

Opinion: At the Gun Store - The distinguishing feature of the Beretta 92 is the open slide design. When you first see it you will also realize how large it is. When you pick it up you will feel the weight and begin to gain an appreciation for our service members who carry this as their daily side arm. But also realize that this is the gun that replaced the venerable M1911A1, itself a hefty firearm. It is designed to be reliable in extreme conditions. The design has literally been battle tested for nearly 30 years.

The grip is large, but it's more rounded cross section is easier to grip than some boxier polymer grips. The side panels are removable and thinner after-market ones are available to make the grip a little more svelte.

The magazine release is reversible.

The trigger guard has a slight forward serrated section for those who use a finger on the front of the trigger guard in the two hand grip.

The Dual Action/Single Action (DA/SA) trigger and safety allow the gun to be carried with the chamber loaded, the hammer down and safety on. From this condition, flipping the safety up make the gun ready to fire utilizing the Dual Action trigger. The hammer could also be cocked manually and that sets the trigger in the shorter and lighter Single Action mode. The ambidextrous Safety lever is also the de-cocker and is mounted on the slide. The fire position is up and the safe position is down.

The slide release is only on the left side.

The take down mechanism requires two movements to release the slide. On the right side there is an elliptical button that when pushed in, allows the lever on the left side to be swung down. The slide does not have to be pulled back to do this.

If you have seen the movie "Lethal Weapon 4" you might recall a scene where the character played by Jet Li pulls the slide off the gun being used by the character played by Mel Gibson. While probably not something you would attempt in a stressful situation, it is possible. It can be done with the gun in any loaded, cocked, safety, or magazine position. Most semi-automatic pistols require the slide to be moved to the rear before the take down mechanism can be activated.

The front sight is integral to the slide. The rear is in a dovetail. The type of sights varies by the model. Between the 92FS and M9 there are at least four configurations. Some have an accessory rail on the dust cover.

The extractor on the right side also acts as a loaded chamber indicator which is visual and tactile. If you have sensitive eyes and finger tips.

The price is higher than the M&P 9 and Glock 17. I have seen a couple of sales over the last couple of years In Tampa that brings the base model into the \$600 dollar price range.

On the Range: The mass helps absorb recoil.

The 5" barrel helps with precision. Because of the configuration of the slide and the barrel, the sight radius is similar to guns with shorter barrels.

The single action trigger is light and crisp. I've told a few students who were shooting this for the first time that if you can't shoot this gun well, you need to go back to working on your basics.

This was originally told to me by a Vietnam Veteran referring to a M1911A1 but I think it applies to the 92FS as well; "If you run out of ammo you've still got a two pound steel club" -

While its size may be problematic for some, if you can get a grip on it, you should find it a smooth operator. - Greg Poole, September 5, 2014