



## TARA TM-9: “PERFECTION” FROM MONTENEGRO

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**It would be** a mistake to dismiss the *Tara TM-9* pistol as just another knock-off of the trend-setting *Glock*.

Yes, it is without a doubt Glock-inspired in its design. Yes, it falls under the economy priced category. And yes, it is made by a Balkan company that many of us have never heard of ‘til recently—the *Tara Group*.

But our initial range session with the TM-9 left us with a very good first impression, indeed! We were left with the impression that this 9mm Luger (Para), 17+1 shot capacity, striker-fired, polymer-framed pistol can truly stand on its own merits.



**Tara TM-9:** This is a well-built, no-nonsense pistol from Montenegro. It boasts modern features like an ambidextrous magazine release and inter-changeable back straps. (Photos by IGG)

Our range session was made possible by Filipino shooting champ and entrepreneur *Jethro Dionisio*, whose company, *Jethro*, imports the TM-9 directly from Montenegro. Jethro is the exclusive Philippine distributor of Tara products.

## Lineage

Buying a previously unheard of product from a little known country may not seem like a good idea at first. But in truth, Montenegro has a long and very well-established weapons industry. This former Yugoslavian state was supposedly the origin of some of the finest East bloc firearms ever made. It shared this distinction only with then East Germany. Yugoslav and East German AKs were widely considered as markedly superior to those made in Mother Russia!

## Gun Details

At first glance, the TM-9's similarity to the magnificent Austrian pistol is undeniable. When one field strips the gun, those similarities are only amplified. Its dimensions and overall features are similar enough to the popular Glock 17. Yet, it is by no means a "clone" as it has certain key features that are uniquely its own.



**Natural pointer:** The TM-9 instinctively points straight, in the author's opinion. It comes with a good set of 3-dot sights. (Photos by IGG)

Briefly stated, the TM-9 has an overall length of 187mm (7.36 in.), an overall height of 139mm (5.47 in.), its barrel length is 113mm (4.44 in.) and it weighs 750 grams (26.4 ounces) unloaded.

One feature that stands out is its grip design—which allows the pistol to sit very low on the web of the shooter’s hand for optimum recoil control. The TM-9’s grip angle is also such that it will probably point straight for most shooters... unlike other pistols which tend to point upward unless consciously leveled.

The Tara’s striker-firing trigger system is dubbed Double Action Rapid Engagement or DARE. In simpler terms this is a double-action-only with a very short and light reset. It is “second strike” capable—a feature which seems to be in vogue with many tactical professionals nowadays.



**Slim grip:** The TM-9 has a wide magazine well for seamless reloads. But its grip is slim enough for those with smallish hands, like the *HDJ* publisher, to gain good recoil control. (Photos by IGG)

The TM-9 slide appears very solidly built, if somewhat boxy in appearance. There is a lot of metal in the upper half of the gun... which probably accounts for 90% of its overall weight. As per the Tara catalogue, the slide and barrel, which are machined from stainless steel blocks, undergo a special process for corrosion-resistance and surface hardening.

## **Firing impressions**

Our date with the TM-9 took place at the Jethro Firing Range in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City.

We started out with a series of 5-shot strings just to get the feel of it. Pretty soon, it was clear that managing this relatively lightweight pistol was quite easy—thanks to its recoil-absorbing polymer frame and the usually benign 9mm Luger cartridge. It also had a decent set of sights in the popular 3-dot format, which we found easy to track even under recoil.

What really stood out about the Tara pistol was its excellent trigger action! There was just enough resistance to ensure safety, but not too much to ruin your shot. The potential contribution of the TM-9's smooth and even trigger action to accurate shooting under stress cannot be emphasized enough.

While we only shot at the 7-meter target, it was quickly evident that the TM-9 possessed all the practical accuracy needed in a defensive pistol. Making tight groups at this range, even under rapid fire, was effortless. What is most important, at least to us, is the fact that there were no malfunctions whatsoever during our fairly thorough range session.

## **Home defense?**

After trying out the TM-9, we were left with the firm impression that it would make an excellent general-purpose defensive sidearm. We would certainly want to have one in our home. And that is the best endorsement we can give to any product!

\*SRP: Php 29,950 (w/ two (2) magazines, cleaning kit & carrying bag)