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Market Challenges

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Is Ammo Really Coming Back?

It's been a contentious topic for over two years, but there are signs of more widespread availability in the ammunition segment. Yes, there are still many holes to fill — especially outside the most popular calibers — but in this issue, manufacturers and dealers share some encouraging insights on the state of the ammo market today.

To hear how manufacturers have addressed continued supply challenges and dealers are navigating availability disruptions, see this month's two-part feature "State Of The 2022 Ammo Market" starting on p. 22.

We invite reader feedback: Email comments@shootingindustry.com.

BUYING, SELLING & MARKETING USED GUNS

In this month's *Best Practices* column, Tim Barker examines the used-guns segment. With uncertainty still top of mind for many, the expected flood of lightly used guns from first-time gun buyers has yet to materialize — but there are still opportunities to be had, advises Wichita Gun Club Owner Jess Hancock: "The money has to be right, but every gun will sell."

For more, see p. 20.

PREP FOR FALL HUNTING SEASON

It won't be long until the fall hunting

season is here. Carolee Anita Boyles gleans the perspectives from dealers in Pennsylvania and Mississippi. With archery season starting before rifle season, Mark Austin of 2nd Amendment Outdoors shared his store gets creative in promoting archery's appeal to hunters.

"Archery is our first big-game hunting season of the year," he said. "We may do an event where people can shoot at a target, hit a certain spot and win a gift card. We're always trying to come up with something new and different to promote archery."

HOME DEFENSE VS. PERSONAL DEFENSE

Many gun purchasers, particularly those newer to gun ownership, may think buying a gun for personal protection is the same thing as buying one for home defense. They walk in asking for a handgun (likely a 9mm) suitable for everyday carry, not realizing there may be better options when it comes to protecting their property. It's up to you, the dealer, to educate them about the differences and the variety of suitable options available to them.

"My impression is when shopping for a home-defense gun, most people are offered a handgun unless they specifically ask for a shotgun," said Linda Powell, director of media relations for Mossberg.

To glean tips on effectively selling home-defense firearms and storage options to home-defense customers, see "Have You Thought About A Shotgun?" pp. 34–36.



JUNE 2022

NEXT MONTH: ANNUAL FIREARMS PRODUCTION REPORT

The "U.S. Firearms Industry Today" report is the centerpiece of the July issue, which also contains features on reaching urban customers, gun-care sales tips, a customer loyalty success story, selling tips for the 1911 platform and more.

The yearly "U.S. Firearms Industry Today" report will analyze U.S. firearms production in 2020, the most recent data available, as well as import and export figures, NICS data and other economic indicators.

The biannual Greatest Buyer's Guide In The Universe — highlighting hundreds of business connections — also receives its first major update of the year in the July issue. **SI**



FEATURE HIGHLIGHT

"Have You Thought About A Shotgun?"

By Ashley McGee

PAGE 34

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IT'S NOT A CAKEWALK ...

Editor's Note: Unless you haven't been reading *SI* this year, you're likely aware of a long-running discussion that began in the Jan. 2022 issue — home-based FFL dealers are feeling “shut out” by some industry partners, generating record engagement. Storefront dealers haven't been shy about making their feelings known, either.

I've read your articles, and can see the home-based stores' point. They want to have their cake and eat it, too. You need to see the point of the brick-and-mortar stores.

We have a lot of overhead expenses to operate a store. Our insurance is based upon inventory level. Our electric and heat expenses are more than a home-based business. We have employees we pay along with payroll taxes. It's unfair to stock inventory customers can handle, and then run down to a home-based FFL to buy at a discounted price because they have no inventory and less expenses.

It appears you're defending the home-based FFL. We would not have the industry we have without the brick-and-mortar stores. Let's see some balance to your articles.

Bill McGuire, Owner
Interlaken Guns
Interlaken, N.Y.

Bill, thank you for your email and for reading Shooting Industry. I've been careful to not take a position on this topic, but have given the home-based folks an opportunity to share their perspectives — which they've done extensively. In my original response to this topic to the

It gets very
frustrating at times
trying to help
your customer to
the point of even
buying retail and
selling to them at
no markup.

home-based FFL Matthew Sims, I told him storefront dealers would continue as SI's target audience, and we're sticking to it. That said, it's clear home-based FFLs are here to stay and it's a win-win if we can collectively welcome and activate lifelong sportsmen and women.

— Jade Moldae, Editor

HOME-BASED VS. STOREFRONT DEALERS

John Doe here with ACME Firearms in business for 12 years somewhere in Texas ... *Shhhhhh!* Some of us who have been with certain distributors and manufacturers for over a decade don't want to advertise who we are and share who deals with home-based dealers because many of our reps haven't shared with their companies that we're home-based and not brick-and-mortar.

If they did, we'd be dropped by the distributor or manufacturer and it wouldn't be good for our reps who

couldn't care less. They have developed relationships with us over many years, and have been able to count on our reliable share of business they receive from us.

Many manufacturers have started requiring distributors to do their dirty work to weed out dealers who want to be able to represent their product. I cater to a lot of high-end clients who like high-price, quality firearms systems and would buy \$2,500–\$6,000 military-grade optics from a household name. I sold tens of thousands of dollars of these scopes, but because I didn't have a storefront like Walmart or Academy Sports with the cheaper traditional hunting scopes, this manufacturer now doesn't allow me to buy their scopes or even have access to study the inventory of their scopes with distributors.

This is why you have a lot of “brick-and-mortar” stores with employees and owners who are largely ignorant about the products they're offering. Many times, it doesn't matter because there are lots of customers who do all of their research online and just buy from the lowest-priced dealer, but I like to be a resource to my customers, many of whom are happy to knowingly pay more than they could elsewhere in return for product knowledge.

— Name withheld by request

I'm writing in response to the “pariah” story I saw in *Shooting Industry* and feel it's a real motivator for us at Xcalibur Arms.

I build mainly custom AR-10s and 15s, however, with all my following, demand from them grew to the point everyone wanted me to sell firearms, so we have. We have a great relationship with Davidson's and Zanders, however, since we're a “home-based” company, many places discriminate against us and refuse to sell to us.

We follow the same rules as any other dealer — big or small — and the fact we had to jump through all the hoops just to get an FFL should give a wholesaler the surety we're a legitimate business. However, I believe it's more than that.

I believe all the wholesalers really just want to deal with places that have huge volume and not just a few guns a week or

month or sporadic-type sales. But what they don't realize is, us small mom-and-pop shops provide personal one-on-one service and most of our customers are repeat customers. We provide a level of personalization the bigger shops do not. On top of that, we don't sell to just anyone. We are more selective on who we sell to, which, I believe, makes the transaction and industry more safe!

I commend places like Davidson's and Zanders for being smart enough and friendly enough to realize there are a ton of us out there and they know how we work. Hats off to them.

Jeff Wood, Operations Manager

Xcalibur Arms
Edmond, Okla.

I've been an FFL since 2007, mostly as a gunsmith, but I do retail firearms sales as well. I'm zoned for business and have all the licenses and sales tax documents as needed. I've also had the

same experiences as other non-brick-and-mortar businesses as far as dealing with suppliers.

Is my money not as green? No, I don't carry \$100,000 in inventory, have a rack of ammunition or T-shirts for sale or body armor, but I like to be able to take care of my customers when needed and have several options for finding what they want or need.

When we were in Wisconsin, I worked out of a purpose-built attached garage off the back of my home. Now in South Dakota, I have a building separate from my home, but we're primarily Gunsmithing, not full retail — no full gun, clothing or widget racks. I have \$150,000 in this building, a mortgage on it, overhead for my business and occupy it from 8 a.m.–6 p.m., Mon.–Fri.

Others chose a business model where they have to keep and pay employees, while some like me are a one-man show. Money is money. We're all in this for

the same reason: to make some money, take care of the customer and provide a service to the shooting public/industry. Big or small, we should be treated as equals.

The industry has really gone toward weeding out the little guy; unless you can buy 10 of something at once, you're useless to them or don't deserve the same pricing or lead times on components.

Online retailers that drop-ship are another issue — no stock on the shelf, just drop-shipped from manufacturers that won't ship direct to me if I called to order for my customer. It gets very frustrating at times trying to help your customer to the point of even buying retail and selling to them at no markup.

Also, MAP pricing ... but that's another story. Thanks for listening. **SI**

Brian L. Smith, Owner

Smith Guns
Belle Fourche, S.D.



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INDUSTRY SURPASSES \$15 BILLION IN EXCISE TAX CONTRIBUTIONS FOR CONSERVATION

NSSF marked a milestone achievement when firearm and ammunition manufacturers topped \$15 billion in contributions to the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund since its inception in 1937.

"This is an achievement for which all in the firearm and ammunition industry are proud," said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO. "This historic milestone is indicative of the value this industry places on the conservation of wildlife and the habitats in which they thrive. The Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund, which is mainly funded by taxes paid by firearm and ammunition

manufacturers, has been responsible for the restoration and recovery of America's iconic game species, including the Rocky Mountain elk, whitetail deer, pronghorn antelope, wild turkey and a variety of waterfowl. These funds have also contributed to the recovery of non-game species that are not hunted, including the American bald eagle."

Less than a year ago (Aug. 2021), NSSF announced firearm and ammunition excise tax contributions surpassed \$14 billion.

The Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund (commonly known as the Pittman-Robertson Fund) is funded by excise

taxes paid by firearm and ammunition manufacturers on their products, as well as archery equipment manufacturers. The excise tax is set at 11% of the wholesale price for long guns and ammunition and 10% of the wholesale price for handguns.

The excise tax, paid by manufacturers and importers, applies to all firearms produced or imported for commercial federal law enforcement sales, whether the purpose is for recreational shooting, hunting or personal defense. The tax is administered by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) of the Department of the Treasury, which turns the funds over to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

"This historic milestone is indicative of the value this industry places on the conservation of wildlife and the habitats in which they thrive."

Joe Bartozzi, NSSF President & CEO

USFWS deposits the Pittman-Robertson revenues into a special account called the Wildlife Restoration Trust Fund administered by the USFWS.

