

# Deep Tech Vista X Review Part 1

by Desi Dunne



## Foreword

When I first heard about the soon-to-be-released “**Vista X**” from Deep Tech in April of 2019, I was very excited about it. Not a ‘fancy Dan’ all ‘bells n whistles’ metered digital metal detector but an analog machine with good ‘*old fashion*’ knobs and trigger’s minus a meter to be gazing at but with a 21st century twist.

Information about it was scant so I acquired one to test: it’s my first time having a “Deep Tech” detector. Analog machines can produce ‘nuanced’ audio and can be a lot more informative to the user than their digital counterparts.

Not only that, the circuitry of the Vista X was designed by one of the Top 10 ‘analog’ circuit designers in Europe, Mr. Plamen Rashkov.

Some of you might remember they started trading in 1990 and in 2000 they designed their first PI circuit detectors with the “PI Penetrator 5500” being the most well known and marketed by “Accurate Locators Inc” in the USA.

In 2003 the company then registered the trademark, “Deep Tech”. It’s a small outfit and all circuit designs and assembly are done in-house while the coil housings are made by two outside companies while another manufactures the PCB’s.

The carbon rod tubes are imported.

The detector comes in a top-opening box measuring 23”x12”x5” and is colorfully embossed with detecting scenes and there is a plastic handle to carry it from the store to your vehicle. Everything inside the carton is snugly fitted into cardboard cut out holders and the coil is hidden from view beneath. A sealed packet of 8 AA alkaline batteries, nuts, separate bolt and 2 velcro ties were included.

There is no paper manual instead this is supplied on a ‘*wafer*’ USB memory card / stick’ and was the first time I had seen one. How to use it has presented mild confusion to some, so on October 20th, ‘Deep Tech’ put out a short video on Facebook showing how to open it. It looks exactly like a credit card and the USB part folds out and slots into a USB slot on a computer.

The Instruction Manual once opened is about 17 pages, not thoroughly detailed with the basics covered along with how to set it up and ground balance. There are several other Files with contributions from some well-known tester’s like “Keith Southern”, from the USA and “Sven Stau” from Canada, along with “Aaron Cooper” UK and another person I am not familiar with named “Michal Majchro” and two offer ‘alternative setup’ instruction with videos from Keith, Aaron & Michal.

## Build, Front Panel Layout and Power

The build in my opinion can only be described as 'drop dead gorgeous'

Very carefully crafted and put together, it is a beautiful thing to behold.

I love the carbon fibre rods: the smooth finish imbues a wonderful impression of longevity.

It's a very tight assembly, no looseness or rattles whatsoever. Assembling can take a while (a few more minutes than normal) to line up the squareness of the coil flush with the square control box.

You've to gaze down the rods and twist to line them up.

If not lined up the control box will be at a different angle to the coil and awkward to use correctly.

Be careful of the 'wheel and clamp' assemblies as these can come apart and end up in separate parts and you could lose them. The first time this occurred was after loosening one when breaking the detector down into a rucksack and I saw four plastic parts on the ground next to my bag. The locks are simple to reassemble but you will have to have all four pieces. So make sure you keep these 'semi tight' which makes the poles that bit harder to push in to their respective slots.

There are seven rotating buttons on the front panel and each one is marked out in increasing numeric increments. There is spacing between 0-15-25 thru to 50 and the white lines in between the numbers indicate an increase of 0.5

The buttons are surprisingly tight to turn and while I would prefer if they rotated more easily, being hard to turn prevents being moved by hitting off clothing or other obstacles such as rough undergrowth. I found the DISC knob the easiest to turn as it moved freely. While bench testing, I used a magnifying glass to help see the spacing better to construct my separate discrimination windows via the 'ALT Disc' (alternate discrimination control) as the rotating movement can be 'jerky' due to the tautness of the buttons. I wanted precision and got it because the "Vista X" is very tightly calibrated and a tone change or a discrimination rejection or acceptance occurs very precisely indeed. The buttons have white arrows that point to exactly where you want to set them to and you could easily 'share settings' with others if you both set them to the same numeric increments. I hadn't seen arrows on any buttons of a detector since way back in the early '80's

There are two trigger switches under the control box and they each do the same things. It can benefit left handed users as well as right handed people. Pull back for All Metal, middle



position is Search DISC and push forward to initiate the alternative discrimination and hold it forward while checking targets in ALT DISC. When searching make sure both triggers are in their desired positions because if they are opposing then you will be in the wrong search mode.

It's an 'S' bend stem and I found it extremely light and comfortable to use and the octagonal coil was easy to keep flat to soil and keep a straight line of detection. The neoprene hand grip didn't fully meet up with the hard plastic control box' rod mounting and I had to twist to move it up to prevent my finger getting pinched by a gap.

