

Gun Evaluation



Gun Kel-Tec PMR30 Caliber 22 Mag (22WMR) MSRP \$415.

Date 6/29/2012 By Joe Piazza

Construction Materials - The PMR-30's internal frame is 7075 aluminum. The grip, slide cover, trigger, mag release, magazines and safety levers are glass reinforced Nylon called Zytel. Slide, barrel and breech block are made from 4140 steel.

Finish - Metal parts are matt blued; Zytel parts are matt surface finish

Specifications

Weight Empty - 13.75 oz Weight Loaded - 19 oz (30 X 40 grain bullets)

Action Type - Semi Auto Hybrid Blowback/Locked Breech

O/A Length - 7.9" O/A Height - 5.8" Grip Width - 1.1 Grip circumference - 5.5"

Grip Perception - Sm female hand/comfortable - avg male hand/comfortable

Barrel Length - 4.3" Sight Radius - 7"

Trigger type and Function - Single Action single strike

Trigger Weight SA - 4.5 lbs

Trigger Travel Pre Engagement Travel - .09" Engagement to Discharge - .1"

Over Travel - .045" Total Travel - .235"

Trigger Operation Perception - Very shootable for intended purpose, better than most DA semi autos and revolvers in DA mode

All shooters liked the trigger, male and female

Capacity -30 Rds. Mag Release - Ambidextrous European Style located at base of grip

Sights - Fiber Optics F/Green, R/Orange Front sight adjustable for windage

Sight Perception - All shooters liked the sights, bright, highly visible, draws your eye, tight enough for precision

Safety - Ambidextrous frame mounted lever

Features - Frame mounted Picatinny Rail under barrel, front of trigger guard squared off for 2 hand hold, oversized trigger guard

As Shipped Includes - Plastic case, 2 magazines, empty chamber indicator, lock

Disassembly Time - Unpracticed 1 min 60 sec

Reassembly Time - Unpracticed 45 sec Impression - Simple and quick, no tools

Pre Range Impressions - Very positive. Construction, fit and finish is as good or better than most pistols in this price range. The bolts and nuts that fasten the frame together are visible, though neatly recessed, if there is anything even remotely negative that I could find to criticize.

Range Impressions

It is beyond accurate enough for it's purpose and price, staying around 2.5" at 25 yards off-hand, in a Weaver or Isosceles stance and it showed a preference for Winchester 40 grain Hollow Points. I could take out stationary clay birds easily and quickly at that range. Groups

with the recommended Maxi-Mags went wider than others @ 3". The sight picture is quick to acquire with the high vis sight elements and this piece shot to a very tight 6 o'clock hold with most ammo. I am not prone to hyperbole and no one has ever heard me say the word awesome but this piece is just plain super fun, just short of a full auto. It is by far the most enjoyable pistol I have ever shot for plinking and training and I would feel adequately armed in many situations especially in sporting endeavors. The use that I did not foresee was as a home defense piece for my wife. Anne really liked the feel, weight, trigger, sights and low recoil and with 30 rounds she does not have to worry about a quick reload. In this role I would mount a small laser sight on the picatinny accessory rail. Ergonomics, accuracy, economical ammo, low recoil, low noise, 30 round clip at under 20 ounces loaded; what's not to like. There isn't much that would not fall prey to this weapon.

If it has an Achilles heel it is user error in ammo selection. Kel-Tec recommends very specific ammo and I found that as long as I stayed with heavier, 40 grain and up, ammo, the PMR 30 functioned flawlessly even if I used ammo not mentioned in their list. If you go down to the lighter bullets or slower velocity ammo, failures to feed and eject will result. Kel-Tec tells you that right in the manual and everybody who has followed this piece knows it up front so the issue is rather mute.

Overall

This is exceptionally lightweight and comfortable piece to carry plinking, camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing and for survival or as a back-up sidearm for hunting in non-dangerous game environments.

