

Review

Szanto Model 1202 and 1203



See "The Verdict" on the final page

Review by Mark Phillips

Szanto Model 1202 and 1203

The Story

During the early 1900s, many watches were military inspired and therefore had limitless character. Peoples imaginations could run wild about where the watch and it's design had come from. Who had thought it up? Who was the hero who inspired it? They were captivating and full of mystery. Of course there were many different design themes, but the vintage military style stood out and still does. They were beautiful, simple, and small. There is a recent trend towards these vintage styles and Szanto (Sahn-tow) is taking part with very competitive prices. They are a new watch company that is determined to mimic these classic designs while making the watch cases bigger and therefore much more relevant. They also use new, precise quartz movements and canvas straps that only add to the design. They say "Everything Old is New Again" and are doing their best to contribute.

Design and Specifications

- 46mm case diameter
- Brushed stainless steel ion plated black case
- Hardened mineral crystal
- Screw down crown
- Japanese Quartz 2-Eye chronograph movement
- About 10mm thick (no exact figure given)
- Canvas strap with nubuck backing and signature buckle
- 100m water resistance
- Date function
- 1 year limited warranty

The Face

Szanto has the challenging task of using brand new parts to make a watch face look vintage. For what they have to work with, they are doing a decent job at making these

watches look like they just came out of a time machine from the early 1900s. There are subtle details about the face that make it look older than it is such as yellowed hands and numbers. They also made an excellent choice of making this watch a two eye chronograph because old watches were typically cluttered and the extra sub dials help with that feel, although it's still organized and easy to use. It is not hard to read and the chronograph function is very easy to use. I also love for a watch to have a date function because I end up looking at that more times per day than the actual time. This watch has a rather curious date window because it shows 3 dates while pointing to the correct one. It doesn't make it any harder to read, but I am curious to know why they

chose to clearly show 3 different dates at once. Overall, it's nice to see that they put some thought into the face because watch companies usually fail in the details. The case is 46mm and the largest I have ever owned, but works very well and does not feel bulky. I was worried that it would be far too big for my small wrist, but since it is very slim (about 10mm thick) it has worked nicely and fit well.



Case Back

This is a simple case back and that's all a quartz movement watch needs to have. It is cool to see designs carved into the back for some extra unseen character, but a watch without that doesn't get any points taken off of my scoresheet. The information printed on the back is easy to read, which is nice if you have eyes as bad as mine. It is 100 meters water resistant, which is a great addition to an already impressive timepiece. This water resistance is primarily due to the screw down crown.

This crown is exactly the right size and a joy to use because I can actually tell when it has clicked into a position other than the first one! By this, I mean, it has multiple positions in order to independently set the date and time...which is a BIG deal. If you have never changed the date from the 2nd to the 3rd by turning the crown 720 rotations because a watch didn't have this function...then maybe you don't understand. But, those of you who have (including myself) know that this feature deserves praise. Other notable declarations printed on the back are that it has 316L stainless steel and Japanese Quartz movement.



Strap and Buckle



As I always begin the strap section of my reviews: "I'm a huge watch strap fan. I love custom straps made by old guys in their garages, NATO straps from Europe, and odd straps like denim or canvas." This is an odd strap made out of canvas! Yippee! A new watch means a new strap and a new strap means changing the look of your whole collection...and all you need is a spring bar tool. So when a company sends TWO

different colored canvas straps...I am overjoyed. In the photos throughout this review, you may have noticed two different strap colors. These are the two straps that Szanto sent and I was thrilled to receive them. I had ordered the gray strap, but ended up liking the tan one much more because of the way it complemented the watch so it's very nice of them to send people not just a watch but options too! Now let me step down from my soapbox and tell you that these straps are incredibly comfortable. I got this watch when I was recovering from surgery and I wore it almost the whole time I

was laid up in bed. The nubuck backing of these canvas straps make it a delight to wear and add to the old time look that was being shot for. The only thing I don't like about them is the more you take it on and off...the more the holes fray. Take a look at the photos and you may see what I'm talking about, although since they send an extra it's no reason to not buy this watch.

Packaging and Presentation

"I'm always looking to see that watch companies send their watches to the customer with excellent presentation. I think it adds a great touch by showing they are grateful for their business and respect the customer." Szanto did an excellent job at this and impressed me greatly. The watch box they sent compliments the time period they represent and simply looks great. It is built well and is not something I will be throwing away anytime soon.



The Verdict



The good: Szanto did a great job of bringing back vintage styled watches (using modern technology!) while still providing quality timepieces at affordable prices. Small (probably overlooked) details add to the feel that the company was shooting for such as an extra strap, yellowed hands, and easy to use crown.

The bad: The canvas straps fray slightly with each use and the ~\$300 price tag might not be competitive enough in the practical watch world. These two small things, though, only add up to the deduction of a 1/2 star.