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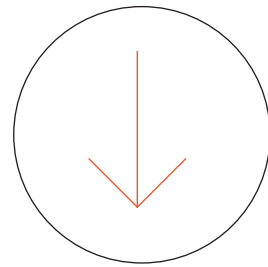
KAHR'S FIRST RELEASE IN  
AGES TUCKS AWAY NEATLY.

# KAHR X9





Kahr's X9 is capable of hosting a plethora of accessories.



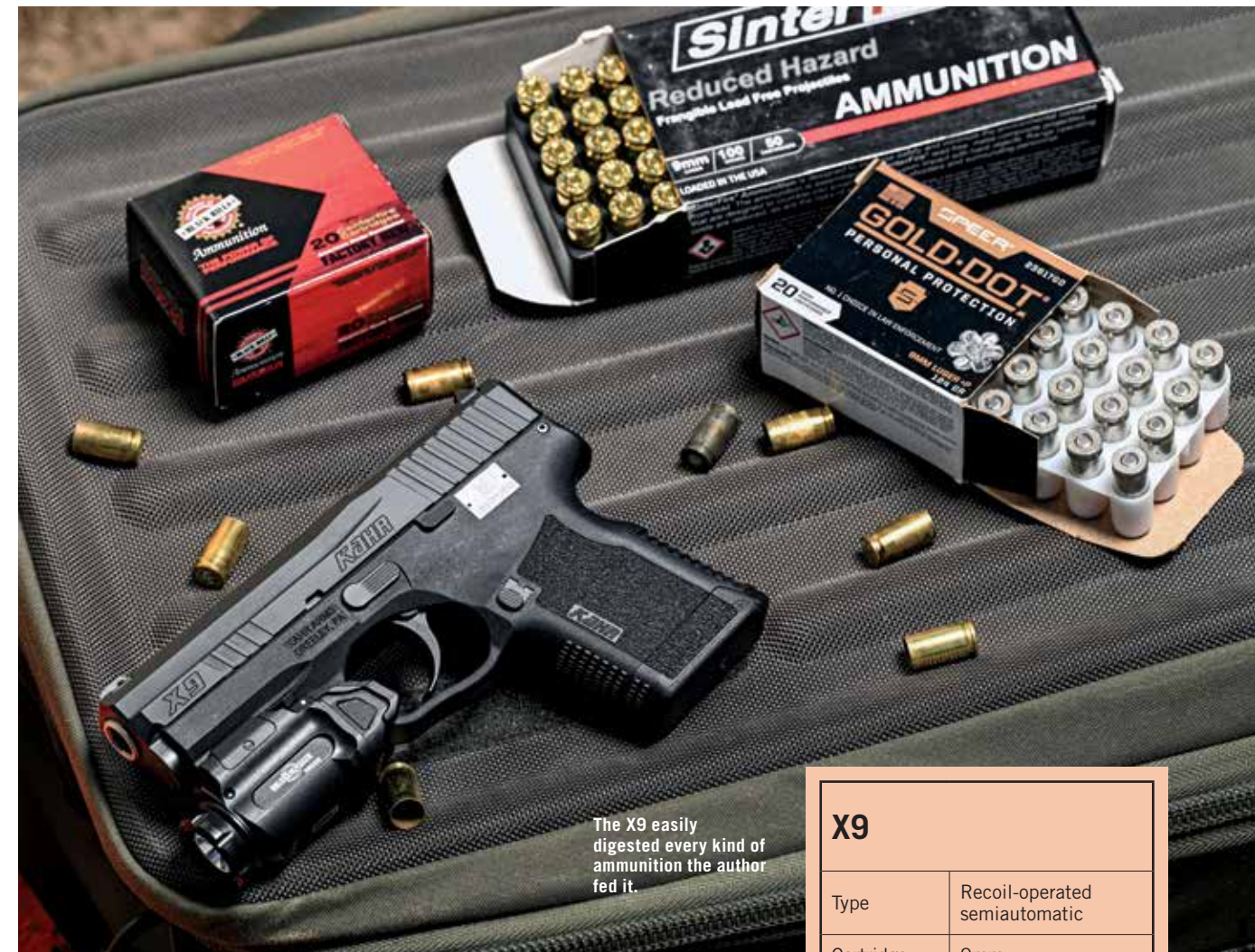
Kahr Arms has a long-standing history of making handguns that put concealability at the forefront. Looking back at their hit K9 pistol confirms this statement, as it was a bold departure from most of the other “wonder nines” of the 1990s. The idea was simple — stay thin. Single-stack magazine designs ruled the roost for the next 25 years or so, but they have a drawback, one that is relatively easy to see.