Continued on p. 12

FIOCCHI GROUP ACQUIRES LYALVALE EXPRESS

Fiocchi Group announced its acquisition of Lyalvale Express, a Litchfield, England-based manufacturer and distributor of premium hunting and sporting-clays shotshells since 1983. The deal closed Apr. 6.

Fiocchi Group is a leading producer of small-caliber ammunition under the Fiocchi Munizioni, Fiocchi of America and Baschieri & Pellagri brands.

The acquisition of Lyalvale further consolidates Fiocchi Group's footprint in the hunting and sporting-clays segments of the shooting industry.

"Lyalvale Express becomes part of a group with an unbeatable historical heritage, and will benefit from outstanding innovation capabilities and from a large production platform, which will generate important synergies," said Maurizio Negro, Fiocchi Group's CEO.

"The acquisition of Lyalvale Express not only brings an established brand with quality product to the group



portfolio, but (it also brings) additional manufacturing capacity to service Fiocchi Group's customers. We look forward to expanding and capitalizing on this very important addition to our leadership position in the ammunition industry," said Anthony Acitelli, Fiocchi of America CEO and president.

[/ fiocchiusa.com](http://fiocchiusa.com)

VISTA OUTDOOR TO SEPARATE ITS OUTDOOR PRODUCTS & SPORTING PRODUCTS

May 5, Vista Outdoor announced its board of directors unanimously approved a plan to separate its Outdoor Products and Sporting Products segments into two independent, publicly traded companies. The company expects to create these companies through a tax-free spin-off of its Outdoor Products segment to Vista Outdoor shareholders.

“Over the past few years, we’ve made significant progress executing on our strategy to grow our leading portfolio of brands, driving operational efficiencies and delivering value to our shareholders,” said Chris Metz, Vista Outdoor CEO. “As a result of our efforts, we have built strong businesses that are well-positioned for continued growth and success as independent companies.”

Following the separation, Outdoor Products (to be renamed at a later date) will be an industry-leading, diversified platform of iconic outdoor brands, including CamelBak, Bell, Giro, Camp Chef, Bushnell, Bushnell Golf, Foresight Sports, Stone Glacier and QuietKat, among others. Outdoor Products will serve consumers in a diverse and fast-growing set of categories, representing an estimated \$30 billion domestic market in its core and immediately adjacent end markets, with an estimated total global addressable market in excess of \$100 billion.

Outdoor Products will be led by Chris Metz as CEO and Sudhanshu Priyadarshi as CFO following completion of the separation. The other members of the Outdoor Products leadership team will be announced at a later date. Outdoor Products will be headquartered in Bozeman, Mont.

Following the spin-off, Sporting Products (to be renamed at a later date) will include the Federal, Remington,



CCI, Speer, Estate Cartridge and HEVI-Shot brands. Jason Vanderbrink, president of Sporting Products, will be appointed CEO following completion of the separation. The other members of the Sporting Products leadership team will be announced at a later date. Sporting Products will continue to be headquartered in Anoka, Minn.

Vista Outdoor expects the transaction will be completed in calendar year 2023, subject to regulatory approvals and satisfaction of other conditions.

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Continued from p. 10

These funds are made available to states and territories the year following their collection based on a statutory formula. Earlier this year, USFWS announced it had disbursed to the states \$1.5 billion in total funding, of which \$1.1 billion was directly tied to taxes paid by the firearm and ammunition industry.

These 10% to 11% excise tax dollars collected since 1937 under the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act are specifically designated to be used by state wildlife agencies for conservation and related purposes. Collectively, purchasers of firearms and ammunition, hunters and the industry are the greatest source of wildlife

conservation funding.

"The firearm and ammunition industry is filled with pride to achieve this landmark for conservation funding and the role our industry plays to ensure America's wildlife is perpetuated for future generations," Bartozzi concluded.

[/ nssf.org](http://nssf.org)

NASGW RELEASES Q1 2022 SCOPE REPORT

The National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (NASGW), creator of the industry's SCOPE Data Platform, has released the Q1 SCOPE Report, compiling distributor sales and inventory data from Jan. 1 through Mar. 31, 2022.

"Building upon the release of our annual SCOPE report, our quarterly reports will provide a consistent, ongoing update of the shooting sports distribution channel. The data and insight in this report are unparalleled in our industry, and we are excited to put this information

to work for businesses and organizations across the shooting sports industry," said Kenyon Gleason, NASGW president.

Released in February, the 2021 annual report encompassed firearms only. The Q12022 SCOPE Report has expanded to also include optics and ammunition, as well as NICS data as a familiar benchmark.

Data compiled from this report comes directly from SCOPE DLX (distributor sales and inventory). The NASGW plans to release a report for each quarter of 2022, and a year-end report that combines data from the entire year.

"The release of our 2021 annual report was widely successful. It's clear the industry has been hungry for something



like this for a long time. The data compiled across all the SCOPE platforms is very powerful, and we're looking forward to sharing with a wider audience on a regular basis," said Tom Hopper, NASGW senior data analyst.

The NASGW is offering a basic, high-level, overview report for free, and a full version is available for purchase via the NASGW website. [/ nasgw.org](http://nasgw.org)

NORMA PRECISION AMMUNITION RELOCATES TO GEORGIA

Norma Precision Ammunition, a subsidiary of European ammunition manufacturer RUAG Ammotec (now owned by Beretta Holding), has relocated its U.S. headquarters, manufacturing and warehousing/distribution operations to Chatham County, Ga., near Savannah.

With operations in 12 countries, Swiss-based RUAG Ammotec develops and produces high-end ammunition for the military, law enforcement, hunting and sport-shooting sectors.

"I'm grateful to Norma Precision Ammunition for their job-stimulating investments, and I look forward to

seeing the opportunities this creates for hardworking Georgians in the region," said Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp.

"The past four years have been remarkable years of steady growth. With this relocation, expansion and focus on the Norma Ammunition brand, we will continue to grow while better serving our customers and industry partners in the United States and abroad," said Christopher Eisenhardt, RUAG Ammotec president and CEO.

In 2021, Norma Precision Ammunition imported over 400 containers of ammunition from RUAG Ammotec factories in Europe, while also delivering over 30 million cartridges of ammunition made in the U.S.

"The Savannah area offers a significant



opportunity to expand our small-arms ammunition manufacturing and distribution operations to meet growing customer demand, and to better serve our partners in the small-arms industry while providing unmatched access to the world-class Port of Savannah," said Paul Lemke, president of Norma Precision Ammunition.

Norma Precision Ammunition is located at 141 Prosperity Drive in Garden City, Ga. [/ normashooting.com](http://normashooting.com)



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U.S. ARMY SELECTS SIG SAUER NEXT GENERATION SQUAD WEAPONS SYSTEM

SIG SAUER announced it was awarded the Next Generation Squad Weapons System (NGSW) contract by the U.S. Army after a rigorous 27-month testing and evaluation process.

The NGSW consists of SIG FURY Hybrid ammunition (6.8 Common Cartridge), the SIG-LMG lightweight belt-fed machine gun (XM250), the SIG MCX-SPEAR rifle (XM5) and SIG SLX suppressors. Together, these components are meant to advance soldier weapons technology to meet the emerging requirements of the U.S. Army.

SIG 6.8x51 FURY Hybrid ammunition uses a patented, lightweight metallic case designed to handle pressures higher than conventional ammunition, resulting in dramatically increased velocity and on-target energy in lighter weapons.




The SIG-LMG lightweight belt-fed machine gun and SIG MCX-SPEAR rifle are purpose-built to harness the energy of the SIG FURY 6.8 Common Cartridge ammunition, enabling greater range and increased lethality while reducing the soldier's load on the battlefield.

The SIG-LMG and MCX-SPEAR deliver significant weapon and technology advancements, and provide a solution for battlefield overmatch in comparison to the current M249 and M4/M4A1.

The U.S. Army's procurement of the NGSW System marks the beginning of an era where combat weapons are coupled with a suppressor as standard-issue

equipment. The SIG SLX suppressors are designed to reduce harmful gas backflow, sound signature and flash. They feature a patented quick-detach design for easy install and removal.

"We commend U.S. Army leadership for having the vision to undertake this historic procurement process to deliver a transformational weapon system to our warfighters. This award is the culmination of a successful collaboration between SIG SAUER and the U.S. Army, and we look forward to the continuing partnership," said Ron Cohen, SIG SAUER president and CEO. / sigsauer.com 

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Nic Lenze has joined the FMG Publications team as video producer

where he is producing and editing video content for all FMG properties, including the company's YouTube channels, "Gun Cranks" and "FMG Pubs," as well as its other social media channels. He will also focus on growing viewership and driving new readers to the *American Handgunner*, *GUNS Magazine* and *American COP* websites.

Randy Moldé, FMG Publications' president, said, "Nic brings plenty of exuberance and a fresh perspective to video design and marketing. His work outside the industry is what caught our attention. We're looking forward to the new ideas and compelling video storytelling he'll present for all our brands."

After completing a two-year trade program at an Avid-certified editing school, Lenze spent 12 years in post-production editing and also writes firearms-related articles.



J. WILSON

IRON VALLEY SUPPLY CO. WELCOMES NEW HIRES

Iron Valley Supply Co. recently welcomed three new members to its team: Account Managers Bryan Warchus (not pictured) and Janet Wilson and Digital Creative Specialist Jennifer Rambo.



J. RAMBO

Warchus has more than two decades of experience in the retail firearms industry, including running daily operations for two gun shops and serving as a reserve patrolman and armorer for the Portage Police Department in Indiana.

Wilson's experience stems

from positioning customers' needs with products and services, collaborating on business growth initiatives and developing B2B relationships. After serving in the telecommunications industry for over 30 years, she spent six years working as an NRA Certified Firearms Instructor and event coordinator at a firearms retail store.

Rambo spent 19 years at Ellett Brothers as the media supervisor. She earned an industrial technologies and commercial graphics degree from Midlands Technical College.



M. CRAWFORD

AKTI ENGAGES MARKETING DUO

The American Knife and Tool Institute (AKTI) partnered with marketing specialists Matt Crawford and Jay Stilwell to work with the marketing committee to create and execute marketing and



J. STILWELL

communication strategies for AKTI programs, events and initiatives to increase awareness, audience and membership. They will also provide consistent messaging regarding the association's mission, programs and legislative direction through all forms of media.



