



The **P226 Legion** is well built and more than suitable for shooting, and it will perform very well. Get your hands on one and put it through its paces.

REVIEW

SIG SAUER P226 LEGION

UNEXPECTED PERFORMANCE

BY ARON BRIGHT, A51967

My experience with SIG Sauer for much of my shooting career has been very limited; the early exposure to the brand was uninspiring, and the price tag in those days was hard to understand. When first assigned this review, my thoughts were “this is going to be a disappointing and difficult task.” Being wrong just generally sucks, and having to admit it seldom makes the situation more palatable; however, completing the shooting experience for this review has completely changed my mind about this pistol. I had little respect for it going into this project, but the P226 Legion has earned my respect.

My first exposure to the P226 was

fifteen years or more ago, when I was invited to participate in a private little pistol match by some friends living in Gosport, Indiana. The match’s host had invited his brother, who was a police officer, and a few of the brother’s fellow officers to shoot with us. The match was fun, but the civilian crowd found themselves at the top of the score sheet and the boys in blue at the bottom. Following the match the discussion turned to gear, and the civilians reached a consensus that the P226 pistols being used by this squad were less than impressive; the fat grip and nasty trigger were not stellar, and these features stuck in my mind for years. At the time, I was in the process of looking for a new pistol for carry and

competition, but needless to say, I was not impressed by the SIG.

All these years later I have gone in a different direction for carry and competition, but my attitude regarding the P226 had not changed and my experience with the pistol had not grown. Why bother with a second look?

My advice to anyone reading this review with an attitude similar to my own is to simply give this P226 Legion a chance to change your mind; an objective study will yield a new opinion. The P226 Legion is well built and more than suitable for shooting, and it will perform very well. Get your hands on one and put it through its paces.

What is the recipe for a good carry



gun? Sights that you can see and a trigger that you can reach and use well are the things that are essential, and the P226 Legion delivers in these areas. The front and rear sights are fixed, and the front sight is very visible with a bright green inner circle. The top edge of the front sight stands out above the circle of green and is easy to find at speed. The rear sight is black with two very small dots of white that do not rob the shooter of misplaced attention on the rear sight, but they allow for a quick alignment of front and rear sight. This combination of front and rear sight made sight alignment natural and fast. The rear sight is also square on the front surface so that the slide could be racked on a belt, holster, or the eye socket of an adversary should this gun be needed in a tangle. The P226 has rugged sights that can be seen.

How is the trigger? Well, Goldilocks would agree that this trigger is “just right”. In the double-action mode accurate first shots can be achieved, and the single-action follow up shots are easy to make. The trigger is smooth and breaks crisply; the reset is sharp, clear and very tactile. There is no guessing about the point in which the trigger is reset. It is as good as any trigger on a carry gun anywhere, and is superior to

SIG SAUER P226 LEGION / CHRONO RESULTS

Sig Sauer 115 grain

1216 | 1178 | 1231 | 1180 | 1178 | **FPS=137.6**

Sig Sauer 147 grain round nose

954 | 983 | 982 | 980 | 1013 | **FPS=144.3**

SIG Sauer V Crown Match Elite 147 grain

901 | 889 | 892 | 901 | 879 | **FPS=144.3**

Federal Syntech 150 grain

901 | 898 | 892 | 893 | 890 | **FPS=134.2**

most. No work needs to be done to the trigger for everyday carry. The trigger is metal and does not feel cheap, as many EDC triggers do. The trigger pull is heavy enough to prevent accidental or negligent discharges in tense settings, but is smooth and crisp enough for excellent shots.

The things that are essential for a carry gun have been provided in the most excellent fashion. In addition, the slide has front and rear cocking serrations, as it should. The metal frame gives the gun rugged strength and recoil-absorbing heft, and it has a rail for mounting accessories such as lights and lasers. The trigger guard has some texture on the bottom and front, and is undercut slightly to allow for a good high grip. The magazine release is oval in shape, textured, and is fit close to the grip. This feature is well-designed and engineered; there was no problem hitting the magazine

release in live fire and absolutely no issues hitting it at the wrong time. This is a small feature that makes a huge difference on the line in competition or in the real world. Well done!

The slide release is small and fit snugly into the top of the grip panel. It is easy to depress in a hurry if that is your preferred method of dropping the slide. The snug fit, however, makes it impossible to inadvertently lock the slide open while firing the gun, another sign of a well-designed gun. The P226 Legion has the signature SIG decocking lever, which allows the safe dropping of the hammer on a live round without the decocking gymnastics of some brands. The grip panels are textured on the back and front straps of the grip. Looking at the grip, it gives the appearance of being pretty slick; however, the grip texture seems to hold onto your hand almost as much

as the shooter holds onto the gun. This gun did not slip or slide around at all on the range. The grip texture is more than adequate without being overly aggressive.

