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Svea stove

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- Gear reviews and tests - Bivouac -



Publication: Saturday 7 September 2002

Description :

A test of the Svea stove.

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One of my friends gave me a cook set with a Svea 123 stove. It'd been in a box since he went bow hunting for sheep about 25 years ago. It still had gasoline in it and started and ran first try. Not bad for dependability!

That's the post I made about the stove, and while it's a bit of bragging - the stove has only gone up in my estimation since.

I guess that a little update is called for, even before we get started. I keep the stove in the back of my truck - inside the coffee can pot, and I found in the middle of last winter that the truck canopy had leaked, the can had filled with water and that the stove was frozen in a block of ice. I decided to leave it that way for a couple of months feeling sure that it would still work. The end result was that the stove was frozen for four months. Once I thawed it out, it started first time and has worked without a problem ever since. I just have to polish the brass again to make it look new. That must seem like a pretty stupid test - but the fact is that these stoves are touted as being the sturdiest and most dependable ever built. It appears that they deserve the reputation! The stove has also run flawlessly on 89 octane purple (boat) gas for a year now.

I've had a lot of email on this stove - lots to say how great the stove is, but others to ask if I'm really sure it's a dependable stove. I'm sure not going to drop it off cliffs or drive over it - but I'd say it's pretty well tested.



For some years I'd been meaning to get a single burner stove. There are times when a fire is not possible or convenient. I have had a two burner Coleman propane stove for decades, but that's not too convenient to pack around. Anyway while I was visiting a buddy, I mentioned that I was shopping for a small stove and he gave me his - and the cook set to go with it. Now that's pretty special! I was quick to polish up the stove and even had it sitting on my bookshelf for a while: it's one pretty piece of equipment being all brass. At first I was worried about getting any needed spare parts as the stove was 25 years old. I shouldn't have worried - the stove has been produced for well over a hundred years. These days everyone is concerned with the latest stuff, lightness, hi-tech: I'll stay with the stuff that really works: to me a brass stove looks better too.

And it sure does work! Naturally I had to take it out and try it with the fuel that was in it, and had been sitting in it for 25 years. That's some testimony to the fact that it doesn't leak! It fired up right away, and only slightly scared me with the distinctive sound that these stoves make - sounds like helicopters coming in. I was a little apprehensive about a stove using gasoline, but you soon get used to things. About the only fuel pressure stoves I ever used was as a kid camping in Europe and those were kerosene or "paraffin" as we used to call it there. The stove has been properly used and abused for the last few months running on regular unleaded gas, being left in a damp truck, and so forth. The stove has never hesitated. For sure you get to learn some tricks in getting it going, but it always goes. I could never bear to dent or scratch the stove, but my thought is that you would have to deliberately try to wreck it to stop it! The one real warning is to be careful to store the plate (part #2174) that fits over the burner carefully. Lose it and you are in trouble as the stove just won't work.

Some Specifications from the Optimus site:

No. 123R SVEA / CLIMBER Gasoline Stove

A beautiful ultra-classic light-weight white gasoline stove made of solid brass. The Svea has been manufactured since the late 1800's and still sets a standard for compact outdoor cooking equipment!

We doubt that any other outdoor stove has been field tested as much as the Svea to this date. Widely used by Climbers all over the world, the Svea is recognized for its performance at high altitudes.

The built-in cleaning needle of the Svea is a very important feature at high altitudes where air is thin. If a stove does not get enough oxygen to mix with the fuel, it may start to sputter, flare up and eventually the burner jet may clog due to incomplete combustion of the gasoline. Turning the burner control to a full left on an Optimus stove clears the jet, and shutdown is avoided.

The Svea is ideal for single ventures, high altitude cooking or whenever stuff volume and weight must be kept low. The lid of the stove also serves as a small cooking pot.

As on the 8R Hunter, the Svea is self-pressurized. Operating without a pump, the Svea produces well enough output for one person outdoor cooking. If desired, output can be increased by using the optional Midi Pump.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Fuels: White gasoline, Coleman fuel.

Weight: 550 grams/19 oz.

Measurements: 100x130 mm / 3.9"x5.1"

Rating: Appr. 1.400 watts/4.700 BTU. With optional midi pump appr. 1.600 watts/5.300 BTU.

Tips:

1. Test the stove away from flammables and with a hosepipe running at least three times before trusting a used or older stove. Leave it running 5 minutes each time.
2. Get yourself a good fuel bottle and always leave an air space.
3. I use a multi tool set of pliers to drop on the 2174 top plate after getting some tissue soaked in gas to heat the stove in the burner bowl. That saves burned fingers. I'll be fabricating a replacement plate or buying one to attach to the stove since the original could get lost.
4. Use Coleman fuel or purple gas. The latter works well in cold conditions because it's 89 octane. Regular gas has a lot of additives - but does work well in this stove. Eventually expect it to clog.
5. I haven't made a lot of the stability of the stove because you just have to be careful. Remember when you decide to make a nice rock wall around the stove to help support the pots that you are keeping the heat in. That's not too great.

Conclusions:

Pressure fuel stoves give a lot of heat. That's the advantage over alcohol stoves which you can make or buy cheaply. Gasoline stoves are the most fuel efficient. For all of the stoves out there, reviews show many people returning to the 100 year old design of the Svea. I think I can see why.

For classic stove stuff, start here and follow links.. [Stoves](#)

Post-scriptum :Original article at [OldJimbo's site](#).