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FEBRUARY 2020



# DESERT EAGLE 429 DE

## NEW .44 SPEED DEMON FROM MAGNUM RESEARCH

### JEREMIAH MCCARTHY

Armed with killer good looks, the Desert Eagle's sex appeal has only increased over the years. The legendary gun continues to make appearances in some shooters' favorite action movies. From *Boondock Saints* to *Last Action Hero*, whether the massive auto-loader was wielded by bad guys in *The Matrix* or gold-plated editions were double-fisted by a fit Demi Moore in the *Charlie's Angels* remake, Hollywood has helped cement the Desert Eagle as a pop-culture icon. While I'm admittedly less attractive than Elizabeth Hurley's Eagle-carrying character in *Austin Powers*, all eyes were on me at the local gun shop while I filled out the ATF Form 4473 to take possession of the highly recognizable hand cannon.

This one is chambered in an exciting new cartridge, the 429 DE. The round is said to be 25 percent faster and offer 45 percent more energy when compared to the tried-and-true 240-gr. .44 Magnum load. Such stats have the new speed demon primed to be a real blockbuster both literally and figuratively.

### THE GUN

The 429 DE Desert Eagle is — no surprises here — heavy, weighing in at 4 lbs., 4.3 oz. with an empty magazine. Like other

Mark XIX models, our 429 DE features an ambidextrous safety selector, Picatinny bottom rail and integral muzzle brake. Our test piece rocks a 6" stainless steel barrel with a 1:18" twist and wears a brushed stainless steel finish — currently the only finish option, but there's sure to be more in the future.

Since the new bottle-necked cartridge is based off the .50 AE, it should come as no surprise the 429 DE Desert Eagle also utilizes the same bolt and magazine as .50 AE configurations. Currently, the 429 DE is pending SAAMI approval. Owners of the .50 AE MK19 USA and/or Israeli Desert Eagle pistol with a wide 0.830" top rail will be happy to hear 429 DE drop-in conversion barrels are currently available in a variety of finishes.

It's clear the design team at MRI had hunters in mind when developing the 429 DE, so we outfitted our test piece with a 2x20 Nikon Force XR — an extended eye-relief handgun scope



The Desert Eagle firing the 429 DE cartridge combines Hollywood good looks and blockbusting power into one massive package.

providing enough magnification to make 100-yard hits very doable, but not so much you lose the scope reticle during dynamic hunting scenarios.

Additionally, we took advantage of the lower accessory rail by attaching a GG&G XDS-2 Quick-detach bipod — perfect for shooting from the bench or blind. Topping it off, we added a Slide Spider from Arachnigrip. This laser-cut, high-friction accessory fit perfectly between the slide serrations on our 429 DE Desert Eagle and uses a marine-grade adhesive to ensure it always remains in place.

### RANGE TIME

Because shooting is as much a social event as it is an educational endeavor, I enlisted the help of a good friend when it came time to test the new gun. After bore-sighting the scope, getting zeroed at 25 yards was a pleasant and uneventful affair. The fast, powerful .44-caliber cartridge has considerable bark but the mass of the platform, fixed barrel and muzzle brake go a long way toward taming the beast and mitigating felt recoil.

Surprisingly, while Magnum Research advertises trigger pull at approximately 4 lbs., the test gun averaged 6 lbs. 13 oz. on our Wheeler digital trigger pull scale. If we take a moment to entertain the idea our measurements might be off, shooters will still find considerably more travel in the Desert Eagle single-action trigger pull than they would in the single-action pull of their favorite revolver. I do not believe this to be an unfair comparison for a pistol vying to be the next big hunting handgun.

### THE DOPE

Using Caldwell's Ballistic Precision Chronograph, average muzzle velocity of the 210-gr. jacketed hollow points (JHPs) came blazing out of the 6" barrel at 1,647 fps, while 240-gr. soft points came out at 1,523 fps. Our results were a little slower than the published data from MRI but we're confident the cold temps played a major factor. Additionally, while MRI continues to finalize the recipe for 429 DE leading up to SAAMI approval, Tertin noted shooters can expect even faster velocities in the future along with premium bullet offerings.

At these velocities, the 210-gr. JHP is generating 639 foot-pounds of energy on target at 100 yards while the 240-gr. soft points are delivering a massive 798 foot-pounds! At this distance, the 429 DE has more energy than a typical .44 Magnum load can generate at the muzzle. Simply put, 429 DE doesn't just ring steel — it knocks it over! My shooting partner and I observed this quite literally toward the end of our shooting session, where we'd saved a single round for an off-hand shot on steel 25 yards out. We laughed out loud when, upon impact, the whole target assembly slowly fell over backwards.

### ACCURACY — WITH PUNCH

In the accuracy department, 429 DE proved to be perfectly capable. While shooting from a sandbag rest, five-shot groups at 50 yards for both loads came in around 5". After eliminating a

**A)** The gun's weight, fixed barrel and aggressive barrel ports gives the Desert Eagle's freaky-fast .429 DE some serious bark — without the bite. **B)** The Desert Eagle's gas port, located at the 6 o'clock position near the breech, syphons gas forward to actuate the piston driven slide. **C)** The rotating bolt design is a critical component for such a powerful cartridge — four locking lugs are present in the Desert Eagle's bolt.



single flyer, the best group of the day was a hair over 2.5" using the 210-gr. JHP. Keep in mind we were battling the frigid temps and the ammo supply was limited. Tertin reports many of MRI's barrels are printing 5" to 6" groups at 100 yards.

If we can smuggle the gun out of Hollywood — and ignore all the filmmaking special-effects flimflam — there isn't a better place to take the 429 DE than to our favorite box blind. With help from the fast, powerful new .44-caliber cartridge, it appears the Desert Eagle has just been cast for its next role — a powerfully accurate deer gun.

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