

AR-15

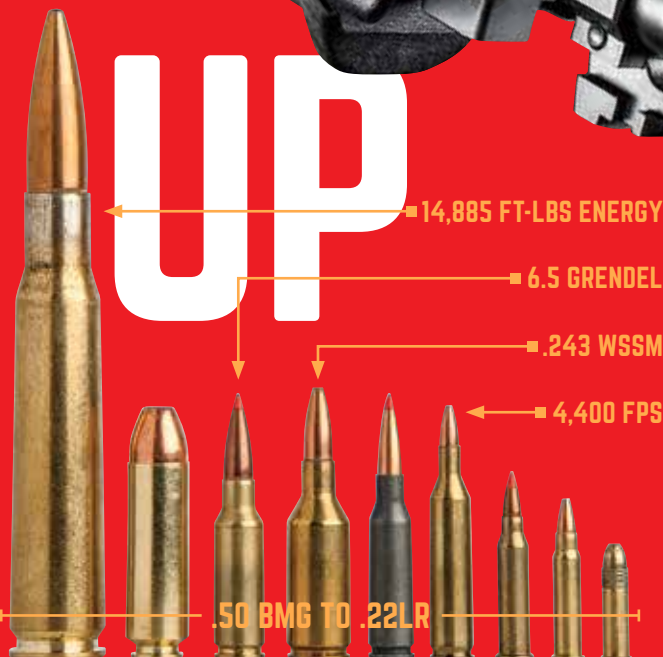
AMERICA'S RIFLE GOES RUSSIAN

▶ POF-USA PURITAN 7.62x39



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PURITAN GOES

REFED

POF-USA GIVES THE
SOVIET CARTRIDGE A LESSON
IN AMERICAN INGENUITY.

BY D. FAUBION
PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY

PURITAN GOES “RED”



The Puritan is available in 5.56 and 7.62x39. Although it's POF's base rifle, it comes loaded with all the necessary features.

THE SHOOTING WORLD COMPRISES AK LOVERS AND AR AFICIONADOS, two distinct camps who rarely fraternize. Due to American determination or foolishness (perhaps both), a third group also exists, one dead-set on making the AR more like the AK47.

Opinions on AR/AK hybrids vary depending on whom you ask. Optimists suggest these mutts are a “best of both worlds” crossbreed. Realists—who know that 7.62x39 ARs are rife with issues—view them as a dog that won't hunt. Pessimists consider the Russian/American mongrel nauseating, like mixing vodka and Budweiser.

Occasionally, however, a company produces an anomaly, a fluke—one that works as advertised. The Puritan 7.62x39 from the crew at Patriot Ordnance Factory (POF-USA) may just be that exception. Coming from Frank DeSomma's talented team, who have the balls to tackle nearly any AR project, adapting its proven short-stroke

piston system to the legendary Russian cartridge should come as no surprise, but claiming the rifle is MOA-capable? Now that takes some *cojones*.

OBSTACLES

An AK has the stomach of a hyena. Loose tolerances and a massive bolt allow it to digest practically any cartridge. Not so for the AR-15. Like a picky brat at the dinner table, Stoner's design takes more persuasion to eat its veggies, especially Russian produce. The reasons are threefold: bolt, cartridge and magazine.

The AR-15 was designed for the 5.56 NATO, a round with little body taper and a case-head diameter of .378 inch, which affords plenty of meat in the AR's seven-lug bolt. Opening up the bolt face to .445 inch—necessary for the 7.62x39 case head—whittles away material required to handle the pounding that comes from going in

and out of battery. Opened up, the bolt goes from robust to gaunt, like a peasant over a Siberian winter, and life expectancy, or round count before failure, drops.

ROLLING OR GRINDING

Conventional direct-impingement ARs use hot gas to initiate rearward bolt-carrier movement. As this occurs, the bolt is rotated out of battery by a cam pin, a square piece of steel that grinds along the aluminum receiver like a shirtless Putin atop a galloping stallion. Manly, no doubt, but it generates friction in unwanted places.

POF's Puritan, in comparison, uses a short-stroke piston to get its carrier going. Once moving, the bolt opens by a roller cam pin that glides along a channel. This eases extraction and reduces friction, prolonging the life of the upper receiver and, with any luck, the bolt, too.

STRAIGHT TO THE TAPER

Next, compare an AK mag with that of the AR-15. Kalashnikov magazines have curves like Kate Upton to account for the taper of the Russian round. Stuffing a tapered cartridge into a magazine designed for the relatively straight 5.56 results in binding. Binding is an inconvenience

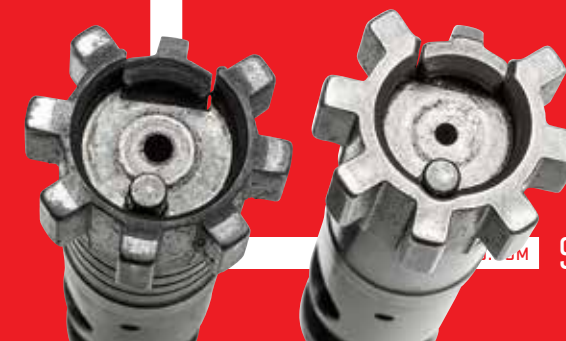


SMOOTH

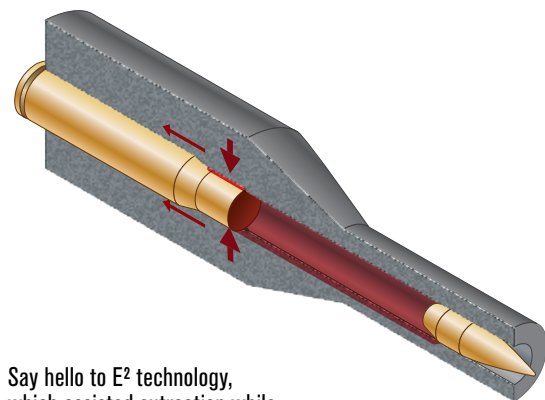
OPERATOR

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he Puritan 7.62x39 uses a short-stroke piston system, so it has a few different components than direct-impingement (DI) carriers. Instead of a snorkel-style gas key on the DI carrier (bottom), POF's carrier features an integral tab directly behind the roller cam pin for the op rod to push upon during firing. Piston operation eliminates much of the fouling present in the DI system, and the roller cam pin does a great job of smoothing out the action.



