

Detector Field Test

Tesoro Tejón

Mart Hoffman

Earlier this year I was fortunate enough to meet Gert Gesink, the Dutch importer for Tesoro metal detectors. During the course of our conversation he told me that Tesoro had recently released a new detector called the Tejón, and that it would soon be available in Europe.

The few details he had about this detector were enough to arouse my interest, and he promised to send me one for test purposes as soon as he received the first shipment from America. The way that Gert described the Tejón was sufficient for me to search on the Internet for more details, and I soon found my way to the Tesoro Website. The Tejón was big news on this site with much emphasis placed on the new livery (this left me wondering how a change in colour could improve the performance of a detector!). I by-passed all the sales spiel and continued on to where the American field tests began. These proved to be far more informative, with many of the reports saying that finds were being made on sites where previous detectors had been used but had found nothing. Such recoveries included buckles and buttons from old campsites, and these mainly dated from the middle of the

19th century. The reports suggested that the Tejón was capable of finding these items at a greater depth than other detectors; however, the conditions in America are far different from those found in Europe and cannot be compared in the same way.

Shortly after browsing the Website the detector was delivered to my home and I hurriedly opened the packaging. The most obvious and immediate thing that strikes you is the change of livery colours for the Tejón. Gone is the familiar gold and brown to be replaced by a very smart grey and black stem and bright blue control box. The control box is of the uMax type and, as such, is not hip-mountable but as it has been said before, with a detector this light it is not necessary to hip mount it.

The battery housing is situated under the upper armrest cuff and holds eight AA type batteries. This not only makes battery changing easier but helps to keep the Tejón well balanced.

Controls

Looking at the front panel of the control box there are six adjustable control knobs and, new for the Tejón, a mode change trigger switch that is mounted under the control box hous-

ing. This allows for fast and easy changes for pinpointing and checking of targets with the *Alternate Disc* facility that will be mentioned later.

From the bottom left there is the *Adjustable Ground Control* above which is the *Threshold* knob. In the centre is the *Audio Tone* adjust, which enables you to set the tones that you are more comfortable with. Using this control enables you to switch from a normal tone to one of many different tones in the *All Metal* and *Discriminate* modes. On the lower right is the *Disc Level*, also called the *Primary* or *Main Discrimination* control, which has a full time *All Metal* setting. The remaining two other controls sited here are the *Sensitivity* and *Alternate Disc Level* controls.

The second one of these is something new from Tesoro and when used in conjunction with the *Trigger Mode* switch means that you should dig less trash and be able to concentrate more on the good targets.

Perhaps this is a good time to explain exactly what this control enables you to do. The *Alternative Disc* level is a second level of discrimination. Let's say that you have set your normal discrimination control to iron and you are receiving a broken signal that you are not too sure is actually iron. By setting the *Alternative Disc* level slightly higher than the normal discrimination



Control box.



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level and - simply pushing forward on the toggle switch to the increased level of discrimination - if the target is iron then the signal should disappear. Pulling on the trigger switch enables you to pinpoint the target.

While we are on the subject of the control knobs it is noticeable that these knobs spin very easily, in particular the *Ground Adjust* knob. As the headphone jackplug socket is at the back of the control housing, the headphone lead can brush against this knob, throwing it out of any adjustment you have made. I have spoken to other users of the Tejón and it appears to be the norm on this switch. To overcome the problem I have placed a small plastic "O" ring over the shank of the switch creating a friction to help stop any accidental movement - it works well.

Field Appraisal

It was on a Friday the 13th that I was finally in possession of the Tejón, and I went immediately to a soil dump for my first test. (I should explain that as I live in Delft in Holland most of my detecting is carried out on reclaimed land, often on spoil heaps and old dump grounds, the majority of which are very heavily mineralised).

I was short of time and had little opportunity to use all the controls on the Tejón, but my first impressions were that it performed well. When there was a target in the ground the Tejón gave a perfect signal, and I was able to recover it easily without resorting to the pinpoint facility.

At the end of about 90 minutes' search I had found six copper-alloy coins (in Dutch named *duit* or *duiten*) from the 17th or 18th centuries, as well as a silver watch key, and a ring for a child made of copper wire with a glass "stone". Perhaps Friday 13th wasn't such an unlucky day for me! (The superstition derives from the fact that this was the secret day set by the authorities



Mart photographed in front of the excavations.

for the rounding up, torture - and often burning or execution - of members of the Knights Templar in Europe).

On Sunday 15 February, I went with Mart and Levi (my two sons) to a location near a park where in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries the city garbage from Delft had been dumped. There is a lot of ground mineralization, so conditions are very difficult for metal detecting. A few years ago we found a lot of coins, buckles, bullets, lead seals and many other objects on the site, but those days are over and now you need a good detector to find anything at all.

With this in mind, it seemed a perfect place for assessing how the new detector would perform. I started off using the elliptical (Double-D) coil and within a few minutes had found two copper coins. My immediate reaction was that the test results I had read about on the Tesoro Website were indeed correct and that the detector was sharp and deep.

