

# BRESSER MONTANA 8.5x45

Matt Merritt gets his head around some unusual figures from a well-known name

**B**resser is a familiar name in optics, but its Montana range of binoculars treads some intriguingly new ground.

For a start, they offer ED glass in a competitively mid-priced package, but you'll probably already also have noticed that they come in rather unusual sizes.

There's a bit more magnification and slightly larger objective lenses than you get with what's become the standard birdwatching size – 8x42.

That's all well and good, but the important thing, of course, is that you actually notice that in the field. In a June of murky, drizzly dawns and dusks, I did, again and again. The image is satisfyingly bright, even in low light (twilight factor is 19.56), with excellent contrast and sharpness, and a pleasingly natural colour tone.

Small margins like that can make a big difference to your birdwatching – it's the gap between, say, picking out some real barring on a singing Cuckoo, and resigning yourself to enjoying its song and not much else.

These days, birdwatchers are coming to expect a very large 'sweet spot', too, with the image staying sharp right to the edges, and the Montanas deliver well on that count.

As well as ensuring that you get to use pretty much every bit of the field of view (a good 155m@1,000m), it makes for a more relaxed watching experience – my eyes didn't get tired, even after long days in the field.

The extra magnification is noticeable, too, in the sense that I didn't find myself wishing for extra power, while focusing is very precise. Close focus, at 2.5m, is pretty good too, for binoculars of this size and power.

One of the most pleasurable things about testing the Montanas, though, was the way that they handled in general. That bit of extra glass doesn't really show itself in terms of weight, or at least they're well-balanced enough to carry it very easily (magnesium barrels help). With the decent strap provided, they certainly don't ever feel heavy.

The eyecups twist up and down, with three click-stopped positions, and offer a good 17mm of eye relief – they're made from the same semi-hard rubber armouring as covers the barrels, but they're well designed and comfortable in extended use.


The dioptre setting is on the right barrel, and although the fact that it's not click-stopped or lockable does create the potential for slippage over time, in practice, its tight enough that it stays in place easily enough.

The textured focus wheel is just over a finger wide, and takes around 1.3 anti-clockwise turns from close focus to infinity.

There's a 30-year guarantee, and accessories



include a roomy leather case, cleaning cloth and removable tethered objective lens covers. There are individual eyepiece covers rather than a rainguard, which is a bit unusual, but you can easily create your own.

That all adds up to a very satisfying whole – like many of the best modern binoculars, the highest praise you can give them is that you quickly stop thinking about specifics, and just start enjoying the view. At £665, that comes a little pricier than some ED models, but a lot cheaper than many others, too, so if you're looking for binoculars that don't just impress in good light, but can handle early mornings, late nights and the worst the weather can throw at you, give them a try. 

## Factfile

**Field of view** 155m@1,000m

**Close focus** 2.5m

**Eye relief** 17mm

**Exit pupil** 5.29mm

**Length** 155mm

**Weight** 745g

**RRP** £665.

**Warranty:** 30 years

**Contact:** Marchwood Optics, Unit 4.06, Cannock Chase Enterprise Centre, Walkers Rise, Hednesford, Staffs WS12 0QU, 01543 424255, [www.marchwooduk.co.uk](http://www.marchwooduk.co.uk)