The battery door is tight fitting: just pull out the plastic holder, insert eight AA's and align, slide in and press on and twist. It might take one or two tries as it's such a tight fit.

The On/Off switch is to the right of the battery door and a simple press up/down arrangement.

The headphone jack plug is on the left and allows straight and angled plugs. **NB:** I used two different sets (i) Troy headphones with individual Volume control on both cups (ii) the "Garrett Z-Lynk" with WS3 headphones. Audio was **the loudest** I have ever heard from any detector with full Volume on both speaker and headphones.



A few things of note: (a) the control box is bare devoid of any logo stickers and I feel they could have added more color and overall appeal to the design of the

detector had they included some (b) the speaker is small (nearly an inch smaller than that in X-Terra) Its also *down facing* so the Volume without headphones is inclined to 'die away' quickly and its hard to hear the audio nuances this machine is capable of. The slide in battery holder prevents the audio from resonating around the large chamber as the speaker sits just beneath it. So its vital to use the detector with headphones **if it is windy**, to block noise from waves and trees rustling (c) the arm rest doesn't have a soft material lining so is bare plastic. Thankfully it does include an arm strap but this is long and fiddly to tie up. The bonus: it caters to those folk with big arms and wearing thick coats (d) There's a red LED on the front panel left of the GAIN button that illuminates on power up/down and when the batteries begin to deplete. I hadn't noticed it in any video or photograph.

## Coil's

The coil is described as 'octagonal' and is not the '*standard*' round, elliptical or 'out of round' shape. Again, it is beautifully constructed and is supplied with a coil cover (easy to remove, clean and put back on) and weighs a lightweight, 534grams or 1.25lbs (incl skid plate)

It is somewhat deceptive and may have been incorrectly referred to in videos as an "11" coil. Yes, it is eleven inches, that is true but the actual diameter (width) of the coil is just 9" dead. It's the 'footprint' that is 11" - from toe to heel. So essentially, its a 9" Double D coil and that's why it has such great separation being just a nine inch L>R<L sweep and punches deep thanks to it's 11" 'forward reaching footprint!'



The coil cable is just shy of four feet and has a robust thickness to it and a wonderful solid feeling connector part plastic part metal with tiny pins but don't worry, they're not as fragile as those in the "Garrett AT Pro" detector. The coil finish is outstanding and is of a high pour standard not usually found across the industry as so many coils are mass produced in huge quantities. Being a smaller manufacturer, quality control is much better. There are two velcro coil ties included and these can help reduce false signaling from a loose or floppy coil cable. There is no serial number present and the only detail is a red X on the toe of the coil and this is noteworthy and I will explain more on that later. The Serial Number is present only on the underside of the detector handle (as well as the shipping carton exterior) and is common to both parts i.e. control box and coil are the same.

The small 5'7" coil continues the fabulous attention to detail in the pour as the epoxy is so shiny you could use it to see your reflection and have a wet shave!

It comes with a coil cover and is 15mms deep without the coil cover on. It bears a Serial Number and in the middle there is that ubiquitous red "X" label.

It air tests very well and is reactive across its surface and has a few tricks up its sleeve too!



## Transporting

Trying to stay 'in shape' (*I'm pushing on now and can't shift the pounds like I used to Lol...*) I cycle to a few sites around my village. The Vista X and everything required for a day in the field fits into a backpack measuring about 26" in length and is light and easy on my back. I'm talking, two diggers, headphones, pin pointer, batteries, thermos, sandwiches, camcorder, gloves and detector and more. Driving into farms I carry it fully assembled in a long black vinyl carry bag, and this is the preferred option.

The shafts measure around 20.5" for the lower rod - 21.5" for the middle one. The 'main body control box' measures approximately 22" It's quite lengthy fully extended and tall people will be happy with it I keep it short and I'll explain why a bit later.

I also received the small accessory 5'75" coil without a second lower rod so I mocked one up easily enough from a shaft from a previous detector test review. To ensure tightness I rolled a layer of electrical tape around it. The second rod made for quick coil changes in the field.

## Bench Testing

Always a crucial aspect of getting to know a metal detector and is important to do before heading out to your site. The Vista X is an interesting machine and you will quickly see there are a few ways to set it up.

With the larger coil, testing small to **half** dollar size coins across it produced good hits from 8" to 10.5" and you can achieve extra 'air depth' and 'whispers' with slower hand passes. A 'designer cologne' tin measuring 6"x3.5" inches hit well even as much as two and a half feet + away from the coil.