To beat the capacity of a standard revolver, the magazine can only get longer, which extends a gun's measurement from the top of the slide to the baseplate. When placed on the hip with a shirt pulled over, this area becomes the most likely to create an outline in the fabric, a malady known as “printing.” As concealed carry becomes increasingly popular, the industry is reevaluating things, with double-stack designs getting another look. In this configuration, grip length can virtually be cut in half while offering the same capacity or more. Released toward the end of 2024, Kahr reminded us of these benefits with their new X9, a twin-stack polymer semiauto that deeply adheres to the company's motto of concealment first.



Picking up the pistol for the first time, I gained an immediate appreciation for its clean appearance, which still left room for modern lines and contours. Sometimes, I feel carry guns are getting a bit too flashy, which doesn't do anything more than create snag points in many cases. It's intended to ride under clothing, so other than sticking out in a display case, what's the point anyway? The top of the slide is beveled, shaving off some weight and making it easier to holster, while the backstrap is cut inward to maximize purchase during your draw. It also features two pairs of cocking serrations with more placed toward the rear than the front. This is a smart move, as the forward set barely sees any use as it is. The grip is molded with gentle texturing, including gritty sandpaper-like side panels and moderately aggressive studs on the front and backstrap. Lastly, the trigger-guard is crafted with a unique pair of undercuts that differ from most other handguns that I've worked with lately. This provides a higher overall hand position, putting you closer to the pivot point of the recoil. In short, it makes the gun easier to control, which is paramount with smaller pistols.

Further attention to concealment can be witnessed in the control set, as it is designed to stave off accidental engagement. The magazine release is oval and nearly flush to the frame. As most civilian gunfights don't involve a reload, many believe that making it larger only contributes to it getting tapped while inside the holster, so I understand the rationale behind this design. The slide stops are more pronounced, which I found a bit odd. Since you can almost always slingshot a pistol



The X9 easily digested every kind of ammunition the author fed it.

back into the fight, they don't need to be this way. I will give credit where it's due with them being bilateral, as small guns are tough to operate. This lets users utilize more fingers when trying to take it off or put it on. The polar opposite of this control would be the takedown lever, which is nearly countersunk into the frame. It's also quite stiff, ensuring that an errant digit doesn't flip it under stress. As for the safety, there isn't one — at least on the outside. Instead, the X9 is fitted with a heavier trigger that requires a longer press to fire. Those of us who have carried revolvers are used to this method and can attest to its effectiveness. Kahr describes it as “double-action only,” which is a fair way to describe it, albeit not completely accurate. A true double-action will both fully cock and release the firing mechanism, in this case, a striker. However, in the X9, it only performs the latter in its entirety. While this might sound disadvantageous, the upside is that it comes with a shorter reset for faster follow-up shots. It's supplemented with a striker block to ensure the gun cannot go off if dropped or jarred, so we can't call the gun safety-less; it just uses different means by today's standards.

### X9

Type	Recoil-operated semiautomatic
Cartridge	9mm
Capacity	10 rds.
Barrel	3.54 in.
Overall Length	6.13 in.
Weight	17.6 oz.
Slide	Steel
Frame	Polymer
Trigger	Safe cam double-action only
Sights	Drift-adjustable white dot front, drift-adjustable rear notch, RMsC optics cut
MSRP	\$549
Manufacturer	Kahr Arms kahr.com



Using a mixture of studs and grit, the X9 has a unique surface that facilitates a more secure purchase.

The Kahr X9 comes with an extraordinarily rugged sight set. Unburdened with markings, the front and rear are dovetailed into the slide with oversized grooves, making them unlikely to drift during use. This makes the gun ready for the range the moment you pick it up, but there are plenty of avenues for accessories.

Like most new releases, this pistol is cut for the Shield RMSc footprint. With that, I grabbed one of these sights off the shelf and attached it using the included hardware. When mounted, the deck covers the rear notch, but the optic itself has a built-in rear sight, so you aren't completely without irons if you go this route. However, as it is taller, you can expect a point of impact shift, so it's best to check what it does to your zero.

