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REVIEW

BERETTA 92X PERFORMANCE

AN ITALIAN RACING MACHINE

BY ARON BRIGHT, A51967

Beretta has a new pistol that certainly will turn some heads. The 92X Performance is a nice-looking gun that will not go unnoticed by shooters who are blessed with vision. Helen Keller and Ray Charles may miss the beauty of this pistol, but it is obvious to everyone else. A handgun that has this kind of eye appeal demands that it be picked up and handled. The next thing that is noticed about this pistol when you lift it up out of the extremely nice case is the heft. This is no wonder nine polymer pistol; this is a steel-frame handgun with a little bit of heft, but it doesn't need to go on a diet like many of us after being stuck in the house for several months. The Beretta 92X Performance has a durable and rugged feel. This isn't your ordinary 92, but a race-ready-built model packed with features. Can this gun shoot as good as it looks?

I owned a Beretta 92 back in the mid

1990's, and I largely liked the pistol. It was reliable and it was accurate. During my days as a reserve officer, the Beretta 92 was my duty weapon, so I have a little experience with Beretta pistols, just not lately. The Beretta 92X Performance is a well-designed and engineered handgun, and it is a much-enhanced pistol from the one I previously owned. The features that come standard on this gun will make it ready to run right out the box. It comes with all the features that check the box for a competition pistol, but it also fits the bill for a carry gun or home defense pistol just as well.

This pistol comes in a very nice case that includes two 15-round magazines with a nice rubber basepad. You will find in the case the usual owner's manual, cable lock and sight adjustment tool. The gun comes equipped with a thin pair of grips, moderately tacky in feel, but if you need a thicker pair to fill your hands better, there is a pair supplied.

The 92X Performance blends parts of other 92 variants to build their ultimate race-ready firearm. The dual tone look of the gun is achieved, according to the Beretta website, by using a Nistan finish to treat the frame and slide surfaces, with the contrast provided by the black burnished barrel, black grips and small parts. It starts with the Vertec steel frame and the Brigadier slide, which take the weight of this hefty beast to 48.4 ounces including the supplied empty 15-round magazines with extended rubber basepad. The weight of the gun increases the pistol's stability and reduces muzzle flip. Also found on the frame are the oversized magazine release button as well as nicely machined checkered front and rear that grab the hand when firing. The trigger guard is relieved and the beavertail is extended, allowing for a very high grip. The fiber optic front sight is a proven performer in daylight conditions. The black rear sight is adjustable

for both windage and elevation. The sights on this handgun are fine right out of the box.

The slide has the traditional Beretta look of being very light and exposing most of the barrel of the gun. The Brigadier slide with barrel and the steel recoil rod system weighs 19.3 ounces. There are front and rear cocking serrations that Beretta refers to as a saw-tooth pattern on the slide, allowing for a good purchase by the hand on the slide for cocking the gun. The front end of the slide is beveled in front of the cocking serrations, as is standard with Beretta pistols, which also makes racking the slide easy. The 92X comes with an ambidextrous thumb safety, which allows the pistol to be carried cocked and locked. There is no decocker on this handgun. The supplied safeties on the gun out of the box are too wide for the gun to be able to fit the Production Division box, so you will need to replace at least one side or modify it. As of this writing, Beretta is aware of this and is working on offering a solution. The ability to have this pistol in a cocked and locked ready condition is a huge deal and a departure from the days of old. While not something that is legal in Production Division, you can do this safely without having to fire the first-round double action only in Limited or L10 Divisions. If this doubles as a carry or home defense gun, the ability to have the single action first shot



BERETTA 92X PERFORMANCE / CHRONO RESULTS

Sig Sauer 147 grain match elite

864	847	856	852	844	PF=125.3
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Blazer 124 grain FMJ

1071	1081	1094	1088	1094	PF=134.6
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Precision Delta 147 grain

878	890	875	874	884	PF=129.3
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is a welcomed improvement.

The frame of the gun is another place where vast improvement can be observed. The grips of Beretta pistols were great if you had large hands. Beretta pistols tend to have a grip with plenty of girth and that can be problematic. The 92X has the slim Vertec grips that allow for any size hand to use this pistol and use it well. The slim grips also allow for the pistol to point very naturally. There is a thicker set of grips supplied if needed. The frame features a rail for accessories, which is nice for any handgun that is going to serve in the self-defense role. The magazine release is oversized, which allows for the thumb to cleanly hit the release. It is also reversible, and there is an adjustable version available from the aftermarket. I was able to hit the magazine release without breaking my firing grip on the gun. During live fire testing,



there was not a single inadvertent release of the magazine, so the size seems to be just right. (Jake has the ability to hit magazine releases when he does not mean to do so.) So I can say without fear of being wrong this magazine release is the proper size. However, the 92X will fire the round in the chamber without having a magazine in the gun, so do not be complacent and rely on a magazine safety to keep you safe.