In the field, I found it went deeper in-ground than in air tests and that took me by surprise when I dug the first coin! We saw similar things before e.g. the "*BBS Sovereign*", the "*FBS Explorer XS*", didn't air test well but were extraordinary deep seekers in the ground.

You can use the detector as a single tone silent search machine by turning off Iron Volume and increasing discrimination.

It even begins to '*spit*' discriminate out small rusty nails set at '0' disc. Increased to 25 its the same. Set

at 30 the Iron Volume begins to kick in as a Low Tone and becomes increasingly louder at 35 Hence two Tones: Low for ferrous High for non ferrous.

Again, with Iron Volume off passing non ferrous targets across the coil and increasing Discrimination will silence detections and by increasing Iron Volume those will become either high or low tone depending on their conductivities.

The ALT DISC should be set higher than the main DISC and depending on where its set the conductivity of the target determines the Tone. You don't have to use this alternative discrimination at all if you don't want to. You can rely on your own 'ears' and the regular discrimination characteristics as it is quite good at rejecting iron set to 0 as described earlier. However, it has to be one of the best attributes of the Vista X

With the help of my magnifying glass, I carefully found settings that would accept all the gold colored euro low value coins (10c, 20c, 50c) and bi-metal Euros ( €1 and €2 Euro) and reject the square pull tabs. I wasn't too concerned about crown bottle tops at this juncture because I discovered a way to easily identify them even if they 'accepted'

Gain 25

Threshold 30

Alt Disc 34.5

Disc 15

Volume 25

Iron Volume 30

Ground Balance didn't matter during bench testing.

Trigger - middle position

I played around a few hours making adjustments, scanning targets, readjusting, turning things up, turning things down or off altogether and soon began to figure out the "Vista X"

The next morning I went to my first coin shooting site - a 'fete' summer time event area (I have exclusive permission) where many surface and shallow finds abound as well as some older deeper targets as I had discovered on prior visits. It had been open farmland pasture fields in the main and 'may have seen some army training' as there is a multitude of ammunition present.

## Modern fields

Regarding crown bottle tops, if they signal when a low disc is used in conjunction with a mid level Iron Volume setting 30 for example, they will probably signal with high / low tones too. They can be but not necessarily 'spitty'. They should be easy to distinguish from coins and other targets.

You can ignore them by increasing discrimination and turning off the Iron Volume but, that's not the way to go with this detector. Remember the Alt Disc can also be used here if the following doesn't work on deeper targets.

To help identify them properly draw back the coil to where signals stop and then very slowly at the same time push forward and pull back but increasing the push distance as you go and if the cap is shallow 3" or so, when the front toe of the coil [is approaching 'it'] the tone can drop to a low one. It's all in the wrist movement and that's why I prefer to use the Vista X in a short length format.

The distance to push and pull is 2.8" to be precise.

Don't get the edge of the coil across the cap. Somewhere in that two point eight inches the magic happens. I have to emphasize at no point should the coil be anywhere 'over' the cap: it is *approaching* it when the tone drops.

In addition and this is one of the more beneficial operational traits that appears to come into play much of the time, 'walk' your targets in a full circle and back if need be.

Move around them as you go and you will be pleasantly surprised by how quickly a high tone will change to low and remain so.

No 'Equinox' crown cap confusion here and all done without a meter!

In a multi-target scenario, you could pull back the coil from the area and even raise up the coil to minimise the responses. You could then begin to use the 'push/pull' method to "find" the individual targets. Then "walk" the spot a few times, 'push sampling' to determine how many targets might be there? It's in these situations that I felt the 9"x11" was overkill and the option to switch to a round 7" or elliptical 8"x5" would be a great addition.

The small 5.7" is good (and we'll cover that later) but for large "congested" areas it's not really the best option. There isn't a pin point button on the Vista X

The first foray was to a few fields that host summer events and a circus that had been on the site for a few weeks had packed up and was gone.

The place is great to test any detector because it's loaded with targets modern mostly but can throw up older finds, buttons mostly and the odd coin from the 1800's. Last year I did well with modern coins and it was a bit like 'shooting fish in a barrel' as I could see thru the grass as the €1's and €2's were shining in the sun (*us detectorists have this ability because I suspect we're always looking down*). The 'gold colored' smaller denomination coins were harder to spot due to their yellow color blending in with the roots of the grass. This time around it rained for almost the entire time the circus was there. Indeed the caretaker on the way in said, "It's like a bog in there!" I didn't hold much hope to find anything. I've been on site several times these past few months and have always come away with a good pile of coins and other bits and pieces including a silver ring a few weeks ago found with a 'Deus Lite'

I set about ground balancing the Vista X (more on this later) and set only one DISC @ 15

I kept the sensitivity low as well and had the Iron Volume @ 30

The guy was right! It was a bog!

