



# Two Years with **TOM KNAPP**



## HOW THE WORLD'S GREATEST LIVING EXHIBITION SHOOTER BECAME A PART OF THE CZ FAMILY.

By DAVID MILLER

While the ink on my contract with CZ-USA was still wet, I caught word that Tom Knapp was a free agent — the renowned exhibition shooter no longer had a gun sponsor. I happened to be in his neck of the woods and decided to go out on a limb and give him a call. If you've ever heard Tom speak, it is a voice you'll never forget.

Tom sounds like he's been on the radio all his life, with a deep, booming "broadcast voice" that commands attention. I was new to the marketing department at CZ-USA, but picked up the phone and called him on a whim.

"Mr. Knapp, my name is David Miller and you don't know me, but I work at CZ-USA. Do you know much about our firearms?"

Tom replied, "I sure do. I use a BRNO semiauto .22 Mag. in my rifle show."

I had an in. We chatted for quite some time, and I explained that I had been shooting competitions with CZs for the last few years and really enjoyed not only their shotguns but also the leadership inside the company. So much, in fact, that I decided to make a career change to come work for CZ-USA. I mentioned that I was already in Minnesota, just two hours away from him, and that I'd love to come meet if he had the time. He agreed, and I hit the road.

It was a surreal evening for me, driving to meet up with an icon of the shotgun industry. Arriving at that little restaurant in Big Lake, it was a mix of nervousness and excitement to shake hands with a legend. Accompanied by his lovely wife, Colleen, it didn't take me long to realize that she is Tom's biggest supporter and a huge part of his ongoing success. We grabbed a table and the conversations began, the three of us chatting for hours about hunting and shooting. We were lost in our own little world, so much so that the manager had to come and politely ask us to leave. It was past closing time, apparently.

A few weeks later, Tom's proposal arrived in the mail and CZ-USA brought him on board as our very own exhibition shooter.

In the last two years, CZ has enjoyed a new level of notoriety. Tom's energy has brought new attention to the CZ line of shotguns, and the emails and phone calls started rolling in supporting our sponsorship of him. The line has expanded, and we even created a Tom Knapp special-edition 912 semiauto.

Here are some tidbits you might not know about Tom Knapp:

- Tom is currently recognized as the greatest exhibition shooter of modern times.

- With TV appearances and more than 50 live shows a year in the United States alone, Tom has thrilled countless shooters with his seemingly impossible feats using CZ shotguns, rimfire rifles and sometimes both.

- Tom has been performing for the public since 1987 and has travelled the world, entertaining audiences as large as 8,000 spectators.

- Tom holds three distinctive world records in freestyle target shooting and exhibition shooting, and is one of the few exhibitionist shooters still making history.

I still find it hard to believe that a spur-of-the-moment phone call two years ago resulted in not only a great business partnership, but a great friendship with a shooting sports legend. 📞

### TOM KNAPP'S WORLD RECORDS

#### WORLD RECORD NO. 1

Tom Knapp set his first world record by throwing nine standard clay targets and breaking them with individual shots in less than two seconds.

#### WORLD RECORD NO. 2

On July 19, 2000, Tom Knapp, with a pump shotgun in one hand, threw eight clay targets in the air with his other hand and broke every one of them with individual shots in an amazing 1.87 seconds, creating a Manually Operated Pump-Gun classification.

#### WORLD RECORD NO. 3

In Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on October 20th, 2004, Tom Knapp set out to make history again. With his 12-ga. semiauto shotgun and extended magazine tube, Tom launched 10 clay targets into the air with one hand and shot all 10 with individual shots in an unbelievable 2.2 seconds flat.

The listed timing for each of these records were digitally recorded for accuracy.