

THE AGUILA ADVANTAGE

AMMO FROM SOUTH OF THE BORDER—AND AS GOOD AS ANY YOU’LL FIND.

IMPORTED AMMUNITION, ESPECIALLY the cheap stuff, tends to have a spotty reputation. And you don’t want to waste your time or money practicing with ammo that will force you to work on your malfunction drills because it is unreliable or is so inaccurate you are left wondering whether your misses on targets and steel are you, the gun or the ammo. But imported ammo can be good as well, and that is certainly the case with Aguila. Made in Mexico, Aguila is more than you might think. Your first thought is, “Oh, made in Mexico, so it’s cheap blasting ammo.” Wrong.

Aguila recognized some time ago that if it wanted to get shelf space alongside the better-known ammo brands here in the United States it couldn’t be just as good as the others; it had to be better. So the company bit the bullet, so to speak, and invested in people, machinery and plant improvements and processes.

I was recently down in Mexico visiting Aguila, and I was impressed. I’ve been to a lot of manufacturing facilities—ammo, guns and more—and what I saw south of the border was as clean, well organized and up to date as any I’ve visited of late. It had the full complement of delicate measuring equipment, accuracy-testing gear and pressure-testing barrels and receivers. And the employees? All hard at work, undertak-



▲ If Aguila’s 124-grain full metal jacket is any indication, this Mexican import offers shooters a new and competitively priced option for general shooting, competition and defense.

ing labor-intensive tasks alongside the labor-saving machines. All the ammo was hand inspected multiple times and then hand packed.

While at the Aguila plant, I had a chance to test all of its 9mm offerings: 115-grain full metal jacket, 124-grain full metal jacket and 117-grain jacketed hollowpoint rounds. They all worked, in various handguns, submachine guns and even a semiauto Mendoza carbine—a rarity usually seen, if at all, in museums.

Here at home, the only loading that could be had in volume in time to make this issue was the 124-grain FMJ. I dumped a box of the ammo on the bench and closely inspected

each round. All were clean, unmarred and unstained. All the bullets appeared to have been seated straight, and none had obviously wobbly noses when I rolled them across the surface. The primers were smooth, unmarred and evenly seated to just below the case head. The cases had a firm, uniform canelure beneath the bullet base to prevent bullet setback on feeding.

I dropped each one in a Wilson case/cartridge gauge. Each went in smoothly and to the correct depth, and they fell out under their own weight. I pulled a bullet and weighed it: 124.1 grains. The powder was a small amount of a ball-like powder, and the case was a boxer-primed.

Naturally, I wanted to test the ammo in an accurate pistol, so I chose my Nighthawk T3 in 9mm—a tightly fitted pistol with a match barrel half an inch longer than normal for suppressor use. It has proven to be a tack-driver, and if there is anything the least bit “off” in ammo,

a tight, accurate pistol is usually the best means of uncovering it.

Aguila’s 9mm 124-grain FMJ is quite soft in recoil. The book spec on it lists the expected velocity as 1,115 fps. My chronograph measured it at 1,095 fps. Yes, the extra half-inch of the Nighthawk barrel should have boosted the velocity just a bit, but the day I tested the load the temperature was only 37 degrees, with high humidity, so the results I saw were certainly close enough to spec.

What really got my attention was the accuracy. The Aguila delivered groups I associate with match ammo—either the expensive stuff from factories or the personal stuff I have slaved over. For vanilla-plain ball to be delivering two-inch groups over a rest is pretty impressive.

And to do so with a recoil level that makes it attractive for competition shooting is a bonus.

USPSA Production and IDPA Stock Service Pistol divisions have a minimum power factor of 125 (bullet weight times velocity, drop the last three digits). A 124-grain bullet at 1,095 produces a PF of 135, which is a comfortable cushion above the minimum and nice to have in case you run into a slow chrono or have a slow barrel. Its accuracy makes it even more attractive for the action pistol shooter. Further, the 124-grain FMJ burns quite cleanly, so once you’ve used your Aguila ammo, the boxer-primed cases will be a breeze to reload.

The 117-grain jacketed hollowpoint has a listed velocity of 1,250 fps, and when I can get some of this

particular load, I’m going to test it in ballistic gelatin to see if Aguila has made a barrier-blind jacketed hollowpoint. If it did half as much work on making the 117-grainer expand as it did in making the 124-grainer accurate, then it should pass with flying colors.

And the cost? A quick price check on the 124-grain load I tested came up at the same cost as more familiar brands. So you get soft recoiling, clean-burning, accurate ammo at a competitive cost. You get reloadable cases.

And you get all of this from a new source. Competition among ammunition makers for our hard-earned dollars improves quality while bringing prices down, and we’re the winners. I’m rooting for Aguila to do well because then we all will.

PERFORMANCE RESULTS | AQUILA AMMUNITION

9mm Luger	Bullet Weight (gr.)	Muzzle Velocity (fps)	Standard Deviation	Avg. Group (in.)
full metal jacket	124	1,095	14.9	2.25

Notes: Test platform was a Nighthawk T3 with a 5.5-inch barrel. Accuracy result is the average of five five-shot groups from a Sinclair rest at 25 yards. Velocities are the average of 10 rounds measured with PACT MK IV chronograph 15 feet from the muzzle.