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REVIEW

CZ SHADOW 2

NOW IT IS ABOUT **THE OPTICS!**

BY ARON BRIGHT, A51967

The high quality of CZ pistols is widely known and acknowledged among USPSA shooters; evidence of this knowledge is the large number of CZ pistols in the hands of serious competitors around the nation. The Shadow 2 has been reviewed in the pages of *USPSA Magazine* previously. (*That review can be found in the 2017 November/December issue, and it is available online in case you missed it.*) The Shadow 2 is an excellent pistol with a fine track record. What has changed since 2017 is that the Shadow 2 has been approved for Carry Optics, and CZ has started producing guns for that division – which is exciting news for the competitors in the Carry

Optics division, but perhaps not so exciting for CZ's competition.

The model that we received was fitted with a Trijicon SRO sight. The short version is that the gun and the optic both performed without a flaw. We had no malfunctions of any type. The Shadow 2 was hauled to the range by Jake Martens and myself for a workout on two different occasions, and each of us also shot the gun separately. Several thousand rounds were fired through the Shadow 2 during these sessions. Obviously this is not a durability test by any measure, but the Shadow 2 has a track record of durability and is a known quantity.

The first range session was in early

summer, but my notes do not include the date. At this first session, all the shooting was done from a table-top start. We did not have a holster ready for this session but were anxious to shoot this Shadow 2 and see how it performed. We were shooting on full-size USPSA steel targets, using both Federal 130 grain syntech ammo and SIG Sauer 147 grain Match Elite ammo for this session. Both varieties fed through the gun well and were very accurate.

The first drill was a front sight forward configuration at 10 yards' distance with one yard between the targets. Both Jake and I started with hands on marks on the tabletop in order to have a consistent start position. Jake's four runs on this

drill had times of 3.69, 3.10, 2.96 and 2.73 seconds while my times were 3.02, 2.83, 2.91 and 2.68 seconds respectively. Neither Jake nor I recorded a miss on this drill. Jake shoots quite a bit in the Carry Optics division and is very familiar with using a dot; I pretty much shoot iron sights exclusively. However, neither of us had trouble finding the dot with this gun and optic configuration.

The second drill was a modified El Prez. It was an uprange start, but the gun was still on the table. With the turn and the picking up of the gun, there was a lot more going on than the typical El Prez. The reload was done from the table top instead of from the belt. Jake had times of 7.08, 6.26, 7.22 and 5.76 seconds. His first three runs had all of the hits, but the final run had a single miss. My times were 7.00, 6.44, 6.65 and 6.29 seconds; my fastest run and two others were clean, but I also endured one miss on this drill.

We next did a set of empty draws from the table, with the target at 10 yards. The goal was a fast load and enough sight picture to get that good hit. Jake's times were 2.73, 2.68, 2.48, 2.43 and 2.61 seconds, and my times were 3.44, 2.38, 2.57, 2.56, and 2.03 seconds. After badly fumbling the first attempt, I got a little better and smoother. On my first attempt I tried to use the front cocking serrations, and on the others I just used the optic, so the results seem to speak for themselves. Use the large bump to rack the slide.

The next drill was a near to far array of four targets set at 10, 13, 20 and 26 yards. The width of the array was about 12 yards from left to right. Jake had four runs on the drill with times of 3.93, 3.16, 3.38 and 3.25 seconds; my times were 3.47, 3.41, 3.16 and 3.31 seconds. Starting from the table loaded, these were respectable times. The gun came into the hand easily, and the dot was easy to track from shot to shot and target to target. This hefty CZ was soft-shooting and the gun stayed flat so that it was easy to get onto the next target. This drill incorporated target distances that can be widely found in many USPSA stages at all levels of matches, and the CZ chewed them up and spit them out.

This concluded the first range session with the CZ. We were both pretty happy with the gun and the dot. This is not surprising, as we have tested this gun before and knew what to expect. We wanted to do some work out of the holster in addition to this set of drills, so a second session was planned. There was some time that elapsed between the first and second range session, and several things happened in between. One of those things was that I started



CZ-USA CZ SHADOW 2 / CHRONO RESULTS

SIG Sauer 147 grain Match Elite

913 | 908 | 901 | 906 | 908 | PF=133.3

Blazer 124 grain Full Metal Jacket

1089 | 1124 | 1120 | 1119 | 1127 | PF=138.3

Precision Delta 147 grain

905 | 913 | 910 | 908 | 915 | PF=133.7

Federal Syntech 150 grain

911 | 920 | 907 | 911 | 919 | PF=137.0

Federal Syntech 130 grain

1051 | 1061 | 1065 | 1054 | 1035 | PF=136.9





radiation and chemotherapy treatments for cancer, so I was not my normal self for the second session and that limited what I could or should do for safety's sake. During the second range session Jake worked out of the holster with the CZ, and I worked off the table for the same drills.

