The arrival of the Shadow 2 was much anticipated; my favorite daughter shoots the Accu-Shadow in Production, so hope was in the air that this gun would be familiar, easing the pains of getting to know it and discovering its quality. Indeed, when it arrived at Parabellum, the gun looked very familiar.

The Shadow 2 is a fine-looking pistol; it is a handful of steel that has noticeable heft to it. This is not your mother’s Tupperware; in fact, “beefy” was the first description that came to mind. The Shadow 2 is the bigger, more impressive cousin of the Accu-Shadow.

How much recoil would be felt shooting this gun in 9mm? The short answer is, “not much”. The sessions on the range proved this hefty pistol to be very soft-shooting, as any knowledgeable person would expect. Since this pistol is for competition, the weight is an advantage rather than a hindrance. If this gun is too heavy for getting through a match with it on your hip, step off to the left and we will print out your WIMP card.

The Shadow 2 has a larger frame than its predecessors; it manages to fit the hand very nicely, but not the same holsters. The grip is slim in the right places and the trigger guard is undercut, allowing for a very high and very comfortable firing grip. Reaching the trigger on this large-framed gun was not difficult at all. A well-designed grip increases the “shootability” of this pistol tremendously. Kudos to the designers for knowing what shooters need in a pistol. Many different brands of pistols do not seem to understand how important the grip and the feel of the grip are to quality shooting. Some are just way too thick and blocky; CZ gets the size and shape of the grip right.

The grip features texture that is fairly aggressive for a factory gun. All four sides of the grip feature some texturing that aids in maintaining a firing grip on the gun. Skateboard tape would not be a necessary addition for most shooters, but the texture is not as extreme as some stippling jobs on many custom pistols. The weight of the pistol literally soaks up recoil.

It is not surprising that CZ has carved out a place among the USPSA crowd; people spend money on quality products. Long-time friend and fellow philosopher Bill DeZarn has always said buy as many match points as possible. The Shadow 2 is money well spent as far as match point go. If you can shoot up to this pistol, championships are in your future. The Shadow 2 will not be the weak link in

**THE CZ SHADOW 2**

**FROM CZ-USA FOR PRODUCTION COMPETITION**

**REVIEW**

**BY ARON BRIGHT, A51967**

**NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2017**
your shooting.

This gun continues the tradition of the CZ family of pistols by providing a large frame that is easy to grip with the weak hand while using a two-handed grip. CZ pistols sit the slide down into the frame rather than fitting the slide over the top of the frame. This is a positive characteristic. There is plenty of room for the weak-hand thumb to ride on the frame and above the trigger guard, which aids greatly in obtaining a proper grip. Despite the pistol's girth, weight and overall impressive size, it remains very user-friendly for all shooters except for those with the tiniest of hands. (For the little-handed people, talk to your parents and place the blame accordingly.)

This pistol features a fiber optic front sight and an adjustable rear sight that every serious competitor will demand as standard equipment. The Shadow 2 is outfitted with both rear and front cocking serrations. As mentioned in other reviews, cool is not even possible without front cocking serrations. A rail for mounting lights, lasers and other gear is also present on this pistol, and the beavertail more than adequate to prevent hammer bite. The magazine release is large and easy to find with a thumb. It could be pressed without breaking the firing grip if you have either large or medium-sized hands (the little-handed people will have to break their firing grip).

The thumb safety is small and lies very flat to the frame of the gun. Using the gun from a cocked and locked position would require practice and skill development; in 9mm it is unlikely that a cocked and locked start position would be widely used, and is against the rules in many of the divisions that the designers had in mind for the Shadow 2. However, it would be possible for the outliers in the crowd to use this gun from a cocked and locked starting position or for carry purposes if they so desired. The slide release lever is large and easily activated when the slide is locked back. Some thumbs can also activate the slide release while the firing grip is maintained. Sometimes steel plates or small poppers disrupt the stage plan to the point that a slide lock reload is necessary, so the large slide release lever could be handy for this purpose.

The trigger of the Shadow 2 is probably the best thing about a great pistol. Nothing needs to be done to the trigger out of the box. If this trigger is not smooth and light enough for you as a shooter – well, to put it politely, you need some skill development. This trigger is light and sweet; the reset is almost non-existent. The double-action trigger pull has some distance involved but it is smooth and the release is awesome. In live fire, both Jake and I were able to get quality hits at speed from double action. If we can achieve good accuracy
on the double-action pull, then it can be achieved by most people. If you cannot get hits out to 15 yards double action with the Shadow 2, then I would recommend cowboy action shooting – and to be perfectly honest, I am not sure how successful you will be there.