At this point, my biggest concern regarding the trigger had been relieved, but a second concern was the grip. This gun appears to have some serious girth to it, and the grip of any gun is important because a good trigger is of little value if the shooter cannot reach it. The SIG Sauer P226 Legion fit into my hand surprisingly well and was very comfortable to shoot. There is small textured square on the left side of the pistol above the top grip screw, and a much larger textured area above the top grip screw on the right side of the gun. These two areas were smooth on the older P226; now they have the feel of very fine-grained sandpaper but are a part of the grip, nice additions to a carry gun.

While checking out the SIG Sauer

website on this pistol I came across the following statement: "This masterful pistol has received a series of enhancements based on the needs and the wants of professionals." One may easily dismiss that statement as a partisan attitude with the goal of selling pistols, but after a close examination of the pistol and its features, and some good quality range time, I found that statement to be an honest assessment. This pistol will meet the needs for civilian carry or duty carry.

We did live fire testing of this pistol in two separate sessions. Using a simple OWB holster made for the pistol, I put on a small Carry Gun match at Parabellum Firearms and Range in September. This match tests the shooter on a series of skills that resemble challenges that are often found in EDC situations; SHO and WHO shooting, use of cover/concealment, moving targets and small



and partial targets are key components of this match. Typically, the stages are a stipulated number of shots only so as to remove accuracy by volume, and all scoring is minor regardless of caliber in order to stress accuracy. Stages typically require a mandatory reload after six rounds are fired. I shot through the stages at the beginning of the day for score with my carry gun, then after running the rest of the shooters I changed to the SIG P226 Legion and reshot the match, the very first shooting that I did with the Legion other than a few dry practice draws in the basement. While shooting the stages, I was surprised and impressed with the gun. In fact, when looking at the overall results I was stunned to see that my runs with the Legion outscored the runs with my own gun. For the whole eleven-stage match, my time with the Legion was 4.5 seconds slower, but the accuracy was better to the tune of eight more Alpha, three less Charlie and five less Delta, which added up to a match victory by 1.8 percent with a gun I had never fired! My wonder and amazement at this development was similar to when a tree-hugging, save the whales, vegetarian teaching colleague of mine makes a logical and reasonable statement in conversation. It is a possibility but does not normally happen. This is weird stuff, indeed. Is this a trend or simply a fluke?

Later, Jake and I got the Legion out to the range and did some shooting. I do not typically get the best of Jake during the review sessions, so this session went better for me than most. Are you starting to see why I am so positive about this gun? We did some shooting on various steel plates and poppers to get warmed up and get a feel for the gun and the trigger. We also did some 25-yard group shooting on paper. Notes taken on the range do not include how many rounds were fired, and at this point I do not remember, but there was not a single malfunction on several different varieties of ammo.

Our first drill was the standard El Prez. Jake pulled off runs of 7.36 seconds and 6.69 seconds with 56 points on the first and 34 points on the second run. My

MORE ABOUT THE P226 LEGION

BY JAKE MARTENS DME A52987

I HAVE OWNED a few SIG handguns over the years, but never a P226. My first SIG was a P220 in 45 acp and I never really warmed up to that gun. I understand why there are 'fan boys' of certain firearms, and SIG certainly has them, especially when it comes to the 226. The P226 was originally developed for entry into the XM9 Service Pistol Trials that were held by the US Army in 1984. The 226 is essentially the same basic design as the P220 that was developed in 1975 and was the first SIG handgun to be sold in the U.S. market, initially by Browning as the BDA. The 226 was developed to use higher capacity double stack magazines compared to the 220. It has been offered in all of the popular calibers and has several sub-variants like the P228 and P229.

The Army ultimately adopted the Beretta 92; however, the SIG 226 was the only other gun to satisfactorily complete the trials with the Beretta. There has been much debate over the years as to why the Beretta was chosen, but the military said it was because the overall package price of the 92 was less than the 226. The Navy SEALs later chose the 266 as the MK25 variant, which I suspect is one of the biggest reasons for the fan club. It is a lot like when your grandpa clears a malfunction from his 1911 and hands it to you, saying "this thing won two world wars", the SIG fan club touts the use of the 226 by the SEALs as a personal endorsement and justification of their extravagant spending on a handgun.

