Imagic TGA WP 7x50 & 10x50
Dr Lee Sproats (October 2016)

The Imagic TGA Waterproof WP are classic-style porro prism binoculars and lie between the Savanna WP and HR WP range offered by Opticron.

Packaging & First Impressions
Both models are packaged in a grey box with the green Opticron logo and an embossed style hand-written like “imagic” vertically written up one side. This packaging offers a crisp modern look before we get to the contents.

On opening the box[s] reveals an orange cleaning cloth and the warranty card. The binoculars are housed in a soft leather-looking style case with an already attached case carry strap. The case lid is of a velcro style fastening. On opening the case reveals the binoculars wrapped in a plastic bag along with the binocular lanyard. Individual rainguards cover the objective lenses while a single long elongated rain guard covers both oculars.

The binoculars are covered in a firm feeling smooth rubber casing. The rubber around the prism housing is the same material as the objective barrel but has vertical raised lines to improve grip. The binoculars felt firm to handle even when wet. Weights are quoted as being 805g (7x50) and 834g (10x50), and puts these binoculars in the same ball park as similar types of 50mm porro prism binoculars. They do not feel heavy when for viewing long periods of viewing and there is no real need for use of a tripod except for extended viewing such as star gazing.

Features, Fit and Finish
Focusing is achieved by a large centre focus knob which has a rubber covering that feels the same type of material as the body of the binocular and also has the same raised lines to improve grip whilst focusing.

Focus feel was smooth without it being too slack or too stiff. The inter pupillary distance (IPD) is 57-73mm movement of the centre hinge is smooth. The binoculars can be tripod mounted by removing the circular cover on the objective side of the central hinge. I would recommend the Opticron 31005 L-Mount which fits at all IPD’s.

Eye relief is quoted at 21.5mm (7x50) and 19.5mm (10x50). I wear glasses and both models were comfortable to use with glasses. The eyecups are twist up-down type and the feel smooth when adjusted. One thing to note was they don’t feature the multi-stage adjustments like a lot of Opticron roof-prism binoculars. Dioptre adjustment is on the right side eyepiece and features a click-stop action.

Field of view is 6° (7x50) and 5.3° (10x50). Close focus distance is quoted as 4.9m and 4.5m for the 7x and 10x respectively. If we compare these figures to the 8x50 and 10x50 Discovery Roof Prism WP models (at a similar price), their minimum focus distance is much less at 1.5m. For viewing distant objects - close focus distance is not an issue but for viewing birds or butterflies at close range you may want to consider how suitable the Imagic would be.

Using the binoculars
I found that the views through both sets of binocular were identical in terms of optical quality. Looking through the binoculars on a wide of daylight terrestrial subjects (landscapes, street views etc.) showed that they gave very bright and high contrast views even on some of the dullest days and I could see no signs of the effects of any internal reflections.

Colours were well reproduced and appeared neutral to my eyes. I checked for colour cast by looking at a range of white coloured objects such as “fluffy white clouds” to a sign board with white writing and compared the views using the naked eye to the view through binoculars. I found that I could see no observable colour cast. Chromatic aberration is well controlled and I found it to be only visible with very high contrast situations such as looking at the Moon against the blackness of the night sky. I saw no signs of pincushion distortion but a very small amount of barrel distortion which was ever so slightly noticeable on the 10x50. For the vast majority of people the amount would be negligible.

Looking at the night sky with both sets of binoculars gave wonderful views of the stars, various star clusters (such as the Double Cluster in Perseus) and nebulae/Galaxies such as the Orion Nebula (rising early in the morning sky) and the Andromeda Galaxy visible late in the evening sky at present.


Perseus Double Cluster by Marc Van Norden

The Andromeda Galaxy is a naked eye object but when both the 7x and 10x binoculars were used to observe this object it simply stood out from the background of space and was 3D like in its appearance. You could almost hold your hand out to touch it! The same goes for views of the Orion Nebula too. The most amazing views through both sets of binoculars were to be had looking at that faint band of light that goes across the sky from about South West to North East - the Milky way - our Galaxy. Naked eye just shows the Milky Way as a speckled band of light, difficult to see from urban areas due to light pollution. But using these binoculars showed the band to be made up of hundreds and hundreds of stars of different brightness. At a nearby darkish sky site it stood out even more. Between the two pairs the 7x model gave a wider field of view to look at the Milky Way sights but also gave it a more high contrast, stand out appearance.

Conclusion

Whichever pair you choose for either terrestrial or astronomy (or both), you will not be disappointed at the build or optical quality. However if I had to choose one pair the 7x would be my choice because of the slightly wider field of view and slightly brighter more vivid views it delivered.

Dr Lee Sproats has been a keen amateur astronomer since the age of 7 & holds an Honours Degree in Astronomy and a PhD in Astrophysics of Infrared and Optical Astronomy of Cataclysmic Binaries from the Mullard Space Science Laboratory, University of London.

He has used telescopes on Hawaii, Arizona, La Palma as well as the Parkes and 5km East-West Array at Narrabri in Australia.

Lee works at Greenwitch North, a specialist optical retailer Birstall west Yorkshire. He has a reputation for being extremely well-informed and helpful.