PURITAN GOES “RED”



Say hello to E² technology, which assisted extraction while we tried in vain to destroy shootsteel.com armor targets.



Special mags are required to run 7.62x39 in the AR. Notice the curvature necessary for the tapered rounds.

for Upton, but it's horrible for a device that feeds cartridges.

Check out the Puritan's mag. Notice any resemblance? This curvature keeps binding at bay and cartridges flowing like Pez from a dispenser. Our sample magazine fed like a champion and enabled the Puritan to churn out rounds left and right from the staggered column like a well-lathered Ivan Drago from “Rocky IV.”

THE SICKLE HAMMERS STEEL

Ever heard of shootsteel.com? I hadn't until a friend received a set of its armor-plated targets. Shooting will never be the same again. While testing POF's newest rifle, we riddled the annoyingly resilient 12x20-inch targets with close to 500 rounds. The purpose was function testing, and it was a hoot (you can't spell “function” without “fun”).

Over the course of a hot and heavy morning, the Puritan only stuttered twice. I attribute both stoppages to the magazine used when firing at the bench. Instead of the supplied 28-round C-Products banana mag, I substituted a 10-round 6.5 Grendel magazine for a lower profile. I figured it'd be close enough. It wasn't. Of the 100 or so rounds

POF-USA PURITAN

Type	Short stroke, piston operated, semiautomatic
Caliber	7.62x39
Capacity	28 rds.
Barrel	16.5 in., nitride treated
Overall Length	32 to 35.25 in.
Weight	6.7 lbs.
Stock	Magpul MOE
Grip	Magpul MOE
Finish	Black anodized
Trigger	POF single stage, 5.5 lbs.
Sights	None
Safety	Ambi selector
MSRP	\$1,470
Manufacturer	Patriot Ordnance Factory 877-561-9572 pof-usa.com



PURITAN GOES “RED”

SOURCES

- Century Arms**
800-527-1252
centuryarms.com
- Federal**
800-379-1732
federalpremium.com
- Hornady**
800-338-3220
hornady.com
- Magsafe**
407-834-8185
magsafeonline.com
- Winchester Ammunition**
winchester.com



fired from this magazine, two failed to go fully into the chamber. Lesson learned. Stick with the mags labeled “7.62x39.”

Speaking of bench work, the accuracy box supplied here was fired by contributor Dave Fortier, who tested this very sample for Shotgun News. Fortier is a better shooter than I, so instead of donning a big scope and measuring groups with

a caliper, I hit the range with a 2X Trijicon ACOG atop the Puritan. A group of friends and I ran the rifle head-to-head against Century’s new RAS47, an American-made version of the legendary AK47.

PURE DOMINATION

For a group accustomed to ARs, the AK47 got more play, largely because of its novelty. AKs are a blast to shoot, but for hitting steel targets, there’s just no comparison. The Puritan dominated — people rarely missed, especially with Trijicon’s little gem illuminating the way. Know why AKs are blamed as inaccurate? It’s because their sights suck.

How’d it go? All in all, POF’s new bullet dispenser performed as it should. It was reliable, fun and — unanimously, I must add — the most surgical 7.62x39 semiauto any of us had fired, especially with quality ammo. Red Army Standard threw the biggest patterns on steel, followed by Hornady’s steel-case ammo. The smallest clusters, from American Eagle and Winchester PDX1 Defender, enabled head shots as far out as the tiny scope would allow. Besides an increase in recoil and decrease in ammo cost, it was just like firing an AR in 5.56. Believe me, that’s a compliment.

Although POF’s Puritan failed to go sub-MOA, that doesn’t bother me in the least because it’s piston driven and it’s chambered in 7.62x39. If match-winning precision is your thing, get over the 7.62x39 fantasy, and get a direct-impingement rifle in 5.56. How about critique, a necessary part of every review? I wish the rifle had its own name. Rather than “Puritan 7.62x39,” I’d prefer it were called the “Comrade 7.62x39” simply because a rifle like this deserves a kick-ass name to really set it apart.

I’m impressed by POF’s newest rifle. It proves that a rifle can bridge the gap between east and west, or in this case the AR and the AK. By merging AR precision, piston-driven reliability and affordable, hard-hitting Russian ammo, the patriots at POF have whipped up something sure to please Mother Russia and Uncle Sam. And that, my friends, is something to hang your *ushanka* (hat) on. ❄️



We tested the Puritan alongside Century’s new RAS47, which is also made in the USA. Guess which rifle was easier to hit with?



PERFORMANCE

Winchester 120-gr. PDX1	Hornady 123-gr. SST	Wolf 123-gr. FMJ	Winchester 123-gr. Hog Power Point	Red Army 123-gr. FMJ	Magsafe 50-gr. Defender
Velocity (fps)					
2,251	2,234	2,337	2,250	2,299	3,526
Standard Deviation					
17	10	20	22	14	93
100 yds. (in.)					
1.7	1.8	2	2	2.5	4

Groups are an average of four five-shot groups fired from a rest at 100 yards. Velocity readings measured 12 feet from the muzzle at an ambient temperature of 95 degrees with an Oehler 35P.