

A collection of CZ-USA shotguns and shot shells is displayed on a rustic wooden surface. In the foreground, a CZ-USA 12-gauge shotgun with a dark wood stock and a black receiver is prominently featured. Behind it, another shotgun is partially visible. Several red and gold shot shells are scattered around the guns. A light-colored hat with a tassel is also present in the upper right corner.

Riding Shotgun

A PARTNER YOU'D BE PROUD
TO MOUNT THE STAGE WITH.

By DENIS PRISBREY | Photography by SEAN UTLEY



HAMMER COACH S/S



In the Old West, while Colts were winning gunfights, shotguns were preventing them. Even at 10 paces, a man had a fair chance at either missing or being missed with a .45, and many gambled accordingly. On the other hand, nobody drunk or sober wanted to tempt fate by facing a scattergun with bores that looked like tunnels big enough to drive a matched pair of steam locomotives through. The odds were simply not favorable.



Cowboy Action shooters can finally rejoice at an affordable double.

Although full length shotguns may have put wildfowl on the table, their sawed off cousins rode many a stagecoach, earning the designation “coach gun.” The proliferation of newly made coach guns on the market today is due solely to the sport of Cowboy Action shooting, with match events that require shotguns appropriate to the era.

Opinions vary widely on which is

best between the older-style external hammer and newer hammerless guns. Both have their places in competition and in real life. Hammerguns can be cocked and decocked without breaking open the action or dry firing, and they tell you at a glance what condition they’re in. Most hammerless double-barreled shotguns won’t display their cocked or uncocked status, and to uncock one for storage

Modern metallurgy combined with CNC machining allow the Hammer Coach to fire high-base 3-inch Magnums—shells that would shred an original like the one above it.

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you have to pull the triggers.

Both have utility beyond CAS applications, and if you like a traditional profile on your coach gun, regardless of what you use it for, this is it.

No catchy name on this one, but in person the Turkish-made side-by-side Hammer Coach Gun shows rugged construction. It is well made, showing some tiger stripe patterning under the matte finish on its pistol gripped stock. Checkering on the test sample's fore-end and buttstock had minor overruns on two border corners and smooth diamond tops that gave a good grip in the hands without being abrasive. Case colors on all external steel parts except for the barrels run from bright on the lockplates to subdued on the gracefully sculpted checkered-spur hammers and buttplate, and wood-



Wells Fargo never had anything on a stagecoach this good.

to-metal fit is quite good overall.

The 20-inch barrels are chambered for three-inch shells, the length of pull is 14½ inches, the Hammer Coach uses extractors only, and the sliding tang safety is manually activated. This muley is a raised barrel

rib-type, with a good size brass bead up front. Fixed chokes are IC/M, and both trigger pulls were off my eight-pound scale.

Setting up in the gravel pit, I didn't pattern the coach gun with birdshot, but I did check for regulation on paper using Winchester Ranger Law Enforcement Low Recoil slugs. At 15 yards both barrels printed two to three inches above a rough point of

Few guns evoke the Old West as much as the classic hammer coach gun. But you don't have to be a cowboy to use one.



SPECIFICATIONS

TYPE: External-hammer double-barrel shotgun
GAUGE: 12
CAPACITY: Two
BARREL LENGTH: 20 in.
OVERALL LENGTH: 37.5 in.
WEIGHT: 6.7 lb.
SIGHTS: Brass bead
SAFETY: Manual tang, rebounding hammers
FINISH: Case colors, blue barrels
MSRP: \$905

Photo by Denis Prisbrey

aim with the bead, the right barrel was near dead-on for windage, and the left barrel was a little over one inch to the left. The sample tossed out empty hulls from the low brass Ranger slugs, low brass Federal high velocity game loads, low brass Winchester Featherlite Target loads and high brass Remington reduced-recoil slugs freely when opened and shaken. High brass Winchester Ranger Low Recoil buckshot, however, had to be pulled clear of the chambers. The shotgun shot everything like a trooper 'til the very last shell, with one misfire that fired on the second strike.

A hammer gun does add extra steps to the firing cycle, but it can be stored loaded indefinitely with hammers down, placing no stress on the action or magazine springs. The CZ's rebound-



Having aligned screw slots allows you to tell at a glance if one is backing out.

ing hammers at rest can't touch the firing pins unless the triggers are pulled; the barrels swing down far enough for clear and quick chamber access on loading.

As a trailgun for hunting, or defense against hostile critters along the way, a quality coach gun takes up far less space than your old goose gun will. 🦆



The Hammer Coach might look like a classic, but it's a very practical home-defense shotgun as well.