J. MCBRAYER

BLASER GROUP NAMES DIRECTOR

Blaser Group named Joshua McBrayer its director of shotgun programs for North America. He

is responsible for managing the company's competitive shotgun sports presence as well as building additional Blaser, Mauser, J.P. Sauer, Liemke and John Rigby & Co. programs and relationships with consumers and dealers.

Jason Evans, Blaser Group CEO, said, "Josh has done an

outstanding job establishing and managing sales channels and dealer networks on behalf of Blaser throughout the world and building long-term relationships with partners."

McBrayer spent six years working with Blaser Germany as international sales manager for Blaser in Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland, Benelux, South America and the USA. Most recently, he served as brand manager for the company in addition to his sales role.



J. RONQUEST

DRAKE WATERFOWL SYSTEMS SELECTS VP OF DEVELOPMENT

Drake Waterfowl Systems (Drake) announced Jim

Ronquest has joined the company as VP of development where he is responsible for cultivating and managing industry partnerships and relationships on behalf of Drake. He will also support Drake through content production and product development.

Ronquest spent more than 25 years with Rich-N-Tone (RNT) Calls and introduced audiences to waterfowl and wetlands conservation through his outdoor television show, resulting in raised awareness and protection of the places and species vital to the lifestyle.



S. LEGATE

GUNSITE ACADEMY ADDS MARKETING DIRECTOR

Shari LeGate is now serving as director of marketing for Gunsite Academy.

"Buz Mills, president and owner of Gunsite, and I are proud to add Shari to our outstanding team of professionals," Gunsite Academy CEO Ken Campbell said. "We look forward to working with Shari to help take Gunsite to unprecedented levels in our industry."

Most recently, LeGate was the video producer for FMG Publications and a contributing writer to the brand's publications. She was a member of the U.S. Shooting shotgun team and won numerous medals as well as the International Distinguished Shooting Badge from the DoD. Upon retirement from competition, LeGate was recruited as executive director for the Women's Shooting Sports Foundation. She was the shooting sports analyst for ESPN's Great Outdoor Games and is the color commentator for the summer Olympic Games shooting sports.

LeGate studied marketing and broadcast journalism at Arizona State University.



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T. LESSER

LEUPOLD & STEVENS INC. ANNOUNCES VP & DIRECTOR

Tim Lesser was recently named Leupold & Stevens Inc.'s VP of product development and marketing, and Dustin Miller transitioned to the role of director of NPI (New Product Introduction) engineering.



D. MILLER

Lesser's duties include leadership of the product development team and the brand's internal marketing team.

Bruce Pettet, Leupold president and CEO, said, "[Lesser's] drive, talent and commitment to the Leupold brand make him the perfect person to continue to elevate our product development and to take our consumer marketing efforts to the next level."

Miller, who holds a PhD in mechanical engineering, joined Leupold in 2021, and has an extensive background in product design and development.



H. LY

PRIMARY ARMS NAMES CONTROLLER

Primary Arms welcomed Hue Ly as controller to oversee accounting operations across all major business

units. He will be responsible for all aspects of Primary Arms' financial reporting, financial analysis and accounting functions for all four major business units, including optics, e-commerce, government and wholesale. Ly will also act as a key contributor to future investment decisions.

"Hue complements our strong team-oriented, customer-focused culture," said Matthew Do, Primary Arms' CFO.

Ly has over 23 years of accounting and finance experience from a range of industries. Before joining Primary Arms, he was a controller at Dhanani Group.



A. FERRIS

REDDING RELOADING PROMOTES VP

Redding Reloading Equipment announced the promotion of AJ Ferris to VP of manufacturing operations where he coordinates

engineering, production control and the manufacturing group to continue the company's focus on enhanced productivity while maintaining rigid quality standards.

Ferris joined the company in 2010 as a member of the customer service department. His experience with CAD and drafting quickly led him to the engineering department where he became an interface between engineering and manufacturing. He has been instrumental in integrating several new CNC machining centers over the past 14 months, enabling significant production increases.



L. THOMAS

CHATTANOOGA SHOOTING SUPPLIES INC. ENLISTS SALES REP

With 21 years' experience in shooting-supplies sales, Lacey Thomas joined Chattanooga Shooting

Supplies Inc. as a sales rep. Thomas has extensive knowledge of accessories, optics and ammunition in particular.

"Lacey brings a wealth of talent through her approach to selling. We are excited to have her on the team," said Ron Staffieri, CSSI president/CEO.



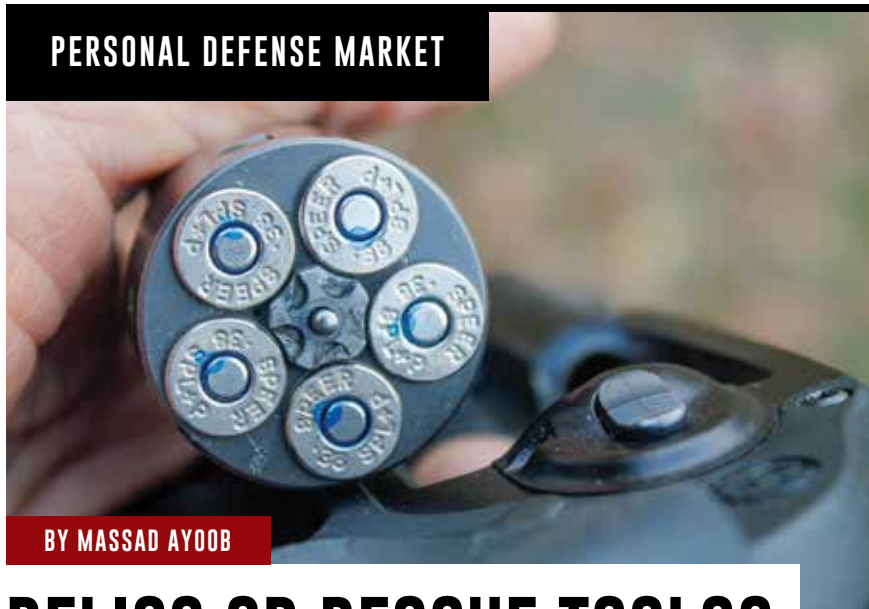
B. ROPER

CAMFOUR WELCOMES RP

Camfour welcomed Brandon Roper to its leadership team as the VP of sales and marketing. He is responsible for leading the growth and performance of the sales team.

"[Roper] brings strong experience in our industry and with wholesalers in particular. He will help us continue our strong sales growth across the United States," stated Christopher DiCenso, president of Camfour.

Roper has over 16 years of experience in the industry from positions at Remington, Nightforce Optics, Vista Outdoor and most recently, Smith & Wesson. **SI**



BY MASSAD AYOUB

RELICS OR RESCUE TOOLS? REVOLVERS ARE BOOMING

A few months ago, I witnessed an interesting dichotomy in a couple of gun shops I visited during the same week.

At Outpost Armory in Mufreesboro, Tenn., I couldn't help but notice handsome displays of double-action defense revolvers at their new building, complete with an indoor range. Now, this shop is owned by the Barrett family — Barrett, as in “Barrett Light Fifty,” a name we all associate with quality — and of course, they had an ample supply of AR-15s, high-tech rifles and the latest in semi-auto pistols of the most-modern styles. Still, it pleased my geezer heart the revolvers of my youth were obviously still selling well.

At Big Daddy's Gun Shop in Gainesville, Fla., I saw something different. Amidst the latest and greatest in black rifles and high-speed, low-drag polymer *pistolas*, there were but four revolvers in the whole inventory, and two of them were single-action sporting guns.

Is there a difference in customer tastes between northern Florida (read: Deep South) and Tennessee (read: Mid-South)?

Well, not necessarily, because when I was in Big Daddy's a month before, there had been a whole shelf of double-action defense revolvers ... and they had all sold out by my second visit.

The lesson? Revolvers ain't dead in the personal protection market.

THE BELL CURVE

There appears to be a bell curve in this matter, and current revolver sales seem to cluster at opposite ends.

Why do we hear anti-gunners gnashing their teeth and wailing about people buying guns for the first time, and screaming loudest about the fact that the numbers seem to be increasing? At the risk of using a pop culture phrase: “Well, *duh!*”

The reason we heard “5 million new gun owners!” “No, 8 million!” “No! *10 million or more!*” is as simple as Occam's Razor: That's how much the numbers are increasing.

The pandemic has been going on for two full years. Looking back, the public experienced a national trend of toilet paper and hand sanitizer disappearing, and reports from credible news sources that emergency services from police to paramedics and hospital emergency rooms would be understaffed and over-run with people in trouble. This was paralleled by the riots, burning cities and the realization people were going to be on their own. No wonder they raced to the gun shops!

As you no doubt experienced, many of those people had never touched a gun. For a lot of them, a semi-auto pistol

was something politicians they voted for said was a deadly assault weapon, possession of which changed the owner's identity to “incipient fascist.” They were scared of the damn things.

The revolver, on the other hand, was more “newbie friendly.” It held fewer cartridges. You could push or pull a lever, swing out the cylinder and see if it was loaded or not, no slide had to be drawn back against heavy spring pressure, no chance of getting the unloading process backward and leaving a live round in the chamber. When the time came to use it, God forbid, it would be simple and intuitive: Aim it and pull the trigger.

ON THE OTHER END

Meanwhile, on the far end of the bell curve, something else was happening. Some are calling it the “Renaissance of the Revolver.” We now see big-name shooting schools — Gunsite, Thunder Ranch, Rangemaster — filling “revolver-only” classes! If it was the gun experts, the *cognoscenti*, who had led the sea of change from the revolver that dominated handgun sales in the mid-1900s to the “high-capacity” 9mm Auto proliferation of today, and are now *teaching revolvers again*, what the hell was going on?

The answer is, the gun experts were appreciating certain revolver attributes.

