



READY

**KAHR'S NEW ST9
IS TACTICALLY
ENHANCED
FOR BETTER
PERFORMANCE**

BY DR. MARTIN D. TOPPER • SCOTT BAXTER PHOTOS

TO

STRIKE



Kahr's semi-automatic pistols have long been known for their innovative designs, but until now, they've lacked one thing: an accessory rail for mounting lights, lasers and combination units. Today's lights and lasers are smaller and more reliable than ever before, and increasing numbers of Americans have started mounting them on their home-defense and carry guns.

Thankfully, Kahr now offers rails on two new 9mm pistols: the compact S9 and the full-sized ST9. I received the latter for testing and mounted a Laser-Max Spartan light/laser combination unit on its rail. This is a very versatile combination that is small enough to conceal well in an IWB holster but large enough to serve as a duty or home-defense pistol.

ST9 SPECS

The ST9 is a 4-inch-barreled 9mm semi-auto with a polymer frame and an 8+1 capacity. The pistol's black polymer frame has a non-slip stippled grip that is checkered on the front- and backstraps for a secure hold. The slide is made of matte-finished stainless steel and features an enlarged ejection port, an external extractor and black fixed sights set up in the popular three-white-dot pattern for rapid

alignment. The action is striker fired, and Kahr has included a disconnecter safety that keeps the gun from firing out of battery and a striker block that helps prevent firing when the pistol is dropped. In addition, the ST9 sports a number of features that are unique to the "S" series, including the frame rail and forward serrations on the slide. The MSRP for this pistol is \$456, which is a very good price in today's market.

When I field-stripped my sample ST9 for cleaning and inspection, it became clear that quality control was excellent both inside and out. There were no sharp edges, tool marks, scratches, burrs, areas of discoloration or any other signs of poor workmanship. The barrel had a highly polished feed ramp, and the muzzle was evenly crowned and recessed.

The trigger pull was smooth and very consistent at 5.25 to 5.5 pounds. The reset was very short, and the trigger travel measured 0.75 inches. That's a fairly long pull for a striker-fired action. In practice, it is more like a double-action revolver, which might be why Kahr describes the gun as being double-action only (DAO). However, it should be noted that even though the ST9 is described as DAO, it does not have a second-strike capability like some other DAO semi-autos.

During the cleaning and examination, it became clear that this pistol

has very strong springs. The recoil and magazine springs were very stiff. The recoil spring required significant effort to compress when the guide was put back in place. The magazines also proved difficult to load without the assistance of a loading tool. Both of these issues are likely to at least partly resolve themselves as the pistol breaks in.

SPARTAN WARRIOR

The LaserMax Spartan light/laser is small, lightweight and very versatile. Its green 5mW laser has a 510nm to 535nm wavelength and is highly visible, even in daylight. The unit's LED light puts out a maximum of 120 lumens, which is adequate for

target recognition at the vast majority of distances where a 9mm handgun would be used. The light has a soft green "mint"-colored filter that is easy on the eyes and provides a green-on-green sight picture when the laser is turned on. The net effect is a bright green laser dot on a soft green background, which makes it very easy to pick up the dot in a hurry.

In addition to all of that, the light and laser are programmable. The light can be set to constant-on and strobe modes. Its output can also be adjusted from 4 to 120 lumens to save power and reduce your nighttime signature. Using the strobe setting helps preserve the battery, which is a single AAA alkaline battery rather

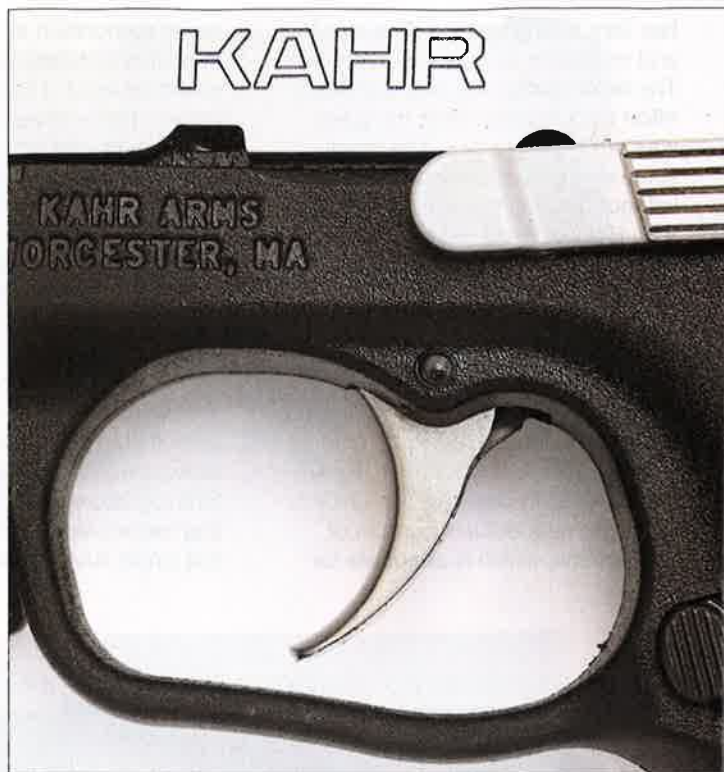
than a more expensive lithium power source. Alkaline batteries have an advantage in that they don't require special disposal methods like those containing lithium. The average battery life is five hours in constant use, and the light and laser automatically shut off after 10 minutes to save power. For more, visit lasermax.com.

