

# THE SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

The Phoenix is  
POF's Fresh Take  
on the PCC

By Nick Saiti, Photos by Iain Harrison





Keep it simple. The straight blowback system relies on weight and spring tension. Notice the tungsten weight on the bolt. The unique design makes for a compact package.

method of gun manufacturing, featuring modern aesthetics, gadgets, and amenities, but with the less complex internal combustion motor. It's what a good truck should be — all the tech and cool stuff inside, with a simple and strong heart. All of the modernization where you want it, but none of the complications to reduce reliability.

#### ALL THE COOL STUFF

The Phoenix is a 9mm subgun, only offered in pistol format — hence the PCF moniker. The billet lower receiver is all POF, and the M-LOK monolithic upper houses the 8.5-inch barrel. The overall length of the Phoenix is 17.5 inches (without a brace). For reference, this is about half the length of a standard AR-15 carbine.

The POF-USA flavor is sprinkled all over this gun, with a few key features that give it away. The ambidextrous-everything, the design of the signature

As they say, the definition of insanity is doing things the same but expecting different results. Just ask anyone who works for a living and votes. The crazy political roller coaster of the last decade has created a mad dash to buy firearms. These days just about anyone in free America who wanted an AR-15 has one, seemingly solidifying the AR-15 as mundane. The firearm industry was left trying to figure out where the next best thing would be. Pistol caliber carbines (PCCs) have filled this space for some, creating a niche for themselves somewhere between rifles and pistols. As a result, they've cemented their place as a viable option to fill that empty spot in the safe.

#### THE TASK AT HAND

POF-USA has a reputation for making guns that are the same, but better.

While POF technically produces AR-15s and AR-10s, they're different than other guns in those columns and have the accolades to prove it. POF had the idea for a subgun almost 10 years ago, but life gets in the way and it fell further down the priorities list. They had bigger fish to fry with the Revolution .308 Winchester. The Phoenix is POF-USA's take on the pistol-caliber firearm.

The Phoenix went through a few iterations before it ended up as what you see today. It's basically a straight blowback version of an MP5 with AR-15 controls. All the bells and whistles that POF is known for have been carried over to the little 9mm. This is the contemporary pickup truck



strong side bolt release, the aesthetics of the handguard, and the newly designed two-port compensator all share visual cues with the rest of the POF catalogue. The other thing the Phoenix shares with everything else POF makes is quality. Companies develop character just like people, and some are known for cutting corners while others hold themselves to higher standards. POF is the latter.

### UPPER

In normal AR-9s, the upper receiver and handguard are separate pieces. The Phoenix has cut out the middle-man and features a monolithic upper for maximum strength. The one-piece M-LOK upper allows for a Picatinny rail that covers the entire length of the upper without interruption. The forward charging handle is ambidextrous and non-reciprocating, rather than the typi-

A brace is a must. The quality of the Maxim Defense SCW brace is on par with the Phoenix.

POF didn't skimp on the lower parts. Everything is ambidextrous, and the anti-walk pins are a bonus.



### LOWER

The billet lower is fully ambidextrous. Bolt release, safety selectors, magazine release, and recessed finger rest are all available for normal people and lefties. The trigger guard is oversized and integrated into the lower. Anti-walk pins come standard, as it features a Mil-spec AR-15 trigger that tips the scale at just under 5 pounds. It's a middle-of-the-road trigger, but aftermarket options are abundant. The lower mostly uses AR-15 parts, making swapping parts a simple affair. There's a bit of 1913 rail at the back of the lower receiver where the receiver extension usually resides. POF didn't want to get too political and simply added a quick-detach hole in the middle of the rail, along with a single-point sling to fit, evoking visions of Chuck Norris wielding two micro Uzis in *Invasion USA*. Alas, our badassness

cal AR-15 "T" style charging handles. The 8-inch barrel features a 1/10-twist rate and is topped with a newly designed two-chamber muzzle brake.