The dot, on the other hand, sits at a relatively natural height, helping the old guys (like me) retain the presentation we learned before guns had batteries. In addition to the optics cut, the X9 has a dust cover accessory rail, which I used to mount SureFire's new XC3 weapon-light. Although irregular, the triggerguard had no trouble accepting it, leaving me with a sweet-looking completed package.

Moving on to ammunition, I like to try a mix of self-defense and practice fodder, as we all should be shooting our carry gun at the range



### Surefire XC3

As a disproportionate amount of crime takes place at night, many consider a carry gun useless unless it is supplemented with a quality flashlight. Weapon-mounted lights are a popular solution, but as guns shrink, so must these devices. SureFire's XC3 is their latest incarnation, designed for guns like the Kahr X9.

Built from high-strength aluminum and powered by a single 123A battery, this light generates 550 lumens and 7,200 candela of white light, illuminating your target for positive ID. When mounted to the X9, I found the controls effortless to reach with little explanation required to understand how they operate. On the range, the small amount of weight acted like a compensator, making the gun even softer to shoot.


Of all the features, I appreciated how SureFire kept a popular form factor, making it compatible with several holsters that are already on the market.

\$299  
surefire.com



PHOTO BY FRANK MELLONI

without any hiccups and was surprisingly accurate for a nontraditional projectile. Running the defensive ammo brought about a little more kick but nothing to write home about. Since I sold the gun short with the standard 7-yard test distance, I widened the space to 35 yards and started drilling the head area of a Caldwell AR500 IPSC. The gun easily kept pace with this refined target area, and it gave me a chance to get a feel for the trigger. Slow fire let me dissect every nuance of the bang switch, which was indeed long but ultimately smooth. That's an interesting point, as long trigger movements can be either the brain-child of intense engineering or a hurried shortcut to rush a gun to market. In this case, it was obviously the former. I finished up with some double taps on closer silhouette targets, followed by a transition back to the far one. This demonstrated the snappiness of the reset, which was indeed a little longer, too. However, it's important to remember that these are not built to be race guns, and that extra tenth of an inch might just be what saves you from touching off a second shot that you didn't intend.

Wrapping things up, I was impressed with Kahr's new pistol and liked that they zigged while others are zagging yet still stayed true to the company's principle of concealment at any cost. Reliability was spot-on, and the gun was accurate beyond its need — the next two qualifiers for something that I'd stake my life on. The only potential downside is one that's easily curable: its capacity of 10+1, which is regarded as low by today's standards. However, the solution is halfway addressed in the box. The X9 can accept the larger magazines that accompany the SIG Sauer 17-round XMACRO, and Kahr includes the magazine hardware to make them work. Kahr will also offer their own 15-rounders for the X9 in the near future. Adding it all up, it looks like double-stacks will be relevant for years to come, and we'll have designs like the X9 to thank for it. 

### PERFORMANCE

LOAD	Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation	Extreme Spread	Avg. Group (in.)	Best Group (in.)
SinterFire NXG 100 gr.	1,136	10	30	1	.7
Speer Gold Dot Carry Gun 135 gr.	1,026	7	23	1.5	1.2
Black Hills JHP 115 gr.	1,223	12	40	1.8	1.6

Accuracy is the average of five five-shot groups at 7 yards from a sandbag rest. Velocity is the average of 10 shots measured with a Garmin Xero C1 Pro chronograph set 10 inches from the muzzle.

more than we do. Since handguns see more indoor ranges than rifles, whenever a lead-free option is available, I like to work it in. SinterFire's NXG product filled that role for this test, as its projectiles are made from a blended copper matrix. As a personal-protection pistol must feed and fire self-defense munitions, I coupled it with Speer's new Gold Dot Carry Gun. A spin on the classic, this load uses an elastomer filling to ensure expansion after passing through intermediate barriers and to maximize performance when fired from short barrels. Last, I used tried-and-true 115-grain Black Hills jacketed hollowpoints. Built to +P pressures, the lightweight projectiles are pushed to hypersonic speeds, all but guaranteeing a speedy mushrooming effect after only minimal penetration. Loading these into my range bag, I grabbed a "gunshow special" universal holster that could accept the X9 with all its accoutrements and planted it at the 8 o'clock position (I'm a lefty) on my waist. As designed, it didn't poke out behind me, and considering all of the accessories that I had on it, it was barely noticeable at all.

I started testing by breaking it in with the SinterFire ammo, which was characteristically light. Therefore, the recoil was minimal, even when fired without the flashlight attached. Nonetheless, it ran the X9