Huge furrows loomed up where the tractor trailer had hauled the fun fair away. Photos on my iPhone showed where the 'Ticket Office' had stood. It was impossible to search there as the whole area had been churned up. Where it was possible to scan, the coins I had been expecting to come didn't! So I progressed further into the site and towards where the 'big top' had been and was bombarded with low tones as I could see silver and gold 'foil' everywhere as the audiences must have munched thru hundreds of chocolate bars and discarded the wrappers (larger discarded materials had been collected previously by a clean up crew) Then, a high tone and I picked up a small child's ring (junk). It was to be the only signal.

So I then headed towards the area where the trailers had been for the circus crew to sleep and it was more of the same, mud city. Oh, I saw a discarded fork! So I packed it in for that day.

Returning early the next morning I headed for an established productive area and went to Ground Balance the "Vista X"

There are a few ways to do it and can be done in All Metal or Disc

Gain to red dot: Threshold to 45: GB control all the way to the left: pull the trigger towards you: bob the coil up and down all the while adjusting, Gain, Threshold & Sensitivity to where the machine goes quiet. Alternatively, you can retain the settings above and readjust the GB button to mid way and then 'scan across a clear patch of soil' and adjust the GB control and if necessary readjust any of the other controls as well. This is the method I chose and the detector was perfectly quiet as I went.

I adjusted the Visa X to go high on euro coins and low on square tabs on Alt Disc. Tabs were the offenders here, with occasional crown caps and foil. The tabs 'sounded like' euros on the Deus and I wanted to see could I avoid digging them?

With Gain @ 30 the very first signal was a loud 'banger' and retained high tone in Alt Disc and straight away I knelt down and turned on the "Garrett AT Pointer" to the spot the coil's X indicated and didn't get a response. I did get a few blips from the detector as it 'adjusted' to the Garrett's probe frequency but after that nothing more. I dug to around four inches and still the probe was quiet. Unusual as 'most coins' would have been out by now I thought!

Digging further still (deeper than usual) a dark round shape rolled around and up came a €2 coin from 6" The signal had been "loud" and unmistakable in comparison to the "Deus Lite" used here normally (also an "X-Terra 505, both machines weren't as loud)

Several more coins were dug and one was a surprise with occasional low tones in Alt Disc but walking around it was more highs than lows so I dug. I was very surprised to retrieve a €1 euro coin in two parts. The inner core had parted with the outside and close examination showed it had been hit. It was something that I have never seen before on any bi-metal coin and didn't expect to find 'a broken coin' The coin signals were very pronounced, sharp and loud: unmistakable with a resonance around the inside of the headphones. I'm positive it was punching deeper than other detectors used there as the 50c coin was very prolific and at depths again deeper than I had been to prior. The 10c coin was 'sharp and short', and a doddle to pin point using the front of the coil. Draw it back where it stops signalling, push forward two to three inches, move it around in tiny moves, get the loudest 'clack', and the coin is usually under the red "X" of the coil. Great. I'll discuss other pin pointing methods later on.

Then another good signal checked out in both disc circuits, and a tiny square piece of tin (after magnifying glass analysis) was recovered with the aid of the probe and I couldn't believe something so small had created such a loud audio. I dug out more soil and scooped the side wall and scanned the pile of dirt but nothing more was found. You can see this piece in a photo second line of finds to the left of the clay pipe found on site that day.

That was another story. Mechanical diggers had been in and dug out trenches around three feet deep and the earth was piled up on the sides. I scanned the piles and then walked in and detected the excavations, saw the clay pipe fragment and chased just one target that 'fooled' the Vista X turning out to be a rusted nut (I think) and that's bottom left above the wrench left side photo. The wrench too came out after loud positive signals ensued and wasn't much deeper than 4". I pretty much knew it would be a large item as it was possible to trace the length of it with the probe set to its second sensitivity level. Remember, this was a Test not necessarily a treasure hunt! I was digging everything. The octagonal coil was very quick to get used to and I didn't find it strange at all. On the contrary, it was surprisingly easy, even scanning the earth piles up and down, not at all tiring or difficult. I noticed that I wasn't hearing any EMI unless I jacked up SENS to Full which, I didn't because I was trying to get used to the detector. Even then it was barely perceptible with Threshold on. This was the same site a few years ago, an American made detector was affected so badly I had to stop as it became intolerable to use.

