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By Scott Truill



## CZ's 527 Ebony Edition Rifle in .223

**Delivered to me and now lying on the workbench** was the new CZ 527 Ebony Edition rifle in .223. Even at a glance it was easy to tell that this rifle was a little bit special. CZ rifles are manufactured in the Czech Republic and, like the standard 527 models, the Ebony Edition features a true mini-Mausser style action, set trigger, and wooden stock.

**W**hen I say mini-Mausser, I mean that the action is a true Mauser design scaled down to handle cartridges of .223/.222 size with a small lightweight receiver and short bolt travel.

With its attractive stock and deep blued finish, the CZ 527 was certainly nice to look at, but even a pretty rifle needs to perform. What was it like and what could it do?

### The Action

Basically a standard 527 action with a flat European dovetail, the ebony edition features a flush fitting 3 round magazine instead of the usual 5 round one. I tried an older Brno fox 5 round magazine and found it fitted fine. An unobtrusive magazine release catch located on the right hand side of the bottom metal drops the magazine out nicely.

A feature I really like on these actions is the simplicity of the bolt and the manner in which the bolt handle retains the firing pin and bolt shroud assembly in much the same way as a Tikka. It's an idea I have copied into my own actions in a similar form because of the simple



*Top: I couldn't get onto my fallow deer possie so tried the CZ on rabbits, one at 231 meters. Above: A genuine miniature Mauser.*

nature of the design. To strip the CZ bolt simply de-cock it, withdraw the bolt handle, and remove the firing pin.

Another plus are the double cocking cams machined into the rear of the bolt body that are dually opposed. This reduces the tendency of the firing pin assembly to twist and bend under cocking tension which is common with other bolt action designs. This is due to the cocking cam being below the axis

of the firing pin and spring which is not ideal as it tends to increase the effort required to lift the bolt as the cocking piece and bolt shroud rub on each other. The double cams on the 527 bolt go a long way in reducing this, giving a smooth bolt lift and a cocking piece that can be easily cocked and de-cocked by hand when the bolt is removed from the rifle. The receiver is grooved for a scope.

The bolt body is attractively jewelled,

and the one piece Mauser claw type extractor provides positive extraction. The ejector is fixed in the bolt way. A thumb applied safety catch is located on the right side of the receiver and blocks the firing pin. Steel is used exclusively throughout the action, including the bottom metal and magazine. For those familiar with the standard 527 action there won't be a lot they will find different.

### The Trigger

As with most CZ centre-fire rifles, the set trigger is a nice feature. It is a single set type and is user adjustable for sear engagement, over-travel and weight. The set trigger feature is also adjustable for weight via a small set screw that can be accessed through the trigger guard without stripping the rifle.

Once the rifle is cocked, a forward push on the trigger rotates the upper

deep blued finish. Overall barrel length is 601mm with a right hand 1 in 12" twist which should stabilise all but the longest .22 calibre projectiles. Open sights are not provided. A small amount of copper fouling was evident which I did not remove.

### The Scope

A Shirstone 4-12x44 parallax adjustable scope with mil dot cross hair came in steel CZ 527 high rings. The scope itself performed well throughout testing, with audible finger adjustable turrets and held zero on the range and in the field. The parallax adjustment ring is located forward over the objective lens and was a handy feature to have, especially when using the scope on its highest power setting.

In the short time I had it I couldn't fault the scope itself, however it wasn't



*I tried a variety of factory ammo. Fiocchi and Federal were the best.*

trigger surface into contact with a separate trigger sear, compressing its spring and 'setting' the trigger. This is a friction hold on the trigger rather than a sear to bent engagement. When the trigger is touched, and I do mean touched, the trigger is released by the set sear, and is propelled forward, kicking the main sear out of engagement with the cocking piece and releasing the firing pin.

Set triggers are able to be set so lightly and safely as they don't have the weight of the firing pin spring pressing down on them. I was able to get this one as light as .12 lb with the adjustment screw; in fact it was so light I had difficulty attaching the force gauge to measure it. As supplied, the trigger released at 2.12 lb when the set trigger feature wasn't used.

Mechanically, this is an outstanding trigger.

### The Barrel

Being European, the barrel is hammer forged and finished externally with multiple spiral flats running the full length of the barrel. It is of medium contour with a flat recessed crown and

suited to this rifle as the eyepiece housing obstructed the bolt handle somewhat, making cycling the bolt rapidly difficult. A slightly more compact European or American optic would be a better choice for this style of rifle, ideally with repeatable dial up turrets to take advantage of the caliber's long range small game potential.

### The Stock

Made from highly figured walnut wood with an ebony fore-end cap, and deep sharp checkering, the stock is an attractive piece of timber. I especially liked the straight double stepped lines of the cheek piece and the manner in which the comb curved back to the shoulder. The words 'Ebony Edition' have been engraved into the underside of the fore-end and a black rubber recoil pad is neatly fitted to the butt.

