

Kahr's Polymer Micro 9mm

By Duane Thomas

The Kahr PM9 is Kahr Arms' cut-down, light-weight, maximum concealment oriented version of their already small, but all-steel, K9. "PM9" stands for Polymer Micro 9mm. A comparison of dimensions and weight, K9 versus PM9, follows:

	HEIGHT	LENGTH	BARREL LENGTH	UNLOADED WEIGHT
Kahr K9	4.5"	6"	3.5"	25.0 oz.
Kahr PM9	4"	5.3"	3"	15.9 oz.

Obviously, the PM9 is a shockingly compact and light handgun for the power of the cartridge it chambers. Most of that weight savings comes from its polymer frame versus the K9's steel frame. Slide on the PM9 is made of 416 stainless steel. My sample PM9 sports that silver stainless slide/black polymer frame two-tone effect. It's worth noting that Kahr Arms also offers a version of the PM9 with the stainless slide blackened to match the frame. For

some reason, when people think "deep concealment" (and for a full-power auto pistol it would be hard to imagine something more appropriate for that job than the PM9) they tend to picture an all-black gun. That strikes them as more low-key, more "hideable." This, by the way, has never really made any sense to me, as when a gun is in deep concealment, *de facto* no one can see it...but there it is.

The PM9 comes complete with two magazines. The first, intended to be carried in the gun, is a flat-bottomed jobbie that fits flush with the PM9's shorty grip frame. With this mag in the gun, the PM9 is a "two-finger grip" proposition. The second mag, intended as the spare, is a standard length K9 magazine fitted with a polymer floorplate preventing overtravel into the PM9's short butt. With this mag snapped in place you have a full length (by Kahr standards, anyway) butt allowing a full firing grip. The short magazine holds six rounds, the long mag seven.

I reposed to the range with my sample PM9 and a reasonably diverse assortment of ammunition. And let me tell ya, gang, it's been awhile since I've so looked forward to test firing a particular handgun. When you do this for a living, there's a tendency to view a new test piece as, "Ho-hum, another gun." But not in this case; I could already tell the PM9, if it lived up to its potential, was going to be something really special.

I put up an IPSC target at seven yards and began working my way though most of a box of 9mm handloads I've had around for years. With

either mag in the gun I found it ridiculously easy to double tap the A-zone with splits (the interval between shots) in the high .28 second range. For some reason I couldn't get the gun under .28 - though I could do that time after time. I'm betting a more skilled double action shooter than I could get those splits down into the 'teens.

Since body shots were just too easy with the PM9, I switched to firing at the head box. My first double tap into the head gave me snake eyes with a .31 split. A chill went down my spine. With just a bit of practice I got the "double tap the head box" drill down to .28, as well, though again I couldn't go lower.

I fired the gun with my handloads. It worked. I fired it with PMC ball. It worked. I fired it with Speer's 124-gr. Gold Dot HPs, Hornady's 124-gr. XTP JHPs, Winchester 115-gr. Silvertip HPs, and Black Hills 115-gr. JHP

+Ps. It worked.

Flawless feed reliability. The closest thing I had to a malfunction was one instance where the IPSC style "straight thumbs" grip I favor caused me to ride the slide stop with my shooting hand thumb and the action didn't lock open when empty. Can't blame the gun for that.

I was extremely impressed with this little pocket rocket.

It's far easier to fire fast and well than we

have any right to expect from such a small, light, powerful auto pistol. This piece fairly begs to be dropped into an ankle holster, pants pocket, jacket or vest as back-up to a larger main gun. As a matter of fact, Alessi Holsters is building me an ankle rig for the PM9 even as we speak.

The late and dearly missed holster designer/maker Bruce Nelson had a concept he called "size efficiency" which meant the natural home of a particular cartridge should be the smallest, lightest gun you can wrap around it, and still have the piece work reliably. If we accept that, then the natural home of the 9mm Parabellum is the Kahr PM9, not a full service sized handgun like, say, the Beretta 92FS. If you want to carry a very small, very light, but still amazingly easy to shoot handgun chambered for a full service cartridge, you couldn't make a better choice than the Kahr PM9.

