

22 JUST HOW AWESOME IS THE GLOCK 34? Pretty darn awesome, actually!

By Duane Thomas

For the past four years my carry gun and match competition piece has been the Glock 34. This is Glock's semi-longslide 9mm, with 5.32" long barrel, according to the Glock website. (A Glock 17 barrel goes 4.49".) I've been fascinated by this gun since it was first introduced in 1998. The Glock 34 was specifically designed to fit in the "IDPA box," a container 8-3/4" long x 6" wide x 1-5/8" deep. In other words a 1911 Government Model will just fit with a little wiggle room left over. Now to me a Glock 9mm designed from the ground up to be the same size as a 1911 GM is a *darn* interesting concept. If I can carry and conceal a 1911 – which I did for years – I can carry and conceal a Glock 34. (The main difference, of course, being the Glock is just one hell of a lot lighter.)

One very nice thing about Glocks in general is that they're modular handguns. The basic Glock design is the most easily detail stripped, service type autoloader on Earth. Once you know how to detail strip a Glock – and it ain't that hard, folks – upgrading the piece is, mostly, simply a matter of replacing drop-in parts with other drop-in parts.

My Glock 34 is fairly stock. No aftermarket barrel, no aftermarket slide, no trick connectors, no extended this or that. I did knock off the stock plastic sights, installing a set of Warren Tactical Series-Sevigny Competition sights instead; I "decus-tomized" the piece by pulling off the stock extended slide stop and mag button, replacing them with the low-profile parts off a Glock 17; tweaked the mag button spring a bit to make it easier to depress; and installed a Pearce grip frame plug.

Doing a trigger job on a Glock is so simple that even I can do it without screwing up. Using the procedures set forth in Tom Graham's DVD from the American Gunsmithing Institute, "Making Glocks Rock," installing a Wolff striker spring, retaining the Glock 34's stock 3.5 pound connector and trigger spring, and just polishing the contact surfaces of what's already there, resultant trigger pulls went an even three pounds according to my NRA weight set.

What I love most about the Glock 34 is the way it tracks in recoil. This is extremely important if you want to fire a gun with speed *and* accuracy. For a while I played around with the "heavy bullet/light

recoil spring" theory, running 147-grain ammo with a 13-pound recoil spring. Testing showed that, for me anyway, the gun tracks better with plain Jane 124-grain hardball and a stock 17-pound recoil spring. To fire a handgun fast and well, you want the muzzle to track up and right back down to the same spot every time without a lot of subsidiary muzzle bounce (i.e. the "tuning fork effect" where the muzzle bounces up and down after the shot's fired). The Glock 34 does that for me. The Glock 17 by contrast is a bit bouncy. Over time I'm going to experiment with loads and recoil springs to see if I can get a Glock 17 tracking like a Glock 34...but it hasn't happened yet.

My daily carry gear consists of a straight drop Blade-Tech Standard Belt Holster and matching double magazine pouch from the same maker, all threaded onto a black sharkskin-and-horsehide Kramer dress gun-belt I've had for years. I shoot my carry rig in IDPA; for USPSA/IPSC I



Duane shoots his Glock 34 at a local IDPA match. He used the Glock 34 to make IDPA Stock Service Pistol Master.

add a second double mag pouch, everything else stays the same. Match ammo is inexpensive Black Hills 124-grain "blue box" hardball.

As much as I've always loved carrying and shooting my Glock 34, I have to admit I was a bit embarrassed by the fact I know it's not exactly the world's most sensible carry gun. It's big, it's long, there are certainly more easily concealable guns out there. And sometimes, well, people would make fun of my gun. Fellow *Blue Press* writer Mark Lisi, who also shoots at my IDPA club, told me after watching me run a stage with the Glock 34, "That gun looks to me like Robo-Glock." An active-duty Ranger, after I used my Glock 34 to outshoot him with his custom 1911 .45, told me, "Well, that's the difference between a real gun and a racegun." Like that extra 0.83 inch of slide and barrel versus a Glock 17 makes the Glock 34 a "racegun," natch.

God knows I've tried to switch to other carry guns: my SIG P228, a Glock 17, a 1911 .45, have all ridden on my body these past four years...for a few days apiece. I could see that all those other guns had their great points. So I'd switch, come back to the Glock, a year later switch again, come back to the Glock – and so on. This is an agony of indecision akin to being scared to commit to the best woman you've ever met, on the off chance

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