



SHOT SHOW

**AN AA LEGION
SPECIAL REPORT**

CONTINUING OUR COVERAGE OF THE MAJOR SHOWS THIS MONTH WE'RE DELIGHTED TO REPORT BACK ON THE MASSIVE BEAST OF AN EVENT THAT IS SHOT SHOW AS BOYCIE, LI'L STU AND DAN BRING IN THEIR LOWDOWN OF THE 2023 EVENT IN LAS VEGAS!

The plans to hit SHOT Show for myself and Li'l Stu started way back in 2020. We were due to attend in 2021 but due to the world COVID pandemic, that trip for us was never going to happen. With the restrictions starting to be relaxed we thought we'd try for SHOT 22... again, due to COVID restrictions it was decided that we would miss 2022's Show and push on for 2023. So this January we set off from Heathrow and after a 10 1/2 hour flight, we finally sighted the lights of Las Vegas and McCarran International Airport!

Li'l Stu and I made it through US Border Control and to the hotel at around 21:00 on Saturday night. On Sunday morning we got up and went for breakfast and then started preparing our kit whilst we waited for our friends and colleagues from *The Armed Lifestyle (TAL) Magazine* to arrive. By 20:00 we were all together, barring Dan who would be arriving in town on Day 1 proper of SHOT. After introductions we all went for dinner and discussed the plan of action for the following day.

INDUSTRY DAY AT THE RANGE

This would be the one day we'd have the opportunity to fire some of the firearms we had only previously handled in airsoft form, something that could not happen in the UK! After a breakfast with the guys we (myself and Li'l Stu) headed over the road to the Venetian Expo Centre where we were going to board the coach out to the Boulder Rifle and Pistol Club near Boulder City, approximately 40 minutes out of Las Vegas. The Boulder R&PC were hosting the range day for a huge number of exhibitors of firearms and accessories. Of course for the UK based members of the team this meant Li'l Stu and myself were

like "kids in a candy store!"

Stu had said his "Target #1"

was the 1911. Stu

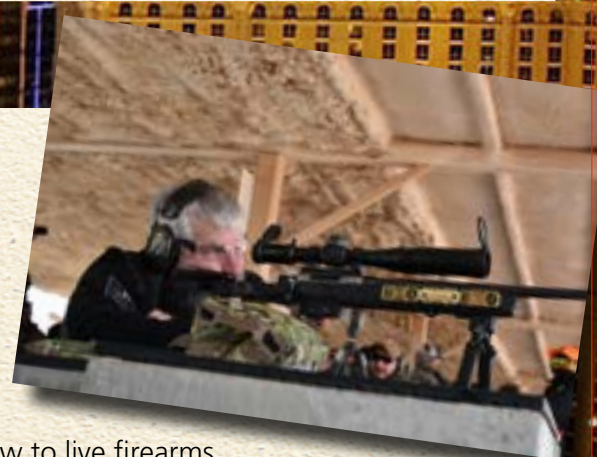
is quite new to live firearms

whereas I started shooting in 1979; my aim (no pun intended... well yes it was!) was to get to Kimber, Glock and Daniel Defense. Stu had also said he'd love to go "rock and roll" with a full-auto rifle. After the last passengers boarded, the bus pulled out of the parking lot at 0845 and we headed out of town. The bus pulled in to the range complex and dropped us off, and we met up with the TAL crew before deciding to start at one end and simply head down the line.

First stop was the Flux Defense stand where we saw, and shot, one of their Raider pistols. This was a quite futuristic, being based off the SIG M17.

