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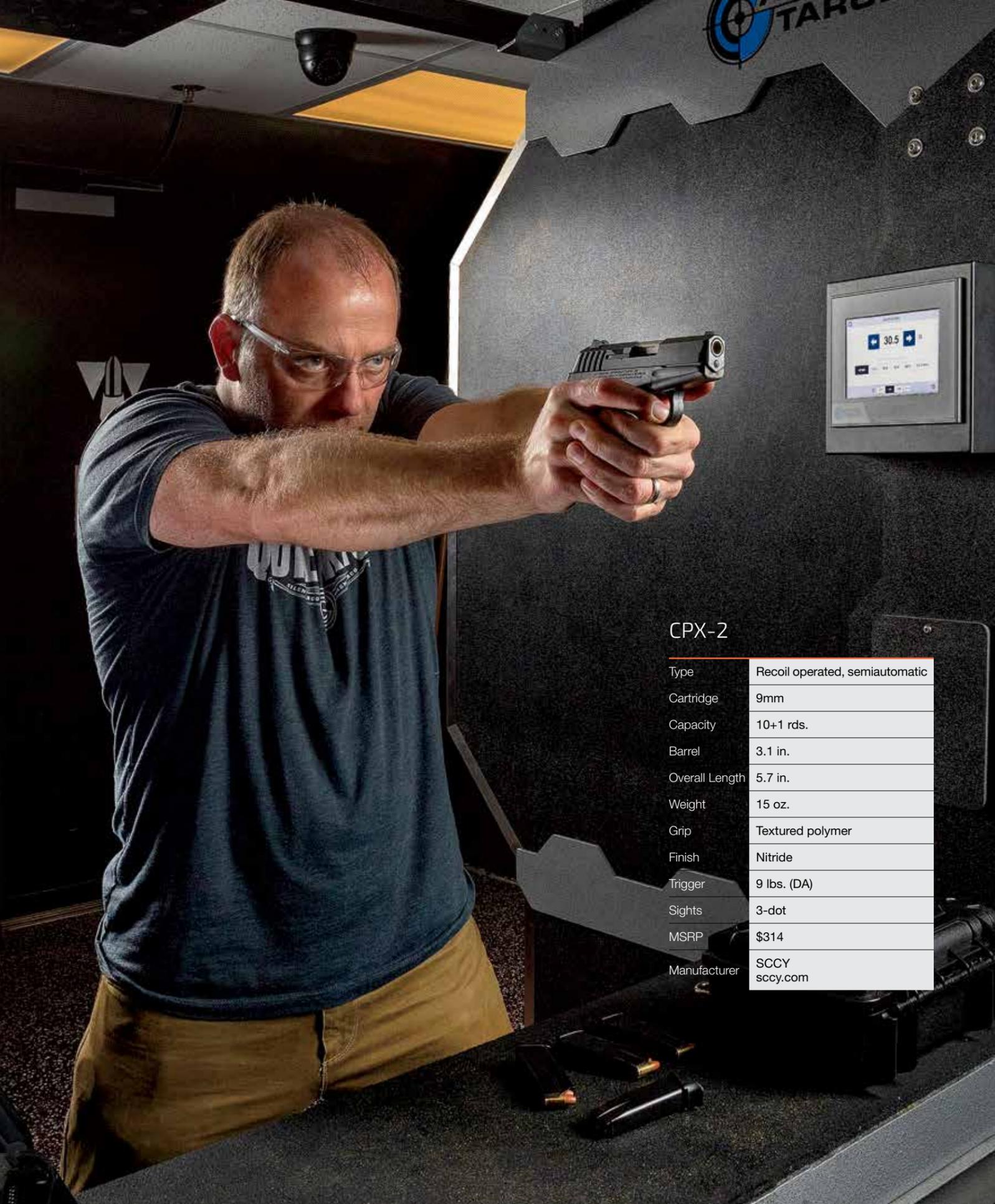
THE MOST FOR THE MONEY

SCCY BRINGS HIGH QUALITY AT LOW COST.



BY TOM BECKSTRAND < **PHOTOS BY MARK FINGAR**

Finding a good deal is the unofficial American past time. Everybody loves to get more for their money, whether it's firearms, automobiles or groceries. Even some homegrown critics of capitalism still love to get maximum bang for the buck. It's the American way.



CPX-2

Type	Recoil operated, semiautomatic
Cartridge	9mm
Capacity	10+1 rds.
Barrel	3.1 in.
Overall Length	5.7 in.
Weight	15 oz.
Grip	Textured polymer
Finish	Nitride
Trigger	9 lbs. (DA)
Sights	3-dot
MSRP	\$314
Manufacturer	SCCY sccy.com

“SCCY IS THE PRESENCE OF TALENT AND TECHNOLOGY WITH THE ABSENCE OF GREED.”

