

NIGHT VISION ON A BUDGET

Pard NV008 LRF Night Vision Scope



By John Herbert

AFFORDABLE NIGHT VISION (NV) THAT WORKS - DOES IT EXIST? The answer to that question, as of 2020, has to be, “Yes!” I realise there have been semi-affordable NV scopes for a few years now, but in my experience, they either lacked usability, were not that affordable or just compromised in weight or performance. Owl Optics NZ think they have the affordable solution with the Pard NVO08, so they sent us the upgraded Pard 008 LRF - which has a built-in laser rangefinder (LRF) - for testing.

INTRODUCTION

Pard are made in China, and interestingly, this unit has more in common with a camcorder than a traditional riflescope; this type of technology is what makes the Pard affordable. It doesn't use traditional image-enhancement tubes that cost thousands of dollars to make and are only useful if they're Generation 2 or better; they're hideously expensive ... if you can even find one for sale!

The solution to this is a combination of old and new technologies. The new is digital - specifically, high-resolution digital screens - as used in almost every modern device these days, and the old is the infrared illuminator that's been around since the M3 Vampir (aka 'snooperscope') scopes of WWII. Infrared is a great solution for this type of application and, while no longer useful for military applications,

the advent of high-powered LED torches has made it work for hunters. The Pard NVO08 LRF combines these technologies in a very compact and effective package.

DESCRIPTION

Externally, the NVO08 LRF has three main parts. The first is a tube with lenses front and rear and an on-off button on the left-hand side. The main button also allows you to put the unit to sleep with a single push; this turns off the display so animals can't see any stray light while you're carrying the rifle. A quick push turns it back on again.

The tube has a built-in 1080p OLED display made by Sony, and this is where you'll see your crosshairs, inclinometer, elevation angle reading and compass. There's also information on the

battery charge level, whether or not Wi-Fi is on, how long you've been recording and the level of IR you're using.

On the other side are the connection ports - USB and HDMI - and the screw-on cap that houses the SD card slot for storing recorded video. The scope had a manual focus up front for the image and a rear focus for the reticle.

Above the main tube is the IR illuminator; this has an adjustable beam for flood or spot and on the left-hand side are the buttons that operate the unit. These are the modern multi-use buttons that perform more than one task depending on what you're trying to do. The unit is powered by an 18650 3200mAh battery, which is supplied with the unit.

To the right of the main body is the laser rangefinder. This has a stated range of 600m but, to be fair, its main use will be for distances up to about 250m. I can see it being useful when you have a subsonic load with a rainbow trajectory where knowing your distance out past 75m is critical. It's worthwhile noting that the LRF measures at the yellow distance indicator and not the crosshairs.

The zero can be set for up to five rifles/loads, so once you have a zero saved for one rifle, you can swap it to another rifle and re-zero it, save that zero setting and, when you move it back to the first rifle, choose the first zero and it should be spot on. The mount supplied by Owl Optics looks to be high quality and will return to zero when removed and replaced. That said, Owl did supply a very nicely made INNOMount unit that's even more accurate with return to zero.

For testing, the Pard was fitted to the excellent Ruger American Precision rifle we tested in the last issue. I also fitted it to my Custom 6.5 Creedmoor but, unfortunately, I saw no game animals on the three occasions I took it out - I had to settle for rabbits instead!

PREPARATION

Zeroing the scope is reasonably simple thanks to that camcorder technology. You fire one shot and, with a press of a button, take a picture with your crosshairs on the centre target. From there, you use the image to move the crosshair to where the bullet impacted the target and zeroing is done. I have to say, this system worked brilliantly, and even though the image from the screen isn't as good as a traditional scope, it never stopped me from achieving some very good groups.



ABOVE:

THE MENU CONTROLS ARE ABOVE THE ON/OFF BUTTON. They control everything including the laser rangefinder, zoom, IR illumination and video functions. My tip is to learn how it works before you go out at night.

BELOW:

THE BUSINESS END OF THE PARD HAS THE OBJECTIVE LENS, which is focusable, the IR illuminator above and the laser rangefinder to the right.

Infrared is a great solution for this type of application and, while no longer useful for military applications, the advent of high-powered LED torches has made it work for hunters.



Swapping between 6.5 and 13x power was done with the push of a button, and there was no change in point of impact.

The scope is certainly good enough for daytime use, but the image is a digital rendition of what you're looking at, so it doesn't have the clarity of a traditional scope - more like that of an older TV screen. It is, however, perfectly useable, and during daytime, it's a colour image while at night, you switch to black and white.

During sighting in, I checked the repeatability of both the supplied mount and a more expensive INNOMount - both of them came back to a useable zero, but the supplied mount was perhaps off by .25 MOA while the INNOMount was near perfect.

The first thing you realise when using the Pard ►

The main button also allows you to put the unit to sleep with a single push; this turns off the display, so animals can't see any stray light while you're carrying the rifle.