Jake and I took the Shadow 2 out to the Riley Conservation Club and put it through some live-fire testing. The pistol came right out of the box and went directly into the holster with no lubing or special treatment. Jake had secured a holster and put that holster onto his Production belt and rig. We were shooting Federal's American Eagle ammunition. We shot full metal jacket ammo of the 147, 124, and 115-grain variety. We also shot some Federal Syntech ammunition in both 115 and 124 grains. The entire session was malfunction-free, and we fired nearly 500 rounds of ammo between us. This gun runs very well right out of the box without any special treatment.

The first live fire exercise was a medium course of fire that consisted of eight paper targets, some of which included hard cover. The course required three shooting positions, starting in a box and engaging four paper at distances from 10 to 35 yards. Shooting left to right required exiting the position on a hard cover target; shooting from right to left required leaving the position a very distant target. Moving to the left of the stage a single paper target had to be engaged, and then a door opened and the remaining paper targets were engaged at a distance of 10 to 15 yards. It was a pretty tough test; to do well required some good shooting, and there was no opportunity for hosing targets. Like a couple of idiots, we jumped right into this without any warm-up.

The gun was very much up to the task. We ran the stage three times apiece and did the runs in a back-to-back-to-back fashion. Jake's times were 12.36, 11.69 and 12.36 seconds respectively; my times were 13.99, 14.28, and 13.66 seconds. Overall, my points were a little better but Jake was obviously a little faster than me. This has been pretty much the norm between us for years. Even with

**EDITOR'S NOTE ON THE CZ SHADOW 2**

BY JAKE MARTENS, A52987

WHEN CZ-USA first introduced the SP01 version of the CZ 75 in 2005, I got the SP01 Tactical version which has the decock feature. I did this for two reasons; one, I knew that the decock feature would drop the hammer to a half-cock position for the first pull of the trigger in double action, and two, I did not trust myself to lower the hammer at the “make ready”. I feared that with sweaty hands, I would at some point let it slip and be headed to get a Blizzard while everyone else finished the match.

As soon as I got the gun, I sent it to Angus Hodbell at the CZ Custom shop (I am not even sure it was officially the CZ Custom shop yet). It was one of the first trigger jobs that he had performed on the Tactical model. This was way before short reset triggers and competition hammers and all the other magic that they now can do to a CZ handgun.

It was a good gun, and a decent option for Production at the time, but my focus shifted from thinking about shooting Production division to Single Stack in 2006. I have since gone back and forth and tried all of the favorite Production guns at one point or another. There are some local members who are running around with M&P Pro’s, Glock 34’s and the CZ Accu Shadow that Aron mentions were once mine.

As recent as 2016 I was running a CZ Custom Shop Accu Shadow and a CZ Dual Tone Shadow; both went to Automatic Accuracy for Matt Mink and crew to love on. They were both great guns for Production division, and I had a lot of my “gun money” tied up in them. As soon as I had a chance to check out the Shadow 2, I promptly sold both of the Shadows before the new model hit the shelves.

Right out of the box, the model that CZ-USA sent us needs nothing to go and run hard in a match. Yes, there are some things that many will want to do to get a perceived competitive advantage over the next person. If you are one of those gear aficionados, then there are a couple of things that I highly recommend. The Henning Wallgren grips are a must; I am limited in space so if you don’t know Henning’s background, look it up. The tall Norwegian was doing the splits on stages all over the world, racking up wins before Stoeger was out of high school. The Contour Checkered Grips available from the Henning Group’s website (www.henningshop.com) take a gun with a 10 on the grip scale to 11. Yes, 11. These are not just a pretty accessory; they’re remarkably functional in their grip texture, and the contours enhance the ability to hit the mag release. Everything feels right about the grips.

I also had the chance to try out two different trigger jobs that Henning had on display during Area 4. They smooth out the already great double action and shorten
The double-action trigger pull we both ran the course fairly well and were not uncomfortable with the Shadow 2 in our hands, even though it was new to us. We both drew into the nearest hard cover target that was 10 yards distant each time. We both managed to avoid any misses on that target on all runs. The double-action first shot was not a problem for either of us. I was afraid to do much prepping of the trigger while pushing the gun out into position fearing an AD, but I am a soul of caution. With some practice I feel that I could get a comfortable prep on the trigger; with a little practice, the draw times could be reduced by not starting the trigger press at full extension. The trigger reset is short and sweet. Someone who is fast on the trigger, like Jake, could get real cozy with this trigger, and perform some great feats of speed.

The next live fire drill that we performed was a “near to far” array of four targets. The near target that included hard cover was at 10 yards and the far target was a full 35 yards away. The remaining two targets were spaced evenly between the first and last target. Jake’s three runs were 5.15, 4.90 and 4.65 seconds respectively. My three runs were 5.40, 5.43 and 5.50 seconds. My best run was down only two points; Jake’s best run was down six points. The worst runs point-wise are not worth talking about, and nothing could possibly be learned from that score. Someone had a hole in the hardcover but I am not going to disclose who it was.