I have a lot of respect for the 22 WMR and with good ammo, placed judiciously on the target, 60 rounds including the reload, is a lot of firepower in a lightweight package totaling 25 ounces for all of it including the extra mag. By comparison, as a side arm on a hiking/camping/fishing trip, a loaded S & W Airweight with 10 extra rounds comes in at 25 ounces or a loaded Glock of your preference from 28 to 35 ounces without a reload. The decision here is a no brainer. The cost of 22WMR ammo is around \$10 per box of 50. Less noise, less money, more shooting = more enjoyment and higher proficiency.

Having spent much time in the south where the 22 WMR is a favorite, I have seen it take many deer and hogs in the hands of the right person. This due to the popularity of squirrel hunting there, with the larger game as targets of opportunity. Yes, the ballistics are less impressive out of a pistol than a rifle. A 40 grain .22 WMR round reaches a velocity of 1230 fps from the 4.3" barrel which works out to 134.40 ft/lbs of energy when fired from the PMR 30. For those of you that insist on arguing about numbers, there it is, argue your heart out. In reality on the subject of lethality, I will go out on a limb here and say that in my opinion, more people have been

killed by the 22 LR, excluding war fatalities, than any other caliber. On animal lethality I will relay a story I heard in Africa.

There was a poacher suspected of killing elephants but the government guys could not catch him nor could they tell how the mammoths were dispatched. They finally caught the man in the possession of ivory and locked him up but they could not understand how he was killing the ellies as the only firearm he owned was a 22 LR. The poacher insisted that it was the 22LR that was used to kill the animals and the Game Protectors would not believe him, thinking that he had a hidden stash of rifles and ammo somewhere. Finally in frustration they made a deal with the poacher, if he could prove that he was killing the elephants with the 22 and could show them how he did it, he could go free. The poacher demonstrated how he would walk beside the elephants in the bush and wait until the front leg took the forward step and exposed the tender area of the armpit. He would then put the 22 slug through the relatively soft tissue and directly into the heart at point blank range. The ellie would walk off and eventually lie down and expire. As with all deadly force, know your weapon, know your quarry and make your shot.

History

As testimony to the difficulty of this design, there were originally problems with the PMR 30 when first introduced. This was not that unexpected as there are many characteristics of this caliber that have prevented a 22 WRM semi-auto offering, in long guns and hand guns, by any manufacturer or there would be a dozen of them on the market.

To date, pre PMR 30, only AMT (Arcadia Machine Tool) out of CA has successfully developed a semi-auto production handgun in this caliber and they are since out of business. Ruger quickly discontinued production of their 10/22 mag long gun although a similar design is made in very limited quantities now by Magnum Research of Desert Eagle fame. This is exceptionally revealing as to the magnitude of the engineering challenge, of all the gun companies in the world and all of the technology at our disposal, only one company pre Kel-Tec, was able to perfect a 22 WMR semi auto pistol.

Kel-Tec recalled all PMR 30s out there, applied their modification and changed the design to solve the extraction and function problems. To date there aren't any problems known to me, with the post recall PMR 30s. I bring this up so that if you bump into a used piece, through the serial # you can find out if it was a pre recall unit and if the solution was installed.

Due to renewed interest in this caliber, ammo manufacturers are dramatically improving the selection of 22 WRM ammo available. Not all that long ago there was only plain Jane vanilla that was not very accurate, due to old school bullet design and propellants. Now there are defense loads and well designed bullets that are much more accurate and deadly in both expansion and penetration. I have heard it said that at least some of this excitement is directly

contributable to the introduction of the PMR 30 but I will for now put this into the urban legend category as I am without proof. Smith and Taurus have both recently introduced lightweight snub nose 22 WMRs for CCW customers. Regardless of the reason, we now have a much better selection with which to stoke this piece and more to come.

I love the piece, I love the caliber, and it is a hoot to shoot. It is most definitely a more versatile option to the 22 LR semi-autos that have owned this utility category in the past. Buy it if you find it.