

Kahr's Newest Compact Powerhouse



By D. K. Pridgen

As a dyed-in-the-wool 1911 fan, I have a confession: I've been feasting from another pistol's buffet. A pistol that gobbles up the big .45 ACP rounds and spits out empty cases with nonchalance and reliability. This pistol, going under the code name P4533, arrives from a surprising source – Kahr Arms. Yes, a double-action-only pistol has caught the eye of this single-action guy!

I guess it's really not surprising that Kahr is the manufacturer. After all, Justin Moon's brainchild, the K-9, set the stage for renewed interest in very compact steel 9 mm (and later .40) pistols. The folks at Kahr Arms then demonstrated that they were able to do the same thing with lightweight polymer framed pistols. Many have lauded the benefits of their micro pistol as a serious-caliber pocket gun.

I suppose, then, the true surprise is this new polymer-framed pistol, chambered as it is for the longer, wide-bodied .45 ACP, is only a schosh bigger than the larger of the small pistols from Kahr. You heard right; the KP4533 is virtually the same size as all the larger polymer pistols in Kahr's stable. It also carries the stainless steel slide found on many in the line. (I was even able to slip the KP4533 into my favorite custom holster for my .40-caliber KP4033 with no more effort than the pistol it was made for.)

Dimensions of the KP45 are: length, 6.3 inches; height, 4.8 inches; and slide width, 1.01 inches. The barrel is 3.54 inches long, and the weight of the pistol, with magazine, is 20.5 ounces. (Rising to 30.8 ounces, with one 230-grain round in the chamber and six in the magazine.) For comparison purposes, my KP4043 weighs in at 18.7 ounces empty, with magazine. Barrel length is 3.5 inches; height, 4.55 inches; length, 6.1 inches; and slide width measures a whopping 0.94-inch.

Enough of this proletarian discussion of dimensions and weights. How the heck does this puppy handle? Excellently, thank you! The DAO trigger was typical Kahr – smooth, and easily handled – with about 6.5 pounds of pressure on the wide, smooth trigger required to pop a primer. The grip,

with all its texturing, adheres well to the hand, offering control when that primer is popped. And control is something that comes into play when driving 230-grain .45 ACP bullets down the polygonal barrel. The KP4043 delivers the shooter a noticeable wallop when fired, and the KP4533 delivers a little bit more.

Neither one is beyond the abilities of a competent shooter. I actually found shooting the KP4533 enjoyable. Double taps were a little slower than my full-size 1911, but it racks in at about 50 percent more in weight! Accuracy? Well, of the seven loads I tested at 25 yards – 185 to 230 grain; standard velocity and +P; hollow points all – the average group for all was 1.27 inches. I tossed in some of Meister Bullets' 230-grain lead round nose ammo. (Recently adopted by Rogers County, Oklahoma, Sheriff's Office as their training loads, after extensive testing.) This load, just like the others, worked like a champ, dropping five rounds into 1.19 inches.

The KP45 fits my hand naturally and points well. The white bar/dot sight system is quick to acquire for first and repeat shots. The beveled magazine well seems to swallow speed reloads.

Nothing I stuffed in the KP4533 did anything but feed with monotonous regularity, and poke holes where I pointed it. I am tempted to repeat Colonel Cooper's famous line regarding the alloy frame Commander, dubbing it a gun to be carried a lot and shot a little. I must admit, with its trim profile, and lighter weight, the K4533 is a pistol to be carried a lot, and its chambering makes it even more attractive to many. However, I believe the Kahr polymer .45 is too nice a shooter to be relegated to a position of shooting only a little!

And just to add a little more to the fare Kahr offers, by the time you read this there should be a couple more models. The KP4544, an all-black model, and the TP4533, a target model with about 1/2 inch added to grip and slide, should be on the table. Kahr just keeps adding tasty items to the shooter's feast!

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