Similarly, the tabs all second checked with low tones after an initial high and all were dug out. The "Energiser" battery checked out in both disc circuits as positive. The zipper high tone too. The 'Bud' cap was high tone which I had dug out before I remembered to use the alternative disc. The "Nissan" badge went from high to low tone but as it was so 'wide' was dug to check! The green screw caps (from small wine bottles) remained positive and another piece of flat iron also checked out as non ferrous. A broken screw remained positive and that impressed due to its tiny size. Several large cartridges also double checked and they weren't deep, and again with the aid of the probe I knew they would be long items.

More trash targets were dug and discarded as I don't like a full pouch as it drags down with the weight and I disposed of numerous tent pegs and other large bits and pieces crushed cans, can slaw for example.

At home later I checked the 'Deus' on all the targets in the photo: it didn't register the "Energiser" battery and the small "square piece" was a non detection - it just didn't see it.

It spat rejected on the wheel nut and gave low/high tone spits on the wrench. The 'Bud' cap was a high tone.

# Deep Tech Vista X Review Part 2

by Desi Dunne

## Beach

Being always curious and very interested in testing new detectors, I and went ahead and used them in both salt and fresh waters. There are *recognised* wet sand machines and the Vista X is not in this class. The "**Vista X**" wasn't designed for that purpose nor is it advertised as such. It's more of a '**Relic**' detector operating at 16kHz

I wasn't able to Ground Balance on salt wet sand where I live. Your area might be different?

It demonstrated that single frequency characteristic: sounding off when the coil touches the wet surface and emits a constant sound even while manipulating the ground balance control, reducing Threshold, reducing Gain and all of that.

Having said all of that however, it does work very well and grounds balances over dry sand with careful attention and is quite the deep seeker, on coins.

Deep Tech are located in Varna, Bulgaria on the Black Sea and the 'salinity' of the salt water is 17psu, lower than the Atlantic where I was testing at a salinity level of 35psu. So maybe they got it to salt water balance more easily there? The Mediterranean and Gulf of Mexico have salinity levels of 35 and 36psu respectively so there too you will probably be confined to dry sand only. Not a bad thing because quite a few 'bucks' can be made searching dry sand beaches all year round.

First time out after an unsuccessful wet sand GB attempt, I headed to the drier sand and managed to Ground Balance and quieten the machine to a stable setting with little falsing. So a low Gain and slower than usual sweep speed had to be employed. I followed the sea wall along and got a loud signal that sounded good and then went 'iffy' and back to good again. I interrogated it for a few moments and pin pointed with my 'red X spot' system and began to dig. I took out two scoops and tested the area with my pin pointer. No reaction so I dug further and tested again still no signal. I went deeper and tested again and got a beep so I landed a last scoop and the target was a rusted 2c euro 'copper' coin (copper coating ferrous core) I was gob smacked when I used the "Garrett" pin pointer to measure the hole as the coin had been at nine inches depth, the length of the probe. Sensitivity had only been at 27 from the full 50. Great.

On a different day at a different beach after a gale force wind and high seas the day before a stretch of semi dry sand was searched with careful balancing of the controls, low Gain and Threshold off provided a fair share of mixed period coins from the '50's to the present day with a few older larger copper coins from the 1900's. A few pull tabs and other 'scrap' non ferrous surfaced as fishing lures and parts of metal toy cars etc.

Depths were respectable and ranged from surface to the foot depth (large items) and had sharp 'clack' sounds.

## River foreshore

One of my favorite areas to hunt are river foreshores and I took the "Vista X" and small 5.7" coil down onto the mud of a local tidal river estuary. Not for the squeamish as it is 'a dirty business' trying to recover targets as they are usually stuck in black mud and are hard to see. Invariably you have to wash them off in the river to identify properly. Ground balancing proved even trickier than I thought because I imagined the smaller coil would be much less affected by



the small dimensions but no, it took a while to balance out and the control ended up completely anti-clockwise in negative balance (white area) with reduced sensitivity. The settings used:

Sens 30  
Threshold 30  
Disc 20  
Alt Disc 25  
Iron Volume 35  
Volume 30

It provided a stellar performance with good iron rejection and sharp loud 'clack' short sounds on non ferrous while ferrous targets created a kind of elongated 'off-set' double blip on the left and right edges unlike the tight, sharp and short sounds created by the non ferrous targets. A few small items surfaced, buttons, scrap bits and other metals were observed on the surface. Taking the detector into the water to several inches depth it was evident the sweep speed required was slower than that over the ground and it still rejected and accepted targets as normal.



I was surprised to dig a few lightweight 'coke rocks' but the clues had been there for the asking and I wasn't paying attention as they behaved much the same as ferrous targets albeit with a much lower signal volume. Once dug they barely responded.

