

Stag Arms 15L Model 1L

Left-handed shooters rejoice! There's now a first-rate, southpaw-friendly AR just for you.

By Stan Skinner



After nearly four decades as the U.S. military's primary individual weapon, the M16 has been modified into several major variants, most notably the currently issued, fixed-stock A2 and carbine-length, collapsible-stock M4.



Left ejection and other southpaw-friendly features make the Stag 15L the answer to a lefty's prayers.

For us civilians, the semiauto AR-15 is available in similar variants, plus National Match versions. A large array of accessories and add-ons allow shooters to customize their ARs to their heart's content. But the core firearm has remained unchanged since the addition of a forward assist and a brass deflector to address problems that emerged during Vietnam service.

Now comes Stag Arms with the first truly different AR-15 since the 1960s: a left-handed version.

The Stag 15L is a mirror-image (in most respects) semiauto AR-15. Five models are available, including the Model 5L, which is chambered for the 6.8mm SPC instead of 5.56mm (.223 Remington). All five models have the "flattop" configuration and an integral Picatinny rail on the upper receiver in place of a fixed carry handle.

STAG ARMS 15L MODEL 1L	
TYPE:	Gas-Operated Semiauto
CALIBER:	.223
CAPACITY:	5, 10, 20, 30
BARREL LENGTH:	16 inches
OVERALL LENGTH:	32 3/8 to 35 5/8 inches
WEIGHT:	8 pounds (with Trijicon ACOG)
STOCK:	Collapsible
SIGHTS:	Peep rear, elevation adjustable rear, plus Picatinny rail
PRICE:	\$989
MANUFACTURER:	Stag Arms

The ejection port, forward assist and brass deflector are on the left side of the Stag 15L's upper receiver. The familiar two-position safety and the bolt release remain on the left side of the lower receiver, and a mirror-image safety is added to the right side, making it ambidextrous.

The magazine catch is also ambidextrous, utilizing the usual button on the right side of the lower receiver along with a pivoting catch on the left side. Stag Arms offers this ambidextrous magazine catch as well as the ambidextrous safety as separate parts that can be fitted to a standard AR-15 lower.

Our test rifle was the Model 1L, which is equipped with a 16-inch, chrome-lined barrel; a 1:9-inch twist; and a six-position collapsible stock. It had a military-style two-stage trigger with a fairly clean break at 6 3/4 pounds.

A carry handle is furnished with a large/small-aperture, flip-up peep sight that has click-adjustable windage and elevation. The front sight is adjustable for elevation only. With a Trijicon ACOG 4x32mm optical sight mounted on the integral Picatinny rail and an empty 30-round magazine in place, this rig weighed in at eight pounds even. Overall length with the stock fully collapsed was 32 3/8 inches and 35 5/8 inches with stock fully extended.

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The ejection port, forward-assist and brass deflector are on the left side of the receiver. Note that the dust cover hinges up. The

dust cover on a conventional AR15 hinges down.

We fired the Stag-15L with iron sights, the ACOG and a Bushnell Holosight. The detachable carry handle allowed the latter two sights to be mounted much lower than would be possible with a fixed carry handle. This is much more comfortable for most people, but the main value, in my mind, is in a tactical situation where the lower head position significantly reduces the shooter's exposure when firing from cover.

The Trijicon sight uses fiber optics and tritium to provide illumination at any level of lighting without batteries. The battery-operated Bushnell Holosight presents a holographic reticle on a screen, which is superimposed on the target. Both sights greatly aided speedy target acquisition.

A slight drawback was the fixed front sight, which protrudes into the field of view of low-mounted optics and partially blocks a clear view of the target. Shooters who have mastered the ability to shoot with both eyes open are not likely to be bothered much by this problem, however.

At the range, we rapid-fired 30-round magazines loaded, in turn, with full-metal-jacket, softpoint, polymer-tip and hollowpoint ammo, and the Stag 15L digested all four types without a single malfunction. Empties were flung 10 feet into about a three-foot area at the shooter's eight o'clock position, and a brassy smear on the brass deflector showed that it was performing as advertised.



The brassy smear on the Stag 15L's brass deflector shows that it works as designed.

A single failure to eject occurred using a five-round magazine while benchrest testing, and it was cleared with little difficulty.

We used the 4X ACOG to test the accuracy of the Stag 15L from the bench at 50 yards. Muzzle velocities from the short, 16-inch barrel were significantly lower than published

figures, and the 1:9-inch twist produced significantly better accuracy with bullet weights of 55 grains and up. Winchester, Hornady and Black Hills loads finished in a virtual dead heat, averaging slightly more than one inch for five three-shot groups.

ACCURACY RESULTS: Stag Arms 15L Model 1L			
LOAD	BULLET WEIGHT (gr.)	AVG. VELOCITY (fps)	AVG. GROUP (inches)
Remington Premier AccuTip	50	3,030	2.02
Black Hills (Red) SP	55	2,937	2.81
Winchester Supreme BST	55	3,142	1.09
Hornady TAP FPD	60	2,924	1.19
Black Hills (Blue) MatchKing HP	69	2,809	1.11

NOTES: Average of five three-shot groups at 50 yards

As a card-carrying lefty, I found that the Stag-15L scratched an itch I didn't know I had. With the six-position collapsible stock and short barrel it was handy as well as light, and I had a lot of fun with it. If I can persuade Stag Arms to let me hold on to it awhile longer, the local jackrabbit population is in for a hard time.