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JANUARY 2020

Kahr Arms K9

25th Anniversary

CELEBRATING THE SINGLE-STACK REVOLUTION

The Kahr K9 Anniversary Model is a special iteration of the market-changing pistol.

JEREMIAH MCCARTHY

PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

Boy, how time flies! A quarter of a century ago, when I was just 13 years old, I was glued to the television set at my grandfather's house watching police cruisers chase a white Ford Bronco somewhere on the West Coast. The year was 1994. The Federal Assault Weapons Ban was signed into law by then President Bill Clinton the same year, putting a decade-long halt on the manufacture or importation of "high-capacity" pistol magazines (i.e., double stack).

Times were tough for gun enthusiasts. I was a young teenager who regularly scoured the firearms classified ads at a time when "pre-ban" was all the rage. Manufacturers were focused on full-size sidearms, and everyday carry (EDC) wasn't even a thing. If you were looking for a reliable, accurate and concealable pistol

in anything larger than .380 ACP, good luck.

Around the same time — perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not — Justin Moon, founder and CEO of Kahr Firearms Group (formerly known as Kahr Arms), introduced the K9 pistol, a compact, single-stack 9mm pistol which set the stage for what would subsequently become referred to as the single-stack revolution.

While many a firearm has come and gone the way of Crystal Pepsi, only a few have stood the test of time — and the Kahr K9 prominent among them. After 25 years and upwards of 40 different variations in caliber, size, and material, Kahr is commemorating the introduction of their barrier-bashing K9 with a limited-edition 25th anniversary pistol sure to get the juices flowing for EDCers everywhere.

GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT

For the anniversary model, Kahr took 500 of their iconic K9s and tricked them out with (amongst other things) an engraved, commemorative "25 years" logo on the slide, front and rear slide serrations, and an individually numbered steel frame. Topping it all off, the anniversary model wears a Sniper Grey Cerakote finish, tritium night sights from TRUGLO and Hogue aluminum grip panels with a custom-engraved Kahr logo. We received numbers 99 and 100 for review.

The K9 anniversary model is a sharp-looking pistol built on an all-steel frame. It arrived in a lockable hard-sided case with a numbered sticker on the outside. Each gun ships with three magazines (a pair of 7-round mags and an 8-round extended mag), as well as a 1791 Gunleather pancake holster with a commemorative "25 years" Kahr logo and the years "1994-2019"

etched into the side. The famed double-action only (DAO) Kahr Action, along with the 3.5" polished stainless steel barrel, has our K9 measuring out at an overall length of 6" along with a sub-1" slide width — perfectly suited for concealed carry.

THE JUICE

The magic of the Kahr Action lies in several patents involving the locking, firing and extraction systems — six, in fact. Similar to the action of Browning's Hi Power pistol, Kahr pistols utilize an offset recoil lug to give the K9 a locked-breech, delayed-blowback design. However, unlike the Browning, Kahr dropped the external hammer in favor of a striker-operated design to help ensure a snag-free draw from concealment.

Another benefit of the offset recoil lug on Kahr pistols can be noticed by looking at the depth at which it sits inside the



Kahr Arms K9
25th Anniversary
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The perfect gun for everyday personal safety or a special occasion, the Kahr Anniversary K9 merges style and practicality into one package.



Unique "tire-tread" slide porting adds a touch of class to this dressed-up 9mm.

At home on your hip or carefully squirreled away to conserve collector value, the Anniversary K9 stays true to its lineage as one of the first defensive single-stack 9mms.

frame — or, better yet, by shooting it. The design contributes to a much lower bore axis in the K9 than in most pistols, allowing it to be significantly less snappy when compared to similar-sized rigs.

Utilizing what Kahr calls a "safe cam action," the trigger bar runs closely nestled inside a channel along one side of the frame and rotates a cam performing two functions while the trigger is engaged. Not only does the cam fully cock the striker, it simultaneously disengages the striker block safety just before releasing the striker. The additional level of safety provided by the longer travel of a double-action trigger is further enhanced by the cam, which physically prevents the striker from being released while it's rotated. While some variants of Kahr pistols do offer manual, external safeties, most do not. Kahr's 25th anniversary K9 falls into the latter category.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT BUTTER

If you're a shooter who was born and raised on two-stage striker-fired pistols — or maybe you're a breaks-like-a-glass-rod 1911 type of shooter — resist the urge to turn your nose up at the thought of shooting anything with a double-action trigger. The Kahr trigger is really something that needs to be experienced before passing any judgment because there's really nothing else quite like it.

The end result of Kahr's unique design is a buttery smooth double-action pull weight in the 5- to 7-lb. range. On our test model, the trigger pull weight averaged out to 5 lbs., 11 oz. through five pulls. Comparatively, the double-action pull weight of most revolvers find themselves significantly higher on the scale, somewhere between 9 and 12 lbs. of pull weight. Unlike revolvers, the Kahr's trigger doesn't stack, meaning the trigger pull weight stays constant throughout the length of travel, leading to some accurate and enjoyable time on the range.

