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TACTICAL LIFE

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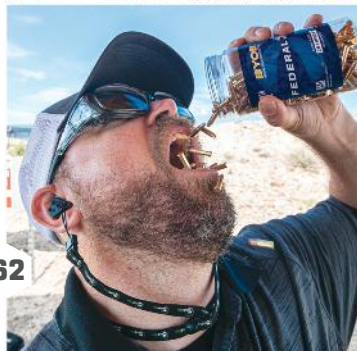
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My wife tells me that I am simple and predictable. My passions may wax and wane, but my interests remain boringly constant. Apparently, I am not alone. I recently learned that there is an 80-percent crossover between gear-heads and firearms enthusiasts. Odds are, if you like anything bearing an internal-combustion engine, you probably like things that send small pieces of lead downrange at hundreds or thousands of feet per second with pinpoint accuracy.

Which brings us to the sixth annual Motoschützen. When my editor told me to go

to Cody, Wyoming, to cover it, I told him I wasn't familiar with it. He laughed and explained that I would be responsible for exposing the week of motors, machine guns and mayhem to the world. (I still can't believe I get paid to do this.) So, I hit the road and picked up photographer Alex Landeen on the way.

Cody might be small, but the people are friendly and everything is named after Buffalo Bill. We arrived in the evening and met up with the Motoschützen crew at the Silver Dollar Saloon. Alex looked a little green around the gills, so I was forced to uphold our manliness by

drinking both his share and mine. Fortunately, I have been in constant training for just such a crisis for the last 20 years. I also got to meet our host, Media Direct's Mark Sidelinger, and learned a little more about the eclectic crew he assembled in the pursuit of embracing everything that makes America such an awesome country. And the longer I hung out with this merry band of rabble rousers, the more enamored I became.

THE BASICS

So what the hell is Motoschützen, and who goes to it? Well, it's a pretty elite

group by any calculation. Imagine you are the head of a company that makes firearms, or the head of marketing, or someone who has been entrusted with a great deal more responsibility than any sane person would ever give to someone like me. Perhaps you are in charge of a major marketing firm that caters to the firearms industry. Such a position comes with good and bad news. You're a recognized leader, but tremendous responsibility weighs on your shoulders. The gun business also isn't the place to go if you want to get rich. The industry is flooded with good companies, profit

MOTOSCHÜTZEN 2019

THE INDUSTRY'S
FINEST GET WILD
IN WYOMING WITH
GUNS, MOTORCYCLES
AND BARBECUE

BY ROBERT JORDAN • ALEX LANDEEN PHOTOS



margins are low, and in case you haven't noticed, demand has gone down since Hillary Clinton lost to Donald Trump. The "Trump Slump" has made it really hard to sell guns. You might be worth millions, but every penny of equity is tied up in your business and making sure your employees still have a job tomorrow.

With this kind of stress, how do you unwind? By taking a week to hang out with a bunch of people who have the same worries as well as the same aspirations and enjoy the same things. And, man, is it a hoot!

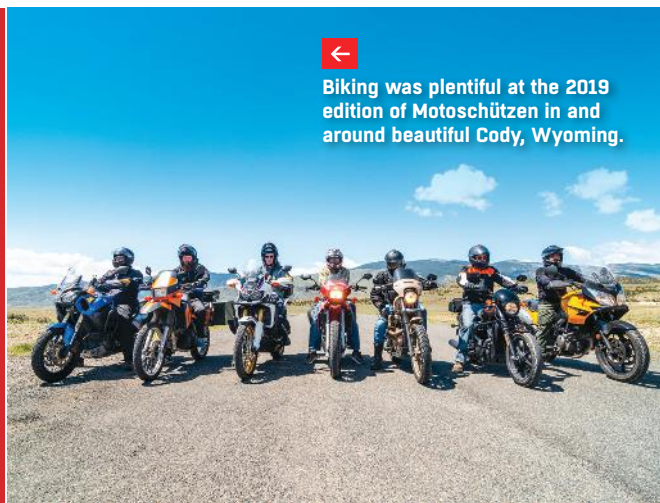
The first day of the event, we met at the Cody Shooting

Complex, where Camillo Velasquez introduced me to some new guns from Rossi and Taurus. He showed me the Rossi Tuffy .410/.22, the RS22 semi-auto .22 rifle and the RB22 bolt-action rifle available in .22 LR, .22 WMR and .17 HMR. After that, we move on to the offerings from Taurus. The crowd really loved the threaded-barrel TX22 pistol that uses 16-round magazines.

Mike Corkish showed me the latest and greatest from Tactical Solutions. The integrally suppressed Pac-Lite TSS pistol and X-Ring Takedown rifle had people lining up to try them out, and



THESE GUYS BELIEVE IN OUR RIGHTS AND THEIR PRODUCTS, AND WORK ALL DAY EVERY DAY—EVEN WHEN THEY ARE ON VACATION."



Biking was plentiful at the 2019 edition of Motoschützen in and around beautiful Cody, Wyoming.





