

## SHOT SHOW

1979

2018

40 YEARS

SO BEGINS  
THE YEAR  
IN GEAR

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

**E**very year I look forward to SHOT Show, but my body begs me not to go.

Although there are different shows throughout the year, there are two that hold the most relevance to the knife industry and knife enthusiasts in general, Blade Show and SHOT Show.

As each show draws near, my inner child starts bouncing around like he has been given far too much sugar at grandma's house and sent home. However, the old guy on the outside starts to grumble a little and my feet send up a formal protest.

The most recent scene of podiatry carnage was this year's SHOT Show. I heard it said once, a few years ago, that if you were to stretch SHOT Show out in a straight line, it would continue for 15 miles. That's 15 miles of guns, knives and equipment. A veritable playground for gear hounds.

Although for me SHOT Show means running from one meeting to the next, often in completely opposite locations from each other, it is always a nice time to see old friends and make new ones. I also like to take the opportunity to check out the cool gear I pass along the way and keep my eyes peeled for great new products that I think you, the reader, might be interested in for our "New Products" column.

It is not often that you have the lobby to yourself at SHOT Show. You have to come pretty late in the evening.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the Vegas nightlife and let you know that if you have a chance to travel to Vegas, you must get out and explore. This year the big attraction was heading over to see Las Vegas Gunfights.

At Las Vegas Gunfights you can either participate or spectate. In our case we spectated, since it was full when we arrived, and we wanted to check it out first. In a nutshell, you go into a small arena with either a team, or one on one, and are given a firearm and two magazines full of "simunition." Once you are given the go-ahead, you start shooting. When you are out of rounds, it is time for hand-to-hand combat. Although striking is not allowed, these guys go at it. Once the opposition is tapped out, the fight is over.

While we were there, we got the added benefit of seeing Doug Marcaida, of the History Channel's "Forged in Fire," judge a match, which was a nice touch.

All in all, now that I have had time to recover from the long week and my inner child is thoroughly sated, I have had the opportunity to reflect on what I saw. I can tell you with all honesty this is going to be a good year for cutlery fans.

Stay sharp and keep it real. **KI**

*Joshua Swanagon*