



## Vector Optics Continental Scopes

A Good Riflescope at Any Price!

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A few weeks ago, my buddy Gordon Marsh of Wholesale Hunter sent samples of the new Continental riflescope line from Vector Optics. In the sport optics business for more than a decade, Vector Optics offers extensive lines of scopes, sights, rangefinders, red-dot sights, and more. Their new Continental riflescopes are their “top of the line” scopes, manufactured offshore (which keeps prices down) using good German glass. Honestly, I didn’t expect to be as satisfied or impressed as I am!



# With Optics, You Get What You Pay For

As with sporting rifles, riflescopes have improved dramatically in optics, features, and reliability from when I first started hunting as a kid. Thanks to modern manufacturing techniques, both rifles and optics are more consistent and more accurate than ever before.

When it comes to optics, I genuinely believe you get what you pay for. Riflescopes run the gamut from just a few bucks up into the thousands. Really inexpensive scopes are to be avoided if possible. Optical clarity comes from good lenses and coatings, and they are costly. Construction matters, too; the most inexpensive scopes will have inconsistent adjustments and are more subject to failure under recoil, which is the riflescope's greatest enemy. The most expensive, premium brands are really good and worth the investment, but when you get into the rarified air of the very best optics, the superiority becomes more subtle and more difficult to distinguish. The good news, though, is there are lots of very medium-priced scopes that are quite good!

Almost all of us have some budgetary limits, but we want good equipment we can trust. When counting pennies, my best advice would be to spring for a less expensive rifle and top it with a *good* scope. The riflescope has nothing to do with how accurate your rifle is, and everything to do with how well you shoot it!

## Overview of the New Vector Optics Continental Line

The Continental is a trim line currently limited to four models: 1-6x24mm; 1.5-9x42mm; 2-12x50mm; and a brand-new 3-18x50mm. Soon to come is a 5-30x56mm. All are “six times zoom” with 30mm aluminum mono-tubes. “German No. 4” (“plex-type”) reticles are standard, as are battery-powered centered red-dot illumination with six brightness settings and an “off” position between each one.



From left to right, Continental scopes in 2-12-x50mm and 3-18x50mm.



## Technical Specs of the Continental Scopes



I haven't seen the 1.5-9x42mm scope or the 5-30x50mm yet, but I've spent time on the range with the other three. They are bright and clear, nice-looking scopes that look good on a rifle and avoid the "extra-large" appearance that's increasingly common today. Each scope comes with sturdy scope mounts (weaver or rail-type) and are serviceable see-through scope covers. Packaging is simple but with an unusual

touch: specifications for the model within are printed on the box. I don't know the people at Vector, but my first impression was that the folks who makes these scopes know what they're doing. The packaging on the Continental scopes has specifications printed on the box, a very nice and thorough touch.

The scopes have three turrets. The top is for elevation, the right is for windage, and the left-side turret holds the CR2032 battery for red-dot six levels brightness illuminated reticle plus the brightness control. On the 3-18X (and I assume the soon-to-come 5-30X), the left turret also houses parallax adjustment. The larger scopes have 1/4-inch click adjustments; the 1-6x24mm has 1/2-inch adjustments. Adjustments were consistent and repeatable on the three scopes I used, basically no problems at all!





# Field Practice with the Vector Optics Continental Scopes

## Trying the 2-12X50mm Continental Scope on My Go-To Prairie Dog Rifle



I started with the **2-12x50mm scope** (which comes with a screw-on sunshade) on my left-hand Rock River AR. That's sort of my "ranch rifle" on my Kansas farm, but it's also a go-to **prairie dog rifle**, so I keep a fairly large scope on it. I already had a tactical mount on the rail, so I just slipped the Continental into place and quickly re-zeroed. I was able to "count clicks" and easily move the strike where it needed to be.

All the Continental scopes have 30mm tubes with surprisingly trim profiles, especially for scopes at these power levels.