Handgun consumers are no different than any other market segment. Maximum value for minimum greenbacks is a driving force. Brand loyalty plays a part, as does perceived quality. Some folks get nervous buying a pistol that costs half as much as the one everybody else loves because they think it might be “too cheap.” There’s no way a pistol that costs \$300 is better made than one costing \$500, right? Wrong.

In the years I’ve worked in this industry, I’ve found no manufacturer that offers more gun for the cash than SCCY. That’s a strong statement that I’ll spend the rest of this article defending, but they do it through brilliant design and efficient machine work.

The single biggest difference between SCCY and every other handgun manufacturer is the founder and CEO, Joe Roebuck.

Most people sitting in the CEO position of a large firearms company got there because they worked their way to the top through the business world. That type of CEO is a valuable addition to the company. They’ll do wonderful things in all the traditional business domains.

Roebuck is different because he started out as a tool and die maker, and he’s still a tool and die maker at heart. His apprenticeship began when he was 8 years old, and his parents allowed him use of the machine shop behind their house. His immigrant father was a tool and die maker and began assigning Roebuck projects that had to be completed on time and meet his father’s quality standards. The shop had a Bridgeport mill, a toolroom lathe, an engine lathe, a couple of band saws and a surface grinder. It was a comprehensive home workshop.

Roebuck worked in that shop from age 8 to 18. It wasn’t like he was just hanging out fiddling around, either. Once he finished his homework from school, he went out to the shop where he had assignments to complete for his dad (where dad inspected for quality and ensured that Roebuck was progressing) and paid work that his mother would then use in her business. His folks set aside the money that his work produced and returned it when he turned 18. While the cash was an excellent gift, the education he received has served him well.



Joe Roebuck owns SCCY and is the man who started it all.

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When 19-year-old Roebuck left his childhood workshop, he stepped into the head tool and die maker position at Schrade Knives. He started working in precision optics not long after, where he developed new techniques to rapidly and precisely grind polymer lenses for eyeglasses. He worked for others in this field until he was 23 and has worked for himself ever since.

Time in the saddle taught Roebuck how to run a business, mostly from the school of hard knocks. What no traditional education could have provided was the knowledge acquired from all that time spent in the workshop learning how to create with tools. When the man in charge of a gun company started out making metal chips in the shop, he is exponentially more prepared for firearms manufacture than an individual with an education grounded in classroom work alone.

I had the opportunity to travel to the SCCY factory and tour the facility. I also spent a couple of days with Roebuck to torment him with questions about the company and his pistol. It didn’t take long to realize that SCCY has the most efficient manufacturing process I’ve ever seen, and I’ve been through more than a few factories.

Every manufacturer has Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines, and they like to show them off. There are big CNCs, little CNCs, 3-axis CNCs and 16-axis CNCs. However, there is much more to manufacturing than just having a bunch of CNC machines.

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It all starts with the tooling that holds the raw material in the machine. Tooling must be rigid to keep the object from moving during the cutting process. Good tooling will also allow as many of the machining steps to occur without having to remove the material from the tooling for repositioning or to move it to another machine.

Time is money in the manufacturing business, so the longer it takes to machine an object, the more expensive it becomes to the consumer. The more it has to be removed and repositioned, the more it will cost and the more variation there will be from one finished product to the next.

SCCY has an incredibly sophisticated manufacturing process that is simple and fast. The machines don't cut faster than anyone else's, but the tooling that SCCY builds in-house for their machines is the secret sauce.

SCCY has many horizontal mills where the machine head that does all the work sits sideways relative to the material it's cutting. When the material is loaded into the machine, it sits on "tombstones" that hold six or seven blocks of material each. There might be three or four tombstones loaded at any one time.

Using SCCY's pistol slide as an example, 24 sections of round steel bar stock get loaded into a CNC at a time. Those sections of bar stock will see a grand total of two machining steps before they turn into complete slides. That's right, a chunk of solid steel turns into a slide in two steps. Twenty-four chunks at a time. There's no time wasted



The polymer frame houses a double-stack magazine. It is small enough for concealment but large enough to remain comfortable during a lengthy range session.

manually moving a slide-in-progress from one set of tooling to the next multiple times; that happens once. All that time saved on the machining process gets passed on in the form of lower cost to the consumer. It's only possible

because Roebuck designed the pistol's slide to be made in two steps. He calls the process "concurrent engineering."

Every part of the pistol was designed to be mechanically simple and simple to machine. Most firearms manufacturers have a team of engineers that design and a bunch of machinists that produce those designs. The two groups almost always fight because an engineer will often design something that performs well but is almost impossible and/or expensive to make. The engineers get to blame the machinists for not knowing how to make their design, and the machinists get to blame the engineers for designing theoretical parts that are too complicated to manufacture.