The straight blowback system is the missionary position of PCCs, but it's done a little differently in the Phoenix. The idea of straight blowback is to use heavy weight and stout springs to overcome the pressure of the pistol round. A standard AR-9 has a bolt and buffer setup with the buffer spring in the receiver extension, just like an AR-15. The Phoenix's bolt and spring assembly is all nestled in the upper, with no need for a buffer or buffer tube. Everything dealing with the operating

isn't on par with Chuck, so we opted for a Maxim defense brace. It's challenging to efficiently shoot a PCF of this size without a brace.

Most AR-9-style guns use Glock magazines, resulting in a harsh angle when the magazine is seated. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, except for aesthetics. POF decided they could do better in the magazine department. Proprietary is usually a bad word when talking guns, but this isn't necessarily the case here. The magazine mimics the MP5 in overall shape but features a single feed point like a pistol magazine. The curved magazine lends itself to better functionality as 9mm is a

## COMPANIES DEVELOP CHARACTER JUST LIKE PEOPLE, AND SOME ARE KNOWN FOR CUTTING CORNERS WHILE OTHERS HOLD THEMSELVES TO HIGHER STANDARDS. POF IS THE LATTER.

tions very quickly and put hits on target with just a thought. On paper it's hard to see the allure of a PCF, but on the range you can feel what it's all about. This is where all the impressive specs in the world will do little good, as it's more about how the gun feels. In this day and age, it's all about feelings.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, we have analytics. Three different types of ammo were used for shooting groups — 115-grain Sterling, 125-grain SIG Sauer, and 147-grain hand loads. At 50 yards from a table, the best group was the 115-grain Sterling ammo at about an inch (1.037 inches).

The 147-grain shot a similar group at 1.335 inches, and the Phoenix didn't seem to like the SIG ammo, netting a 2.3-inch group. The results aren't off the charts, but remember this is a "pistol." The groups are definitely good enough for any use you'd have for a PCF.

### IN THE END

The name of the game these days is how small you can make a gun and still accomplish the task at hand. The POF

Feel like something is missing? The Phoenix doesn't use a standard AR charging handle.

tapered round, naturally curving when stacked deep. This is a perceived flaw with the straight-stick monster Glock magazines. The single-feed tapered end of the Phoenix magazine makes it easier to find the magwell during magazine changes but is more difficult to load. The engineers at POF kindly included a magazine loader with every mag. Even if you never use magazine loaders, this one is a bit of a necessity.

### ON THE RANGE

Shooting the Phoenix is what you'd think a direct blowback gun feels like. It's not very soft, but remember we're talking about a 4.6-pound gun shooting 9mm. The recoil on PCFs aren't a big issue for most, and the Phoenix is very maneuverable. You can change direc-



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quality and short overall length separate the Phoenix from the rest. It's not the operating system that's unique, but the way the operating system is engineered. A different take on the same straight blowback system makes for a more compact package.

This is a simple recipe — aesthetics and uncomplicated operation. While there's nothing revolutionary about the Phoenix, it's a well-made gun. The idea that every gun has to be radical to be good isn't practical. Tried-and-true ingredients can give you a solid result — the same, but different. ■

The included POF handstop is a must with such a short barrel.

Magnification is too much, and iron sights are too old. Red dots are a perfect fit for PCFs.



**PATRIOT  
ORDNANCE  
FACTORY  
PHOENIX**

**CALIBER:** 9MM

**BARREL LENGTH:** 8.5 INCHES

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 17.5 INCHES

**WEIGHT:** 4.6 POUNDS

**MAGAZINE CAPACITY:** 35

**MSRP:** \$1,699 (BLACK), \$1,799 (FLAT DARK EARTH)

**URL:** POF-USA.COM

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**THE RECOIL ON PCFS AREN'T A BIG ISSUE FOR MOST, AND THE PHOENIX IS VERY MANEUVERABLE. YOU CAN CHANGE DIRECTIONS VERY QUICKLY AND PUT HITS ON TARGET WITH JUST A THOUGHT.**

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