Between range sessions I received some advice on the reviews that we had been doing. A veteran shooter from the state of Illinois requested that we talk a little more about the accuracy of the guns that we review – so in an effort to oblige him and other like-minded shooters, we decided to give it a try. Many gun rags put guns in rests and spend a lot of time talking about the group size that they can produce. That type of measurement does not really fit with USPSA and Steel Challenge shooting, which is our point of focus. However, accuracy is important – it is not possible to miss fast enough to win. Jake did a couple of five-shot groups with the CZ at a distance of 14 yards, shooting the group offhand without any support, bags or rests. We painted up the targets and placed a paster on the target to give him an aiming point; one group of five rounds was shot double action only, and the other group of five rounds was shot single action. The pictures show that the CZ Shadow 2 is more than accurate enough for any practical purpose. If the shooter does their part, the gun will not

be the weak link.

The first drill that we shot in the second range session was a front sight forward array that included four steel USPSA targets that did not have the delta zone on the target. These reduced-size USPSA targets added an element of accuracy to the drills. The distance of the targets was 14 yards, with two or three yards between the targets. Nothing about this eight-shot drill said “hoser”. Jake’s times on the drill from the holster were 3.74, 3.58 and 3.53 seconds; his fastest draw was 1.62 seconds. My times from the table were 4.26, 3.92 and 3.52 seconds, and my fastest first was 1.42 seconds on the third run. The gun is performing as expected at this point, and shootings a little better than I expected as neither

of us missed. We have both proven our ability to shoot deltas, and they would be a miss on these targets.

The second drill used the same steel targets from the first drill but added two 10-inch steel plates on the left and right side of the array. All of the targets remained at 14 yards. We shot from left to right on the array with one hit per target. Jake’s times were 3.71, 3.87 and 3.68 seconds; his fastest draw to a 10-inch plate was 1.67 seconds. My times were 4.61, 4.66 and 3.99 seconds, and my fastest first shot was 1.51 seconds. Once again, neither shooter missed a target, and the gun and dot were working very well.

The third drill utilized two of the reduced-size targets; the first target was at 10 yards and the second at 15 yards. There was about four yards between the targets. We drew into the close target for six shots, then transitioned to the second target for two shots. Jake’s times were 3.05, 2.98 and 2.96 seconds, and his fastest draw was 1.49 seconds. My times were 3.59, 3.48 and 3.21 seconds, while the fastest first shot for me was 1.30 seconds. (I just need to pull the trigger faster.) The gun was flat-shooting, and this drill made that obvious. Watching as Jake shot this drill, you could see the gun was perfectly flat for the six shots on the first target, and that allowed for shooting at warp speed. While I was shooting the first target I could see the



dot throughout the whole process, and I do not have a lot of experience with red dot optics – so if I can do well with this equipment, most shooters have a chance to do well with it. This gun and optic combination performs really well.

The last drill that we shot during this session was a near to far array. We used the reduced USPSA targets at nine, 10, 14 and 20 yards with a width from left to right of 12 yards. Jake's times were 3.45, 3.95 and 3.49 seconds, and his fastest draw was 1.55 seconds. My times were 4.93, 4.85 and 3.99 seconds, and the fastest first shot was 1.59 seconds.

This review is mainly about the gun and optic performance. However, an important piece of performance is the ammo. We have included five different types of ammunition here with chrono data, and all of these loads feel pretty good going down the tube of the CZ. We shot a variety of ammo in the drills, and they all functioned at 100 percent. In my mind, the best load was the Federal Syntech 130 grain ammo. It is the softest shooting of the bunch in terms of felt recoil. Switching back and forth between the different brands of ammo, the Federal 130 grain stood out for me. Many competition shooters load their own ammo for a variety of reasons, but the 130 grain Federal is my first choice of factory ammo for 9mm.

The CZ Shadow 2 is a great gun for Production division; with a Trijicon SRO sight riding on the slide, it is a great gun for Carry Optics. If you have not given these products a serious look, you are missing the boat. It's hard to imagine that there is a better combination out there for the competition world where fast and accurate hits are necessary. If a person was to find themselves in a situation of revolution, civil unrest or a zombie apocalypse where fast and accurate hits would be required, this gun and sight combination would be more than up to that task as well. This gear is rugged and dependable. Jake and I can recommend both without reservation. ■

Trijicon SRO

By Jake Martens, DME A52987



A red dot sight on a pistol isn't anything new. I wrote a little bit about the history of them in the 2018 November/December issue of the magazine; that issue also had a review of the current popular reflex sights that were being used in Carry Optics at the time. These were the C-More RTS2, Vortex Viper, Leupold Delta Point Pro, SIG Romeo1 and the Trijicon RMR. Since then, most of these have seen updates as well as new models that have been released.

