



Chiappa PAK-9 Pistol Review: Finally, A Viable 9mm Kalashnikov?

 March 20, 2017  Big Scott

As somewhat of an AK aficionado I have been anxiously waiting for some sort of 9mm AK-based firearm to be readily available in the United States. For years the only options for a pistol-caliber-Kalashnikov were prohibitively expensive custom builds that took seemingly-forever to receive after ordering, so when I got wind that Chiappa would be bringing a commercially practical, sub-\$500 9mm AK to the market it immediately caught my attention.

The gun is imported by Chiappa, but is actually manufactured in Romania at the famed Cugir Arms factory. You have probably heard of Cugir before, as this is where the popular semi-auto version of the AKM (known as the “WASR”) is manufactured.

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Chiappa PAK-9 Details

The PAK-9 is a semi-automatic, blow-back operated pistol based on the AK platform. I say “based on”, because the PAK-9 doesn’t have a traditional AK piston-driven gas system. Unlike the original WASR, It uses detachable pistol magazines that are inserted via an adapter that fits in the standard AK mag well.

From Atlantic Firearms, this adapter is configured to utilize Beretta 92 magazines. However, (and to me, this is perhaps the most appealing feature of the gun), the PAK-9 comes with the capability to use different magazine patterns with a simple swap of the mag well.

I love GLOCK pistols almost as much as AKs. When I found out that Atlantic Firearms was offering the PAK-9 as a package with both the Beretta and the hard-to-come-by GLOCK magwell adapters for a total price of less than \$500, it made my decision on where to order from easy.

Specifications

- Caliber: 9MM
- Action: Semi-auto
- Barrel length: 6.3”
- Capacity: 10
- Feeding: Detachable Magazine

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- Front Sight: Adjustable Military Style
- Rear Sight: Adjustable Military Style
- Weight: 6 Pounds
- Length: 14.37"
- Finish: Black
- MSRP: \$569.00
- Receiver Material: Steel

Atlantic Firearms ships the PAK-9 with two 10-round Beretta 92 style magazines and a sling. The forearm features three Picatinny rail sections and a hand stop on the lower rail. This leaves plenty of room to mount a small light, like a Streamlight TLR-1 or similar. The dust cover also features a Picatinny rail section, which is perfect for mounting various types of red dot optics.

The overall fit and finish of the PAK-9 fell into the general category I’ve come to expect from Romanian-built guns; nothing spectacular, just a solidly built gun with an acceptable level of finish quality.

Of course, I installed the included GLOCK magwell as soon as possible. It’s very easy to plug in once the forend is removed.

I have been unable to confirm my suspicions on whether or not the forearm and pistol grip are American made. They do feel cheap, but for a sub-\$500 AK pistol it’s hard to complain. I did choose to swap out the less-than-perfect grip for a Magpul MOE AK+ version, and added a SIG SB-15 stabilizing brace before heading out to the range.

Range Time with the Chiappa PAK-9

I wanted to test several different types of ammo and GLOCK magazine combinations with the PAK-9 pistol. My hopes were that it would function equally well with cheap Korean magazines loaded with steel case 115 grain ammunition, and factory GLOCK magazines feeding 147gr Winchester Ranger self defense loads.

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The following ammunition types were used for testing the PAK-9, for a total of 1,000 rounds:

- Monarch steel case 115gr
- Federal aluminum case 115gr
- Tula Brassmaxx brass case 115gr
- Winchester white box brass case bulk pack 115gr
- Winchester NATO brass case 124gr
- Blazer brass case 124gr
- Federal Hi Shok brass case 115gr JHP
- Winchester Ranger brass case 147gr Bonded JHP

The very first magazine fired was a Korean 33 rounder, loaded with Monarch steel case 115 grain ammo. Much to my surprise, it functioned perfectly. I had expected a malfunction with this combination above all the others, so I was starting to become impressed.

I tried the following mags in the PAK-9, to great success and with no malfunctions:

- Magpul PMAG17 GL9
- ETS 31 Stick mag
- 50 Round Korean drum
- GLOCK factory 15, 17, and 33 round mags



At this point I was becoming very impressed by the reliability of the PAK-9, while feeding it every possible combination of magazines and ammunition. At this point, the round count was right at 500 with no malfunctions.

I decided to try defensive loads in the PAK-9, beginning with 147 grain Winchester Ranger and 115gr Federal Hi Shok. While there was a noticeable change in recoil, the PAK-9 operated without any issues.

After the defensive load test, I burned the remaining 500 rounds of the test: a mixture of Monarch steel case and Federal aluminum, both in 115 grain weights.

While ripping through a mag, I had my first failure to feed at 700 rounds, with steel cased Monarch. I experienced only one other failure during my 1000 round test: A failure to extract on the last round of a magazine with the aluminum cased Federal 115 grain ammo.



I am *very* pleased with the PAK-9 reliability.

PAK-9 AK 9mm Pistol Accuracy

what kind of groups I could get. The PAK-9 proved to be surprisingly accurate with just the crude open sights and short sight radius.



I do have plans to add some type of red dot optic. I feel like it would help squeeze out some more accuracy and reduce time between follow up shots.

Final Thoughts on the Chiappa PAK-9

I bought this gun intending to use it as just a fun range toy. I love all things Kalashnikov, I love GLOCK mags, and I love 9mm. What could go wrong?

After putting it through its paces, I wouldn't hesitate to make it a truck/trunk gun. It would be a perfect companion to anyone who carries a 9mm GLOCK daily. After 1000 rounds and only 2 malfunctions, the PAK-9 greatly surpassed my expectations. For the low price tag, it's simply a great buy if you're in the market for a pistol-caliber Kalashnikov.