Out of the box I was impressed with the Legion version of the 226, the grips were very nice and felt good in the hand. The grips are G-10 with the Legion medallion and look great against the Cerakote Elite gray coating that is standard on the Legion. Other features that make this model feel more natural when gripping are a reduced and contoured beavertail and more aggressive front strap checkering as well as the addition of checkering under the trigger guard. There is also an X-five undercut on the trigger guard that with the Elite beavertail allow for a higher grip and better control of the gun. The Legion features low profile decocking and slide catch levers, which I liked, that stayed out of the way of my support hand. The pull of the double action/single action was impressive for a "stock trigger". This is not the stock trigger that I was familiar with on the previous SIGs that I have shot. The Legion comes with the SRT (Short-Reset-Trigger) and included the Grayguns, Inc.-designed P-SAIT trigger. If Bruce Gray is behind the design then you know it is going to be better when it comes to triggers. The 226 also comes with a solid steel guide rod to help balance out the gun.

The gun shot great, I was able to run it from the box pretty fast and had no issue with the trigger on this gun. I have paid several hundred dollars for trigger jobs on other da/sa guns that were not as nice as this trigger setup. The SIG Electro-Optics X-RAY high visibility sights that come on the gun are great for a carry gun. The front sight's large green insert was very easy to find and line up with the rear sight. For a competition gun, I would prefer a smaller all black post or red-fiber optic front sight. The gun weighs in at 34 ounces, a nice weight with good balance. Also available for the 226 is an RX slide that comes with a slide-mounted Romero 1 optic and iron sights. A quick swap, and you are running a Carry Optics gun without having to break the bank on milling a slide to make weight.

The SIG P226 has been around for 35 years now and has an impressive reputation as a very reliable sidearm. The Legion version of this gun comes ready from the box to carry everyday or to hit the range for a match. The MSRP is \$1413, but can be found at most places for \$1199. The additional slide and optic from SIG are \$399. If you are looking for something that you can shoot all day from your competition holster and then stick in your carry holster after the match has been torn down, check out the SIG P226 Legion. ■



runs both scored 54 points on the target and had times of 9.06 seconds and 8.66 seconds. My hit factors were 5.9602 and 6.2355, which fell between Jake's best of 7.6086 and his stage worst of 5.0822, nothing too impressive or surprising here on this drill. The first double-action trigger pull had both of us being more cautious than normal on the first shot.

The second drill was a Front Sight forward drill. The targets were at El Prez distance and spread but facing them on the draw. Jake's first run was 4.10 seconds with 27 points for a hit factor of 6.5853; his second attempt was 3.35 seconds with 24 points on target for a hit factor of 7.1641. My first run was 3.87 seconds with 27 points on target for a hit factor of 6.9767, and the second run was 4.12 seconds but with all 30 points available for a hit factor of 7.2815 for the best on the stage. I'm liking this gun more and more all the time.

The third array was Near to Far in nature, with targets at 10, 15 and 25 yards. Jake stepped up and gripped and ripped it. The first run was 4.49 seconds

but with a paltry 3 points on target; Captain Obvious commented that the hit factor was going to be small. (It was 0.6681.) The second attempt was 4.37 seconds with 22 points on target for a hit factor of 5.0880 – not exactly something to write home about but much better than the initial run. My first run was pretty bad but was at least on the lead lap at 4.52 seconds with 13 points on target for a 2.8761 hit factor. The second run was 4.99 seconds with 27 points on target for a hit factor of 5.4108, and the win on the drill.

The last recorded drill was an unloaded start on a table and a three-target array spread across the width of a larger shooting bay. The targets were eight, 15 and 10 yards from the table from left to right, with 15 yards between the targets. Jake's first attempt was 4.95 seconds with 22 target points for a hit factor of 4.4444; the second run was 5.11 seconds with 26 points and a hit factor of 5.08880. My runs began with 5.46 seconds and 26 points on target for a 4.6099 hit factor; the second was similar, with 28 points in

6.07 seconds for a 4.6128 hit factor.

We ended the day with some extra rounds being run through the gun in an unorganized fashion, without a single malfunction or hiccup of any type. Other than good sights and trigger, a carry gun must have reliability. This Legion was completely reliable during the first two outings.

The final part of the live fire test was an indoor club match at Parabellum Firearms and Range on December 4th. The gun ran flawlessly for both Jake and myself. The shooting was less than impressive, but the gun was not the reason. It was completely reliable, and it was fun to shoot. For a gun that I was not looking forward to shooting and writing about, it was a very nice surprise. I would recommend it for a carry gun without hesitation. I also think the gun could be just fine in Production division in the hands of a good Production shooter. So if you are looking for a serious carry gun, give the P226 Legion a hard look. If you are looking to carry the same gun you shoot in competition, this gun may be exactly the answer. ■