One element, of course, is “gun people” recognize the elegance and style of certain firearms. Another element is those who care about hitting what they shoot at have learned once you master the long trigger stroke of a double-action revolver, you can shoot *any* handgun well. (For decades, I've told students, “A double-action revolver will teach you how to shoot your auto-loader better!”)

A small revolver with a spurless, shrouded or completely enclosed hammer can snake out of a pocket/ankle holster without catching on anything. During the draw, the rear of an auto pistol's slide that extends back over the web of the hand can sometimes catch on the edge of the pocket or the bottom of the pants cuff, “stalling” the draw. The small, light revolver with a sleek hammerless (or at least, spurless) configuration can get past that.

The math is simple: In a reactive life-or-death situation, five shots from a revolver *right now* beats more shots from an auto *one second later* than right now.

Clint Smith of Thunder Ranch appreciates a large-caliber six-shooter, but usually carries a .45 Auto for serious business — and has written he prefers a light snub-nose revolver for backup in an ankle holster. Tom Givens, one of the world's leading defensive firearms instructors, carries a GLOCK 17 as a primary option — but, usually, a light snub-nose .38 for backup. Ace police instructor Greg Ellifritz, now teaching private citizens, is a GLOCK guy for primary, but has written he likes a light .38 revolver for backup.

Does anyone else see a pattern emerging here ... ?

ADDITIONAL SALES CONSIDERATIONS

A *whole* lot of those new customers are buying “one gun per household.” The new customer might be well served if you informed him or her to consider other members of the household (even less familiar with firearms than the buyer) might be more confident and competent with

“

**The math is simple:
In a reactive life-or-death situation, five shots from a revolver *right now* beats more shots from an auto *one second later* than right now.**

the simpler to handle and operate double-action revolver.

Another consideration: Does your customer live someplace where venomous snakes are a problem? Snakeshot loads don't cycle particularly well in auto pistols, but work just fine in revolvers.

Finally, you might want to remind defense-oriented customers the thing trying to kill him — a wild creature of the forest or a feral human of the city alleys — might be right on top of him or her, requiring a muzzle-contact shot to save their life.

While some auto pistols can function with a press-contact shot, most can't. Whether it's the defender reflexively pushing the gun into the threat or the threat's body crushing down on the defender and their gun, most auto pistols' barrel/slide assembly will be pushed out of battery, rendering the gun unshootable. Not so with a revolver, which can be emptied into a threat at press-contact distance. This also directs muzzle blast into the deadly thing's body, magnifying destructive and fight-stopping power significantly.

The revolver isn't yet obsolete for self-defense — but some of your customers may need you and your sales staff to tell them just why it's still a valuable defensive asset. **SI**



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ARMS & THE WOMAN



BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

STORE OWNERS MAKING THEIR MARK

Women are making inroads in many segments of our industry, but one of the places they have the most visibility is as retailers. Having a woman behind the counter brings in a new clientele and a diverse demographic. In many cases, these women didn't grow up with firearms, and came to the gun industry as adults — giving them a unique perspective when dealing with new firearms owners, particularly women.

Flashpoint Firearms Comstock, Mich.

Lisa Mayo owns Flashpoint Firearms in Comstock Park, Mich. As a child, she had no exposure to firearms and knew nothing about them. When she met her husband, however, he introduced her to guns — launching a passion for firearms.

"I was just fascinated by the guns: I love building them and shooting them," she said. "I can outshoot a lot of men, and it makes me feel empowered."

The more comfortable she became with firearms, the more Mayo thought about starting a business related to them.

"I want to be a role model for other women, and to help them develop confidence," she noted. "I want to help them learn to protect themselves and

participate in a sport that isn't based on their gender."

Mayo started by selling various firearms-related products at gun shows. She works at a hospital during the week as an operating-room assistant; her gun-related sales were strictly a weekend side gig.

Then COVID hit. Gun shows were canceled, and elective surgeries were put on the back burner. Mayo had no income. So, she opened a retail gun store.

"I was able to get approval from the ATF agent just in time to sign our lease agreement. We opened April 2020," she recalled.

Mayo still works at the hospital during the day and goes to her store late in the afternoon. She has dependable staff members who take care of the business while she is in the OR, but she is still as busy as you'd think of someone working two full-time jobs.

"I have a great team," she shared. "Hopefully, things will continue to grow."

Mayo's five-year plan is based on projected growth.

"Five years from now, I want to have my own building," she said. "What I have now is leased. I want to start doing classes and training, specifically for women."

◀ Adding a range to 22Three's facility opened up an entirely new realm of opportunities for Wendy Monroe's team. "Training is great, and selling product is great, but shooting is a form of entertainment," she said. (Photo: Marissa Bowers, mbadp.com)

22Three Lebanon, Ohio

Wendy Monroe is the operating officer of 22Three. When she and her husband launched the company in 2011, it was just a store with some offsite training. Fast-forward to 2017, and the picture changed dramatically.

"We moved to our new location and built a range with 12 indoor lanes," Monroe shared. "We now have more training, because we can train on site. We can do a lot of private training and let customers try before they buy."

Adding the range was something Monroe and her husband wanted to do to round out the business.

"Training is great, and selling product is great," she said. "But shooting is a form of entertainment. Adding the range broadened our business and made it stronger."

When they started 22Three, the Monroes worked in different fields entirely and wanted to do something together. Even though they came from different backgrounds, Monroe's husband was experienced with firearms and a professor of criminal justice with a specialty in firearms law, while she had a background in public relations and writing.

"At first, I wasn't sure I would be able to contribute anything to the business," she said. "But when it's your business, it's sink or swim. So, I sought a lot of training from other people and within two years I was a certified instructor, and two years after that I was a certified training counselor. I started with NRA and then went to USCCA."

At first, Monroe was the only instructor. As the company has grown, they've hired more instructors, and now she supervises a staff of 11 instructors and 33 employees.

"I still do a little instructing, but my main role is human resources," she shared. "I work the sales floor some and I train some, but my main role is to empower my employees to do their jobs. Managing this many people is a big job."

Although the company has grown fairly quickly, the Monroes have been conservative about the steps they have

taken to expand the business.

"It took us longer than we wanted to add the range," she said, "but we wanted to be smart about it. You have to be careful when you're a small business and not bite off more than you can chew. After six years, we decided it was now or never, so we built the range and moved."

Gun Shack *Helotes, Texas*

Noemi Skok is a managing member of Gun Shack in Helotes, Texas. When she and her husband, Lance, met in 2006, he was a systems engineer for Cisco. She was working in a bank, but felt it wasn't a good fit for her, and she was also a realtor.

"When I met Lance, I had no use for guns," Skok stated. "I grew up very poor in the projects, so in my mind, anyone who had a gun was a bad person. But Lance taught me different guns do different things, and as time went on, he would take me to the range."

By the time they started Gun Shack, Skok had changed her mind about firearms, but she still wasn't as knowledgeable about them as she needed to be.

"We started in the gun show circuit in 2011, at the height of the Obama administration," she said. "We had a little 10' x 10' office with one safe in it, and sales were by appointment only."

They started the business selling just Savage parts, including barrels and other components, which they continue to carry today. A year later, shortly before the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Conn., the Skoks moved the business into a storefront.

"The business just exploded," she recalled. "We were completely unprepared for it. We didn't have established credit lines with any vendors, and it was difficult to get merchandise. At the time, it seemed like people were mostly looking for lowers and those were hard to find, but we would buy a case of 250 or 500 and they would be gone immediately."

Today, Gun Shack is a GLOCK Blue Label dealer and the team is proud of its 4.9 star Google rating. They carry most major firearms brands and are able to maintain a "middle of the road"

pricing structure.

"We have made the store accessible to everyone," Skok remarked. "Over the years, we've noticed we have a lot of different ethnicities coming into the store. We see a lot of Asians and African Americans, and we have a strong Hispanic presence here."

Skok said they would like to add a range to the store, but when they looked at the feasibility of it — it would cost about \$2 million.



I want to be a role model for other women, and to help them develop confidence. I want to help them learn to protect themselves and participate in a sport that isn't based on their gender."

Lisa Mayo, Owner
Flashpoint Firearms
Comstock Park, Mich.

"It is prohibitively expensive, especially when you factor in OSHA and insurance," she noted. "So, we haven't done it, but I sure would love to have a range. One day."

For now, Gun Shack is taking a more traditional approach and using modern selling platforms.

"We sell firearms, ammo and accessories," Skok said. "We're a Holosun authorized dealer and a SIG Master Dealer. And we do a lot of online sales. We sell on eBay and Amazon, which presents its own set of challenges."

Fifteen years ago, Skok would never have thought she'd be a small-business owner, particularly one related to guns.

"We have so many risks and so many rewards. But I enjoy this, and I

enjoy the freedom that comes along it, she shared. "And I would love to have another woman in the business with me, maybe someone who I could hand the reins over to someday."

A COMMON BLUEPRINT

Both Mayo and Skok shared similar motivations for starting their businesses and the impact they want to make in their respective communities.

"I want every first-time gun owner to have a place they feel like they belong," Mayo said. "This means especially women and the LGBTQ community. We have plenty of customers in those communities, and it's kind of my thing. It doesn't matter what color your skin is or whether you're male or female or if you identify as something else. Owning a firearm is your right, and we're here to help you become a responsible gun owner and be able to take care of yourself."

Likewise, Skok started her business with the intent to provide great customer service and create a welcoming space.

"Before we opened, we went around to other gun stores and noticed how we were treated," Skok shared. "I got ignored, or people would speak condescendingly to me. They looked down on me and kind of rolled their eyes like 'I can't believe you're asking this question.' We created this business with the intent to make every customer feel valued and there are no stupid questions. People are welcome to ask anything, and there's no pressure to buy anything."

Three women — all came to firearms as adults. Three relatively new retail stores in three different locations in the country. And all three are showing, once again, women have gained a strong presence in the firearms industry and are essential to our future. **SI**

Editor's Note: Is yours a woman- or minority-owned business and would you like to be featured in *Shooting Industry*? Send an email to editor@shootingindustry.com.

BEST PRACTICES

Photo: Adobe Stock

BY TIM BARKER

BUYING, SELLING & MARKETING USED GUNS

We've done a lot of speculating these past couple of years over the eventual fate of all those guns gobbled up by first-time buyers. How many of them, we've wondered, might end up on the used-gun market?