The trigger on the Performance is wide compared to most pistols; it is metal and has grooves placed vertically along the trigger surface, allowing for the trigger finger to stay in place without any slippage. It is easy to reach, and I believe sits at rest closer to the grip than the old 92 pistols; the thinner Vertec grip makes reaching the trigger easy and comfortable. The trigger is smooth as butter on this model and breaks crisply; the reset is short and sweet. The pistol is accurate, and a great trigger is a big reason why. Ten pulls on the Wheeler Engineering trigger pull gauge in double action average four pounds, 15.4 ounces, and three pounds 13.6 ounces in single action.

Part of this trigger comes from the skeletonized hammer with a competition standard hammer spring. According to Beretta, the faster cycle time of the gun is a result of the new hammer and the new

Extreme-S trigger mechanism that keeps the striker automatic latch active, ensuring the safety of the pistol in case of a drop, but decreases trigger rest up to 40 percent. You can see from the pictures that this pistol will fire great groups in both single- and double-action mode. There is no cause for concern about accuracy with this gun either on the first shot or on follow-up shots.

In summation of the features, the 92X Performance has everything the competitive shooter and the defensive shooter needs right out of the box. It is a fine-looking pistol and it has great ergonomics. The trigger is good to go as well. This is not just a new model of Beretta, it is a much enhanced and

improved Beretta pistol, designed to take the podium in competition matches.

The range session with the 92X was a hybrid session, hybrid meaning that Jake completed the drills from the holster and I completed the drills from a loaded table start. The ready condition of the gun was hammer down with the first shot being double action. The first drill was a 1x6 drill. The targets were a mixture of 10- and 12-inch plates at 14 yards spread out across a large bay roughly 20 yards wide. We were standing in the middle of the array. Jake's times on this drill were 4.16, 3.94 and 3.61 seconds total time; he achieved all of his hits on the middle run but not so much on the first and last attempt. The draw times on these runs were 1.72, 1.76 and 1.59 seconds with a double action first shot. My times with the tabletop start were 4.79, 4.26 and 3.99 seconds with no recorded misses. My times for the first shot were 1.43, 1.52 and 1.39 seconds. The trigger pull on the first shot even in double action mode was smooth and broke nicely. Accuracy was not a problem on the first shot for either of us.

The second drill was a front sight forward drill with four steel USPSA targets with the delta zone removed. The targets were also 14 yards distant, with one yard between each target. We shot each target with two rounds each for a total of eight rounds. Jake's times were 3.72, 3.55 and 3.43 seconds coming from the holster. Jake's best draw among these three runs was 1.59 seconds, with no misses. My times were 4.35, 3.90 and 3.95 seconds on the drill. My best draw time was 1.40 seconds coming off the table, securing all the hits.



The third drill was a 6x2 array; the first target at 10 yards was shot six times and the second target at 14 yards was shot twice. We used the no-delta-zone targets for this drill as well. Jake went first with times of 3.35, 3.15 and 3.10 seconds without a miss. His draw times were 1.58, 1.51 and 1.48 seconds respectively. My times on the drill were 3.43, 3.14 and 3.19 seconds from the table; my draw times were 1.32, 1.24 and 1.24 seconds. We were impressed with the gun's performance.

The fourth drill was a Near to Far array. The target distances used were nine, 10, 14 and 20 yards. Jake's times were 3.93, 3.85 and 3.60 seconds; the draw times were 1.71, 1.70 and 1.71 seconds. My times were 4.21, 3.98 and 3.74 seconds, and my draw times were 1.50, 1.45 and 1.40 seconds. Both Jake and I had all of the hits on this drill. The Beretta 92X seems to be more than accurate enough for the distances frequently encountered in USPSA shooting.

The range session proved that the 92X is a very nice-shooting pistol that is capable of competing with any pistol out there on the USPSA circuit. We shot a couple of other pistols on this particular day and were pleased to find the Beretta was their equal. Being a heavy gun made it very soft-shooting and allowed for really rapid splits, and the weight of the gun did not seem to detract in any way on transitions.

It has come to my attention that using words like "surprisingly" when describing the gun or the trigger or the ergonomics, ruffles the feathers of the manufacturer. I understand that to a certain degree, and no disrespect is meant. However, this double action trigger pull on the 92X is really nice and a vast improvement over the older Beretta models that I have shot. When discussing the older models of Beretta with shooters, the double-action trigger pull was the largest complaint in my experience. The 92X has a great trigger, and perhaps that is surprising. So do not let what you think you know about the Beretta trigger scare you away from this gun. It is a quality pistol designed to meet the demands of competition shooters. ■



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