### **Fresh water**

A few shallow streams were waded into and yet again it was a completely new learning experience as I had to find the best settings.

If you get some signalling it might be best to adjust the ground balance in the red area only (positive) and find a quiet setting there. You might also have to reduce gain to find a quiet point.

It was good for me set to the GB knob to 'twenty past' (like a clock) setting.

Pay attention to the coil if you're in a fast moving stream and tighten up the coil bolt that extra bit because the force of working with the flow can cause the coil to upend. I worked under a bridge in one stream and recovered a few modern small coins with the help of a hand held metal scoop.

If you are a New England fresh water searcher (I used to do a bit on the Cape) it should be a decent performer with an absence of salt and with the standard 9"x11" coil you might get some decent depths, with the octagonal coil. I was getting coins from 10" on dry salt sand so sand without salt content should *theoretically* be better?

Similarly, I wouldn't anticipate an issue with using the smaller 5" coil for seeking small gold nuggets in slow flowing streams. Maybe someone will chime in about this? I did Test on a tiny gold coin and it sounded off nicely to at least 6" away from the coil and not at full Sens (a usual test piece a *Fanam* the smallest gold coin from India)

## Pasture

I tend to revisit former 'productive' sites with any new detector because if any extra targets are found,

shallow or deep, doesn't matter, then I deem 'Model X, Y or Z' 'a better machine'

So, after a few unproductive searches on one former good site where the grass was a bit too long, "Vista X" was beginning to show itself. It wasn't doing it right away but as I put more time in and became more proficient with it, it began to work for me.

This particular site was very iron noisy and it took a while to go thru all the settings to banish the iron sounds to a level I was comfortable with.

To prove to myself that they were iron signals I worked in All Metal for a while. Ground balancing was easy and was at the '2' o'clock position that gave me a kind of a low signal return with the coil an inch above the ground. So I had to use a very slow sweep speed to keep a stable detector as I had the Gain set to the pre set red dot 45 position.



Signals began to form and one unusually broad and high toned gave up a small cake tray foil from a few inches.

Two small screw caps from old whiskey bottles came up with good loud clean hits from the six inch level (I was working close to the road) and were easy targets and presented no problem to the Vista X

Another good sound revealed a green copper disc from around 4"

I heard a similar signal that was 'low in volume' with a 90% positivity and around 10% iron sound and knowing deep coins might mimic this exact sound decided to dig. It was late in the afternoon and a dull day when I saw the 'red LED' light up on the front panel indicating 'low battery'. So I changed out the rechargeable 2400mA batteries and installed '8' fresh-from-the-pack "Panasonic AA"

I began to dig. Went down eight inches and used a hand held probe which suggested deeper and went a further two inches to ten and then scraping revealed the telltale brown appearance of rust!

I pulled out a flat square piece measuring 4" x 4". I wasn't at all surprised because it wasn't old so therefore hadn't lost it's magnetic properties.

I heard another target from a dipped area where cattle had trodden quite a lot and I guessed it would be another copper coin because the signal was so sharp, short and almost clipped, and dug out an older copper half penny coin dated 1889 that was missing about quarter of its edge having been cut in antiquity. A few other fragments of cans were dug from shallow depths with similarly good sounding signals. As it was approaching 5pm, with the light almost gone, I stopped for the day and went home.



## Stubble fields

Most of us like to relic hunt and some of the best can take place in wide open fresh cut stubble fields.

The "Vista X" was quite at home on the stubble fields I searched. Unfortunately, the time of year was wet with almost incessant rains and colder temperatures that made for 'construction site like' soil conditions. It wasn't easy to recover targets and the ground was gluey and thick.



I said in Part 1 that the best use of the "Vista X" is derived thru a good set of headphones with a Volume control. The two other important features of operation are (a) Threshold (b) Iron Volume. If you set these controls wisely it can help to audibly identify many iron targets that will 'spit and crackle' in your ear cups. You should also ground balance on every new field you venture into and the Gain control can dictate the amount of output power that's best where you happen to be standing at this point. If you have 'Gain' too high it can upset things dramatically because it can bring in deeper iron targets that can misidentify as good or even worse, can cause minutes of head scratching wondering whether you should chase signals or not! So it is best then to have as quiet a detector as you can.

Working stubble rows can upset a stable detector if the coil cable hits off hard stalks or gets entangled. So make sure the coil cable is tightly wrapped and if you have them use Velcro wraps to keep a taut cable but still with enough length to enable easy coil rotation. I noted when using the small coil around stubble it brought in some false signals because the cable was more prone to entangling in the stalks. Using the large coil I tended to avoid hitting them and you're doing the opposite with the small coil, getting right next to and touching them because you can and should. I've often found good targets directly under stalks.