Mike Rust, general manager of H&H Shooting Sports in Oklahoma City, remembers joking with his sales staff about this very topic during the hectic days of 2020 and 2021. "We figured we'd be buying those guns back in a year and a half," Rust recalled.

So far, at least, it hasn't really been happening. Perhaps this isn't surprising, considering we still live in a world of turmoil. COVID continues to linger. Civil unrest lurks in the shadows. And the nation's political divisions show no sign of healing.

More recently, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has added something new for people to worry over, suggests Jess Hancock, owner of The Wichita Gun Club in Wichita, Kan.

"There's always going to be something else out there to be afraid of," he proposed.

Still, this seems as good a time as any to talk about the used-gun market and how to approach it. It's an area with the potential for high profit margins and an ability to differentiate your shop from the one down the street. But it does bring its own set of headaches.

Both shops say the used-gun market is hot, with plenty of opportunities to

buy and sell. The key, they say, is to understand the segment, including how much to pay and where to sell what you've bought.

"The money has to be right," Hancock noted, "but every gun will sell."

FINDING USED INVENTORY

One of the first challenges of this segment is deciding how to bring used inventory into the shop — and how aggressive you want to be. If you want to have a constant influx of "new" used guns on your shelves, it will take more than just waiting for customers to bring them in. It helps to let everyone know you're in the market, contends Rust.

"Every once in a while, we'll do an advertising blitz to remind people we buy used guns," he said.

Those reminders come in various forms. They have a sign on the front of the building. They've tried billboards with limited success. There's a banner on the store website. They use radio and print ads. And they occasionally have store events designed to encourage customers looking to sell. Once a year, this takes the form of a "no gun turned away" promotion. The last one pulled in nearly 80 used guns.

"We ended up buying a bunch of crap," Rust admitted. "But on the other side of the coin, we also bought a lot of nice stuff."

And, as Rust points out, just because you advertise the event as "nothing

turned away" doesn't mean you have to pay more than something is worth.

Hancock buys his share of guns from local customers, but he's also active in the estate market — picking up entire collections from across the country. They'll go in and bid on everything, such as guns, boxes, knives, holsters and even safes.

WHAT'S THAT GUN WORTH?

Whichever method you choose, there are pricing issues — both in terms of what you pay and what you'll sell the gun for — that need to be considered.

Of course, it's easy to deal with common production guns. When someone brings a GLOCK 19 Gen5 through the door at H&H, Rust knows they can look up the new retail price and offer the customer about half.

The challenge comes when it's something more exotic — maybe an old Colt Python, a WWII-era 1911 or a custom target rifle. This is when they turn to online research, including GunBroker.com's concluded auctions, Guns International and Rock Island Auction. They also use the store's own point-of-sale system for historical sales prices on similar guns.

"We try to price based on moving it within 30 days," Rust shared. "Sometimes we'll offer a little less upfront to give us some room to negotiate."

If his folks can't come up with a value they're comfortable with, they'll offer a consignment option to the seller. They charge a 20% fee on consignments, compared with a 35% markup on used guns. Still, the option can be lucrative.

"When it sells, I'll make a lower margin, but I don't have as much invested in inventory. We'll do that all day long," Rust stated.

H&H has, however, learned one valuable lesson regarding consignments. They charge the seller a \$25 inventory fee (refundable if the gun sells). They used to collect the fee, spelled out in a contract, whenever someone changed their mind about selling. Often, those customers had no memory of agreeing to the fee — which led to some hard feelings. So now, H&H collects the fee upfront.

"This has completely eliminated the hassle of trying to convince someone they signed a piece of paper," Rust explained.

Valuing exotic guns has become

a frequent activity for Hancock, particularly when dealing with those estates, which often include rare and collectible firearms. Over the years, he's developed a network of friends and industry sources who are experts on a wide range of collectible guns, including Colts and Smith & Wessons.

"We do our diligence and research," Hancock shared, "but we still make mistakes."

Consider his tale of the Korriphila HSP 701 handgun that recently passed through his shop. After some online research, they listed it on Gunbroker.com for \$9,500. Warning bells went off when the gun sold within a few minutes of going live. Then a few weeks later, they saw it sell again on the auction site for more than \$17,000. What they hadn't realized was the shop's 9mm version was much rarer than the .45 ACP version they'd based their price upon.

"That guy doubled his money because he knew what I had," Hancock said. "I knew I had a gem, but not that much of a gem."

A WORD ABOUT HONESTY

Invariably, you're going to run into issues of honesty and trust when delving into this arena. Both Rust and Hancock stress the value of playing it as straight as possible with customers.

With 10 years in the business, many of Hancock's customers looking to sell guns come in because of a friend's recommendation. It's because they have a reputation for treating people fairly.

To help customers understand his pricing, they walk them through the process. They'll point out completed

auctions on Gunbroker.com to help them understand used-gun values — along with the store's own need to make money on any deal.

"We're pretty open about how we get to the prices we offer," he stated. "In the end, doing the right thing is doing the right thing."

There's also the very real threat represented by the world of social media we live in. Word of a single bad transaction can spread widely.



In a nutshell, you don't want to tell a customer their old gun is worth \$300 and then put it in a display case for \$1,500. Not when there's a decent chance the customer is going to see what you've done.

Rust tells how they'll occasionally buy a gun from a customer, only to realize later they underpaid for it. It's a particular danger with older collectibles, where matching serial numbers and other factors can make a major difference in a gun's value. When this happens, they'll reach out to the shocked but appreciative customer to make up the difference.

In a nutshell, you don't want to tell a customer their old gun is worth \$300 and then put it in a display case

for \$1,500. Not when there's a decent chance the customer is going to see what you've done.

"We're trying to establish and build relationships," Rust said. "We want to be seen as an honest shop."

MARKETING THE USED STUFF

There are, of course, several ways to move used guns. The easiest is to just toss them in a display case and let capitalism do its thing. (This is unlikely to be the best option, however, for the more exotic guns or firearms you'd rather not display.)

Hancock has become increasingly active on various auction sites, recently hiring a staffer to take charge of the store's online presence.

"We used to have three or four guns on the auction sites. Now we have 30," he shared.

Consider a recent 120-gun estate they purchased from a collector in Wichita. After cataloging everything, they decided to send a third of those guns straight to auction.

"We know what sells and where it sells," Hancock confirmed. "There are some things you don't want on the sales floor. They just don't fit the brand."

Oklahoma City's H&H uses Guns International for the rare and unusual. They also plan to list more of the used inventory on Gunbroker.com and other sites if they can find an employee to manage it.

"It seems like it's just gravy," Rust noted.

Keep in mind the fact there are likely collectors in your area who can be cultivated. Members of the H&H sales team have relationships with customers looking for certain types of guns. So, if someone brings in a boxed Colt Python from the early 1980s, it may never hit the display case.

"I've got a salesman who has a Colt collector on his speed dial. This is true of other brands and models," Rust said. "If I can move a used gun in less than a day, it's a home run."

As you can see, there's a lot of potential in this segment and it seems poised to grow. What's worked for you in this arena? Do you see a wave of used guns coming back into your stores? Let the *SI* team know: comments@shootingindustry.com. **SI**



To avoid any hard feelings with a customer, Jess Hancock advises dealers to be upfront on how prices are determined when buying or selling a used gun.

IS AMMO REALLY BACK?

State Of The 2022 Ammo Market

By Jade Moldae

Over the past two years, no segment in the shooting, hunting and outdoor industry has been hit quite like the ammunition market. Record-breaking sales in 2020 continued into 2021, and while there is hope 2022 will bring added stability into the market, it's still likely to be some time before ammunition availability returns to some sort of "normal."

In Part 1 of this special report, several ammunition makers provided their insights into the market, addressed how dealers can promote the return of "core" calibers, prepare for challenges in the hunting sector and more.

(Editor's Note: This article was written in mid-May before the tragic school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. It's too early to tell how much this will influence consumers' buying habits, but there's no doubt it will.)

THE RETURN OF HIGH-DEMAND CALIBERS

At the macro level, demand isn't quite to the level it was earlier in the surge — giving ammunition manufacturers a chance to catch up. In welcome news, popular calibers are

coming back onto shelves.

"It is certainly not at peak levels," said Tom Taylor, SIG SAUER CMO and EVP, commercial sales. "Ammo is still selling well, but the high-demand calibers from the surge (9mm and .223, primarily) are generally on the shelf. Other calibers and categories are still harder to find — 6.5 Creedmoor, .380, 10mm and many popular hunting calibers."

Seth Swerczek, Hornady marketing communications manager, added further confirmation the most popular calibers at the onset of the buying surge are starting to come back.

"What we've heard from dealers and distributors, and seen at the local level, is the first ammo people panicked and purchased — 9mm, .223, .308 Win. — has really lightened up," he said. "Since those three calibers have settled down, hopefully the buying frenzy is starting to show signs of slowing and ultimately stretch into every other category."

AMMO Inc., makers of Signature, STREAK and stETH Subsonic lines, is in the closing stages of building a new 170,000 sq. ft. ammunition manufacturing plant in Manitowoc, Wis. This facility will at least double the company's production capacity and further accelerate the availability of core calibers, according to Director of

Sales Anthony Tate.

"We've stepped up the production of our three lines, giving the consumer a chance to get out and try our products over the past two years," he said. "On the retail side, we've noticed dealers promote the return of different calibers we hadn't seen in the past six months."



SIG SAUER JHP — 9mm (124-grain)

APEX Ammunition, launched in 2017 by U.S. veterans Jason Lonsberry, Jared Lewis and Nick Charney, serves turkey and waterfowl hunters. Lonsberry, APEX CEO, shared demand has remained at record levels for his company.

"Fortunately, demand has always been high for us. But according to our dealers, it's a bottomless pit right now since all other manufacturers are

behind the bell curve and there's no letup in demand in sight," he said.

CONCERN FOR HUNTING AMMO AVAILABILITY

Dealers have written in to *SI*, sharing their concerns on the availability of hunting ammunition this fall. We asked the manufacturers quoted in this story for their assessments, and dealers should be prepared for stocking difficulties.

