

Szanto 2002 Chronograph

Today The Time Bum brings the Szanto series to a close. So far, I have shown you three models with black cases and a utilitarian ethos, but the subject of this fourth and final review takes a very different approach to affordable retro. The model 2002 chronograph speaks to an earlier era of more genteel pursuits. It is the most identifiably "vintage" and owes the least to military design.



There are three variants in the 2000 series: black dial with gunmetal case, green dial with brushed case, and the ivory dial with brushed case reviewed here. MSRP is \$325. It uses a Miyota OS20 quartz movement with registers for seconds, minutes, and 24 hours, and a date complication between 4 and 5 o'clock. The small seconds is always engaged, the large second hand runs with the chronograph function. The pushers respond with a positive click when operated. I would have happily forgone the date in favor of a seamless and symmetrical dial, but I know this is a minority opinion among buyers. As it stands, the black-on-white disc coordinates well with the ivory dial on the model 2002 and does not detract.

The dial reminds me of an Elgin or Waltham pocket watch. In part due to its size, but also the skeleton hands, large Arabic numerals, and "railroad track" index. While other Szanto models drew their inspiration from the 1940s, the 2000 series seems drawn from the pre-war era. Of course, no one would have ever worn a watch this large back then, but times have changed. The hands and markers are filled with a white lume that glows intensely when fully charged. Day or night, this is one fetching dial.

The 2002 is a big watch. The 46mm case initially put me off as I had no confidence that it would fit my 6.5" wrist, but I was mistaken. Short lugs give it an overall length of 52mm, which fit me just fine. The level of finish on the case is excellent. It is brushed north-south along the barrel and lugs, and in a circular pattern around the bezel. The brushed finish was a good choice for this watch, as a polished case of this size would run the risk of being

too flashy. In profile, center section of the barrel is slightly raised, breaking up the flat sides and slimming the case. This angle also displays one of my favorite parts, the domed mineral crystal. I love a dome on a watch: the height, the little bit of distortion at the edges, and most importantly for a watch in this style, the vintage feel it imparts. Domed crystals lend a great measure of character and I hope to see more of them on future Szanto models.



The strap is another element that sets this watch apart. It is 22mm wide, and does not taper, terminating in an engraved, brushed, square frame buckle. It is made of thick black leather with ivory stitching and a light brown cracked pattern that makes it appear very old and very dry, creating the same effect as the strap on the Tudor Heritage Black Bay; however, it is just a pattern on a brand new strap, not actually an aged finish. I found the strap to be very stiff at first but not uncomfortable. I would expect it to break in easily. Comparing the pattern on the strap to the truly cracked and destroyed leather on a 40 year old office chair, I found it to be a faithful reproduction.



The case back and crown are decorated with the Szanto logo, just as the other models. In great contrast to the other watches reviewed, water resistance is a scant 30m, making it safe for the occasional splash, but little else. This is indicative of the 2002's purpose. It is not a sport or tool watch. On the other hand, its size prevents it from being a true dress



watch. You can fit it under a shirt sleeve if the cuff has a large barrel, but dress watches should be slim and simple, and this watch is neither. I would call it smart casual, or business casual - those nebulous realms of dress that include everything from jeans and an oxford, to jacket and tie, falling short of a proper suit. I managed to wear it into the office under a blazer, but it was just a bit too much for me. Bigger guys with larger wrists than mine could pull it off its proportions a bit better. A strap swap could provide even greater versatility. I think a finished, tapered, brown leather strap with heavy padding to balance the case could easily get you through the work week, with the beefy cracked strap for the weekend.



This watch is probably the prettiest of the five Szanto watches I evaluated. It may not have the military bearing and utility of the others, but it has a casual elegance with a solid, sporting flair. I'd like to think that if I was timing a race between a Duesenberg Model J and a Supercharged Mercedes-Benz, I'd use something like the Szanto 2002.

Pro: Drop-dead gorgeous.

Con: Large watch, little water resistance.

Sum: Sexy beast. The Time Bum approves.