A small amount of bedding media has been used around the recoil lug area and the barrel channel is of a generous size to ensure that the barrel floats freely back to the receiver. The rest of the receiver bedding area has been neatly inletted and I wouldn't feel there was any need to add or alter anything here.

**On the Range**

A near windless day allowed a good test of the CZ's accuracy. All testing was done at 150 metres with the ammunition consisting of FIOCCHI 55gr soft points, Federal 55gr soft point, Wolf 62gr FMJ, and some reloads with 35gr Hornady V-Max projectiles.

I fired three four shot groups with all the ammunition types, starting with the FIOCCHI and Federal, then the steel cased heavy Wolf ammunition, and lastly the 35gr V-Max reloads. The FIOCCHI averaged exactly 25mm at 150 metres for the three groups, with the Federal going slightly better at 22mm for an average. The heavier Wolf ammunition averaged a four shot group of 39mm at 150 metres which was surprising, as I wouldn't have expected



*Mechanically, the CZ trigger is superb.*

the slower 1 in 12" twist to have stabilised these projectiles. I've seen other .223 caliber rifles keyhole the Wolf and SS109 military ammunition which is also heavier than 60gr at only 10 meters.

The light 35gr V-Max loads proved to be very accurate in this rifle; averaging 13mm at 150 metres for three four shot groups, which is the sort of

accuracy you would expect from a heavy barrelled custom varmint rig.

The CZ 527 Ebony Edition performed very well with all the ammunition types and with the set trigger I found it relatively easy to group shoot off bags.

**In the Field**

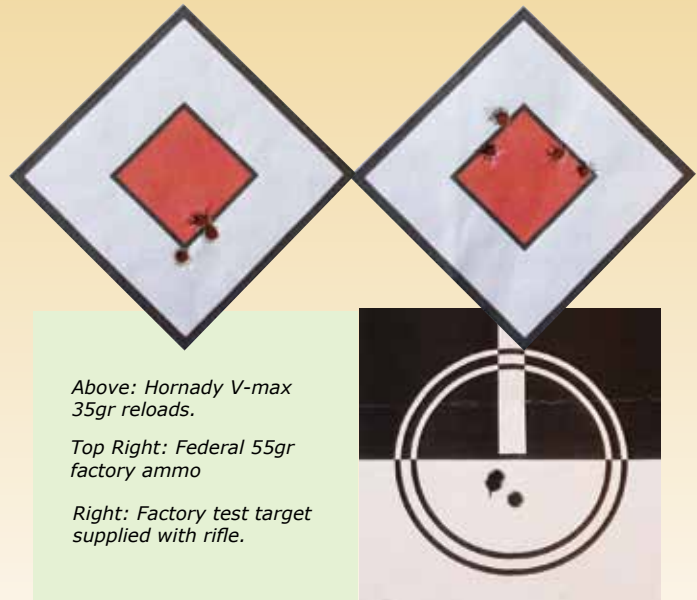
The opportunity to try the CZ on some fallow deer wasn't presented during the time I had the rifle, so a few rabbits filled in for them, one being taken at 231 meters with the Hornady 35gr V-Max loads which I had zeroed the rifle for. The bolt handle rubbing on the scope made reloading a bit awkward, but apart from that the whole set-up worked well. If I was going to use this rifle mainly for varminting I would add a quality bipod or shooting bag to take full advantage of the rifle and caliber combination. For a light calibre stalking rifle I would leave it as is, changing only the scope for one with smaller eyepiece housing.

**Conclusion**

The majority of rifles I work with are of the stainless variety, with a healthy dose of alloys and synthetics added to the ingredients. It's hard to argue with the practicality of a rifle built

with these materials, and that's where my personal tastes lie. Equally however, it's hard to beat the beauty and feel of a well made wooden stocked rifle with deep, flawlessly-blued metal work such as the CZ Ebony Edition. Everyone who handled the CZ was impressed with its quality and appearance. It will appeal to those who appreciate the finer things in life, and while being very pretty to look at, it's made to be used, not left in the gunroom.

The CZ ebony edition shoots and functions very well, and features like the single set trigger, and heavy floated hammer forged barrel make this a practical rifle for everyday field use that I would expect to perform very well over the owner's lifetime.



*Above: Hornady V-max 35gr reloads.*

*Top Right: Federal 55gr factory ammo*

*Right: Factory test target supplied with rifle.*

Specifications	
Calibre (detachable mag.)	.222 Rem, .223 Rem, 22 Hornet
Magazine Capacity	3 rounds
Stock	walnut
Trigger	adjustable single set trigger
Sights	no sights
Overall length	1077 mm
Barrel length	601 mm
Weight	2.8 kg
Barrel	hammer forged
Agents:	Kilwell Sports Ltd