RANGE TIME

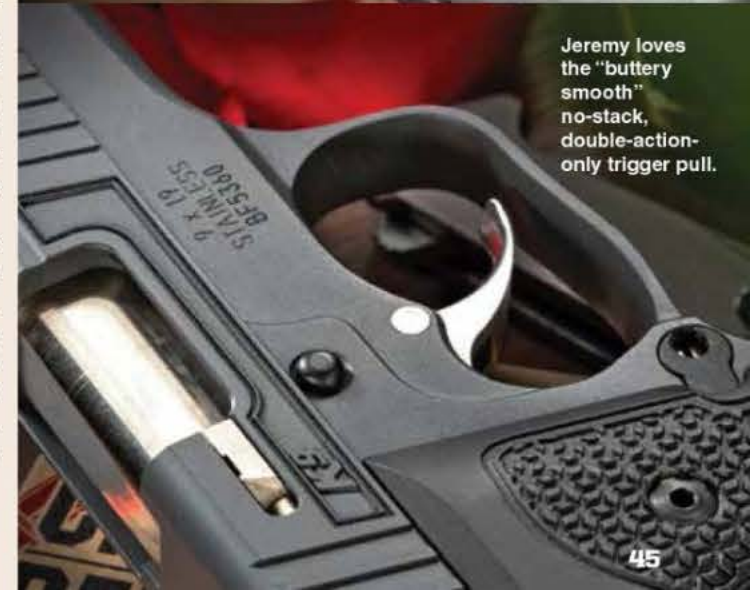
I was curious about what kind of splits I could get while running the K9. Defensive situations are serious business, and time is always of the essence. Due to the additional length of travel required to fully reset the double-action trigger and the additional time it would add to follow-up shots, it was important to me to get the K9 on the clock.

A good friend of mine — an officer with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department and fellow National Guardsman — joined me for the day and helped set up a 12" by 20" steel silhouette at 10 yards before getting to work. For comparison, we had a typical two-stage, striker-fired pistol on hand. With shot timer in hand, we timed each other shooting strings of five rounds at the steel target. The steel would have to ring five times in order for the run to count.

At this distance, I'm typically a quarter-second-splits type of guy when I feel like I'm on it. This day would prove similar, and my buddy and I shared roughly equal split times between shots. For the K9, we were running 0.30-second splits with its longer trigger reset — and with our two-stage striker fired pistol, only slightly faster at around 0.25 seconds. With a difference of just five-hundredths of a second between shots with the double-action K9 and two-stage striker fired pistol, it's fair to say the K9 alleviated any concerns about being slow.



The gun sports an eye-catching logo highlighting 25 years of production and visible unit number designations.



Jeremy loves the "buttery smooth" no-stack, double-action-only trigger pull.

“HOGUE DID A MAGNIFICENT JOB WITH THEIR ALUMINUM GRIP PANELS ON THIS ONE, AND THE WEIGHT OF THE ALL-STEEL FRAME GIVES THE PISTOL A ROBUST FEEL.”



Ready to rock? Jeremiah and company put the pistol through paces in an offhand course — who could argue with the results?

TAKEAWAYS

I almost always stop listening to someone the second they start to talk about how well or how poorly a particular pistol might fit their hands. I believe “fit” sits near the bottom of the list regarding any implications on how well one can shoot. Sure, comfort is important. However, most feelings regarding how a gun doesn’t fit one’s hands properly can usually be remedied by practice and becoming more familiar with the particular firearm.

I and all the other shooters in my circle who had the opportunity to handle the anniversary model were quick to point out how well the K9 fit in their hands. Hogue did a magnificent job with their aluminum grip panels on this one, and the weight of the all-steel frame gives the pistol a robust feel. The palm swell? Dare I say, it was perfect for my medium-to-large sized hands. The lip on the basepad of the seven-round mag reliably tucked my pinky onto the pistol grip with each draw.

This gun was built to be reliable, and it chewed up everything we could feed it — from soft shooting 150-gr. action pistol loads to heavy hitting +P defensive loads. No surprises here, really — the design of the Kahr action allows the firing pin block to be placed farther back in the slide making it less susceptible to fouling. In addition to the unique locking and firing systems of the Kahr pistol, Kahr also utilizes a unique self-cleaning

extractor which allows fouling to be pushed away as it pivots through a series of relief cuts.

In the accuracy department, Kahr’s K9 did not disappoint. From a sandbag rest at a distance of 10 yards, SIG SAUER’s 115-gr. 365 V-Crown loads posted the best group of 0.869”. The gun also liked NOVX +P loads using the 65-gr. Inceptor ARXs. The lightweight metal/polymer matrix of the ARX bullet came screaming out of the K9’s short 3.5” barrel at a blistering 1,600 feet per second (fps) and printed a best group of 1.16”. Magtech’s 115-gr. full-metal jacket (FMJ) loads fared about the same in terms of group size.

It’s easy to see the impact the Kahr K9 had on the firearms market. Nowadays, if you spend more than five minutes browsing Instagram, you’ll see a picture of some gun geek’s pocket dump. Somewhere in the picture, odds are they’re rocking a single-stack 9mm for concealed carry.

The anniversary model Kahr K9 is just as accurate and just as reliable as the first K9s produced a quarter century ago, but with the addition of modern accoutrements EDCers crave (tritium sights, front and rear slide serrations, Cerakote finish and slide ports). The limited edition 25th anniversary Kahr K9 respectfully celebrates its past, while its unique action carries it into the future. 🔫

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