"When ammo companies turned their focus to 9mm and .223 during the surge, it's been challenging to get factories back on track with hunting ammo," Taylor said. "This may improve by hunting season, but many retailers are already stocking (or will begin very soon) for hunting season, so it's likely this hunting ammo shortage will drag into hunting season and never fully catch up."

While Hornady is producing more ammunition than ever before, Swerczek stated the company isn't willing to sacrifice quality to get more hunting rounds on the shelves. His advice to dealers? Start early, and be prepared to be flexible.

"Keep your eye out when you can — and maybe consider switching to carrying a different bullet weight or product line you haven't traditionally used," he said. "Start early, look often and know Hornady is dedicated to making hunting ammunition at volumes we never have before."

Since APEX is a producer of shotshells, we asked Lonsberry for how today's demand will impact fall wingshooting.

"We'll have the APEX Waterfowl and Upland lines ready for shipment to our dealers starting in late summer. Some are even placing their orders now [mid-May]," he said. "We'll produce more ammo than ever this year and are aiming to fill the void as much as possible. Our anticipation is we'll still sell out our entire production allotment before the end of the waterfowl season."



APEX Ammunition Waterfowl Loads

RIISING INPUT COSTS, RISING PRICES

The past two years have played out a classic case of supply and demand. Skyrocketing demand alone will rise prices. But high demand coupled with supply chain challenges means prices aren't likely to drop in the foreseeable future.



Demand for match, long-range and hunting SKUs is still off the charts, and the political climate can always make things go backward."

Seth Swerczek, Hornady
Marketing Communications Manager

In last year's report on the ammunition market, in the June 2021 issue, Swerczek noted demand for lead, rising copper prices and difficulties securing components resulted in a trickle-down effect on cost for the end user. Today, these challenges remain and haven't been helped by rising gas prices and inflation. That said, manufacturers are powering through to boost supply levels.

"Prices are what they are, and they've been impacted by several

variables. Production of ammo hasn't been hindered," he said. "There are certainly concerns we keep a strong eye on, like primers. The industry partners who manufacture primers have honored their contractual obligations with us, so even though it's a concern, it's not a problem. Availability of primers hasn't impacted us negatively with regard to production."

With the supply of primers coming into focus, SIG has made plans to be more self-reliant, according to Taylor.

"While SIG is taking steps to become fully independent for supply, we still source some bullets and all primers," he said. "We're in the process of building our own primer manufacturing facility and ramping up bullet production, but we're still reliant (especially) on primers out of eastern Europe. The Russian-Ukraine war has certainly impacted our primer flow. We hope, within months, SIG will be fully self-sufficient."

Taylor predicts prices will continue to remain elevated.

"While supply is catching up on popular calibers, componentry costs are extremely high and even though product may be showing up on the shelf it is not, nor do we anticipate it getting to, pre-surge prices," he said.

UKRAINE'S IMPACT

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has added further fuel to fears of global uncertainty, and the U.S. ammunition market is most certainly going to be impacted.

Continued on p. 26

KINSEY'S

FULL SPEED AHEAD

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Throughout its first 70 years as a family-owned business, Kinsey's has been dedicated to the success of its customers through superior customer service, unique programs, a one-of-a-kind dealer show experience and making astute investments for the future.

Today, Kinsey's is a leading distributor to the archery, firearms and outdoor industry. Carrying items from more than 600 brands — in-stock and ready to deliver — the company offers 4,500+ domestic and international retailers a wide array of products and services, including a 1,000-page catalog, an online ordering system, a renowned custom-fletching program and more. The company also owns innovative consumer brands including Alpine, BlackHeart, Fin-Finder, Elevation and October Mountain Products.

Kinsey's is poised to further its impact in both the archery and gun

industry for the next 70 years. Here are four ways Kinsey's is benefiting its retail and manufacturer customers.

1. KDS: A CAN'T-MISS TRADE EVENT

Kinsey's dealers are treated to an annual trade show — the Kinsey's Dealer Show (KDS) — which features unbeatable terms, programming and pricing. It's a margin-maximizing event, delivering real savings to fuel dealers' businesses for the year.

"It's one of the best shows out there," shared Aaron Beverly, owner of Beverly's Gun, Archery & Pawn in Coeburn, Va.

Held at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, Pa., Feb. 25–27, KDS22 attracted the highest attendance figures in the show's history and featured over 250 industry-leading archery and firearms vendors.

"The show is quite a draw, a lot of good crossover between archery and firearms — it's a one-stop shop," stated Justin Gorman, Kinsey's VP of sales and marketing. "At this year's show, dealers were able to program out orders on accessories through Aug. 1 — one of the largest booking windows for a distributor show in this industry."

Approved dealers were able to place ASAP orders, drawing from over 20,000 accessories in Kinsey's catalog, at KDS22. Those who took advantage of this program won't need to pay until 8/1/22 for products they received in March. Orders for guns and ammo were booked for ASAP shipment but held open through 6/30/22 to give dealers the widest possible window to receive backordered product.

In addition to providing significant savings off everyday prices, KDS attendees are also treated to a Dealer Appreciation Night, \$1,000s in prize giveaways and more. Though KDS offers Kinsey's best promotions, the company also runs several sales events throughout the year — available to brick-and-mortar customers only.

KDS23 will be held early 2023. Prospective attendees can register for next year's event beginning in October. For more info: KinseysInc.com/dealer-show.

2. TODAY'S ORDER SHIPS TOMORROW

Every business has faced considerable disruption in the supply chain over the past couple of years, but Kinsey's has risen to the challenge and recently completed an expansive warehouse system merger project that increased its available inventory by 25%.

Since its acquisition of Pape's in 2018, Kinsey's has served customers from two locations: Mount Joy, Pa. (Kinsey's

and Louisville, Ky. (Kinsey's South). The addition of Kinsey's South accelerated delivery times to customers on the east coast (1–2 days) and increased the number of available SKUs.

With its warehouse system merger complete, Kinsey's retail customers have streamlined access to both warehouses — providing more inventory with quicker service times.

"Kinsey's main focus is to increase the ease of doing business. When a dealer sees an empty peg, we want it to be easy to get their order in," said Gorman. "With the investments we've made in our warehouse system, dealers receive fast processing time and access to more inventory. Today's order ships tomorrow."

"With the investments we've made in our warehouse system, dealers receive fast processing time and access to more inventory. Today's order ships tomorrow."

JUSTIN GORMAN, VP of Sales & Marketing — Kinsey's

Beverly, a Kinsey's customer for more than a decade, shared the distributor's trademark



◀ Serving the outdoor industry for more than 70 years, Kinsey's has distribution warehouses in Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

reliability has shined over the past two years.

"Throughout the whole hard-to-get times over the past two years, Kinsey's has been really good at shipping and staying on top of things," he said.

Kinsey's also has a fulfillment dropshipping program available to online businesses, but it's set up in such a way to safeguard its brick-and-mortar customers.

"We offer fulfillment programs to support dealers with online stores or online-only businesses. But their set of criteria is different, so we're protecting the brick-and-mortar dealer at the same time," Gorman informed. "We make sure we can serve both business models without cannibalizing the other, and we do so with integrity."

3. ONBOARDING FIREARMS, AMMUNITION

Kinsey's continues to evolve and add more business facets to strengthen the outdoor retailer. For example, Kinsey's added ammunition and firearms to its inventory in 2019 and 2020, respectively, to complement its long-standing excellence in the archery segment.

Gorman shared the crossover potential between

"One thing with Kinsey's: They've always been easy to work with. You get the feeling you're part of their family."

AARON BEVERLY, Owner
Beverly's Gun, Archery & Pawn

firearms and archery retailers represents a significant opportunity for growth.

"We've traditionally been an archery and general hunting supplier, but as we were looking at the next phase of growth, we did some market research and found a lot of archery shops crossover into gun shops and vice versa — exactly who we want to serve," he stated. "We're serious about this market; this multi-category approach is who we are for the future. Firearms, archery and the outdoors is who Kinsey's is going to be for the next 70 years."

The decision to onboard firearms and ammunition products gave Kinsey's an opportunity to not only serve a larger market of customers,

but also to make new connections in the industry — like the thriving partnership it has developed with Winchester Ammunition.

Kevin Winscher, Winchester Ammunition sales manager, shared how partnering with Kinsey's has benefited its brand and opened up an entirely new base of retail customers.

"In 2019, Winchester and Kinsey's met with the goal of expanding ammunition distribution to outdoor shops complementary to the traditional gun shop model," he said. "Many outdoor and archery shops don't have an FFL, but service consumers who hunt with a firearm, shoot at a local range or are looking to get into shooting sports and need ammunition products. Since we formed our partnership, Kinsey's has doubled their Winchester business every year, in part, by distributing to customers who never carried ammunition before and via expanded distribution to gun shops that were underserved with the Winchester brand."

4. A PERFECT FIT

From its signature KDS event, special promotions, expedited shipping and diverse inventory, Kinsey's represents a perfect fit for

dealers with firearms and archery customers.

"A shop needs to find the distributor that best fits their needs, but the fact we're a full-service archery and accessory hunting distributor — combined with firearms and ammunition — gives us a leg up," Gorman said. "Our combination of archery and firearms is unique because when you look at other distributors, we offer the most expansive assortment when it comes to anything in the archery space. If you're a dealer who participates in both pursuits, we're really the perfect fit."

Beverly shared how his store is treated makes Kinsey's his standout distributor partner.

"One thing with Kinsey's: They've always been easy to work with," he said. "Even after they added firearms to their supply, you get the feeling you're part of their family. A lot of my distributors aren't that way; you're treated as just another customer. With Kinsey's, you feel like you're part of the whole process."

For four generations, the Kinsey's team has continuously strived to persevere and exceed the expectations of customers around the world — and they're just getting started.

For more information on becoming a Kinsey's dealer and learning more about its unique programs, contact Kinsey's at (800) 366-4269 or visit KinseysInc.com.