Carrying over 40 rounds in two

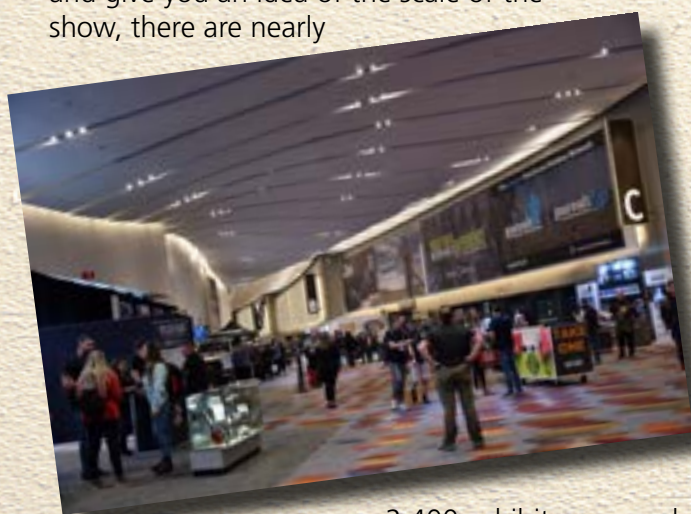
magazines this was billed as a "truck or pack gun"; there'll be more info on this to follow! Most of our team took the opportunity to fire one of the six variants that they had on offer. Li'l Stu really enjoyed this stand. We both said that we looked forward to the time when the Flux Raider replica would find its



way to the airsoft market. Throughout the day we fired the H&K G28, AR's, bolt-actions and pistols, as well as shotguns and even a belt fed AR. What an awesome start to the Show for us Brits!

GETTING DOWN TO (AIRSOFT) BUSINESS!

Veteran show-stomper Bill had told us that SHOT was big but nothing ever really prepares you for it! For the most part Day One would be a recce day; walking round and locating the stands (booths) we wanted to visit properly later in the week. Just to try and give you an idea of the scale of the show, there are nearly



2,400 exhibitors spread over four floors of the Venetian Expo Center in addition to the whole of the Ceasars Exhibition Center. Within the floor space of the show, 547 F16 fighter jets could be parked and there would still be some space left over! In Dan's estimation, it was a "labyrinthine maze" with seemingly no end in sight...

The Press Room was rightly huge on its own. This was where we would get breakfast and plan our days. After a quick bite and some discussion, it was time to hit the floors on the search for airsoft-related products, and the first floor we went to was Floor 2 which housed the majority of the Military and Law Enforcement clothing and kit exhibitors. Here we located First Tactical, Condor, Agilite, Blue Force Gear, Spiritus Systems, Eotech, Holosun, Hawke, and more.

After lunch (yes it really did take the whole

morning to just walk Floor 2!) we had a chance to discuss where we needed to go during the afternoon. We decided to go and 'scope out' the airsoft exhibitors Lancer Tactical, Redwolf, Evike, Cybergun, PTS, MOS (E&L & Arcturus), and KWA.

LANCER TACTICAL

Boycie: For me it was great to catch up with fellow AA Legion Associate LayLax Marck for the first time in person. We had a chat about the new hop units coming from LayLax,

which are specifically made for VFC platforms. These also come with two hop rubbers: the soft,

which is ideal for UK climate, and the new red bucking to suit 380-420fps. Whilst I was talking with Marck, we got onto the subject of his MPX build and I asked what he ran in his. He was happy to tell me that he runs the new LayLax VFC hop unit, soft bucking, Prommy inner barrel and the hard gear set. He said, "it's a great setup that lets me reach out and touch people in a good way!"

Stu: I really liked the LCT AKs on the Lancer stand and they were certainly "floating one's boat."

I have really liked the build quality on the LCT AKs for a long time. You have the confidence that they are really well put



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together.

Dan: The first item to catch my eye was the Kalashnikov USA licensed PP-19-01 Vityaz replica front and center. I was surprised to learn that Lancer Tactical will be manufacturing this model, amongst several other Kalashnikov branded AK's present. Notable features were the realistic magazine dimensions, rotary hop up chamber, on top of the overall build quality feeling quite lovely. As a user of LCT's PP-19-01 model, I am really keen to get my hands on one of these for some T&E.

