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THE CLASSY K9

KAHR'S K9 9MM SEMIAUTOMATIC HAS BEEN A PREMIUM PERSONAL-PROTECTION PISTOL FOR 25 YEARS.

BY JAKE EDMONDSON

TWO YEARS AGO, I WROTE about two then-new versions of Kahr's Value Series CW9 and CM9 pistols. Now I have the pleasure of working with one of Kahr's premium models: the K9. Kahr is celebrating the K9 turning 25

years old this year, and the company will offer a commemorative model to acknowledge that milestone. *Shooting Times* got an advance look at the special K9.

The Kahr K9 is a double-action-only (DAO), striker-fired 9mm autoloader. In my experience, the K9 has a smooth trigger stroke that is stage-free. When the trigger is squeezed fully, the stroke rotates a cam that unlocks the spring-loaded striker safety, withdraws and moves the striker to the fullcock position, and then releases the striker to fire a cartridge.

There are no external safeties on the K9, but there is an internal striker block that immobilizes the partially cocked striker from any movement until it is deactivated by squeezing the trigger through a complete stroke. Because there are no external safeties, the K9's exterior is snag-free, which is great for a gun that's

primarily intended for legal concealed carry. In addition, the K9 does not have a magazine disconnect safety, so it will fire when the magazine is out.

When a cartridge is fired, the slide is pushed rearward, and a cam on the barrel lug pulls the barrel down and unlocks it from the slide. The slide continues rearward and extracts and ejects the spent case. The recoil spring, which is located on a full-length guide rod under the barrel, pushes the slide forward, which strips



The K9 turns 25 in 2019, and Kahr is celebrating the milestone with a special anniversary model.

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a fresh round from the magazine and chambers it. As the slide goes into battery, the barrel and slide are locked together by the barrel hood moving up into the slide's ejection port.

The K9's "offset barrel" design places the trigger mechanism beside the barrel lug instead of under it, which allows the shooter's grip to be placed close to the centerline of the bore. Having a grip close to the center of the bore provides enhanced recoil control and also reduces muzzle flip and felt recoil.

Additionally, the self-cleaning extractor forces powder residue away from the extractor, preventing fouling from building up. The extractor design also limits movement, reducing the possibility of a failure to extract.

The K9 has a 3.47-inch barrel made from proprietary high-tensile-strength steel, and it has polygonal rifling. With polygonal rifling the lands and grooves are blunter than the sharp-edged lands and grooves of traditional rifling. Some say polygonal rifling looks like hills and valleys. Typically, polygonal rifling is shaped like a hexagon or an octagon. The concept holds that polygonal rifling provides a better gas seal because the bore area is slightly smaller than with traditional rifling. This provides more efficient use of the combustion gases trapped behind the bullet, which produces greater muzzle velocity and slightly better accuracy. Other reported advantages of polygonal rifling include the barrel's thickness is less compromised in the area of each groove, less bullet deformation and less drag on the bullet as it travels through the bore, reduced buildup of bullet jacket material in the barrel, and greater barrel life.

The 25th Anniversary K9 has a smooth, Sniper Gray Cerakoted stainless-steel frame and slide. The slide has eight grasping grooves on each side at the rear and five up front. The top of the slide is ported and distinctively contoured from the back of the ejection port to the forward grasping grooves. A special 25th Anniversary logo resides on both sides of the slide near the muzzle, ahead of the forward grasping grooves.

The K9's overall length is 6.0 inches, and its height (from the bottom of the grip frame without a magazine to the top of the rear sight) is 4.5 inches. The K9 comes with three magazines. Two hold seven rounds, and one has an extension, allowing it to hold eight rounds.

The pistol has steel sights that are dovetailed into the slide. The front sight has one white dot, and the rear sight has a vertical white bar. The front sight is 0.145 inch thick, which matches the 0.145-inch square notch in the rear sight.

The K9 also has an elongated trigger guard; a smooth-faced, polished trigger; and black polymer wraparound grips. The



The Kahr K9 has steel sights dovetailed into the slide. The slide is ported and has grasping grooves up front and at the rear.



The K9 comes with three magazines. Two hold seven rounds of 9mm Luger ammunition, and one holds eight rounds. The polymer baseplates are removable.

grips have a unique texture and a grip circumference of 5.0 inches just below the trigger guard. The pistol comes with a 1791 brand leather holster and a foam-lined plastic case that can be padlocked.

Range Results

You can see the results of my shooting session with the K9 in the accompanying chart, but briefly, the overall average accuracy for five, five-shot groups with 10 9mm Luger factory loads was

THE CLASSY K9



3.76 inches. That shooting was done from a sandbag benchrest at 25 yards, and my best accuracy came with the SIG SAUER 115-grain Elite V-Crown 365 JHP ammunition. It averaged 3.31 inches. SIG developed its 365 ammunition specifically for short-barreled 9mm pistols, but in my experience, it shoots well in all barrel lengths.