Continued from p. 23

The ban on the imports of Russian steel-cased ammunition — a significant part of the U.S. ammunition market — went into effect Sept. 2021, which was already set to diminish supply as Form 6 applications are no longer approved (but valid for 24 months).

However, in the wake of war, there are calls for immediate bans of Russian goods in the U.S. May 20, as the firearm industry trade association, NSSF publicly joined these efforts.

“NSSF calls upon the administration to impose a complete and immediate ban on the importation of all Russian goods, including firearms, ammunition and components,” it said in a press release.

As of this writing, the immediate and complete ban on these goods have yet to be realized. The ultimate absence of Russian steel-cased ammunition in the market will impact the pricing structure.

“With steel-case ammo not flowing in, it won’t be able to check the price of brass-cased ammo,” Tate noted. “Ultimately, we’re going to see brass-cased ammo slowly tick up with less supply.”

AMMO Inc. made global headlines with its pledge to donate 1 million rounds of ammunition to the Ukraine Armed Forces just days after the invasion began. The company successfully delivered the shipment in mid-March. Vista Outdoor — through

its Remington, CCI, Speer and Federal Ammunition brands — likewise donated 1 million rounds to the Ukraine Armed Forces.

MARKETING AMMO’S RETURN

Despite ammo availability improving, we at *SI* have heard firsthand from dealers the latest challenge they’re facing is how to market the return of ammo into their stores.

Matt Nicholson, AMMO Inc. VP of sales and marketing, understands why some dealers and ranges may be hesitant to market ammo availability to customers.

“The dealers and ranges are — for a lack of a better term — in a little bit of a shell shock, since they may not trust the supply before something else happens that drives it back to zero,” he said.

With the summer slowdown coming, Nicholson recommends now is as good a time as any to market the return of ammo on shelves.

“For stores looking to advertise ammo is back, these next two months would be the time to do it — because who knows what’s in store as we move into the fall,” he said. “If I was a range owner, I would be hammering my social media accounts and sending emails because it’s an easy story to tell and probably the best way to reach the most consumers as quickly as possible,” he advised.

Swerczek is optimistic the industry



**Our research shows
50% of gun owners
buy a gun and never
shoot. Only 10% go
to the range more
than five times per
year.”**

Tom Taylor, SIG SAUER
EVP & EVP, Commercial Sales

can do a better job of informing the public recreational shooting is more feasible than it was during the height of the demand surge.

“Hopefully we can satiate the market with those calibers people shoot the most, and get the word out there things are becoming a little more stable and prices come back down a little bit,” he said.

With the surge subsiding, Taylor says the industry will be better positioned to communicate the return of product lines to consumers.

“We’re hoping to launch a new program for ranges, and we hope to help communicate high-demand guns and ammo are available,” he said. “Neither of which was doable during the surge.”



Highlighting the “fun” side of the shooting sports (literally), AMMO Inc. partnered with the Scottsdale Gun Club on Star Wars Day (May the fourth) to show off its STREAK line of nonincendiary tracer rounds in low-light settings. AMMO Inc. Director of Sales Anthony Tate says he’s seen more ranges promoting similar events. (Photos: AMMO Inc.)

DON'T FORGET ABOUT FUN

It's been lost in the chaos of the past couple years, but if the industry can successfully market the "fun" side of the shooting sports to first-time gun buyers it will generate longer-term participants. SIG SAUER and AMMO Inc. have recently been involved in events to encourage connection and entertainment.

In May, SIG hosted its inaugural SIG Freedom Days event, which welcomed 4,000+ consumers to the Ben Avery Shooting Complex in Phoenix. Taylor said events like this will help enhance SIG's most popular lines of ammunition.

"Personal defense seems to continue to be in high demand, but training/range ammo is most popular," Taylor said. "With millions of new shooters, training/range ammo should continue to grow and SIG will certainly be launching many new programs, such as our recent SIG Freedom Days event, to get more people out shooting."



AMMO Inc. stelTH 300 Blackout

Taylor also shared some rather concerning data.

"Our research shows 50% of gun owners buy a gun and never shoot. Only 10% go to the range more than five times per year," he said. "We'd like to see all gun owners spending more time at the range, which will inherently produce more ammo sales."

AMMO Inc.'s STREAK line, a nonincendiary tracer round, has been increasing in popularity over the past two years — with ranges showcasing this technology for customers.

"STREAK has a good range application. With it being nonincendiary, we've seen ranges take it on and it's been received well. We're going to be making a whole lot more of it," Tate said.

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In honor of Star Wars Day (May The Fourth Be With You), AMMO Inc. participated at a range event at the Scottsdale Gun Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., which featured shooting STREAK in a low-light setting and prizes for the best-dressed attendees.

In addition to ranges, Nicholson added demand for STREAK has increased at training centers and in the L.E. market, as well.

"It will help with training and qualifying efforts," he said.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

It's the million-dollar question we've asked since March 2020: When will things go back to "normal"? It's complicated ...

"The crystal ball is still quite hazy," Swerczek of Hornady stated. "With some of the bulk ammo, there are signs of things slowing down — but it doesn't always translate to other parts of the market. Demand for match, long-range and hunting SKUs is still off the charts, and the political climate can always make things go backward."

The midterm election cycle will certainly have an impact on whether or not things return to some sort of normal quickly, according to AMMO Inc.'s Nicholson.

"We're on the path to 'normalcy' but it could be derailed in a heartbeat," he said. "The Russian ammo ban is going to

have a massive impact on the U.S. market, and we're going to see rising prices and scarcity as a result. Availability of 9mm and .223 is getting there, but other SKUs like 10mm, .45 LC, .45 ACP or even .380 are going to be a struggle for a while. If the midterms see a 'red wave,' we get closer to normalcy."

APEX's Lonsberry offered the continued logistics challenges have likely pushed a post-pandemic "normal" a couple years away.

"Metals to create brass, components to produce gun powder and horrible logistics issues that affect other industries as well are the main causes of the delay today," he stated. "This shortage in raw material supply could last for a couple more years, based on our speculation and conversations with fellow manufacturers."

There have been lots of ups and downs over the past two years, and though we're certainly not "out of the woods" yet, there is hope as supply is at least beginning to show signs of recovery. Agree/disagree? Let us know. **SI**

Dealers, we invite your feedback: Are you still having trouble getting ammo in store? What are you doing to spread the word once you have product in stock? We want to hear from you: comments@shootingindustry.com.

State Of The 2022 Ammo Market

By Carolee Anita Boyles

We may be starting to move past COVID (finally!), but supply chain issues continue to abound. Talk to any firearms retailer and you'll still hear stories of shortages, delayed order fulfillment and products that are difficult (or impossible) to source.

DEALER: 5 REASONS WHY THINGS ARE GETTING "EASIER"

Anthony Puglia, owner of Puglia's Sporting Goods in Metairie, La., said things are getting easier for him. He cites five possible reasons for this, first of which is he's placing larger orders than he ever has placed before.

"I think manufacturers may give a little more attention to larger orders," he said. "It doesn't make sense for them to ship out a lot of small orders when they have much larger orders to ship out."

Another reason for the improvement, Puglia noted, may be his affiliation with a buying group.

"We belong to Nation's Best Sports,"

he informed. "It may be we're getting some orders because of that."

Third, Puglia has had orders placed with manufacturers for a long time.

"I think things may be starting to get caught up, as far as orders being lined up are concerned," he said.

Some of those old orders are the ones being fulfilled, leading to the thought manufacturers are finally able to fill orders retailers placed as long as two years ago.

Yet another reason for increased availability, according to Puglia, may be the social and political situation is more stable than it has been for a while.

"We don't have any crises going on right now," he shared. "We don't have any riots, protests, elections or hurricanes going on at the moment. So maybe the demand for ammunition is a little lower than it has been domestically."

Crucial to his entire supply chain process is the relationships Puglia has with his sales reps and distributors throughout the country.

"I feel like our allocations are pretty good as a result of our good relationships," he said.

However, Puglia still isn't able to get everything he would like to have.

"Getting .410 and 20 GA lead shot is difficult," he shared. "We're seeing a little bit, but not enough to fill the demands of all our customers."

Puglia also is having trouble getting what he termed the "more exotic" calibers. This includes anything in such calibers as .416, .500 Nitro, .50 AE, .270 WSM and .300 WSM.



Hornady Frontier 5.56 NATO

"All of those are still difficult to get," Puglia said. "A little bit is coming in, but I feel like manufacturers probably are focused on the top six or eight best-selling centerfire rifle rounds, such as 6.5 Creedmoor, .270 Win., .30-06 and those types of calibers. They've maybe put the slower movers on the back burner so the larger calibers someone might want to take to Africa are kind of nonexistent right now."

CONTRASTING FORTUNES

Dawn Westendorf owns We Kick Brass in West Palm Beach, Fla. Westendorf opened We Kick Brass early in the pandemic and had the foresight to place orders for ammunition overseas almost immediately. As of late April, ammunition is much more available than it was a year ago.

"We've been buying pallet after pallet for the past two or three months," she shared. "Prices are still a tad higher than they were at the start of COVID, but they're not a lot higher."

She's no longer having to order ammo from overseas; she's able to source ammunition domestically now.

One thing Westendorf believes has helped her is her relationships with her sales reps.

"We have really good reps who can get their hands on anything," she confirmed.

Jim Waldron is the manager of Kastle Keep in St. Petersburg, Fla. He contends a lot of ammunition is still not available.

"I'm seeing some change with 9mm, and I'm starting to see more .380," he conveyed. "What I'm not seeing is .38 Special or .357 Magnum, which are very popular cartridges down here."

Other calibers Waldron isn't able to get include hunting rounds in .243, .308, .30-06 and .270, as well as .45 ACP, .357 SIG and hollowpoints of almost any caliber.

"I think so many people were asking for 9mm manufacturers retooled a lot of lines for 9mm so they could get caught up," Waldron stated. "Customers are now shifting gears and going back to wanting ammunition for their centerfire rifles."

Waldron doesn't expect things to improve any over the next several months.

"I've talked to a friend of mine who works at Hornady, and he said they're about to start making range rounds because the call for them is so high," he said. "Hornady is usually

the only manufacturer I can get hollowpoints from. A lot of people are switching to Hornady because they can get it."