REDWOLF AIRSOFT

Boycie: Redwolf's booth was not quite what I had thought it would be, but this is entirely understandable considering the remaining COVID restrictions for people coming into the US from Hong Kong/China. There was a really lovely aged Enfield rifle on display, which I



mentioned to Andrew that looked perfectly aged just like the No4 Mk2 we have at the range where I work.

Stu: With the Redwolf

stand being quite low key, the one stand out item for me was the new RWA Warhawk. This is a revised version of the officially licensed Nighthawk, which has been around for a few years now.

Dan: I was certainly admiring the excellent 'distressing' and aging work on the Enfield, but found the SBR variant of the upcoming RWA Battle Arms Development 556 PDW to be visually interesting. This sported a nicely done quick-release Fortis rail and compact PDW style stock paired with the unique styling Battle Arms is known for. Andrew humorously pointed out Battle Arms proclivity for slapping their logo on every single part as we had a little laugh counting the number of instances

replicated here. True to form, indeed!

ACTIONSPORTGAMES (ASG)

Stu: The Steyr L9-A2 MF! I'd not seen one before and was intrigued on the design.

On picking it up, I felt the design ergonomics worked well (please note, I have short stubby fingers, so finding a comfy pistol is troublesome!). Both the backstrap and side panels can be swapped out to give the user the best choice and fit. A nice polymer frame, metal slide, Steyr Trades and an underslung Picatinny rail too.

Not normally a huge fan of pistols that I've not seen or played with before; in this case, I'll make an exception.

Dan: I also really liked the feel and solidity of the Steyr L9, but the standout item for me would have to be the B&T APC 556 models on display.

It's been great to see more manufacturers actually incorporate true quick-change spring guide



assemblies into designs, and this was on display here in the form of a nifty little door that allowed access to the spring and battery compartment. The APC feels very much at home in the hands of someone who's ran the CZ Bren and SCAR series platforms. I particularly liked the compact form factor of the collapsible stock version, which was reminiscent of the H&K collapsible stock designs.

PTS SYNDICATE

Boycie: The PTS booth was quite busy when we got there, with the guys talking to Greg Wong AKA

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Spartan117GW and a couple of other groups of people, so we stood back for a few minutes to allow the crowd to dissipate. When we eventually got to talk to the PTS guys, I immediately asked about the soon to be released MAWL and the Zev Custom Glock and 1911.

The MAWL was still in prototype form with some parts being 3D printed



and the coating wasn't the final hard anodized finish that we were told would be on the

production versions.

Saying that, it looked good and I can't wait to see the finished article. The licensed Zev Custom Glock again, was still coated in the prototype finish but again will be hard coat anodized in the final version. I really liked the Glock and I was told

that there would be two variants, one using a metal lower frame and the other using a more usual polymer frame.

This would offer variants that would appeal to those with varying budgets.

Stu: As a really big 1911 fan, I really liked the soon to be released Zev Customs 1911, which will be available in Black, FDE or Dual Tone. This will also be compatible with CO2 magazines, which for me will be a really good feature.

Dan: The standout items for me were the simpler

things: namely the extended buttplate for the compact version EPS stock. This will house up to an 11.1v LiPo and will be an absolutely ideal solution for us ERG users who wish to keep to a slimmer stock assembly, but still keep things rear-wired. The upcoming Unity licensed 45 degree Aimpoint mount and flip-up magnifier mount were also on display and very well replicated. Another item of interest was a prototype of a new EPG grip in development, which will surely be a hot item as the natural 'bridge' between the two existing versions.

EVIKE/CYBERGUN

Boycie: After the recce to find Evike, we went down to the new Evike Outpost for their pre-opening party where we could have a good look around their store, try out their range and enjoy a beer along with a live band. Back on the Shot Show floor, I liked the SCAR SC but I am going to leave Li'l Stu to wax lyrical about that, as he is a huge fan of the SCAR.

Stu: This was an easy choice... The SCAR SC – saw it last year at IWA and was very impressed; it's a SCAR, and yes, I'm a fan, can't you tell? Having also been afforded the opportunity to get "hands on" with a real FN SCAR SC, I'm very impressed with its airsoft counterpart.