My favorite 9mm factory ammo has become the Federal 150-grain HST loading because it is so soft to shoot. While it wasn't the most accurate load in this pistol, I fired a full box of it prior to sitting down at the bench for the shooting-for-accuracy portion of my evaluation, and that helped me get used to the K9's long trigger pull. (I also did a fair bit of dry-firing before even heading out to the range.) Because I was so familiar with the trigger pull by the time I conducted the accuracy review, I believe the long trigger pull did not hinder my ability to produce good groups.

As much as I enjoy shooting for accuracy, I really enjoy popping steel targets, bouncing ball targets, and paper silhouette targets from a variety of distances and positions, so I set up my portable 6-inch-wide steel plate, my 10-inch steel gong, my man-size steel silhouette, some Birchwood Casey "Bad Guy"

25TH ANNIVERSARY K9

MANUFACTURER	Kahr Arms kahr.com
TYPE	Striker-fired DAO autoloader
CALIBER	9mm Luger
MAGAZINE CAPACITY	7 and 8 rounds
BARREL	3.47 in.
OVERALL LENGTH	6.0 in.
WIDTH	0.90 in. (slide)
HEIGHT	4.5 in.
WEIGHT, EMPTY	25 oz.
GRIPS	Wraparound textured polymer
FINISH	Sniper Gray Cerakote
SIGHTS	White-bar rear, white-dot front
TRIGGER	5.88-lb. pull (as tested)
SAFETY	Firing pin block
MSRP	\$1,449

silhouette targets, and my Champion DuraSeal and Birchwood Casey bouncing ball and tumbling jack targets at various distances ranging from three to 10 yards and ran another full box of each factory load through the K9.

Some of my shooting drills included drawing and firing three rounds with a one-handed grip on a silhouette target set at three yards, then doing a combat reload by dropping the magazine, pulling a second loaded magazine from a magazine pouch, and inserting it into the pistol and then repeating the shooting. On a target set at seven yards, I drew and double-tapped using a two-hand grip. I then holstered the K9 and repeated that drill twice. With a fully loaded magazine, on a target set at 10 yards, I drew and fired seven rounds in slow, aimed fire with a two-hand hold. Then I repeated that drill with a second full magazine. The pistol performed flawlessly.

During all that shooting, the K9 was easy to control, reloads were easy to make, and the magazine dropped free upon pressing

THE CLASSY K9



the magazine release. A fresh magazine seated easily. All ammo types, ranging from hollowpoints to full metal jacketed types, fed, fired, and extracted perfectly throughout the range session. The sights were fast to acquire, and the recoil was easy to manage. Trigger take-up was relatively long, and it broke as it bottomed out, but it was controllable. The trigger pull averaged 5 pounds, 14 ounces, according to my RCBS trigger pull scale. All in all, the K9's mechanism was fast and trouble-free to operate.

For anyone who is doubting the desirability of a DAO semi-automatic pistol, here are a few reasons to consider such a pistol for your personal protection. First, a DAO is simple for the shooter to operate. If one is ever involved in a life-threatening situation, a pistol that's free of any combination of levers, buttons, or grip safeties that have to be rotated or flipped or squeezed or manipulated in some manner is obviously much easier and faster to operate. Under the stress of a life-or-death situation, remembering how to operate a more complicated pistol could lead to a mishap. With a DAO, just draw, aim, and fire.

Just because a DAO pistol like the Kahr K9 doesn't have any external manual safeties, that does not necessarily mean it's less safe. If the DAO pistol has a relatively long trigger stroke—and the K9 does—that long trigger stroke reduces the chances of an accidental discharge. The only thing necessary to make a DAO pistol safe is to remove your finger from the trigger guard.

The 25th Anniversary K9 comes with a black 1791 brand pancake-style leather holster that features Kahr's special logo. According to the company, production is limited to 250 pistols.

It is true that a pistol with a different type of trigger mechanism, such as a single-action Model 1911, has the potential for better accuracy, but match-winning precision isn't necessary for self-defense. Don't get me wrong. We all want good accuracy from our guns, and striving for the best possible accuracy is a tenet I live by. But considering that most defensive-type shootings occur inside seven yards, a good-quality DAO pistol typically provides more than enough accuracy. The K9 certainly does. **ST**

KAHR K9 ACCURACY & VELOCITY

AMMUNITION	VEL. (FPS)	E.S. (FPS)	S.D. (FPS)	25-YD. ACC. (IN.)
9mm, 3.47-in. Barrel				
American Eagle Syntech 115-gr. TSJ	1024	33	14	4.17
Hornady Critical Defense 115-gr. FTX	1015	19	6	3.88
HSM 115-gr. XTP	1121	60	23	3.59
SIG SAUER 365 115-gr. JHP	1123	42	15	3.31
Winchester 115-gr. Silvertip	1112	11	4	4.38
Federal HST 124-gr. JHP	1077	23	9	3.33
Hornady American Gunner 124-gr. XTP	1072	33	12	3.95
Hornady Critical Duty 135-gr. FlexLock +P	945	28	13	3.84
SIG SAUER 147-gr. FMJ	825	25	11	3.66
Federal HST 150-gr. JHP	806	17	7	3.49

NOTES: Accuracy is the average of three, five-shot groups fired from a sandbag benchrest. Velocity is the average of five rounds measured 12 feet from the gun's muzzle.