Mixing business with pleasure, the event attendees spent their time at Motoschützen gobbling up whole lots of ammo while on the shooting range.

they did not disappoint. Zach Hein showed off some CZ rifles. With its pinpoint accuracy and beautiful trigger and stock, the CZ 457 was probably the most accurate rifle on the range that day.

Charlie Brown showed me his pistol and carbine from Hi-Point. Brown is a super-nice guy and immediately recognized that I am a gun snob. My guns keep me alive on the job, so I buy the best. But Brown explained that not everyone can afford the best, and new shooters need a gun that doesn't cost \$800 plus magazines, optics,

lights and holsters. I began to see why Hi-Point has its cult following. Brown also introduced me to the Russian Barnaul ammo that his company has begun importing.

Next was a table with Ron Norton from Inland Manufacturing and some pretty cool retro World War II guns. We shot some Rock River Arms BT-9 carbines and pistols, then a Just Right Carabines 9mm and MG Arms' ARs (available in eight calibers), along with the company's Wraith 1911 pistol. And that was just the morning. Mark Sidelinger treated us

all to Fat Racks BBQ, and it was so good we went back there for lunch every day.

The first motorcycle ride came after lunch. Landeen and I chased the road bikes all the way up the fabled Beartooth Pass in Montana that opened the week before and got snowed shut two weeks later. Snowbanks along the road were still 10 feet high and, of course, we had to stop and throw snowballs at each other. It was hard to believe that it was June. The day ended with Millstone Pizza, cold drinks and a lot of very tired guys

making jokes about who had the most fun that day.

DAY TWO

The second day, we headed back to the very nice Cody Shooting Complex for a morning of long gun shooting. The same guys from before brought along a Rock River Arms prototype rifle that will debut at the 2020 SHOT Show and a D-Day commemorative Inland M37 trench gun that we shot along with several other shotguns at an impromptu Five-Stand competition. A lot of people said things like, "Back when I had time to practice, I used to be pretty good at this." Naturally, any misses were met with jokes, juvenile humor and poignant put-downs. Eventually they all told me to be quiet.

After shooting, we hit up Fat Racks BBQ once again, and a group got back on their bikes. This time Alex and I

“

...MY EDITOR...LAUGHED AND EXPLAINED THAT I WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPOSING THE WEEK OF MOTORS, MACHINE GUNS AND MAYHEM TO THE WORLD.”



While some of the attendees are competitors in the firearms industry, everyone united for a few days to renew friendships and make sure a good time was had by all.



went with the off-road crew, and my 2002 Toyota Tacoma 4x4 was pushed to the max to keep up. We went west around Buffalo Bill Reservoir and then into the hills, where we skirted some BLM agents (I think we were riding on legal land), and the guys showed off their hill climbing skills. Tim Matters from Tactical Walls displayed serious man skills on any motorcycle he rode, and he rode several because when he was done with them, parts were falling off. Stopping to look at the views was the only thing that slowed us down as we wound our way up a “trail” on what I believe was Citadel Mountain.

Dinner that night was at the Cody Cattle Company with live music from the Triple C Cowboys. There were about 25 of us from Motoschützen along with 300 other guests in attendance. Afterward, half the crew rolled next door to take in the rodeo

while the rest of us went over to the Juniper Bar before again meeting up at the Silver Dollar and becoming impromptu cornhole champs against all challengers.

DAY THREE

Our shooting was done, but we were treated to an exclusive tour of the Cody Firearms Museum by lovely curator Ashley Hlebinsky and assistant curator Danny Michael. I’d describe the place in three words: A-MAZ-ING. The museum was just finishing a \$12 million renovation. So much history about firearms is packed into the place that I can’t wait to go back. Plus, they have hands-on displays that explain basic gun parts and safety and allow you to mimic shooting a machine gun, for example. Even my wife would love this museum.

Finally, it was time for our last ride, which took

us east from Cody through beautiful canyons, mountains and resorts that are only accessible a few months out of the year. We traveled the backroads and stopped to enjoy the scenery that none of us in our hectic 60-hour weeks would normally ever appreciate. And every one of us wore a wide grin that comes from the satisfaction of knowing we are doing the best we can for the industry, for our products and for the people who depend on us. This is a little slice of how much pleasure and beauty there is in this world.

One of the things that really struck me about all of these guys was how diverse their activities were. Nobody focused on just one product or even one line of products. They were negotiating with distributors, with product providers, with foreign countries, the BATFE, employees and advertisers. At the same

time, even guys who were in competition bent over backwards to help each other. If someone needed a replacement part for their motorcycle, a cell phone, ammo, a ride or just a sympathetic ear to vent, these guys were there for each other. It was impressive and heartwarming at the same time.

I admit that I’m a cynical cop who thinks the worst of everyone, but I felt like participating in Motoschützen was a shining star in a sea of woe. And while this event isn’t for the masses, I feel privileged to have peeked behind the curtain and witnessed a little of how the other half lives, even if it isn’t all glamour and luxury. These guys believe in our rights and their products, and work all day every day—even when they are on vacation. But they still want to have a good time. And that, my friends, is Motoschützen! 🍷