

Warning: not all of the following is necessarily true or actually happened.

When I joined the Auckland Pistol Club a few years back, it seemed like everyone was running a Glock or a CZ. The club's guns were Glocks and CZs. Everyone told me that the perfect first pistol was either a Glock (for the ease-of-use and reliability) or a CZ (for the accuracy and reliability). And as I progressed through my training and probation, I knew one thing: my first pistol was not going to be a Glock or a CZ.

I bought a Springfield Armory XD having neither handled nor shot one, and Sheila and I — yes, I named her — would throw jacketed lead downrange whenever my and the club armourer's schedules coincided (my B endorsement was still pending). The XD worked — and still works — perfectly, eating whatever factory and reloaded ammo it's fed without complaint, and is a wonderful and fun pistol for IPSC matches. Then I got a Tanfoglio P19 for NRA matches and I broke it on each of my first two range visits with it (but that's another story).

Fastforward to last year and, with two 9mm's (figuratively) on my belt, I got a hankering for a .45. That's not exactly true — the stars aligned and available for sale were: a barely used SIG-Sauer P220 at an awesomely reasonable price; and a brand spanking Tanfoglio 1911 at a very competitive price. Both pistols were all steel, and each came with enough eight-round mags to complete a typical IPSC match (if I remained calm enough to be both accurate and frugal). I had quite the conundrum.

Google helped a little. The SIG-Sauer had countless positive reviews while reviews of the actual Tanfoglio 1911 were a little thin (and usually not in English). I asked an online forum and once I sorted out the Glock and CZ fans — seriously, you can't take two steps without tripping over one — I had a list of pro's and con's. It was German precision versus an all-American classic. Teutonic reliability versus a century-old-plus design. One bright spark pointed out that if I wanted to claim any kind of proficiency with any firearm, I should sleep with it as well. No, wait: that would threaten my B endorsement, not to mention sleeping arrangements with my Lovely Wife. What they actually said was, proficiency comes from practice, visualisation, practice, muscle memory, and more practice.

The Tanfoglio 1911's controls are similar to those on my P19: magazine release, slide release, and safety catch. Similar and familiar controls are good between pistols. The P220, however, has no safety catch — it has a decocking lever which means that, having racked the slide and chambered a round, the decocker has to lower the hammer, so the first shot has to be double-action. Since I enjoy shooting cocked-and-locked, controlling that first double-action shot was going to require a lot of practice — and .45 ACP ammo isn't cheap.

I umm-ed and ahh-ed. The clock was ticking on the SIG-Sauer and the Tanfoglio.

Then I saw an awesome online special and bought a Grand Power P45 without having handled or shot one — but look: a rotating barrel! ambidextrous controls! ten rounds per mag!

And when the P45 arrived in the mail and I held it in my hands... it was hate at first sight.

**To be concluded next Bullshooter in
“How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love My First .45”.**

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