Small, pointable, comfy, a perfect CQB tool that I suspect would be handy in other airsoft situations too!

Dan: I did not get opportunity to peruse the Evike booth in great depth. The first time we swung through, we had an interview to get to, then the second time I was running solo and it was the last day of the last hour of the show. The booth was packed with the crew and the lovely ladies from Taran Tactical, so I took a moment to wait until there was time to zip in and fondle the merchandise (the airsoft goods, of course!). I was quite keen on the LCT SVD Dragunov and VFC FAL GBBR, which I'm told will be hitting the website this year for us US-based guys. The Ares SCAR SC was also quite attractive, as was my first handling of the Archon Type B pistol that was tucked away in a corner.

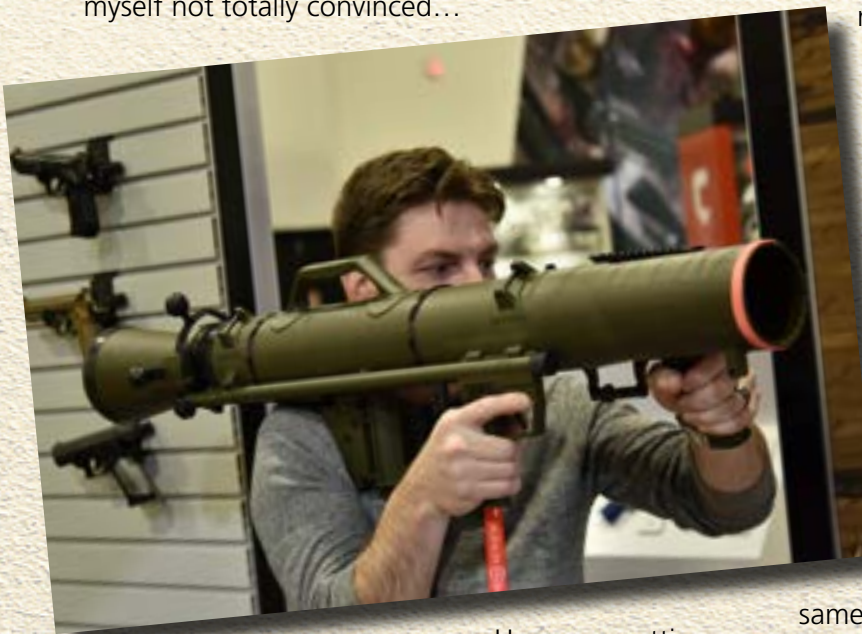
ELITE FORCE/UMAREX

Boycie: What I really liked on this stand was the

"THIS WAS AN EASY CHOICE... THE SCAR SC – SAW IT LAST YEAR AT IWA AND WAS VERY IMPRESSED; IT'S A SCAR, AND YES, I'M A FAN, CAN'T YOU TELL? HAVING ALSO BEEN AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET "HANDS ON" WITH A REAL FN SCAR SC, I'M VERY IMPRESSED WITH ITS AIRSOFT COUNTERPART"

M110 and the long awaited Carl Gustav. Having fired the HK G28 live on Monday I had a good reference point to compare the heft and feel of the M110 to the weight of the real steel G28. I can honestly say that I really liked the balance on the M110 and can see it being on my shopping list soon. The Carl Gustav really is a lovely piece of kit. It would need to be two-person operated unit on the airsoft field and the loading of the 'round' can be a bit fiddly until you get used to it but oh what a lot of fun that will be to use at skirmishes.

Stu: An Airsoft Charlie G? Really? Hell YES! I'd seen all the blurb on its release, the reviews etc and found myself not totally convinced...



However, getting my dabs on one at the show has changed my mind. Impractical? More than likely. Fun? Shedloads!!! And it can take TAG rounds I believe...

Dan: Aside from the Gustav, the only new item on display appeared to be the M110A1 AEG. I was told this would be equipped with a Gate ASTER out of the box and will be a regular production item.

