

Reviewed by Office Staff

# Mini contra helis

We try some of the latest Jamara EP indoor helis...

Indoor EP micro helis have taken the modelling world by storm in the last 12 months, with any number of different variants of infra red foam helis flooding the indoor RC scene - it's fair to say that if you visited any of the indoor RC venues up and down the length of the country, you would see one or more of these little hovering machines. They must have sold by the bucketful! Spearheaded by the brilliant Silverlit Picoo Z range, the helis have tended to be generically similar (dare I say, copies?), but Flying Toys, distributors of the aforementioned Silverlit range have their fingers on the pulse of the development of these micro machines and can proudly announce that they now distribute the new generation of micro EP heli - the contra-rotating hard bodied fliers under the Jamara brand. The surfaces of these tiny helis are smooth and highly detailed, meaning scale types can be produced that look very realistic

with a hitherto unknown level of finish. Add to that the benefits of 3-channel radio, the contra rotating double headed blades, plus the addition of a small horizontal rear rotor and you have a more stable and manoeuvrable machine, retaining the easy to fly characteristics of the earlier generation of machines.

We put three of the latest range to the test, letting our office mini EP chopper jockey try them out and give his verdict - the Airwolf, the Alvis and the twin rotor Chinook.

## First impressions

The bodysells look very realistic carrying panel lines and motor detailing, together with neat spray paint colour schemes. Looks? 10 out of 10. They really look miniature versions of larger outdoor helicopters.

Charging is identical to earlier models - the Tx unit needs to be equipped with AA batteries (not supplied with the heli) and an umbilical lead connects between the Tx and the heli - switch the Tx on in



The Jamara Airwolf micro EP heli - contra rotating blades, horizontal tail rotor - and a hard bodysell. One of the next generation of this type of micro machine?

'Charge' mode and the onboard Lipo begins to be charged, the charging cycle being identified by a green LED on the Tx - when the light goes out, the lipo is charged and you're ready to go! The time takes about 10-15 minutes depending on the level of charge left in the battery.

All three Tx units are operated the same way, although the trim

adjustment differs. The left stick controls rotor speed, i.e. height, whilst the right stick controls the direction of the heli. - left, right, forward and backwards. Trim buttons are used to stop the heli rotating about its own axis, or to turn it in the direction you want it to face. As with all these helis, it is the fine movement of the sticks and →

**“It is the fine movement of the sticks and trims and the skill in anticipating the needed inputs that makes flying these helis interesting, and ultimately - when you've got the hang of it - very satisfying.”**



Our office chopper jockey Alex gets up close and personal with the Alvis, showing how confident he is at holding the hover!





The Tx units are not configured the same, needing different finger control skills, but both are very stable and easy to fly, with a bit of practice.



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**How did they fly? Alex's verdict:**

I flew the Airwolf first because it looked the coolest of the three we tested. The contra rotating heads seemed to make it more stable and easier to hold in the hover than other micros I've flown and trimming was easy to achieve, although the forward and back action seemed a little sluggish until I'd got the hang of it. One thing I didn't like is that the throttle stick is on a spring rather than a ratchet, which means constant finger pressure is needed to keep a constant speed - this can be quite tiring. If I had to score the Picoo Z helis out of 10, I would give them a 7 - the Airwolf though would be a 9. Without that throttle stick spring, an easy 10!

The Alvis is altogether more sporty looking and chunkier. It also seemed more responsive to throttle and easier to hold in the hover. As my air time was increasing, I expect the Alvis seemed easier to fly, not necessarily due to the heli, but to my becoming more homed in on the techniques. I was able to place the Alvis more precisely where I wanted it, but again, the forward/backwards control would often result in more of a rocking motion rather than steady movement in one direction of the other. Time will tell if is my 'cack handedness' that is at fault or a genuine reluctance to move. Score? 9 out of 10 also.

The Chinook was left till last, thinking that it would probably be the hardest to fly - but not so. I found it almost instantly comfortable and was able to hover very easily. The forward trim was

way out, however, and it wouldn't stop travelling forward, although I was able to maintain a circular flight pattern for quite a while before getting too near a wall. The throttle stick pressure was quite strong and a bit uncomfortable, making flying a bit tiring after a couple of minutes. Flying was curtailed when after a bit of an argument with a wall, the front lower rotor wouldn't turn, needing some technical investigation. The Chinook is definitely impressive in the air and the bodywork looks very scale-like. Score? Until I get the hang of the F/B directional control, I will give it 8 out of 10 - when it's in the bag, it will probably be a 9/10!

**Follow up comments:**

More flying time, as you would expect, has made me more proficient with the controls and can get the helis to perform pretty well now. I still don't like the spring pressure on the throttle stick, but I'm getting used to it. Overall, I can see a better performance than the Picoo Z, being easier in the hover - and so far, the harder bodyshells have proved very resilient to the typical 'arrivals' that these helis are likely to encounter. ⚡



The Alvis sports body gives it a look just like its much bigger brothers. It's easier to fly than the big ones, too!

The other two helis in the Jamara range, the Bell 222 and the Ranger - very scale looking, but with the same flight attributes. Price for these, plus the Air wolf and Alvis is £34.99 each, with the Chinook costing £49.99.