The signals were obvious and clear, and I was able to hear the difference

between small iron and good targets with the aid of the tone control. Once again, there was no need to make use of the pinpoint facility to accurately locate targets. Some of the coins I was finding also came from what I would regard as a good depth for the conditions, which was down as far as 10in.

I then tried the 8in concentric coil. I found that fitted with this, the Tejón again gives a good response on bad ground, and I had soon found another coin. Exactly the same story was repeated and in no time I had located some nice objects at (for this place) some remarkable depths.

Lastly I used the standard web coil. This coil did not give the responses I had expected. In some instances I had to dig slightly to the side of where I received the signal; this is perfectly normal for this type of coil and is caused by such things as a coin on edge.

On Tuesday 17 February I visited a farmer to renew my permission to search on his fields. This was the first time in over five years that I had searched one of the big fields of the





A selection of the artefacts found during the field test.

farm, and I felt that it was important to check if the spider coil would perform better in these conditions than on heavily mineralised sites. I started with the concentric coil as I was happy with its previous results and I felt that it would give me a guide to how the conditions were on the field.

My first find was a coin at about 4in, followed by a horseshoe at a depth of over 15in. After a while, by now feeling comfortable with the concentric coil, I fitted the spider coil. The difference was incredible: the Tejón was at its best and I found more coins and several more artefacts.

During this time I had the opportunity to concentrate on the *Alternative Disc* settings and the trigger switch. It works perfectly and clearly indicates the difference between the things you want to find and those that you do not.

For my test I purposely set the main discrimination level to just above the all metal setting, which would result in "broken" signals from small iron objects, and the *Alternative Disc* to the "5 cent" position. At these extreme levels I could totally eliminate any "broken" signals and not dig any iron. I did, however, at first dig up the broken signals to ensure that they were indeed unwanted trash. This is the first time I

have used this "double discrimination" type of control and I found it to be a big plus in heavily mineralized conditions. I would recommend that the main discrimination is set to the "foil" position in normal use.

I had promised myself to return to the spoil dump where I had first tried the Tejón. As I was leaving home the phone rang and it turned out to be one of the town's archaeologists asking if I could help him on an excavation in the middle of the old city. I was confused as to what I should do. I had taken a day off from work to search on the spoil dump, but this was also a great opportunity to search on an archaeological dig.

My wife Judith suggested that I should do both: go first to the spoil dump and then on to the excavation - and I was glad that I did. One of the finds from the spoil dump was a pin from the 16th century, but later on the excavation site I found a silver coin dating from between AD 1322-1384. (This was on a spot where the other metal detectorists involved failed to get a signal). I also found some interesting iron items when searching in the all-metal mode.

My next test location was a spoil dump where detectorists had been finding Roman artefacts over the last

few months. The technique here is to dig a large pit and then search with the detector on the excavated spoil and in the pit itself. In this ground I found a perfectly preserved Roman sandal nail. Even this small item gave a good signal.

Another test site was on an archaeological excavation in the centre of Delft. The mechanical diggers had dug out the ground and the pit was already over 5ft deep. At this level the Middle Ages trash pits and a trench could be seen, but it was far from ideal digging conditions. I had to work alongside the mechanical diggers and jump into the hole they had made before the next bucketful was removed.

During this time the Tejón proved its worth as there was no problem at all finding or pinpointing an item and digging it out. In a very short space of time I had found: a pilgrim's badge, four medieval coins, a strap end, a jetton, a few buckles, some knives, and many other objects.

One item in particular warrants a special mention. In a corner of the excavation site near to an old wall, the Tejón gave a very loud signal spread over a large area of approximately a foot. I centred the search head several times over the signal, but each time it gave the same response over a large





Down in the mud.



area. Digging down to around 12in I located a big round object. Careful removal revealed what turned out to be a late medieval kitchen spoon made from bronze. The reaction to this find is typical of those received from the Tejón: on nearly every large metal object the signal is loud and the detector picks it up some distance from the centre of the find.

Conclusion

In my opinion the Tejón is a superb detector. It can handle all types of ground without losing depth or experiencing "chatter". I found this to be the

deepest seeking of the Tesoro detectors I have used. Many of my finds were located at depths greater than would be expected from other detectors.

Very small objects are also no problem for the Tejón. The *Alternative Disc* is simple to use and effective. The *Mode Trigger* switch, being situated below the control box housing, is ideally placed when pinpointing or operating the *Alternative Disc* mode. There are a couple of points that I should make. Care should be taken when setting the *Ground Adjust*. Make sure that you have no large metal objects close by and recheck your settings frequently to get the best from this function.

You cannot use any of the normal Tesoro accessory coils with the Tejón other than those designed for the Lobo because of the wiring configuration, and I found the spider coil to be least effective on bad ground.

The battery housing is sited at low level under the arm rest so is prone to lying in the wet and mud when placed on the ground. It therefore needs protecting and - if you have large arms as I do - the space between the arm-rest and the grip is a bit short.

I believe the Tejón will become a firm favourite with all types of detectorists - it is consistent, flexible and effective. **TH**