Trijicon was founded in 1981 but would not get the name we are familiar with until 1985. Trijicon stems from two words, "Tritium", the key element in the company's innovation illumination technology, and "icon", meaning a picture or image. The "j" was added to combine both words to form Trijicon. I learned something new looking this up – also, the "iji" in the name mimics the "three dot" design of their Bright and Tough Night Sights that were introduced that same year. By 1987, Trijicon had introduced the ACOG (Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight), which was included in the US Army Advanced Combat Rifle program almost immediately. Then in 1988, the

Bright and Tough Night Sights were adopted by the FBI. Over the next several years, Trijicon's partnership with the military and law enforcement agency ramped up. 1995 had the US Special Operations Command purchase 12,000 units and word was getting out as other units and foreign Special Forces like Israeli were purchasing the ACOG.

With a strong footprint in the military market, Trijicon now set its sights on the hunting market and introduced the AccuPoint 3x9x40 dual illuminated rifle scope in 1998. They continued to introduce new products for both the civilian and military market with great success; 2007 saw the release of the Trijicon Red Dot Sight, their first miniature reflex-style red dot sight, in direct response to US Special Forces modifying their ACOGs by mounting a small red dot on top. In 2009 the Trijicon RMR (Ruggedized Miniature Reflex) sights were released and named the "Optic of the Year" by FMG. There were two versions, LED-illuminated and Tritium/Fiber Optic illuminated reticle, and featured a uniquely-shaped housing for strength. The RMR was updated with an adjustable LED in 2012, and there is



the Type 2 LED with upgraded electronics that are proven to perform when mounted on the slide of a pistol.

The RMR was a hit. It is the Official USSOCOM handgun Reflex Sight and can be found in use on self-defense, law enforcement, military, target and competition firearms. What makes it great for the self-defense, LEO/MIL market is its size and ability to be co-witnessed with iron sights. It is also one of its drawbacks for competition use, as it has a small window compared to other red dots mounted on Carry Optics and Open Division guns. Trijicon got to work and in 2019 the SRO (Specialized Reflex Optic) was released.

If you take all the engineering of their legendary durability and maximize the field of view with a clean, crisp red dot that mounts to the already popular RMR footprint, what's not to like? Additionally, they added a top-loading battery and both manual and automatic LED brightness modes to the new SRO. There is a reason why these are hard to find in stock, they are very popular in the fastest-growing USPSA division of Carry Optics. The SRO features a large, unobstructed field

of view that is parallax free. It features a tool-less design for windage and elevation adjustments, making zeroing hassle-free. It is available in 1moa, 2.5moa and 5moa reticles with eight brightness settings that include one super bright mode and two night vision modes. The SRO features button "lock out" and "lock in" modes. The "lock out" secures the auto brightness setting feature that is ideal for everyday carry firearms. The "lock in" mode secures the user-chosen brightness setting indefinitely geared to competition use. The housing is made from 7075-aluminum and is waterproof up to 10 feet.

The SRO 2.5moa was mounted to the Walther Q5 Steel Frame firearm and used in several club matches, on the range testing as well as the Stoeger training class. It mounted easily to the Walther, and was quick to sight in on the first range trip. The window is similar in size to the C-More RTS2 that it replaced on the Walther and was very easy to find. The dot movement was very easy to track and never left the window. Between the matches, range trips and the training class, I burned through 2500 rounds with zero issues. I swapped

the SRO on to the CZ Shadow 2 Optics Ready model for its review.

The SRO again mounted easily to the CZ and actually was good to go on being sighted in. We ran the CZ/SRO combo through several drills in two different range trips shooting a variety of ammo. again with zero issues. The round count between both guns using the Trijicon SRO is just shy of 5k. I had no issue with the 2.5moa size dot during any of the shooting. I have been running 6moa with the C-Mores and SIG Romeos; I would like to compare the 5moa, but that is very hard to find right now.

Slide mounted optics on handguns are becoming the norm, but they do have their drawbacks. They take a beating on the slide, but Trijicon is known for having one of the toughest ones out there. I am happy to report that after mounting the SRO to two different firearms and shooting a little less than 5,000, rounds we experienced no issues. If you are thinking about Carry Optics, or replacing your current red dot, keep an eye out on the Ben Stoeger Pro Shop and Shooters Connection websites for the Trijicon SRO. You will not be disappointed. ■