

Triple Seven gliders - Pawn

Triple Seven gliders is a manufacturer started in 2011 by competition pilots and brothers, Urban and Aljaž Valič. The main paragliding range is named after chess pieces. The company is Slovenian, and based at Ajdovščina, next to those well known flying spots in Slovenia, Lijak and Kovk. UK distributors are xTc Paragliding and Cloudbase Paragliding, and any newer dealers will be found at <http://777gliders.com/tripleseven/distribution>

The glider offered for review was the Pawn, an entry level EN/LTF A glider. The others in the range are the Rook (high end B), Queen (C) and King (D/competition). A Knight (low end B) and Bishop (Tandem, B) are on the design board. There is an ultra light hike and fly wing based on the Pawn, called the P-Light, but it has a much smaller wing area and uncertified. Triple Seven describes the Pawn as: *"an EN-A, LTF-A class glider designed for schools, beginners and intermediate pilots. This glider is developed for maximum safety. Our effort with this glider was also XC abilities and we believe, that pilots will have great fun during their first steps in paragliding and progression toward becoming the new XC masters."* The weight range for this model is 65-125kg which is covered by three sizes, the 100-125kg size was the one used for this review, flown at about 110kg.

The glider is supplied with a backpack, inner bag, compression strap, Triple Seven T-shirt and the manual on a USB stick. For this review, I was supplied with just the glider, inner bag and compression strap, we've already review the other bits in the review of the Rook late in 2012. The glider is made exclusively from Porcher Sport Skytex, with upper and lower surfaces made of the 38g/m² Universal fabric, and ribs of the harder E29 finished 9017. Lines are a mixture of sheathed Dyneema and Technora from Cousin, and the riser webbing is 19mm width. Speed system pulleys are Finsterwalder. The manual is very detailed, and covers all aspects of flying the Pawn and also gives line lengths for the M size.

The glider has Triple Seven's signature Back Positioned Intake and Reinforced Leading Edge which give the glider its distinct nose on the aerofoil. On the trailing edge, mini ribs make the "Smooth Trailing Edge". The glider has a very simple riser and line layout, with only 2 lines per side and 3 risers. The A risers are split, and there's one A line from each riser. The stabilo comes off the B, so there are three lines there, but otherwise it's a very minimal amount of line. The stabilo line is very clearly marked as it comes off the B risers in a different colour to the other lines on that riser. The outer A riser is marked with "Big Ears" and the B riser is marked with "B Stall".

The glider is very simple when it comes to ground handling, the lighter cloth seems to aid the filling of the wing with air when building the wall. The glider comes up easily and does not have a phase where it accelerates quickly as some do and require sharp brake input. In moderate winds it needs to be guided up to about 60 degrees or more on the A risers, followed then by some brake. It inflates best when both A risers are used together. The glider will also asymmetrically inflate, Cobra style, very well. It's possible to reverse the manoeuvre, and put it down on one tip, if the need arises. On windy days it has no virtually no tendency to overshoot, and when braked at the end of the pull up does not lift you and dump you. The only thing to comment on here is that being an EN A glider, it has to have a very long brake travel to stall, so if you need to keep it on the ground during a gust or a spell of strong wind, you may need to take wraps on the brakes. This is true of all EN A gliders, and is a certification issue. However, there is a better way to do this, and because the Pawn is a 3 riser glider, you can keep the glider absolutely dead on the ground with a moderate amount of C riser control, as you will as you progress through the system onto

higher rated gliders. This is what's nice about the Pawn, advanced techniques still work on this glider.

In the air the glider feels very solid, but launches better than you would think given it's an EN A. As you pull on the brake for the first time, you realise that whilst this may be an EN A glider, it doesn't conform to EN A prejudices widely held, and the handling is agile, but without being nervous or twitchy. Even without weight shift, flown for the first time on a small site, direction can be reversed in the smallest bits of lift, meaning that it's possible to stay up when it might have been a day to go down. The glider signals lift on either side, but with a muted message, and it does not tug at the risers in a nervous fashion, nor is it talkative in a way that might put off the new pilot. Turns can be initiated with medium amounts of brake, and it reacts promptly.

When you come to thermal the glider, it reveals itself as a wing you could have a lot of fun with. It rolls into the turn nicely, with plenty of reserve to tighten the turn if you want, and will maintain any angle of bank chosen. It does so in a fashion that you would associate with gliders in higher certificated classes. Any further roll in or the straighten out happens nicely, as demanded. As you 360 or turn reverse, you can easily forget that you are on a glider designed and trimmed for the highest passive safety, as it does not allow this requirement to restrict its handling. The brakes are firm, and as you'd expect, a bit longer travel than higher classes, but give a nice roll in, especially with some weight shift. There's a hard point long before spin onset. There's no problem on the Pawn fitting in with other, much higher performance gliders in thermals and even in weak lift there is no climb penalty, quite the opposite, when flown mid weight range the Pawn climbs very well.

The speed bar is easy to use, and does not require much of a push. Speed bar use isn't a huge priority on an EN A wing, but it's where you start to learn and with a glider like this you'd consider sticking with it if it didn't hold you back. It doesn't, and the very marked increase in speed on the first of rung my speed system ladder was obtained without much of a penalty. The second half doesn't have the same effect, and you get a little bit of flutter on the leading edge between cells, but the first bit is solid, confidence inspiring and easy to use. With height in reserve, a brief push on it was useful to cross slightly into wind gaps on a windy, inverted day on the ridge, again showing the real life performance difference between this and higher rated glider can be smaller than thought when usability is taken into account.

Big ears resist the pull in, but as most 2 A line gliders do, the Pawn produces a credible big ears display with just a simple pull on the outer A riser, already labelled for the same. When released the ears roll out smartly and smoothly with no pilot input. The manual says to be ready to use the speed bar to enhance the effect, and avoid any drop in air speed but I did not detect a speed reduction when medium size ears were pulled in. The glider is easy to steer on the C risers, and these can be used when on bar, but there is nothing in the manual to sanction this and it is something that new pilots should receive instruction on before attempting for the first time.

Landing is very straight forward, that hard point towards the end of the brake travel being useful, and if landing in stronger winds, pulling the glider down on the C risers is very effective, putting the glider on the ground with no chance of re-inflation, and therefore a drag is almost out of the question. Packing the glider away is slightly different from most gliders, but the method is simple, does not require a concertina bag and will protect the leading edge reinforcements. The manual details everything with well taken pictures.

The Pawn is an excellent combination, solid, confidence inspiring, yet with pleasant handling, usable performance and something that could last several seasons if the pilot is not overly affected by peer pressure to upgrade because it's the done thing. It has the same technology as its higher rated brothers, and looks very distinctive in the air with the chequerboard inspired leading edge colour scheme. It shows what can be achieved in the EN A category, and therefore recommended as great glider for the new CP, and also for the very occasional experienced pilot, with very little time to stay current, or a bi-wingual pilot who flies PG infrequently. Overall, a lot of fun to fly, and that's the sole reason for flying, and something definitely capable of those first XCs. A superb introduction to the Triple range of gliders for the new CP, and well beyond that.