



Len Hodgson took some trial shots, persevering before hitting the 50m pig on the smallbore silhouette range.

The light fantastic Glock's new Model 44 rimfire

Geoff Smith

The Austrian firm Glock, known globally for producing lightweight polymer-framed handguns, recently released their first .22 rimfire, designated the Model 44. According to Wikipedia, while designer Gaston Glock wasn't the first to make a polymer-framed gun (he was apparently beaten by Heckler & Koch) his format was nevertheless well received due to its simplicity and inherent safety.

Glock handguns are favoured by many police forces for being lightweight and extremely straightforward to operate. Ridiculously easy to field strip and clean, there are few controls other than the trigger, slide release and magazine release, making them also almost idiot-proof and durable. This facilitates much simpler training for beginners generally - this model particularly - because of its low recoil and cheap ammunition.

It differs from other Glocks by being a straight blowback-operated gun yet matches

them perfectly by having the black polymer frame and nitride Tenifer-finished steel components. In size it equals their Model 19 so holsters can be used interchangeably and at just 433 grams empty, the Model 44 is extremely lightweight yet exceptionally comfortable to point and shoot.

It's supplied, like the others, in a signature carry box which includes a small cleaning rod, jag and bronze brush as well as a full set of both plain and beavertail grip inserts to enable customising grip size. There are two magazines, an instruction manual and tiny screwdriver for adjusting the rear sight. To comply with Australia's minimum length requirements it has a 122mm barrel, there's a threaded cap on the muzzle and a separate thread adapter is supplied which enables a muzzle brake to be fitted if desired.

The polymer 10-round magazines are of substantial size, tapered at the top to enable rapid insertion into the funnel-shaped magazine well entrance. Twin tabs on either

side aid loading and the recommended method involves placing the magazine on a flat surface and lowering the tabs just enough to insert one cartridge at a time until full, thus ensuring the rims of each cartridge are properly aligned and misfeeds don't occur. The magazines have a zig-zag spring and removable floorplate to enable cleaning. The slide recoils on firing, back over the shooter's hand and in returning to battery scoops up a new cartridge from the magazine in readiness for the next shot. Firing is achieved with a striker located within the slide which has the firing pin on its forward end.

The barrel and key parts of the slide are steel while the frame is made from a tough polymer into which steel guide pieces are strategically embedded. The Model 44 slide differs from the centrefire models by having a steel chassis and breechface but filled with polymer like the rest of the frame, resulting in it weighing just 133g, supposedly to give reliable cycling. Safety begins with the

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Some ammo performed better than others.

trigger which has a protruding safety bar in its centre. Unless the shooter's trigger finger is pressed across the width of the trigger ensuring the central safety bar is pushed back, it cannot move.

Trigger travel is relatively long which makes it feel unusual until the shooter is

used to it. The trigger also readily reveals whether the gun is cocked since it sits far forward compared to when uncocked, what's unusual being the striker is not completely retracted at this time. The final trigger travel is what pulls the striker fully back to its maximum extension position

and consequently, the slide need only be pulled rearwards a short distance in order to engage with the trigger bar catch. The trigger bar itself is connected to the trigger and runs along the right side of the magazine well, back to the rear of the frame.

Depressing the trigger moves the trigger bar backwards which does two important things. From its resting position the catch on the trigger bar pushes the striker rearwards until the cam on the connector pulls the bar downwards, thus releasing the striker. Simultaneously the vertical spur on the trigger bar pushes the firing pin block upwards, enabling the striker to hit the cartridge rim. The firing pin can't reach there if the trigger is not fully engaged, providing the second safety feature. The 'drop safety' is the third inbuilt safety feature and this prevents the trigger bar from releasing the striker unless the trigger is being pulled, so dropping the gun when ready to fire won't result in accidental discharge (doing this of course is highly discouraged).

On firing, as soon as the slide moves out of battery, an internal horizontal cam on the right underside of the slide pushes the



Left-side view with slide held open.

With slide removed the trigger bar can be seen going around the right of the magazine well back to the striker release position.



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connector away from the trigger bar thereby disconnecting it, ensuring the trigger must be released and re-operated before firing the next round. The slide recoils through the direct momentum of firing and, having pulled the empty case from the chamber, brings it rearwards until striking the ejector, which throws it clear. The returning slide picks up a new cartridge from the magazine and chambers it so when the trigger is released the gun can fire the next shot. The slide remains open after the last shot as the magazine follower lifts the slide release lever when empty.

The unusually slim cold hammer forged barrel features six-groove right-hand rifling with a pitch of 406mm (a fraction under 16"). A bore camera reveals the unusual profile of the rifling as well as the fluting at the forward end of the chamber, which is claimed to assist with extraction. The breech end of the barrel has a 'ghost hole', enabling the shooter to see if a round is present in the chamber which also means dry-firing with this gun is safe, as the firing pin end of the striker can't reach the breechface.

Field stripping is quite simple. After clearing the gun, removing the magazine and dry-firing, the slide is pulled back about 3mm and held (typically with the right hand) while the left hand is used to lower the slide lock catch evenly on each side of the frame, the slide then slipped straight off the frame. The recoil spring lifts out from the barrel and slide and, after unscrewing the muzzle cap, the barrel is slipped out. The gun is now stripped and can be cleaned effectively.

The open sights have a square notch highlighted in white at the rear and a white single dot on the front, the rear sight adjustable for elevation and windage via two tiny screws on the right side and attached to the slide by a transverse dovetail. After cleaning oil from the bore I went to the SA Para range on several occasions and used the gun in a variety of matches, as well as giving fellow shooters a chance to try it and make comment.

The relatively heavy trigger (average pull-weight measured with an RCBS gauge at 6lb or 27N) was a point of discussion as was the noticeably light overall weight. Straight out the box the gun was shooting quite low and to the left but after some adjustments was on the target adequately. I then took the pistol and a wide variety of ammunition to the range and conducted grouping tests from a rest, chronographing with a LabRadar and later analysing results using RSI Shooting Lab software.

Good news is the gun had no problem



Field-stripped for cleaning.

with any of the ammunition used, muzzle velocities ranging from 822-1092fps. In my experience, few handguns will cycle flawlessly then remain open after the last shot over such a wide array of bullet velocities. The groups obtained were not as tight as I'd have liked, which I ascribe mostly to my own inexperience with this combination of light gun and rather heavy, long pull of the trigger. Having said that, I managed 10-shot groups with each of nine brands of ammo and many of those groups included acceptably tight clusters within larger groups, having several flyers that were almost certainly my fault. When accustomed to shooting a heavy gun with a light trigger, the contrast is quite challenging.

There's little doubt that with practice this gun will produce adequate accuracy. Surprisingly, the best groups were achieved with Winchester 555 budget ammo, SK Pistol Match and Sellier & Bellot standard velocity also giving fair results. Because of this I believe the pistol is ideally suited to action-style matches where the emphasis is on speed and timing and, as a training gun for shooters who also use the Glock Model 19, it'll be an outstanding addition to your arsenal. Glock's focus on safety, utility and ruggedness is what makes this gun stand out. The test gun was loaned by Nioa Trading. ●



Originally from Vienna, Rudi Bajer enjoyed using a gun from his home country.

Specifications:

Glock Model 44
Calibre: .22 long rifle
Length: 206mm
Width: 34mm
Height: 124mm
Weight (unloaded): 433g (including magazine)
Magazine capacity: 10 rounds
Barrel length: 122mm
Rifling: 6 grooves, 406mm twist
Australian importer: Nioa Trading
RRP: \$1360 (but ask your local dealer)