

BUSHNELL ENGAGE 10X42 BINOCULARS –

REVIEWED BY JAMES LEWIS...

Over the years I have trialled several different makes of binoculars, from entry level right up to the top of the range, and to be honest I am a strong believer that you get what you pay for in terms of quality.

Bearing this in mind, and after being fortunate enough to be offered the opportunity to review a relatively new model of binoculars called the "Bushnell Engage", I was initially a little reluctant to trial them. Not to mention being a little sceptical about leaving my Leica Geovids at home in lieu of a much smaller and lighter

pair of binos costing a fraction of the price. However, to my surprise the Bushnell Engage left me quite impressed.

OVERVIEW

Contained in the box were the 10x42 binoculars, a silk liner bag which doubles as a cleaning cloth, a neoprene neck strap, and a durable canvas outer storage case. Once around my neck, my first thoughts were, "Comparing apples with apples, ya know, these binos aren't that bad after all!". They look impressive and feel like they will survive to tell the story, even if they are really put through their paces.

In terms of specifications the Bushnell Engage come in 8x42, 10x42, 10x50 and 12x50 configurations and have many handy features. The main body is O-ring sealed and nitrogen purged for total waterproof and fog proof protection and can withstand punishment, being housed in a lightweight and rugged magnesium alloy chassis. The Engage come covered with a robust grip surface for ease of handling, twist-up eye cups, and have lockable diopter rings which in my opinion are a sign of quality that other models in this price range are yet to adopt.

↑ The Engage binos feature a large and heavily 'serrated' central focusing wheel.

The Engage lenses are fully multi-coated to deliver maximum brightness and clarity, and Bushnell has utilized ED prime glass technology which is resistance to temperature changes. The lenses are designed to deliver excellent colour, resolution, contrast, and great light-gathered abilities

in low-light conditions. In addition, Bushnell has applied several EXO Barrier water and oil repellent coatings to the exterior of the lenses to help prevent scratches and blemishes. The thing to note is, this bonded coating will not fade with the passing of time, or through normal wear and tear.

Bushnell also boasts a 113 metres @1000m field of view and incorporates the Bak-4 Roof Prism system in all of their Engage models, with corrected P3C prism phase coating. In a nutshell, prism system binoculars often need corrections due to stray light entering the binoculars and causing a polarization angle to occur. This can result in the light being split into two slightly out-of-phase beams, which if left uncorrected will produce a poor-quality image with less contrast and a lower resolution.

IN THE FIELD

In terms of how they performed out in the field, I tested the Engage binos in several different settings and at various times of the day in order

BUSHNELL ENGAGE 10X42

Magnification x Obj Lens:	10x42mm
Close Focus:	2.4m
PC-3 Phase Coating:	Yes
Lens Coating:	Fully Multi-Coated
Field of View:	113m @ 1000m
Adapt to Tripod:	Yes
Eye cups:	Twist-Up
Locking Diopter:	Yes
Eye Relief:	18mm
Focus System:	Center
Exit Pupil:	4.2mm
Prism Glass:	BaK-4
Water/Fog Proof:	Yes
Prism System:	Roof
Length:	140mm
Weight:	666gr



⬆ James photographed this red hind and fawn through the Engage 10x42 binos.

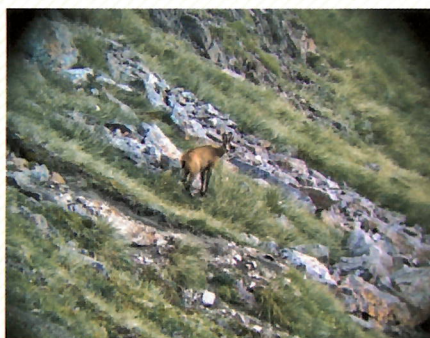
to get an idea of what they are truly like. On my summer break up in the Marlborough Sounds I had them out on the boat most days. In this kind of environment you would expect the view to be bright and reflective but the Engage helped to remove a lot of the glare from the water and allowed me to view other boats and objects clearly from several kilometres away. This was especially

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noticeable at last light with a low angle sun. I also used the Engage to glass cliff faces for goats and deer with relative ease in low light.

On a separate occasion on the West Coast a couple of weeks later I took the Engage for a last light stroll at the end of an overcast and rainy day. I stalked along a river edge where I’ve known chamois to reside and with very little light left I was able to identify a small mob as they fed out onto a tussock flat. I was impressed with how the Engage showed the sharp outline of the animals only minutes before the evening became pitch black.

On the last occasion I trialled the Engage 10x42s out at altitude on a very bright,



⬆ Sprung! An East Coast chamois buck caught out in the open.

sunny day. Once again, I went to a spot known to hold animals but this time decided to leave the rifle at home. Instead my mission was to get clear, crisp images of live animals to test the Engage’s focus and clarity. As you can see, the quality of the images you can take with an iPhone and these little binoculars is right up there with some SLR digital cameras.

For years I thought it was best to try cover every square metre of a hunting area to produce results, but nowadays the results come more often because I’ve slowed down (a bit) and spend more time glassing potential areas from a distance behind a good set of binos. In my experience, the Bushnell Engage are a great option when it comes to all-weather performance. At 140mm in length and weighting only 666 grams they’re constructed with a high level of workmanship, better than one would expect from a middle of the range product, and in my opinion, they are serious contenders for anyone in the market for a new pair of binos. Bushnell optics are distributed by Ampro Sales Ltd; an independently owned outdoor equipment firm here in New Zealand, for \$779.99 – for that price you’d be silly to not have them on your wish list.

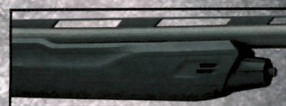
Hot barrels!

James



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