

THE MARTIALIST: ISSUE 3.11 SUBSCRIBER

extremely useful unarmed self-defense curricula. Train hard knowing that your life and the lives of those you love are literally in your hands. A certain amount of conditioning is appropriate if your body and your mind are to be your only weapons.

Third, you can focus on weapons that are improvised or otherwise “politically correct” in nature. A koppo-wrapped Minimag flashlight makes a great pocket stick and is generally legal. Tactical flashlights can be used defensively and also serve well in utility roles. The Super Sharpie is a great improvised pocket stick. Other “covert” weapons include flexible weapons like bandannas and scarves, which can be used to grapple, to whip, as saps (when loaded with weight), and as emergency bandages. Where improvised weapons are concerned, you are limited only by your imagination and the basic principles of physics.

To succeed in self-defense, you don't have to leave your home each day with a .45, three knives, a SureFire light, and a can of pepper spray – though if you can legally do so, you might as well. Use your *mind*, apply what you learn to the context in which you live, and learn to adapt to and work within your legal constraints. Such constraints make self-defense more challenging, but not impossible. You *still* have choices.

Choose wisely. ♠

I am a peace activist. I wish to live in a world in which the rights of individuals are protected and civil liberty is not threatened by random violence. Towards that end, I advocate the appropriate use of force in self-defense – preemptive, proactive, and in response to offered violence.

Brinkmann MaxFire LX

Review by Francis Rook

The lithium/Xenon Brinkmann MaxFire is Brinkmann's offering in the polymer-body Xenon-bulb market. An obvious attempt to emulate SureFire's G2 Nitrolon and similar lights, the MaxFire is arguably a “tactical” light sold in low-cost discount store venues like Wal*Mart and Target.



Photo by Phil Elmore

The light is 5.25 inches overall with a 1.25 inch bezel. The head and shaft of the light have rubber grips for improved traction. These work well. The light feels very secure in my hand.

The tailcap bears a cross-hatched switch that can be pressed for momentary-on (what Brinkman calls a “silent signal”



option) and clicked positively on and off. This arrangement is very popular with some users, though “tactical” consumers may not like it. This is because, under stress, it is possible to press the switch too hard and get always-on light rather than a momentary burst. I don't think this is a concern with

THE MARTIALIST: ISSUE 3.11 SUBSCRIBER

the MaxFire, however, because a very deep press is required to switch the light to always-on. I tried several times to “accidentally” go past momentary lighting but did not manage to do it.



Photo by Phil Elmore

The MaxFire costs half to two thirds as much as its SureFire competitors, but produces comparable light – around 60 lumens. The company’s website does not list burn times or lumen ratings, stating simply that the light is brighter than a “standard 3D” flashlight. The light runs on the same CR123A lithium batteries on which so many tactical lights feed.

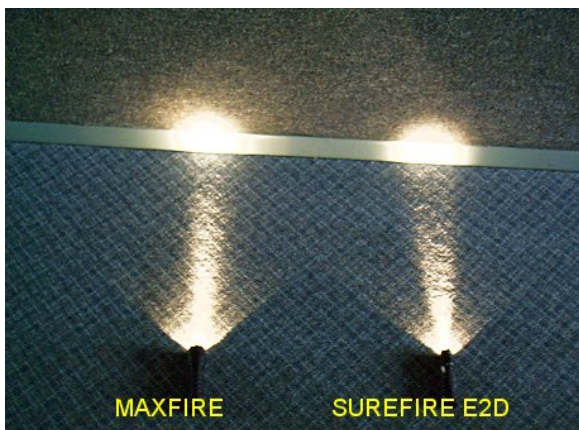


Photo by Phil Elmore

Ridges cut into the light head make the MaxFire a decent striking implement. As a tactical tool, the Maxfire handles

well (thanks to its rubber grips) and produces a bright (if slightly irregular) blob of yellow-white illumination. This is more than adequate for home defense, personal protection, and applications involving handguns.



Photo by Phil Elmore

Thanks to its low cost, decent workmanship, and simple function, the MaxFire has gained quite a following among budget-minded flashlight users. It is worth having and fills both tactical and utility roles.

That is all anyone should ask of a Xenon-bulb torch. ♠

EDITOR’S NOTE: *I’ve personally used the MaxFire to incapacitate someone during a potentially violent confrontation. Specifically, I confronted someone seated in an automobile at*

THE MARTIALIST: ISSUE 3.11 SUBSCRIBER

night, aggressively lighting him up from the driver's side. He reacted beautifully, shielding his eyes, demanding that I get the light out of his face, and even trying to use a CD to reflect the light back at me, all while cringing and wincing under the bright beam. You could not have asked for a better example of the tactical advantage of such a torch.

– Phil



Photo by Phil Elmore

Creation vs. Criticism

By Phil Elmore

Some time ago I was visiting an online discussion forum when I noticed the name of an instructor whom I respect. A participant at the board was asking if it was worthwhile to train in this instructor's system. A couple of people responded and, surprisingly, had very negative things to say. Their comments did not at all match my opinion of the man and his curriculum, but on the Internet there is never any shortage of disagreement. Some of the people who criticize a given person, style, or system know what they're talking about and some do not, but the Web is a great leveler and renders all opinions at equal volume.

The instructor in question posted a message at the forum after I let him know it was taking place. (I'll stand up for anyone in whom I believe and I don't

care how unpopular my opinion might be in a specific venue. I won't talk about someone behind his back if I can help it.) I was surprised at the intensity of the instructor's reply. He let his critics have it in no uncertain terms, pulling no punches and sparing no feelings.

Reaction to his words was fairly negative. An instructor should rise above such criticism and discuss things intellectually, some asserted. Where, others wondered, were the instructor's de-escalation skills? Why could he not keep a cool head under pressure? Why was he so "defensive?" Was he "insecure?" These and other questions were asked with the sort of wide-eyed incredulity one sees in people who don't really believe in the questions they're asking. They were, I think, simply piling on and refusing to see the instructor's side of it.

I defended the instructor and was accused of sycophantic devotion to him – a laughable charge when you consider how much grief I get for refusing to align myself in a martial arts "camp." How could I give the instructor the benefit of the doubt, I was asked, when his chief critic claimed to have trained with him in person and I most definitely had not? How could I claim to understand the instructor's "overreaction" – a reaction that could only be construed, his critics claimed, as "Do as I say, not as I do?"

How, indeed. The issue is one close to me – and one that, interestingly enough, the instructor and I had discussed just prior to the incident. While criticism – punditry, if you will – abounds in the self-defense field, precious few people *create* material of value and make it available to their fellow citizens.