first thing that catches your eye when you receive the elegant black box in which they are packaged is their size, which is relatively small. Inside we will find, in addition to the binoculars, a case, a neoprene strap, a good size cleaning cloth, the warranty card, a silicon ice bag and a small thank-you envelope with a small gift.



Once in the field, the Aurora stand out for their size and weight that are significantly smaller, for example, than those of my Zeiss Victory SF that I carried for comparison. To the touch they are compact, solid and their construction feels of very good quality. They have a rubber coating that makes them pleasant to the touch and a focus wheel which responds well to manipulation since it is very precise. Dioptre adjustment is made using a wheel located above the focus wheel.

One element that did not quite convince me, were the eyepiece cups, which apparently seemed a bit loose, but it must be said that after a couple of days of intense use, I did not notice any type of malfunction when raising and lower them to adapt to vision with and without glasses.

The binoculars are equipped with protectors, both for the eyepiece lenses, with solid plastic, and for the objectives, with softer rubber. It should be said that the eyepiece caps, although they perform correctly, do not have the quality that would be expected from binoculars of this range and are, simpler, than the ones of some lower models of the brand. On the other hand, personally, I never use objective lens protectors (the ones below), since I consider that any element that can dirty the binoculars usually comes from above (rain, sweat, dust, etc.) and because, when it is windy, they wave and become quite annoying elements. Luckily, these protectors can be removed very easily and left in the case.

In terms of optical quality, in optimal light conditions, I found it excellent. In fact, I was entertained in comparing the two binoculars thanks to a group of Red-rumped Swallows that were perched on an electric wire, and I was hardly able to see any difference with my Zeiss. The Opticron Aurora have a very good contrast and the definition of the colours is totally faithful to what is perceived with the naked eye. In addition, the definition of the periphery of the image is remarkable and this is particularly noticeable in binoculars that, like the Aurora, have a fairly wide field of view (116 m). At dusk, in low light, I did notice a slight decrease in performance compared to the Zeiss Victory SF, but it must be said that this fact was only perceived in twilight conditions.



Another feature that I liked was its short focus distance. This allowed me to enjoy the beauty of the butterflies on the flowers and the endeavours of insects right at my feet.

In summary, taking into account that its price is around €1.000, I think that Opticron has successfully launched an excellent product in a range where there are more and more attractive options from different brands, which in many cases, as in the case of the Aurora, they have little to envy models of the most recognized brands, which are priced more than double. The Aurora offer very good optical quality in a small and light package, and still feels extremely solid and well-built. In a time in which most of us carry, in addition to binoculars, a camera and even a sound recorder, this saving in terms of weight and size, without affecting quality at all, is an advantage to be taken into account.

Xavier Riera is in charge of the Dissemination and Training Unit of the Institut Català d'Ornitologia (ICO), which manages the training of new ornithologists through numerous outings and training courses. In addition, he is especially dedicated to the recording and study of the vocalizations of birds and is one of the administrators of Trektellen, a web portal in which, among other parameters, the data of all the European recording stations of nocturnal vocalizations (NOCMIG) are stored. Xavier Riera is also a member of the Organizing Committee of the DELTA BIRDING FESTIVAL.