

BOW REPORT

BY JOE BELL



RYTERA ALIEN-X

When it comes to overall performance and value, this lightweight speed bow is well ahead of the game.



Rytera's Alien-X is easily one of the best bows on the market. Its smooth to draw, yet comes with a fast, high-energy cam system (340-fps IBO) that is easy to adjust, offers a rock-solid wall, and emits little to no shot vibration. It's lightweight and compact, too—only 3 1/2 pounds and 31 1/2 inches long. Best of all, it retails for \$699.

I get to review, test-shoot and hunt with a variety of bows each year. This is a tough job, believe it or not, mainly because I hold the responsibility of reporting on each bow's performance and worth as I see it. In doing so, I always try to be as objective as possible—just as one would be judged in a court room—by identifying the key features of a particular model and then elaborating on these attributes.

However, after nearly a decade of reviewing bows, I've realized that objective portrayals really don't do a bow justice—not by a long shot.

Proficient archery is not just about using the latest bow technology. Sure, some new technology can enhance arrow speed and make a bow shoot with less vibration, but it won't necessarily make you a better shot. Bow ads can tell us all they want about a bow, but only shooting it will tell you if it's a winner or not. Some bows just "feel" better than others. Personally, I believe good-feeling equipment is crucial for making successful high-pressure shots in the field.

This is why subjective comments about a bow are very important. In terms of qualities I look for in a hunting or 3-D bow, I like a good blend of speed with shot forgiveness; I like a super-quiet shot thud; I like a bow that tunes easily; I like an ultra-comfortable and narrow grip; and I like day-in, day-out shooting consistency. I also like impeccable quality that ensures shooting reliability and a constant arrow tune over the long haul.

This comes in the way of precise

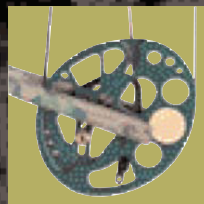
components and machining, bomb-proof construction, parts that mate perfectly to the bow's construction, and so on.

Which all brings me to the Rytera Alien-X. This bow is not only sweet to handle, but it also personifies what excellent engineering and a good-feeling bow is all about. Let's examine this bow's features.

GOOD LOOKS & VERY LIGHT

The Alien-X is a strikingly cool-looking bow. It has a myriad of attractive bridge-like cutouts to make the bow riser as light as possible. However, the "bridges" were tediously designed by engineers to make the riser more resistant to shot vibration and flexing—two elements that affect accuracy. Even the bow grip, which comes with leather covering at the back and front for warmth and gripping comfort, has four distinctive cutouts that are outlined with two wooden side plates. At only 3 1/2 pounds, this bow is as light as they come and just what today's consumer is looking for.

As far as top componentry goes, this bow lacks nothing. It has a roller cable-guard, which makes the bow more efficient, smoother to draw, and more vibration free. The roller guard also works fail-proof in wet or cold-weather conditions, eliminating that all-too-common "screech" sound, which traditional cable slides are notorious for doing in inclement weather. An STS string-stop dampener is standard and works to deaden bowstring oscillation. It also stops the bowstring from moving past the brace-height position,



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keeping it from slapping your arm and causing accuracy problems. The Double Helix custom-made bowstrings are dual-tone, neon-colored and made of the most creep-resistant BCY fibers.

Other high-quality features include five-layer multi-laminated bow limbs (super-tough) and simple, yet effective, Roto Limb Cups. The cups use two precision-polished stainless steel pins that align the limbs to the riser with exact tolerances, ensuring the most accurate arrow delivery possible.

BUILT FOR SPEED & CONTROL

The heart and soul of this bow is its smooth, yet powerful, cam system known as the Hybrix Duo-Cam. The Hybrix offers many advantages over other systems on the market. First off, it's uniquely adjustable; it allows for draw length changes within a 3-inch span in 1/2-inch increments. For draw lengths beyond 29, additional modules are available that adjust from 29, 29 1/2 and 30 inches.

The system draws aggressively, but smooth enough for my tastes, yet it belts out arrows with lightning-like speed—340-fps IBO! One of the best features is its extra-firm draw stop. Once you're at full draw and into the wall, there's nothing but a feeling of promise because it stays rock-firm as you aim and tug on the release's trigger smoothly.