SPECIFICATIONS

- 1080p full colour for daytime use and 1080p night vision mode for night use.
- 600m laser rangefinder.
- 6.5x optical magnification and digital 1.5x zoom function increases image/target size.
- Multiple reticle choice with aim-point graduations.
- Built-in recording to Micro SD card; records in MP4 format, which is compatible with OSX and Windows systems; video can be also be played back through the viewfinder to analyse shots.
- Built in 200-250m illuminator with zoom function from spot to flood and three IR power modes.
- Recoil rated up to .308 calibre.
- Waterproof IP67.
- Runs off a single 18650 flat top battery so you can carry spares and replace in the field easily (one battery included).
- Adjustable brightness and exposure control to allow greater colour and detail during very low light conditions.
- Picatinny/Weaver rail mounting system.



ABOVE: **THIS IS THE DAYLIGHT VIEW DURING SIGHTING IN; NOTICE THE BOX ON THE RIGHT** – this is the laser rangefinder. The box needs to be over the target for an accurate reading. Sadly, the video capture does not show the other information displayed, which is quite comprehensive.

RIGHT: **THE ACTUAL IMAGE YOU SEE IS BETTER THAN THIS** as this is a screen capture of a video; but finding animals in pitch black darkness is a piece of cake – hitting them is pretty easy as well. The rangefinder says 0 because I was resting on the side of a fence post which blocked the laser.



ABOVE: **WITH THE COVER CAP REMOVED, YOU HAVE ACCESS TO THE SD CARD SLOT as well as the USB and HDMI outputs.**

at night is that you have to remember what all the buttons are for, and this can be a bit confusing when you're trying to get the rangefinder working, change the IR illuminator settings and record video all at the same time. I'd also note that if you do get confused and press and hold buttons in a certain sequence, you can confuse the Pard to the point where it becomes unresponsive. I did manage to do this twice, but to be fair, I eventually got used to what button does what, and it was plain sailing after that.

PERFORMANCE

The actual performance was very good. Rabbits out past 100m were easy, and bigger animals could be seen at 200m plus. The unit is rated to 250m for game animals, and I think that's fair. Its zoom function is mostly best left on 6.5 power, as on the higher setting, the field of view is narrow. That said, zooming in once you're set up for the shot is useful. The images are quite clear, and shooting some rabbits at 80m was a piece of cake. The rangefinder is especially useful at night as your depth of field is gone and judging distance can be tricky. Just be aware that the rangefinder, being off to the side of the unit, can get blocked if you're resting against a tree or fencepost like I did; I thought it had stopped working, but it was just operator error.

The downsides of the unit are minor when you balance them against what it can do and how affordable it is. As mentioned, you do need to become familiar with the buttons so you can use them correctly at night, and it's worthwhile having a spare battery, as runtime on a fully charged battery can be as low as two hours if you don't switch the unit onto standby; if you do this, it's realistic to expect around four hours' use. For me, it was



The unit is rated to 250m for game animals, and I think that's fair; its zoom function is mostly best left on 6.5 power, as on the higher setting, the field of view is narrow.

three hours, but I used a lower Ah battery. I will say that if you have good moonlight, you can use the Pard without any IR illumination, and this way it's possible to get up to eight hours on a single battery. You could also choose to use a separate IR torch – this'll save the battery and extend your range out past 300m.

The positives for the Pard are many. Firstly, and most importantly, it works, and it's 100% useable up to 250m on game animals – probably further depending on the moonlight. The rangefinder is worthwhile, and the built-in laser beam can be useful for small game; but past experience says it'll possibly scare deer.

The reticle choice is good and the Strelok ballistics program actually has two of the Pard reticles in its database. Sighting in is easy, and the mount is robust and appears well made.

The unit is IP67 waterproof and is reasonably small and compact. It also comes with an 18650 battery to save you some money.

Finally, it's worth noting that the NVO08 has the same features but no laser rangefinder; however, it's \$500 cheaper, so for those that want useable NV on a budget, there is an option. ■



ABOVE: **THIS RABBIT WAS TAKEN AT 72M;** I missed the first headshot as my rest was wobbly. This one and another just sat there, as without any light, they just kept feeding.

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It works well and is practical for everyday use.• Laser rangefinder is useful at night.• Easy sight-in process.• Useable in daylight.• Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You need to learn what the buttons do before you go out at night.• The manual is barely adequate, although there are videos on their website.
RRP \$1,899	MORE INFO www.pard.co.nz

PARD

The Best Value Night Vision

Affordable and Quality Night Vision

After proving very popular in the UK, now PARD is coming to New Zealand, and they leave the competitors in the dark for image quality and performance – don't take our word for it – see for yourself.

RANGE UP TO 330M

CLIP ON SCOPE
NV007A
Uses your normal scope
2 Year Warranty
RRP \$999

600M RANGE FINDER OPTION

STANDALONE SCOPE
NV008 PLUS
6.5x Optical Zoom and 13x Digital Zoom
2 Year Warranty
From RRP \$1299

600M RANGE FINDER OPTION

THERMAL SCOPE
S445
3.9x Optical Zoom and 13x Digital Zoom
3 Year Warranty
From RRP \$5499

FOR STOCKISTS, HUNTING REVIEW VIDEOS OR MORE INFO VISIT **PARD.CO.NZ**

Distributed and Supported Locally by Owl Optics in Whangarei