The next drill was El Prez; we did not measure the distances, but it was real close to the right distance. This drill put a reload into the test drive. Jake ran it in 6.00, 7.04, and 6.14 seconds respectively. No mikes were recorded. Jake was down eight or 10 points on each run. The second run had an abortion in the middle of it that was labelled a reload. It happens once in a while (ask me how I know). My three runs were 6.84, 6.94 and 5.76 seconds. I ranged from twelve points down in the worst run to four points down in the best run, so my shooting was nothing impressive but very repeatable, much like the rest of my life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>American Eagle 147gr FMJ</th>
<th>968</th>
<th>970</th>
<th>959</th>
<th>967</th>
<th>970</th>
<th>959</th>
<th>avg = 965.5</th>
<th>PF = 141.9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Eagle 124gr FMJ</td>
<td>1141</td>
<td>1149</td>
<td>1159</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>1164</td>
<td>avg = 1151</td>
<td>PF = 142.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Eagle Syn Tech 115 gr</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>1173</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>1175</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>avg = 1181</td>
<td>PF = 135.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Eagle Syn Tech 150 gr</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>913</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>avg = 904.8</td>
<td>PF = 135.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the reset for the single-action pull. The out-of-the-box trigger is ready to roll, but if you need a little extra rock to your roll, then they have the setup for this beast.

If you are going to go racing with this gun, you are going to need the right holster. I contacted Tim Meyers at the Ben Stoeger Pro Shop to see about getting a holster and hanger set up for the Shadow 2 since I knew he had them in stock. The holster is a Blade-Tech Kydex and provides a secure fit for the gun. Where the magic happens is the BOSS hanger.

I have a very crappy draw; this was pointed out to me in a class with Manny Bragg several years ago. I was running a race holster for Limited division and, after watching me during a drill, Manny first asked me, “seriously, that is your draw?” followed by “everything a race holster is supposed to do for someone doesn’t for you, get rid of it.” Since I have never beat Manny and I was paying him for this advice, I took it. I had a swoop draw and never got a good grip on the gun out of race holster. I went with Blade-Tech Kydex holsters for every division. My presentation of the weapon did get better, but I still had a tough time hitting that good grip you need. The hanger on the holsters was very flexible Kydex as well, and when I came down on the grip it would flex in, and I would screw up getting a good grip. The BOSS hanger sets the holster off the body and has a solid offset that rests against the hip. When your hand comes down on the grip, the holster stays in position and doesn’t flex in like with the Kydex hangers. After getting this setup my draw speed increased, and getting a consistent good grip became the norm. I am still not a sub-one-second draw person, but that is not because of the BOSS hanger, it’s more of a slow reaction to the timer.

During the CZ-USA Iron Sight Nationals, there was a side match set up for the competitors to run the Shadow 2 in a steel challenge type stage. Everyone I talked to loved the way the gun felt in hand and how it soaked up recoil. Many asked if anything had been done to the trigger and were surprised that this was an out-of-the-box gun that they were shooting.

Federal Premium sent 10k rounds of the soon-to-be-released 150gr 9mm Action Pistol ammunition for the side match. The ammo is designed specifically for meeting USPSA minor power factor; they have developed a round with a heavy bullet and elongated the felt recoil to make it a very flat shooting round. There were many competitors asking when they could get their hands on it. The official release will be Jan 2018.

Since 2005 with the introduction of the SP01, CZ has changed Production division. What was once dominated by striker-fired polymer guns is now the proving grounds for just how far you can take a double action/single action trigger and design a platform around it to meet the needs of competition. No, just because you stick a Shadow 2 in a BOSS holster doesn’t guarantee a Nationals title, but it sure isn’t going to hold you back.

Doing these reviews this past year has been very enjoyable. Jake and I have been blessed to shoot a ton of ammunition through some really great guns. They have all been very different from the Limited or Single Stack guns we typically shoot. All of these guns have performed admirably. There are things about each one that we really liked, and we have achieved good to great results on target with all of them. Each time out I have felt like we could have done a little better with a warm-up period, and the more I got to shoot each gun the better the results. The Shadow 2 is not like my Limited gun at all, but I feel like the Shadow 2 was the easiest gun to shoot well. I liked the weight and I loved the trigger.

If you are in the market for a new Production gun, the Shadow 2 is a great candidate to fill your holster. The Shadow 2 is a soft shooting, accurate pistol. This particular model is not available; Jake called dibs on it right away. The good news is that they are making more; call the good people at CZ and get one of your own. You will not be disappointed.