Perhaps my favorite feature on the Alien-X is its brace height, which is a moderate 7 inches. Many of today's "speed" bows are reaching high IBO numbers, but they sacrifice shootability in favor of speed. The Alien-X gives you both speed and shootability through the use of a higher brace height. A higher brace means the arrow leaves the bow sooner, reducing the chance of slight hand torque from fouling up the shot. It also means more clearance between your jacket

sleeve and bowstring, so when it's frigid out and you're all bundled up in a treestand, you won't have to worry about the string slapping your jacket-covered forearm, causing a wild-flying arrow.

SHOOTS QUIET & EMITS LOW VIBRATION

Although the Hybrix system was engineered for low vibration and quiet shooting, this bow has a number of other features that diminish shot noise. The bow's limbs offer an extreme-parallel design. When the bow is drawn back, the limbs create a beyond-parallel arrangement, practically eliminating all limb movement as the arrow cycles through the bow.

The Vibration Escape Module (V.E.M.) arrow shelf that is at the center of the riser reduces residual vibration flowing through the riser to become squelched once it hits the soft, Omega-V dampening material. It also eliminates the need for fleece on the arrow shelf, since it will dampen the sound of an arrow falling off the rest.

Another VEM component exists on the riser within one of the cutouts directly beneath the bow grip. Both VEM dampeners "sandwich" the bow's grip area, which effectively remove vibration from ever reaching the shooter's hand. The result is a smoother, sweeter shooting experience.

SHOOTING THE BOW

It took me a dozen shots or so to paper-tune the Alien-X. I enjoyed the bow's draw cycle; it felt firm, but not so firm that it was intimidating or left me concerned about its capability in the woods. The bow's grip felt great right from the get go and allowed my hand to stay relaxed and calm, making my hand-arm unit to feel like "dead wood." The draw transition was nice from peak weight to the

draw valley. At full draw, the bow's extra-firm string stop seemed to exude a new realm of aiming confidence. Everything about the bow was engaging. It felt solid, precise, and smooth. Perhaps its best quality was its shot quietness. It thumps arrows with a whisper—the quietest bow I've shot in a long time. When you compare its \$699 price tag to the competition, you'll have a hard time turning this bow down. It comes with all the "goodies," but more than anything, it offers the shooter a feel-good experience. This is something you just can't ignore. ←

BOTTOM LINE:

This is one amazing bow—ultra-lightweight, super-fast and deadly silent. You can shop a lot of bows and not find the features and shooting qualities found in the Alien-X.

SPECIFICATIONS

Model: Alien-X
Manufacturer: Rytera/Martin Archery, 3134 W. Highway 12, Walla Walla, WA 99362; (509) 529-2554; www.rytera.com.
Peak Draw weights: 50 to 70 pounds
Draw lengths: 26 to 30 inches
Axle-to-axle length: 31 1/2 inches
Limbs: Solid, five-layer laminated
Riser: Machined aluminum
Grip: Integrated, leather palm, wooden sideplates
Eccentrics: Hybrix Duo Cam or Tranz Single Cam
Brace Height: 7 inches
Mass Weight: 3 1/2 pounds
Advertised IBO speed: 340 fps
Suggested Retail: \$699
Color: NEXT camo, Hunter Black

PERFORMANCE RATINGS

True Speed: 276 fps, 27 1/2-inch draw, 60 pounds, string loop, Easton Super Slim 400 w/100-grain point, AAE Max Hunter vanes—total arrow weight: 380 grains.

NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS:

- 7-inch brace height offers improved shootability over other speed models; very hunter friendly.
- Extreme-parallel limbs create smooth, quiet shooting; Roto Limb Cups offer precision riser-to-limb alignment, improving accuracy.
- Hybrix Duo Cam system is efficient and fast yet offers easy draw-length adjustability to optimize fit and feel; ultra-hard wall feel at full draw.
- Very comfortable self-grip; excellent componentry throughout—custom strings, roller cable guard, vibration-dampening modules, STS string stopper.