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LED Lenser F1 Testfire



With a name like "F1" there is a high expectation of performance. LED Lenser's new fully waterproof super-torch pretty much delivers. LED Lenser has done a great job marketing its product into New Zealand. Many outdoor shops stock their stuff and its quality seems up there with the best that I've used in the past (such as Fenix, Surefire, Maglight and Zebra). This is worth noting because it's always comforting to know that sales support is locally available when, or if, you need it when spending reasonably large chunks of money on top end gear such as this.....sure beats burying your fancy gadget in a bowl of rice hoping it will miraculously attract smart Asians who will fix its electronics. The first surprise when opening the box is the diminutive size of the F1. To me, it looks more like a keyring accessory than a full blooded hunting torch. However, contrary to popular pornstar puffery, size isn't everything, and this little critter punches well above its weight.

KEY FEATURES:

- Tiny – about 90mm in length
- Lightweight – only 70g
- Grunty – full power from its Cree XP-G2 LED delivers a whopping 400 lumens of light (at this rate it is specified to run for two hours)
- IPX8 waterproof (continuously submersible to 2.5 metres)
- Runs on a single CR123X lithium battery
- Type III hard anodizing and internal gold plated electronics which automatically regulate power, and a temperature sensor to prevent overheating
- Rear on/off switch sits slightly inside the rear alloy cap meaning it is less likely to bump on in your pack and you can stand the torch up vertically on a bench and use it like a candle

Like a growing number of the latest range of LED super-power torches, this one runs on the 3V CR123A battery. This is good and bad news right now because many hunters (me included) standardise on the venerable AA which, in terms of torch power sources, seems to be following the footsteps of our once all-conquering .303 calibre. Great in its time but being superseded by higher performing units that deliver better outcomes.

For example, LED Lenser's single AA equivalent torch (P5) is 18% heavier, 20% longer and pokes out only 95 lumens compared to the F1's 400!

For the kind of hunting I prefer, where I carry in all my gear, pack size and weight mean a lot. Combined with its waterproofness, this tiny torch is a winner for those looking to trim down, but not compromise on performance. I took the torch on a recent Tahr trip and it performed well. The beam spills out quite wide and it does not have any focus adjustment which means its useful range is about 120 metres – still awesome for something so teeny weenie.

The F1 replaced my old 2 x AA LED torch, taking up less room and reducing my hunting bag weight at the same time.....it all adds up, and helps when you spot an animal several hundred metres above you that can only be nailed by hard uphill, thigh crunching yakka.

Unlike some other LED Lenser units, this one does not have any programmable functionality, first click switches the unit on to its full 400 Lumen output, next click reduces output to 60 Lumens, third successive click switches on a 12hz strobing effect. The rear cap of the torch has hexagonal faces which prevent the unit rolling on a table and helps your grip when unscrewing. It also comes with a replaceable "tactical" bezel ring (capable of breaking glass in an emergency....) and a clip that can be used to fit the torch to the brim of your cap.

SUMMARY

This revolutionary torch from LED Lenser is easy to like, and the fact that it switches immediately on full power is certainly handy if you are in any sudden spotlighting opportunity. It is a very small, well-built and tough LED torch that delivers a huge amount of light out of a single battery. The waterproof feature is excellent for our hunting conditions. The only negative would be that it's almost too small to adequately hold and locate in the jumble of junk

floating around in your hunting bag...hardly a problem really.

The F1's 400-lumen maximum output is very demanding for the single 123A battery, so LED Lenser uses an aggressive step-down to 10% after about 1½ minutes of continuous use on full power – therefore limiting this unit's use to bursts within this timeframe. With a partially depleted battery I found the F1 unable to fire up on full power.

A great option for a hunter, however given the huge demands of the single CR123A battery when on full power, be sure to carry spares!

RRP NZ\$150.00.

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