

SIG SAUER E-SQUARED PISTOL

By Bob Parker



SIG SAUER P229 E2

Back in the day, mass production handguns came from the factory as one-size-fits-all. Shooters with larger hands could modify their revolvers with oversized target grips, both factory and custom-made. Semi-automatic pistol users had more limited options, but beefier grips could be found to expand the pistol’s circumference on some models.

With the advent of semi-automatic pistols with double-stack magazines in police inventories, shooters with hands on the small side had a difficult time manipulating the pistol while firing or operating the control levers. Pistols that used a single-

stack magazine diminished the available firepower of the pistols, and a single-stack pistol, such as the 1911A1, was never intended to be used by shooters with smaller-than-average hand size.

Some pistol manufacturers have introduced grip panels and back straps of varying sizes in recent years. Now comes SIG SAUER (sigsauer.com) with its Enhanced Ergonomics (E-squared) package.

The platform reviewed in this column is one of Sig’s venerable pistols: the P229. In addition of being employed by several

countries around the globe, this weapon is currently in use by a great number of U.S. law enforcement agencies, U.S. government entities and several branches of the U.S. military. The P229, like the other Sig P series pistols, operates the locked breech short recoil system, the same system used by the majority of modern self-loading pistols, courtesy of John M. Browning, the designer of the 1911A1 pistol.

The P229E2 used in this evaluation is chambered in 9mm parabellum. The P229, like the P226, is also chambered in .40 Smith and Wesson and .357 Sig. Action is SA/DA. Factory-rated trigger pull is 10 lbs. in double action, 4.4 lbs. in single action. This weapon seems to be on the lighter side in both modes, and crisp with no noticeable loading before sear release. In the trigger mechanism, we find two E2 features. Trigger

reset length is reduced by around 60%. This gun will shoot as quickly as you can — not a feature for beginners. The reduced reach trigger was added as a consideration for shooters with Hobbit-sized hands.

I have long fingers and wear an XL glove and found the trigger as accommodating as a standard reach trigger.

The E2 model has a thinner slide configuration of approximately .1 inch. Not a lot, but noticeable. The E2 model has a larger external extractor. Vertical cocking serrations are full length on the E2 slide, twice as wide as on the original slide.

Specifications:

- Overall Height: 5.4"
- Barrel length: 3.9"
- Overall length: 7.1"
- Sight radius: 5.7"
- Overall width: 1.5"



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To further reduce the profile of the E2, the decocking lever has been redesigned. Sights are SIGLITE® three-dot night sights. They work very well in dim light and total darkness.

To fit a wider range of hand sizes, a one-piece modular grip with improved texture reduces the area in the back strap and overall circumference. The modular grip snaps in place; no grip screws are necessary. A lanyard loop is standard on the heel of the grip. In most cases, Sig supplies a plastic proprietary tool for removing the grip. For those shooters who want to change out the modular grip for other Sig or custom grips, the screw holes in the grip frame have been retained.

The newly-designed flush-fit 15-round magazine (9mm) replaces the previously standard 13-rounder for the P229. These magazines have a wider body than the older mags and will not fit in the narrower magazine well (grip) of the standard P229. But the older mags, for either the P229 (13 rounds) or the 15- and 20-round mags from the P226, will work in the E2 model.

The P229 E2 features a frame machined from 7075-T6 aircraft grade aluminum with a black hard coat anodized finish and an integral accessory rail for tactical accessories (light). Slides are machined from a stainless steel billet and coated with a proprietary Nitron finish that seems to be very corrosion-resistant in the heat, humidity and salt air of south Florida.

Considering all of the “Enhanced Ergonomics” features that Sig Sauer put into the



E2 shown with modular grip removal tool

E2 pistol to cater to shooters with smaller hands, I was expecting a weapon that would require an altered grip with my larger-than-average hands. I was surprised to find it was quite the opposite. This is a very well-engineered and designed makeover of an industry standard. The somewhat plain wrap-around grips, while in my view not aesthetically pleasing, give a good solid purchase on the grip. The serrations on the front strap aren't aggressive (deep) but fulfill the task. The short reach trigger really wasn't that perceptible. The E2 felt well balanced.

On the range, I shot better with the P229 E2 than I do with my older P229 with thick wooden grips. Admittedly, by chance or some other factor, the E2 just has a better trigger. Two hundred rounds of Winchester 115-grain FMJ and 200 rounds of Hornady Critical 115-grain FTX rounds were used in the range testing. At 10 yards, even the rounds fired in double-action mode were

dead-on. All rounds fired at 7 and 10 yards from the standing position hit at the point-of-aim. At 15 yards, the Hornady FTX rounds grouped at 2 to 2½ inches.

Shooting on the move, aggressing toward the target and creating distance, the SRT trigger of the pistol would consistently deliver two- and three-round bursts in the head of a silhouette target. There were no failures to feed, extract or eject. There was no break-in period. I've learned over the years that Sigs seem to prefer more lubrication than some other pistols, but they are not finicky; you can probably use transmission fluid and a Sig will function.

Sig Sauer has improved on a proven defensive pistol in the P229 E2. It worked well before, and in my opinion this model is a step up. It is a good secondary weapon to back up your rifle, and a good concealable piece for either on- or off-duty because you always carry your weapon...right? ◀◀

Correction

Due to an error, some text was missing from the Countermeasures column (“1911 Pistol”) in our Summer 2011 issue. A corrected version is available on our Web site. Contact our editor at maryheins@ntoa.org with any questions.