## Putting the 3-18x50mm Continental Scope Through the Paces at SAAM

The **3-18x50mm scope** got more of a workout! I put it on a new Sabatti Sapphire in .300 Winchester Magnum. This is a very nice rifle, with "soft-touch" synthetic stock with checkered pistolgrip and fore-end panels. The rifle has partial rails on both receiver bridges, three positions each. Using the supplied Vector mounts, I got the scope mounted in about two minutes. Accuracy was excellent, with the Sabatti turning in sub-MOA groups with a variety of loads. This, of course, was the rifle, not the scope! However, the adjustments were consistent and I was able to quickly acquire the 200-yard zero I wanted.



Using the sturdy Vector mounts, I put the 3-18x50mm scope on a Sabatti Sapphire in .300 Winchester Magnum. Mounted with a Continental 3-18x50mm scope, the Sabatti Sapphire in .300 Winchester Magnum proved extremely accurate with a variety of factory loads, easily turning in sub-MOA five-shot groups.



Timing coincided with a few days at the SAAM shooting school at Tim Fallon's FTW ranch: Great people, great ranges, and a wonderful place for tuning up! The German No. 4 reticle is excellent for fast field shooting at moderate ranges, but it is not a trajectory-compensating reticle. Most of the FTW ranges are "steel plate" ranges. Using "Kentucky elevation" I had no problems ringing steel out to 400 yards, but beyond that I needed to dial using the elevation turret. This is a much better test of a riflescope's repeatability! Dialing the MOAs, I had no trouble getting out to 700 yards.

At this point, a gusty crosswind made things difficult, so ringing steel at 1000 yards took some adjustment, but we got there. I was shooting Hornady's 180-grain SST load. Purely coincidental, with a 200-yard zero it took exactly 100 clicks of adjustment to get "on" at 1000. The turret has 60 clicks per revolution, so this took us well into the second revolution. When we came back to zero the rifle was still on at 200—meaning this scope tracked perfectly!



At the SAAM shooting school in the Texas Hill Country I took the Sabatti with 3-18x50mm Continental scope out to 1000 yards with little difficulty. From a 200-yard zero the 180-grain SST load required 100 clicks of elevation at 1000 yards, well into the second revolution of the turret.

### **Testing the 1-6x24mm Continental Scope Against Recoil**

The 1-6x24mm scope is a bit simpler tool. Clicks are 1/2-MOA and there is no parallax adjustment. Although clearly not a long-range scope, 1-6X is an extremely useful magnification. In our southeast Kansas woods that's what I put on my whitetail rifle. On a dangerous game rifle, I prefer a 1-6X over the classic 1-4X. The extra magnification isn't needed on buffalo, but with versatile calibers like .375 and .416, it's handy to be able to turn up to 6X for plains game. Considering its likely purpose, to try this scope out I needed to put it on something with plenty of recoil so I mounted it on a Ruger No.



One in .450/.400-3". The No. One isn't compatible with Weaver or rail mounts, but I had 30mm Ruger mounts on hand...and plenty of ammo.



On the bench with the 1-6x24mm Vector Continental, mounted on a Ruger No. One in .450/.400-3". I "padded up" with a PAST recoil shield and fired the rifle about 30 times. The scope held up perfectly under recoil and the 1/2-inch adjustments were precise and repeatable.

The .450/.400 isn't a really brutal cartridge, 400-grain bullet at about 2100 feet per second for a bit less than 4000 foot-pounds of energy. However, the Ruger No. One is fairly light, so there's plenty of recoil. I strapped on a PAST recoil shield and fired the rifle about 30 times with full-power Hornady factory loads. Once again zero was easily achieved. The rifle and scope remained in zero and produced shockingly good groups.



Despite significant recoil the Ruger No. One .450/.400-3" with 1-6x24mm proved extremely accurate. The 1/2-inch adjustments were precise and repeatable; the more powerful scopes all have 1/4-inch adjustments.

## Continental by Vector: Good scopes at great price points!

At each stage of my testing, I was impressed with how well each of the Vector Optics Continental scopes performed. The quality of the scopes, ease of mounting, and overall design make these scopes a great option for both varmint and big game hunters alike, and at an affordable price. If a new scope is in your budget, I recommend checking out the Vector Optics Continental line.