This is what sets SCCY apart. The guy (Roebuck) that designed the pistol had an extensive background in machining, so he designed it to be easy to make and then built the tooling he needed.

When SCCY was just an idea floating around in Roebuck's head, he noticed that there was a huge performance gap between a \$200 pistol and a \$500 pistol. Roebuck studied the pistols that were out at the time and realized he could build a pistol that performed every bit as reliably as a \$500 pistol for a little more than \$200. It sounds crazy, but that's just what SCCY did.

Roebuck's strong background in tool and die making got SCCY started. When considering how to make the pistol, Roebuck said: "I don't like castings. I don't like forgings. I like machining from bar stock." Castings can have voids, and forgings can warp when cut if not heat-treated carefully. Nothing beats bar stock for strength and stability.

The \$300 CPX-1 and CPX-2 all come with slides, barrels, firing pins, etc., that started out as steel bar stock (solid bars of steel). The flat steel parts are stamped, but everything else gets milled in-house in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Performance

LOAD	Velocity (fps)	Extreme Spread	Standard Deviation	Best Group (in.)	Avg. Group (in.)
Hornady 124-gr. XTP	983	41	16	2.45	3.66
SIG Sauer V-Crown 124 gr.	1,086	25	11	3.24	4.03
Remington Ultimate Defense 124 gr.	1,008	32	14	3.8	4.78

Accuracy results are the average of five, five-shot groups at 25 yards. Velocity figures are derived from a string of five rounds measured by a Shooting Chrony chronograph 15 feet from the muzzle.

When it comes to the polymer frame and frame rails, the SCCY pistol is superior to many pistols costing twice as much. Each SCCY pistol has an aluminum receiver that sits inside the polymer frame. The receiver carries the serial number and has the rails on which the slide rides. This receiver is machined from 7075 T6 aluminum billet. Many polymer-framed pistols have receiver rails made from sheet metal molded into the polymer frame. The latter is much cheaper and more prone to failure than the former.

Early in SCCY's history, they had to outsource some of their production. No company can just buy all the machines they need to do everything in-house and start over night. Starting SCCY was a huge challenge for Roebuck because he didn't know a lot about the firearms industry and how gun companies managed their vendors.

"People either don't want to make gun parts because they're afraid of the liability, or they want to charge you a ton of money because they think you make big bucks because you manufacture guns," Roebuck said.

The nightmare of finding reliable vendors drove SCCY to bring production in-house as fast as possible, but magazines were one of the last components that SCCY decided to manufacture themselves. Roebuck held out on magazine production until the end because there are a lot of ways to screw it up. He used a vendor that many other manufacturers use and was surprised when he received their price quote. Since he understands machining, Roebuck explained how their machines made so many passes an hour and there was no way the rates the vendor was charging were competitive with what other shops could do. After some back-and-forth, SCCY got their parts for a sixth of what everyone else paid. Those savings got passed along to the consumer.



Every slide starts out as a section of round bar stock. After two machining steps, it's a slide.

A skeptic might wonder what kind of quality control a company that runs CNC machines 24 hours a day can maintain. Those machines run through piles of bar stock and billet, spitting out barrels, slides, receivers and other parts. Who keeps an eye on them?

SCCY has a well-equipped quality control team that is required to sample a large amount of parts from each machine every two hours. Those poor bastards. They have all the latest and greatest measuring tools, and they ensure that the parts are well within SCCY's specifications, but they also track tool wear and instruct the floor personnel to adjust the machines to account for it. All of this happens every two hours. Every day.

It's hard to believe that a \$300 pistol could be 100 percent made in America and that it can compete with pistols costing twice as much. While the pistol is entirely made in America, the only things not made at SCCY are some of the springs. Springs are best left to the experts, and SCCY may never bring those in-house.

The high caliber pistol performance for such a meager price is only possible because of Roebuck's manufacturing prowess and SCCY's ability to make their own tooling. Tooling is crazy expensive, and almost no gun manufacturers make their own. The tribal knowledge required for such an endeavor is too expensive to purchase, so most firearms companies buy what they need from dedicated tool and die makers. SCCY succeeds because the guy that started the company is and always will be a tool and die maker. SCCY is the presence of talent and technology with the absence of greed.

So, how's the SCCY pistol shoot? It's a large and light double-action 9mm, so recoil is snappy but comfortable. Shooters who spend all their time on striker-fired guns will not like the long trigger reset, but well-rounded shooters will appreciate the comfort and accuracy. I cannot recommend the SCCY pistol highly enough for concealed carry and for new shooters. The double-action-only trigger is as safe and concealment-friendly as they come.

An afternoon with the SCCY CPX-2 showed that it's a reliable and well-made pistol. And for just over 300 bucks, it's hard to resist the urge to cache them around the house like flashlights. ☺