The first point about the ASTER leads me to believe it might be running a new gearbox design (hopefully a Ver. 2.5?). Unfortunately the Elite Force rep manning the booth didn't know the specifics of the internals, but for fans of this platform, the change to a new gearbox design has us collectively and tentatively crossing our fingers; especially as wet paper is practically stronger than the old Ver. 2.2 design we've

dealt with.

MOS (E&L)

Boycie: There were a lot of things here that caught my eye, firstly, the new E&L AK and Vityaz replicas. As Dan really liked those I'll leave them to him. Another product that I really liked was the collaboration between Arcturus and Gate, which is the all-new Trinity Armament Alpha series. These combine a Gate TITAN II ETU along with a rather clever split gearbox. The unique thing about the gearbox is that you can change the 'timing' of the system from instantaneous trigger response to pre-cocked without having to reprogram the ETU or open the gearbox.

Second for me here was their range of Russian replica scopes, which most are NV compatible and also in some cases outperform their real steel counterparts! These are expected to be available this year in around the 3rd quarter (July - September) and start from US\$80 and go up to around US\$300 as the expected resale price.

Stu: I mean, where to start? It's E & L, AK heaven for a fan like me! I spent a good long time chatting to the Team on the stand, and they happily answered all my questions.

A lot to choose from, but the AK-105 Platinum stood out. Perfect example of how an airsoft AK should be. Solid, reliable and just the right amount of Sino/Russian brutalist architecture. It strips down like a real AK, same cleaning kit, oil bottle... no real surprise as they are built in the same factory as certain other AK's are made!

After I had a look over some of the body parts, I can make a guess as to their original purpose too... the gearbox was a delight, QC spring feature (though it looked like it was not as QC as would have been liked), and the magazines? Well. According to one of the chaps I spoke with, they make the midcap internals to the same dimension as real AK mags, allowing airsoft inners to be swapped into a real AK mag. Not had the chance to verify this myself, but if its true? Oh boy!

Dan: Ever the ardent Vityaz fan, I was immediately smitten with the PP-19-01 models on display from Arcturus. The build quality was absolutely fantastic,

“AN AIRSOFT CHARLIE G? REALLY? HELL YES! I'D SEEN ALL THE BLURB ON ITS RELEASE, THE REVIEWS ETC AND FOUND MYSELF NOT TOTALLY CONVINCED... HOWEVER, GETTING MY DABS ON ONE AT THE SHOW HAS CHANGED MY MIND. IMPRACTICAL? MORE THAN LIKELY. FUN? SHEDLOADS!!! AND IT CAN TAKE TAG ROUNDS I BELIEVE...”

with these sporting some really smart features from the true quick-change spring guide, to the realistic magazine dimensions, and a (soon to be updated) rotary hop up chamber that will sport a top-down-center hop up arm. Two of the models present were bedecked in full Zenitco regalia, including the modernized PT-1 stock, which has actually been improved by Arcturus to have a better opening and locking mechanism. To wit: this AEG has officially supplanted my desire to pick up the SIG MPX, even!

KWA INDUSTRIES

Boycie: We have enjoyed a great relationship with KWA over the years and have been privy to a number of new developments; even being supplied with the Ronin 47 and LM4D before

they were released in the UK and Europe. This year for SHOT show, they were



showing their new PTP in the form of the ATP-Z, which had some similarities to the SIG M17. We were also told that the classic ATP-LE is also undergoing a redesign, so I look forward to what that new version will look like.

The new variant of the LM4D was also on show with the new M-LOK rail. Both myself and Li'l Stu have our own LM4's... I have the LM4D and Stu owns the LM4C and the PTS Radian which uses the KWA LM4 internals.