Signals were sporadic and were usually short 'clack' sounds if they were non ferrous items, small buttons, bit of other broken objects and so on. Iron was usually identified quickly with broken stutter sounds. Larger bits were identified by either twisting the coil on edge or engaging the second discrimination. It could also be identified by that classic 'double hit' left and right sides of the sweep with a dip in the middle, almost as if it was moving. It hit really well on lead targets and in one field the Trash side of my finds pouch was filled up with it. I have no regard for lead: I like silver and gold.

In this field the stalks were still hard and made for difficult sweeping so I stopped and fitted the small coil. This was a good idea and made for much easier sweeping and several targets were dug in succession including a screw cap that was buried at 6" but still sounded off with the coil 5" above the soil! with almost full sensitivity set at 40.

At the high setting I had thought the detector would be noisier and full of chatter but no, quiet as a mouse.

If the target was deep, then the return signal volume would be quieter and therefore easier to determine depth (modulated audio) and to recover them. The field was very close to a working manufacturing facility, one of the largest around the area and no EMI was heard as it is such a well designed coil to match the available power on tap as Vista X is such a powerful analog design. It has huge raw power availability and is without many 'power hungry' features such as multi-tones and digital target ID screens.

## Woodland

This was my preferred Vista X detecting scenario. I love being in the woods and the only downside usually is a deep layer of decaying leaf mould as the ground never seems to dry out and is continually wet. So targets can be buried deeply as you might have to penetrate a foot and more of ancient leaves. It's important to ground balance here and if the soil is wet even more so. The soil can vary from soft mossy dark material to dark stony clays and the damper it is the more instability ensues. However, I was able to get away with a high sensitivity setting of between 40 and 45 the entire time provided I didn't scrub the coil on the ground.

I visited a small clearing in some woods where a few years before I had been lucky to unearth a gold sovereign which was a huge shock because the place had been liberally infested with foil from some idiots who chose the spot to dispose of their domestic rubbish. I had worked the area with a few other detectors. No other golds were found. So it warranted further exploration with the Vista X. I scrubbed the surface here and that produced two 'iffy' targets that I dug out...small ancient ferrous that might have been nails? Then I got three more '*diggable*' signals which had been completely missed by the other detectors. The first was a low volume return signal and up came a silver three pence coin dated 1918 from around seven inches. Second up, a louder signal was a silver shilling from ten inches dated 1878 and the final target a weak signal was a copper coin that took about fifteen minutes to find as it had been edge on and underneath a thick root at about eleven inches, which I couldn't identify as it was 'toasted!' Wow! Good depths!

In another ancient woodland full of that awful compacted mess of decaying leaf mould, at the 10" level after digging through lots of flat stone (you know the find will be good) the compacted layers gave up a copper half penny and I'm guessing an English coin from the reign of Charles the second or third...1690 perhaps? Soon after the shock of that another clanger of a signal from "a well worked pathway" gave up another copper half penny. Again I had to "saw" my way down through a thick inter-tangled root system (and again I knew it would be a good find as this almost guarantees antiquity) the coin dated 1805 was well worn but I was able to make out the right facing bust head and neck of George the Third. I went on to find other targets "missed" on previous excursions. In the main these were low grade foil and a few broken pieces from tabs and cans e.g. the small round pieces that fold inwards when a drink can is opened. Several small gold colored euro coins surfaced from just beneath the leaf cover and a find that saddened me somewhat was a metal pipe for smoking weed. Yes, this small area was popular with kids who liked to drink beer and smoke weed! Some discarded plastic lighters were seen scattered over the area.

## Rx coil winding trick

In Part 1 of the "Vista X Review", I alluded to target identification "tricks" with the standard coil and other not usually seen useful 'quirks' with the small 5.7" coil as well. A useful trick was first observed during initial bench testing the day I received the Vista X. I already alluded to the large 9"x11" coil being able to ID 'crown caps' readily enough and easier than several other very popular detector models.

The small coil also possesses this quirk and I repeat, I had never seen this to be so consistent before. While being an early proponent of 'coil edge pin pointing' (even before "Explorer XS" which was good at it) it is something I have always done and continue to do to assist with pin pointing. So, playing around with the primary discrimination and alternate disc control and moving the coils around all the various targets I was introducing, I was amazed to see when the coil was turned on its edge in a 90 degree right angle and the right side of the coil (Rx winding is the one with the cable coming from it to the control box) was bobbed up and down above some trash targets, the tone generated was low. It just so happened that this appeared to work best on crown caps, square pull tabs and small ferrous materials such as nails. Scanning across targets with the coil flat on the signal was the expected high tone.