TAKING IT FOR A SPIN

I tested the ST9 with five separate 9mm loads, including Black Hills' 125-grain HoneyBadger rounds, Cor-Bon's 100-grain +P Urban Response rounds, Freedom Munitions' 124-grain ProMatch HPs, PolyCase's 65-grain Inceptor RNPs and Winchester's 147-grain Defend JHPs from the Train &



“...Kahr's new ST9 delivers everything it was designed to do.”



Defend series. I used the Black Hills, CorBon, Freedom Munitions and Winchester loads for the accuracy and velocity portions of the evaluation. The PolyCase ammunition was used for tactical drills. All of the testing was conducted at the Flagler Gun Club in Flagler County, Florida.

The accuracy and velocity results are listed in the included table. With respect to muzzle velocity and energy, CorBon's Urban Response ammo was the fastest and most powerful. Its average velocity of 1,336 fps and 396 foot-pounds of energy from the ST9's 4-inch barrel was most impressive. This load is an advanced version of CorBon's Pow'RBall ammunition. According to CorBon, Urban Response is designed for controlled penetration in urban self-defense situations such as subdivisions, apartment complexes and mobile home parks where deep penetration may threaten bystanders. The three subsonic loads—Black Hills' Honey-Badgers, Freedom Munitions' Pro-Match HPs and Winchester's Defend JHPs—clearly produced subsonic muzzle velocities and would be good choices for suppressed 9mm pistols.



KAHR ST9

SPECIFICATIONS:

CALIBER:	9mm
BARREL:	4 inches
OA LENGTH:	6.5 inches
WEIGHT:	20.6 ounces (empty)
GRIPS:	Polymer
SIGHTS:	Three-dot
ACTION:	Striker-fired
FINISH:	Black, stainless
CAPACITY:	8+1
MSRP:	\$456

Accuracy testing was conducted at 15 yards. The data presented in the table represents the best of three 5-shot groups with each load. In my opinion, the best group is most representative of the inherent accuracy of the pistol's design. That's because the trigger of the ST9 is really not designed for shooting from a benchrest. Even so, three of the four loads produced very good groups for a pistol that's basically designed for use in close quarters.



On the other hand, when running the tactical drills with the LaserMax laser, the practical accuracy was excellent. I attribute this to the good performance of the ST9's trigger when it was pressed straight back through the break point. Dry-firing using this technique showed that the laser barely wiggled throughout the trigger stroke. During the accuracy testing, the fluted Black Hills bullets misfed twice when the edge of one of the flutes got hung up on the side of the Kahr's offset feed ramp. Fluted bullets came out commercially after the basic Kahr design, and these two stoppages simply represent a lack of complete compatibility between designs.

TACTICAL DRILLS

I used two tactical drills to test the performance of the ST9. The first involved a target depicting a robbery in which a man behind a store counter was using the clerk as a hostage. I shot the drill two-handed at 3 yards using a Competition Electronics timer.

10 ROUND ETM

PROVEN RELIABILITY

The updated 10 Round, .45 ACP, Full-Size, Elite Tactical Magazine with wrap-around base pad enhances reliability in all 1911 Handguns.

AIRCRAFT GRADE
CERTIFIED
STAINLESS STEEL

RAILED FEED LIPS

REMOVABLE POLYMER
WRAP-AROUND
BASE PAD

SELF LUBRICATING
POLYMER FOLLOWER

NO-RISK
SERVICE POLICY



ORDER TODAY AT SHOPWILSONCOMBAT.COM



“...when running the tactical drills with the LaserMax laser, the practical accuracy was excellent.”

KAHR ST9

PERFORMANCE:

LOAD	VELOCITY	ACCURACY
BLACK HILLS 125 HONEYBADGER	913	1.97
CORBON 100 URBAN RESPONSE +P	1,336	2.08
FREEDOM MUNITIONS 124 PROMATCH HP	932	3.88
WINCHESTER 147 DEFEND JHP	914	1.57

Bullet weight measured in grains, velocity in fps by chronograph and accuracy in inches for best five-shot groups at 15 yards.



At the random beep, I drew the pistol from concealment while taking one step right and then firing a double-tap to the upper chest. I ran this drill four times, and the average time was 4.13 seconds. All eight shots were in a 2.75-inch group in the upper chest to the right of the midline.

The second drill involved a target depicting an armed assailant on a

crowded urban street with a single bystander on both sides of him, set at a distance of 10 yards. My average time for four runs was 5.81 seconds. Seven of my eight shots were in the center of the chest in a 3.75-inch group. The eighth shot was a flyer that opened the group to 5.5 inches. The flyer hit the right shoulder of the gun arm and would likely have disabled the

shooter's gun hand. Overall, the tactical performance was very good.

All in all, Kahr's new ST9 delivers everything it was designed to do. It mounted the LaserMax easily and firmly held it in place, delivered good tactical accuracy and was quite reliable. At a suggested retail price of only \$456, it's a good deal. For more information, visit kahr.com. **CCH**