Stu: F90 AUG GBBR... this was an easy choice for me; as a long-time airsoft AUG user, I couldn't wait to get a close look at the F90 GBBR. At IWA in 2022 I was lucky enough to see a real one on the Steyr display stand; little did I know, I'd have a chance of seeing KWA's version. After having wiped the silly grin off my face, I picked the F90 up and had a good look over it. To me, it's perfect; others I know will have their own

idea's & thoughts! It's heavy but balanced, yes, it's a love/hate RIF.

Most certainly on the "Want List" but as KWA are currently supplying about 2000 units to a certain armed forces

somewhere in the Southern Hemisphere for use as training weapons, it may be a while until they are released to the airsofting public!

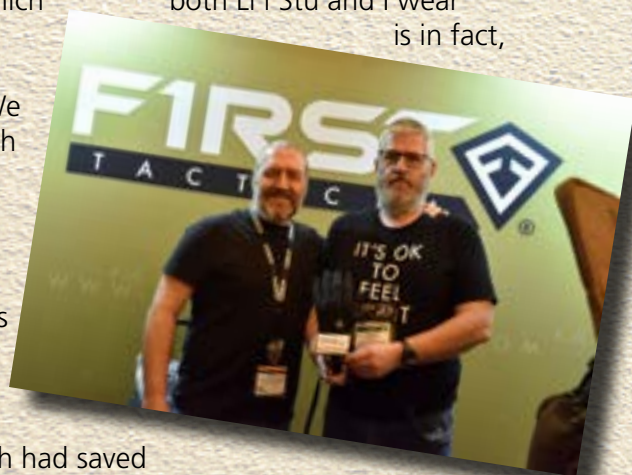
Dan: Not being a huge GBB guy myself, I was admittedly impressed by the build quality and truly unique design of the F90. That being said, I was informed of some interesting new developments coming down the pipeline from KWA that I'm not privy to discuss yet. Suffice it to say, the 'arms race' amongst airsoft manufacturers never stops, and certainly is driving some interesting innovations.



GETTING DOWN TO (KIT & GEAR) BUSINESS!

Boycie: For kit and clothing, we sought out First Tactical, which both Li'l Stu and I wear regularly. It is in fact,

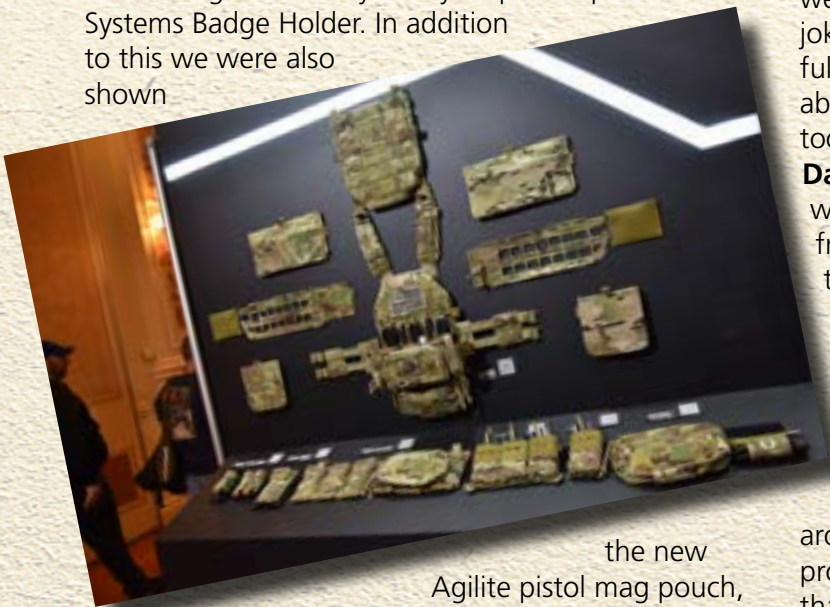
my work uniform. We met up with the owner, Cory, who was really pleased to meet me as I had sent him my FT Flash/Slash glove which had saved my right hand from major injury when a flash bang went off prematurely about 3 years ago.