A few notes here, Iron Volume has to be set at least 30 or greater. Primary discrimination can be set at zero to enable the generation of low tones on crown caps, which don't even have to be corroded. Alternative disc doesn't come into play at this stage because if the low tone is generated then you may be dealing with a trash item. I took this a step further and changed the primary disc control to the preset red dot 20 and the alternative disc to 25 because this enabled the rejection of those annoying 'copper euro coins' that I hate to spend time on digging. Naturally I was excited to see this and I couldn't wait to test in the field to see if the phenomenon translated to outdoor field use? You know what...it did! I was very pleased because it made working trashy modern fields a lot quicker to search and ignore many low tones. I wasn't expecting jewelry finds so I was prepared to make that sacrifice.

Further testing has shown that square tabs can generate the low tone quicker than the 'round edge' 'square' tabs. The square tab can be identified even easier if they are buried at an east / west tangent. So too the rounded ones but they have to be almost at surface level. The squares can be identified at a few inches. So too are the crown caps and small nails. Larger ferrous shapes can cause the reverse of this and generate high tones. I couldn't get modern 'Zincoln' pennies to generate low tones but many other ordinary rubbish items did. I was able to set up the Disc and Alternative Disc to remain High tone on Euro coins and go Low on square pull tabs. Brilliant.

Those lucky enough to have a "Vista X", even if you have mastered it, should spend some time bench testing. Place the coil upside down away from any metals on top of a plastic table. It doesn't matter if indoors or outside. Pay particular attention to the coil's edges - front back, left side and right side and as it is a square shape it is easy to get targets right up to it.

On a low discrimination setting e.g. 15, it would spit and crackle on some ferrous items, rusty nails etc. Even at 0 disc it still did the same so you could always use it without any disc.

But then the ALT DISC may not see use and that is a 'selling point' of this detector: the ability to check

targets with a second discrimination setting. So typically I set DISC to 15 and ALT Disc to 25 and so on. You'll have to become very dexterous with angling the coil onto its edge and bob it up and down to check the target. However, if you don't want to bother, rely on the standard discrimination and use the toe, sides and heel of the coil flat to ground as standard procedure.



## Vista X limitations

There aren't many to be considered.

Lack of a meter and, a two-tone audio operational sound system might be two?

A third (but not too important in my opinion) is an inability to work salt wet sand. There are other detectors that will cover this area and multi-frequency and pulse induction are best.

There are some other minor criticisms I would have of it and I'd prefer if the speaker wasn't (a) so small (b) downward facing and (c) so close to the ground when you set it down because it doesn't have any raised legs to keep it away from damp surfaces. So I would advise the use of control box covers. Deep Tech provide some camo green covers for the arm rest and battery box area as well as a clear plastic screen front panel cover.

A final criticism I would have (and probably unfair to even consider) is it's almost too loud so a headset with a volume control is a necessity (*you probably have a good set already*)

## In Conclusion

*"Is the Vista X for you?"*

I guess the key decision you have to make is whether or not you can do without a target ID meter.

Can you handle a two-tone output only?

*"Where is my primary focus? Am I a coin shooter or a relic hunter? Am I both?"*

As of today, just two coils are available and this in my opinion is somewhat limiting.

Competition in the market is hotting up so the Vista X is up against a lot. I've shown the standard 'octagonal 9" x 11"' coil might be too big in some situations e.g. multi target proximity, while the smaller 5.7" coil while being great may also be a tad too small. Having said that they both have their places and I am certainly using both to maximum advantage.

What's needed to really set this detector 'on fire' is a 7" or 8" round coil and possibly an 8" x 5" elliptical coil. With an expanded coil selection it would give the Vista X much greater appeal and usability.

All of that aside, and dealing with **what we do have**, we have a fantastic metal detector. It's pleasingly easy to use.

Why the better signal clarity? I'm thinking it's all in the design of the 'octagonal shaped coil' as it behaves more like a 'sharply focused concentric tipped detection cone' than the 'wider scan of the typical Double D coil.

In addition, and in Part 1 of the Review, I referred to the Vista X' designer, Plamen Rashkov, he is the top

analog circuit designer in Europe, what we term, 'a boffin!'

He successfully merged an innovative coil design to a powerful and purpose built analog schematic creation. All things being equal there's plenty of technology on offer here but may not quite match its rivals for outright 'bells and whistle' visual (and audible) wizardry! Look beyond that and you will see plenty to like about the Vista X.

I'm thinking a Vista X should be on the '*consider*' buying' list for many people.

Vista X summed up in a single word - Powerful



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