



TECH REVIEWS

Binoculars

Opticron Aurora BGA VHD Binoculars



By **Nick Moran**

The Aurora BGA VHD, launched in spring 2021, is Opticron's new flagship binocular. It takes over that mantle from the DBA VHD+ and I was able to field test 8x42 models of both, side-by-side. The first impression of the Aurora is one of quality: even the box (complete with a 'surprise gift', that I managed to resist opening!) and the Cordura case look the part. Picking them up, the Aurora immediately gave a feeling of robust construction, without being too heavy, and lifting them to my eyes, the weight was very well balanced. Unlike the double-hinged DBA, the Aurora has one central hinge, providing more space for your fingers to wrap round the objective end of each barrel. The Aurora is just under a centimetre longer and about 30 grams heavier, on account of having 10 glass elements compared to eight in the DBA, but these differences are slight and do not make the Aurora feel any bulkier.

The glass is where the Aurora really outstrips its stablemate. The eyepiece lens diameter is wider, creating a more comfortable viewing experience, and the field of view is considerably better: 141 m at 1,000 m, compared to 122 m for the DBAs. The image is crisp and to my eyes, the colour rendition true to life, and certainly brighter than the older model. Excellent edge-to-edge sharpness is achieved by field-flattener lenses, though

these do result in a very thin blue fringe to the edge of the field. Furthermore, the Aurora wins on close focusing. The distance is quoted as 1.9 m but I could focus on my feet and I'm 1.83 m! The close focus on the DBA is 2.5 m and, whilst the difference might seem trivial for birdwatching, it can have a big impact if watching insects at close quarters. Another plus point about the focusing is the minimal movement of the wheel needed to focus from near to far, making it easy to keep a sharp image of a bird flying towards or away from you.

TOP PERFORMANCE FOR PRICE

Setting up the Aurora for your eyes is straightforward, with an unfussy click-lock on the focus wheel to set the dioptre adjustment, and a wide interpupillary-distance range. Four eyecup heights provide plenty of flexibility, though if I was being picky the eyecups on the unit I tested were quite loose, hence occasionally becoming adjusted accidentally. The kit includes a wide bungee-style strap which was easy to fit and comfy to wear.

As I've come to expect with Opticron equipment, the Aurora binocular offers extremely good value for money. Its performance in various light levels raises the bar for binoculars in the middle price bracket, and indeed rivals that of many more expensive models. Coupled with an ergonomic design, reassuring build quality and a 30-year warranty, it is hard to imagine a better binocular for the money and, if your budget will allow, they are certainly worthy of serious consideration. ■

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Price	£799
Value for money	●●●●●●
Weight	●●●●●●
Image	●●●●●●
Build	●●●●●●
Ease of use	●●●●●●
Overall	●●●●●●