"MOST CERTAINLY ON THE "WANT LIST" BUT AS KWA ARE CURRENTLY SUPPLYING ABOUT 2000 UNITS TO A CERTAIN ARMED FORCES SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE FOR USE AS TRAINING WEAPONS, IT MAY BE A WHILE UNTIL THEY ARE RELEASED TO THE AIRSOFTING PUBLIC!"

He said “you know, I have that glove in my office!” Cory is a guy who really cares about the product and knowing when it has really done its job well.

Secondly on kit, we stopped by the Agilite booth and saw the new K-Zero plate carrier system. This had quite a few cool additions over previous Agilite rigs, the main ones being sewn on shoulder pads and the ability to quickly swap from a velcro closing to the Agilite version of First Spear Tubes. Both Dan and myself are a part of the Agilite T&E team who advise and comment on Agilite products in development. Boaz of Agilite gave me my exclusive to the T&E team patch. I was really pleased to receive it and it went straight on to my newly acquired Spiritus Systems Badge Holder. In addition to this we were also shown



the new Agilite pistol mag pouch, which is expected to be released in the near future.

Stu: Too many to choose from, but the Ready Tactical Sling (see the video on the AA website!) was my standout. Fiendishly simple design and build, but so damned effective and adaptable!

Dan: As a member of Agilite’s T&E team, it was really cool to see some of the features we’ve suggested and talked about actually being incorporated into final design. That sort of public discourse and rapid, forward-thinking design is refreshing to see in an industry that often seems to avoid taking in product feedback. Agilite also had one hell of a nefarious claw machine that befuddled many a passerby trying to win a mag pouch or even the dual-tube NOD’s nestled within its confines.

While not exactly new, S&S Precision had some very interesting low-profile plate carriers on display that showcased some rather technically advanced design. I could see these being quite useful for Airsoft as a lightweight and breathable chassis to mount pouches to without even needing to load them up with mock

rifle plates.

PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Boycie: My personal highlights were catching up with Jerry Miculek again after 27 years. He’s still as nice a guy as I remember. I also got to sit in the 1969 Mustang Mach 1 that was driven by Keanu Reeves in the John Wick movies!

Stu: As a non-shooter, this was my idea of heaven. Range Day was both brilliant and terrifying – but great fun. Meeting up with Trampas and the AL crew was amazing, a great bunch of folks that made this “f*cking Brit” (as I was laughingly named) feel very welcome. Boycie for putting up with my endless crap jokes and Dan for being one hell of an amazing chap, full of knowledge and help, but incredibly modest about it; a proper gent with a great sense of humour too (the taxi ride back from Evike was epic...)

Dan: The astonishing number of products on display would honestly make any one thing hard to pick out from the other. But for me personally, I would have to say that the true highlight of the show was finally getting to meet John and Stu in person. They were truly great guys to experience the show with, and made you feel as if meeting with old friends.

ENDEX

During our walks around the halls, we covered around 50 miles over the four days of the show proper, which isn’t hard to believe when you consider that there were nearly 2400 exhibitors over the 4 floors of the Venetian Expo Centre and the two massive halls of the Caesars Convention Centre as well as the Market Place and outdoor displays. It is estimated that if you spent 30 seconds at each stand it would take around two weeks (during the opening hours of 8:30 – 5:30) to visit every stand and display!

That about wraps up the report for SHOT 23; I’d like to thank Bill for entrusting the coverage of the show to myself, Li’l Stu and Dan. Also a huge thanks to Trampas, Tabb, Aubree, Amy, Cody AKA “Bingo”, Shaun AKA “Bugout”, Jamie, Patrick and Luke for being such a great crew and for welcoming us and making us part of the team from the first time we met up. I left one person off the list and that is Bernei. She gets a special mention for not only being such a kind, supportive and welcoming person but for being our (myself, Stu and Dan) partner in crime during the after-hours in Gilley’s and for the laugh that is so infectious we couldn’t stop laughing for most of the night on Wednesday. This trip and the people truly has been epic and something we all definitely want to do again! **AA**

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