

THE KLARUS XT-10 FLASHLIGHT

GOOD QUALITY FLASHLIGHTS CAN SET YOU BACK A SMALL FORTUNE - THERE ARE BUDGET OPTIONS, BUT WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED. ALL THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE WITH THE KLARUS XT-10 AND ITS INCREDIBLE USER INTERFACE. HEADS WILL TURN... WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JACK BAXTER

Klarus have been making torches for a few years for other companies, but now, with the help of the former chief engineer of Fenix, they're using that knowledge to bring some very well thought-out new kit to the market. I've been looking for a good quality strobe torch for months, but have been put off by high prices and clumsy user-interfaces (UI). Being able to access the strobe mode quickly whilst holding a pistol is essential in a night game, and the button layout on the XT-10 has solved the problem perfectly.

Rather than using a rotating tail switch, or a second button near the head, this flashlight groups the main, and a secondary mode button together on the tail. A half-press of the main button gives momentary control of the torch at its full 470ANSI (American National Standards Institute) lumens, while a full press locks it on. Pressing the mode button cycles through high, medium and low power, or hold it to access the strobe. Keep the strobe button held and it will continue to pulse at a high frequency, or let it go and the strobe will cycle between high and low frequencies, which is claimed to disorientate the bad-guys even more! Things get really clever when you press and hold the mode button while the Klarus is off, instantly accessing the strobe mode. This is what makes it the perfect torch for me, as I found I could flood a room with light at Urban Assault, or pop out of a doorway and strobe the attacking team, giving me that split-second's advantage that can make a game.

The Klarus uses the new CREE XM-L T6 LED, which is designed to give a very smooth, wide spread of light. It's not designed as a 'thrower', although having

said that, it still gives an incredible amount of light over a huge distance. Power comes from either two CR123A batteries (or their rechargeable equivalents), or one rechargeable 18650, giving up to two hours and twenty minutes of light at full power, or 300 hours in low mode! The supplied tactical ring allows you to hold the flashlight in a variety of positions, and also included are a pair of spare O-rings (this thing is water and dust resistant to IPX-8 standard), a pocket clip, lanyard and a pouch.

I've been deliberately rough with the Klarus, and it's continued to work flawlessly. My only problem came when I took a tumble on concrete with the XT hanging from my wrist. Somehow I managed to smash it against the ground and break the plastic tactical ring. Taclight's customer service was flawless however, with a new part sent out the next day - honoring the two-year Klarus guarantee.

I'm thoroughly impressed with this torch - it offers extraordinary value for money, with the best UI I've seen. Its 1" standard body makes it easy to weapon-mount, it's incredibly bright, and it's very well made. Could it be better? It would have been nice to have a metal tactical ring, a remote switch and a slightly longer lanyard, but these are all issues that Klarus are about to address (an anodised metal tactical ring will be included with the flashlight within a month or so). Other than that, it's a shame that you can't stand it on its tail to illuminate a work area when you need both hands free, but now I'm nit-picking. I'm sure some of the big brands will be copying the Klarus UI, but at this price, and with this performance, the XT-10 is a bargain not to be missed.

'THE KLARUS XT-10 GIVES AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF LIGHT OVER A HUGE DISTANCE. I'M THOROUGHLY IMPRESSED WITH THIS TORCH - IT OFFERS EXTRAORDINARY VALUE FOR MONEY, WITH THE BEST 'UI' I'VE EVER SEEN!'



AI WHICH BATTERY?

You might be surprised to learn that there are three batteries you can use with the Klarus - two standard 3V CR123A cells, two rechargeable 3.7V Li-ion RCR123A cells (sometimes called 16430), or one rechargeable 3.7V Li-ion 18650.

So what's the difference? Although when running two cells you have a combined voltage of 6V or 7.4V, the XT-10 outputs the same amount of light as it's a regulated circuit.

Some professional users prefer to use standard (primary) CR123A cells, as the torch's brightness tails off as the juice runs out, giving ample warning that they need changing. Li-ion cells have a very sharp cut-off, meaning you could potentially be suddenly left in the dark. As airsoft users, we're not facing a life or death situation, and over two hours of run-time at full power should be more than enough for a day's play before recharging.

Running rechargeable cells undoubtedly works out cheaper in the long run, but you still need to consider the single or double option. As running two cells in series offers no output advantage, we'd recommend the single 18650, as the Cytac shown here packs an impressive 2400mAh, giving you the maximum run-time when compared to the 123's 650mAh.

One 18650 costs £8.95 from Taclight - the same price as a pair of rechargeable 123s. The basic charger shown will set you back just £16.95, so add them to your basket when you get the torch...



EXTERNAL PARTS ★★★★★
INTERNAL PARTS ★★★★★
PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

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