

TECH REVIEWS

ZEISS binoculars

ZEISS Victory SF 8x42 and 10x42



ZEISS Victory SF 8x42 binocular by **Su Gough**

These most definitely are not budget binoculars. But, if you are planning on buying any high-end optics you would rightly expect and receive superb image, excellent build quality and excellent after-



sales service. So, why buy these instead of the other market leaders?

ZEISS, Leica and Swarovski have long been the 'Rolls Royce' brands of birding optics. Fashions vary and Swarovskis are the current birders' favourites but ZEISS, having been rather quiet, have created a new product which has allowed them to explode back onto the market.

Looking through this ZEISS pair, or equivalent Swarovski and Leica models, most of us would struggle to notice differences between the images, so why choose the ZEISS? They are longer but lighter. I find many binoculars too heavy to carry round my neck for extended periods but these are fine. The narrower, longer barrels are a lot more comfortable for me to hold than the other makes, which I find bulky. Their balance is amazing, with a new arrangement of the internal 'gubbins' up at the eyepiece

end, making them seem almost weightless in use. In addition I did actually notice a difference in image as well; I love the natural colour – bright but realistic and with an unexpected three-dimensionality – and the field of view width is unsurpassed. The close focus is incredible, only 1.5 m, fantastic for watching insects.

I just can't fault them and would highly recommend them. I was not in the market for new binoculars, but I found these Victory SFs simply astonishing. I've saved hard and bought a pair!

Price:	£2129.99 inc. VAT
Value for money:	●●●●●●
Weight:	●●●●●●
Image (brightness, sharpness, colour correction):	●●●●●●
Build (durability, design):	●●●●●●
Ease of use:	●●●●●●
Overall:	●●●●●●

ZEISS Victory SF 10x42 binocular by **Greg Conway**

At first glance and handling, the build quality and finish of this binocular is of the high standard expected from ZEISS. The weight, at 780 g, is modest but the well-balanced design and the sturdy



compact manufacture make them feel considerably lighter.

My only opportunity for field testing was on gloomy winter days. Fortunately the excellent light-gathering properties and clarity provided a brighter than anticipated image, which more than compensated for the low light levels. The combination of wide angle and excellent colour rendition give an extremely bright and consistently crisp image.

The close focus of 1.5 m is excellent for a binocular of this size. When combined with the 10x magnification and superb optical qualities, the ability to scrutinise in such minute detail will appeal to not only birders but anyone with an active interest in other wildlife, particularly butterflies, dragonflies, etc.

My only slight dislike is the small diameter of the housing, which doesn't quite fit snugly in my grasp, but this minor issue would be soon overcome

with use. However, a big positive from me, having to wear glasses, is the adjustable rubber eye cups, which can be easily moved to the required distance to maximise the field of view, unlike many other makes where the eye cup can only be retracted to its full extent, thus limiting the field of view and comfort of use.

The price tag is a touch on the high side (with little separating competing models from other manufacturers) but let's face it, this purchase would be a sound investment and would serve you very well for at least the next 20 years.

Price	£2164.99 inc. VAT
Value for money:	●●●●●●
Weight:	●●●●●●
Image (brightness, sharpness, colour correction):	●●●●●●
Build (durability, design):	●●●●●●
Ease of use:	●●●●●●
Overall:	●●●●●●

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