



GLOCK 17 MEETS TARA TM-9

March 11, 2014 ·

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We decided against our initial impulse to entitle this article “the Glock vs. the Tara” because it sounded petty. Pitting the Montenegrin newcomer against arguably the gold standard for polymer-framed pistols would smell like a cheap publicity stunt. But, then again, there are simply too many similarities in their design that one cannot avoid making a comparison.

When shooting champ Jethro Dionisio showed us the Tara TM-9 for the first time, our first question to him was “will some parts interchange with the Glock 17?” It seemed like a fair question because of the more than passing similarities between the Tara and pre-Gen4 Glocks. But the answer was NO, Tara components are not compatible with the Glock despite their aesthetic similarities.



Things in Common: The Glock 17 [top] and the Tara TM-9 [above] may not be twins but they are clearly alike in many respects. Their similarities are more than superficial. (Photos by IGG)

Similarities

The general dimensions of the Glock 17 and the Tara TM-9 are practically the same. But the Tara slide is visibly thicker and boxier compared to the Glock slide—with its more slender profile and rounded corners. Both guns are relatively lightweight, thanks to their space-age polymer frames, but the Tara is slightly heavier.

The internal engineering of both guns are strikingly similar, so much so that we can say that Tara engineers were definitely inspired by the Glock design. Examining both guns field-stripped, we can see that the Tara more closely resembles earlier Glock models (Gen 1 to 3) with their single flat recoil spring. Both guns are striker fired—a feature which lends itself to simplicity and fewer parts. Neither pistol has an external safety button or lever.

Both the Gen4 Glock 17 and the Tara TM-9 have replaceable back straps that allow for grip size adjustment, in order to fit different hand sizes. The two guns have roughly the same size grip assuming both are configured in their slimmest trim. Early Glock models (non-adjustable grip) have grip dimensions slightly larger than the Tara when its slimmest back strap is installed.

Both guns come standard with 17-shot magazines. The Glock 17 magazine is constructed of polymer and allows for the installation of a factory supplied +2 floor plate (which increases its capacity to 19 shots). The Tara magazine is metal and does not seem to allow for any user-end modification.



The size of it: Any way you look at them, the dimensional similarities between the Glock 17 and the Tara TM-9 are obvious. (Photos by IGG)

Differences

The Glock's trigger is actually quite different from the Tara, even while they feel similar enough to many shooters. Once the Glock trigger is on ready, its striker is already partially compressed and is halfway ready to spring forward. The short pull of the trigger only completes the process. The Glock's trigger operation (Safe Action) is not a double-action-only (DAO) type but may be best described as a "semi single-action" of sorts!

The Tara is a true DAO because the striker is always at rest until the trigger is pulled. Dubbed the Double Action Rapid Engagement (DARE), the Tara's trigger requires a longer (but surprisingly light) pull in order to fire the gun. This feature also gives it a "second strike" option on cartridges that did not initially fire.

Field-stripping the Glock entails simultaneously pulling down the small "wings" on either side of the frame while slightly pulling back on the slide. The gun then comes apart after the trigger is pulled. Dismantling the gun further requires the Glock Tool (bought separately), an ice pick like tool which is used to punch out the retaining pins holding the parts together.

The Tara seems to field-strip a little easier. All that is needed is to rotate the dismantling lever on the left side of the frame downward while also pulling back on the slide. The gun then comes apart without having to pull the trigger. Further dismantling also entails the use of a factory-supplied pin punch that is conveniently stored within the pistol's grip.

Gen4 Glocks come with a large magazine release button on the left side of the frame... but which can be switched over to the opposite side (for left-handed shooters) by a qualified Glock armorer. Earlier Glocks have small magazine release buttons on the left side of the frame which cannot be switched to the opposite side.

Tara pistols are truly ambidextrous because they come with two magazine release buttons, one protruding on the left and the other on the right of the frame. But these buttons do not protrude as much as ideal, so a more strenuous jerk of the thumb may be needed to free the empty clip.

The metal slide assembly of both the Glock and the Tara have undergone special surface hardening treatments, for extra toughness and corrosion resistance. But the external finish on the Austrian pistol seems to be glossier and done to a higher standard while the Tara has a more dull and utilitarian look.



Inside out: The internals of this early model Glock [top] is strikingly similar to that of this current model Tara [above]. But the Tara appears to have more steel on the lower assembly. (Photos by IGG)

Proof of the pie

The honest truth is, most of us on Team HDJ are long-time Glock users. The Glock is the pistol we have come to depend on for legal concealed carry as well as for home defense. We realize that the Glock is not perfect, but we have grown to depend on its reliability, robustness and ease of maintenance. We are content with our Glocks!

Still, we are always on the lookout for products that may surprise and excite us! Trying new things is, after all, the way towards discovering better equipment! So we decided to shoot the Tara side by side with our personal Glocks to see if there will be any perceivable change in our performance.

Our host for the session was Jethro himself, who is also the exclusive local distributor of the Tara. He also took time from his busy schedule to burn a few rounds with us. Our fact-finding shooting session took place at our host's shooting range in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City.

Briefly stated, this writer as well as HDJ staffer Anthony James probably shot our personal Glocks a little better than the Tara. But this was probably due to our familiarity with our personal pistols. We concluded that the Balkan pistol can give us just as much peace of mind as the Teutonic pistol!

So, is either pistol inherently better than the other as far as engineering and basic handling characteristics is concerned? Probably not! Budget considerations as well as concerns over the availability of parts and accessories may be the primary determinants for choosing one over the other.

In other words, it's all very subjective! If you haven't already, we strongly urge you to try both guns on the shooting range. You may just find yourself equally pleased!