A MIXED BAG

In Orem, Utah, Wyatt Harrison is one of the owners of Gunnies. He's seeing a lot of fulfillment of ammunition he ordered in 2020, but many key calibers continue to be troublesome to keep in stock or get at all.

"What's particularly difficult is rimmed calibers such as .30-30, .45-70, .357, .44 Mag. and .45 Colt," he said. "It's very hard to get those in. We're seeing very little fulfillment in our network."



Customers are now shifting gears and going back to wanting ammunition for their centerfire rifles."

*Jim Waldron, Manager
Kastle Keep
St. Petersburg, Fla.*

Shotshells, however, are becoming more available.

"So far in April I've seen a lot of shotgun shells come in in both 12 GA and 20 GA," Harrison shared. "However, .410 is still a thorn in our side; it's disappointing to tell people every day we can't get .410. We're also seeing quite a bit of fulfillment in 5.56 and .223, but the pricing is terrible. Customers are really disappointed with where it's climbed. It's kind of plateaued, but people really aren't willing to pay the current price."

One caliber Harrison has been able to get is .308.

"It's always been very abundant through the whole crunch," he

shared. "Also 6.5 Creedmoor is in high demand. We'll have it for a few weeks and then we won't have it for a few weeks. Then we'll have it for a few weeks again."



Federal Top Gun (Paper Wad)

Harrison thinks manufacturers are focusing on some key calibers such as 9mm, .223 and 5.56. It may account for these calibers being more available.

"We finally have seen some fulfillment in .38 Special in the past few weeks," he said. "We've also gotten some .40 S&W after a big drought there. Most of what we're getting is domestic ammunition. All the Russian stuff got cut off last year and we're just selling down what little we have left. There's a lot of hesitation when people start to buy the cheaper ammunition with steel casing. There's a perception it's lower quality."

RELATIONSHIPS STILL KEY

The long and short of it? While things are better, inventory is definitely not at pre-COVID levels just yet.

"I'd say we're seeing an increase of between 60 and 70% in volume from what we were seeing a year ago," Puglia said. "Right now, the important thing is to build your relationships with your sales reps and sales managers. And join a buying group. Those two things have helped us the most."

Four stores, four perspectives — likely mirroring some of what you've experienced in your areas. Want to have your voice heard on this topic? Send feedback to comments@shootingindustry.com. **SI**

DIY GUN SALES

FOR HOME + HUNTING



BY BRYAN HENDRICKS

Many people buy cars and trucks with visions of custom rims, custom lighting, custom body parts and high-performance add-ons like custom exhausts and superchargers. When fully tricked out, the vehicle is an extension of its driver's personality, an avatar.

In recent years, the same thing has happened with firearms. Rifles, handguns and shotguns remain specialized tools for acquiring game, target games and personal defense, but they have also morphed to express an owner's individuality.

This trend has created a vast, lucrative market within the firearms industry for aftermarket accessories.

At the same time, the simplicity of contemporary

firearms and the ease of customization creates a parallel market for do-it-yourself (DIY) gun reinventions.

THE WEST COAST WAY

Mike Gascon, an employee at Oregon Rifleworks in Medford, Ore., contends Oregonians are natural tinkerers by virtue of their pioneer heritage.

"Even in the Portland area, Oregon is a DIY state," Gascon said. "From the guy who makes a stencil to put leaf shapes in your latte to somebody who customizes an AR-15, it's just something that's part of our culture here."

With the evolving demographics of firearms ownership, the barista might also be the guy or gal who customizes a GLOCK or transforms an AR-15. Those platforms are essentially blank canvases — easy to accessorize.

It helps immensely nearly three generations of veterans who served continuously in war over the last 30 years

developed an intense affinity for the firearms they used in the military. The civilian market always shadows military trends.

"Around 2004-'05 is when AR customization really kicked off," Gascon recalled. "A lot of the pictures coming out in publications were really pushing the whole 'action-guy-from-overseas' thing."

The melding point was from 2005-'12 with the convergence of the tactical and competition markets, Gascon noted.

"Guys really started working with each other," he said. "Geissele makes some awesome hand guards, some awesome triggers. When competitive shooters started looking at what professional triggers could do for them and companies eased back on ruggedness and reliability, that's when it was a match made in heaven."

According to Gascon, YouTube has made every gun owner more knowledgeable. In many cases, it gives them enough knowledge to be



“dangerous.” Oregon Rifleworks fills the gap with in-store workshops with professional armorers, as well as with a full inventory of tools to perform the necessary tasks.

“Part of our business model really pushes the DIY aspect to the point we even host and teach workshops on how to build your own lower receiver,” Gascon shared. “We have all the tools in a classroom setting and armorers there to answer any questions and show people how to do it.”

The beauty of this model is it requires no development. It’s like wild fruit waiting to be picked.

“We wanted to serve an existing community that didn’t have everything all together in a brick-and-mortar store,” Gascon said. “This really sets us apart from other shops. We’re helping people along their journey through education for competition, home defense and hunting. We welcome all shooters.”

A major thrust is welcoming novices, which forms a communal atmosphere.

“We really keep an open attitude to people,” Gascon relayed. “Our shop is known for, I’ve never built an AR, what all do I need?”

After accessory or aftermarket parts, they need tools. Astute

retailers like Oregon Rifleworks have a full selection for all price points.

“Magpul has an awesome kit,” Gascon noted. “Bevlock’s kit is awesome, too. Once people are made aware of those tools, they buy them. And then the parts — everything from short safety throw levers to gas tubes, different buffers, adjustable gas blocks and buffer springs. The rise of the adjustable gas block is fantastic to see.”

“Part of our business model really pushes the DIY aspect to the point we even host workshops on how to build your own lower receiver.”

Mike Gascon
Oregon Rifleworks
Medford, Ore.

SOUTHERN DIY COMFORT

In the Southeast, AR-platform owners are very fond of powering up their

rifles, and Talon Tactical Outfitters in Tallahassee, Fla., has the materials and expertise to help them.

J.D. Johnson, chief operating officer of Talon Tactical Outfitters, said many of his customers are interested in powering up their AR platforms above 5.56-cal.

“Most folks we deal with are doing something outside the norm,” he said. “The people building their own stuff are building them in 300 Blackout and 6.5 Grendel. We do more 6.5 Grendel builds than anything for people who want to hunt with them.”

Another popular trend Johnson noted is building 9mm handguns with extended braces for plinking, for carrying in vehicles and for home defense.

The fun and satisfaction from a reconfiguration is in doing it yourself. Talon Tactical Outfitters cultivates a lucrative niche empowering do-it-yourselfers.

Johnson believes it’s important to distinguish between DIY armoring and DIY gunsmithing. Armoring, which comprises an overwhelming majority of builds, is merely swapping out parts. Gunsmithing is far more involved.

“We teach an armorer’s class,” Johnson stated. “The student

is actually buying the components. If somebody is buying a considerable dollar amount of parts from us, we are more than happy giving them advice. If they buy everything from us, we show them how to do it.”

The classes employ Real Avid armorer’s kits, which contain all of the tools necessary to do standard customizations.

“I’m a big fan of Real Avid’s Master Armorer’s Kit,” Johnson confirmed. “It’s easy to use for the novice armorer.”

For example, it contains a tool to install the front takedown pin to an AR-15 lower receiver.

“That can be difficult, and novices also tend to launch detentes across the room,” Johnson said. “Real Avid makes a tool that goes in a pinhole and captures the detente. It makes this particular operation very simple. It also comes with a torque wrench.”

Many DIY armorers neglect torquing, sometimes to their regret.

“We see ARs in here all time where the barrel nut is under-torqued or over-torqued,” Johnson said. “Real Avid’s AR Wrench works on multiple different buffer tubes and castle nuts.”

“There’s a few of their things I’d like to see them do better,” he added.

“I’m not tickled with the quality of some of their punches. They chrome-plate some of their



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Oregon Rifleworks offers a full range of instructional services to do-it-yourself gun enthusiasts. While customers can access a bevy of information on YouTube and other sources, there's nothing like the personal connection during a build class — which is where storefront dealers have a leg up on online-only resources. Those stores that can market this advantage are primed to grow their audience of DIY customers. (Photo: Mike Gascon)

punches, which I don't care for, but for somebody who's going to do just one or two, they're fine."

GLOCK handguns can be taken down and reassembled with a single punch, Johnson affirmed.

"The most popular handgun on the planet is stupid, stupid simple to work on," he added.

One notable development in the DIY department is a burgeoning selection of scope mounts for AR-style rifles, according to Johnson. Shooters are learning cantilever mounts work better for the particular platform than conventional mounts because they eliminate the flexing that occurs on a full-length Picatinny rail. The Burris P.E.P.R. not only stabilizes a scope, but it also aligns it for proper eye relief.

Of course, Talon Tactical offers equipment and instruction for DIY scope work. Popular products are scope alignment kits and ring conditioning kits.

As DIY customization grows more popular, more manufacturers will likely offer firearms conducive to accessorizing, and aftermarket

"If somebody is buying a considerable dollar amount of parts from us, we are more than happy giving them advice. If they buy everything from us, we show them how to do it."

*J.D. Johnson, Chief Operating Officer
Talon Tactical Outfitters
Tallahassee, Fla.*

suppliers will provide the products. The trend ensures a positive cash flow far beyond the sales of guns and ammo while also creating excitement and enthusiasm among gun owners. **SI**

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DIY GUNS hits newsstands June 28 and will be available for purchase online at fmgpubs.com.



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HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT A SHOTGUN?



BY ASHLEY MCGEE

HOME-DEFENSE LONG GUNS & SECURE STORAGE OPTIONS ABOUND

As temperatures rise, so does the crime rate. According to a report from the Department of Justice, each summer, home burglaries increase by around 10.5%. Household property victimization, household larceny and serious violent crimes also occur more frequently in the summer. You may recall the summer of 2020 experienced the biggest rise in murder since the start of national record-keeping in 1960, according to data gathered by the FBI for its annual report on crime.¹

If you're wondering "why summer?" the explanation is pretty simple. Most home burglaries are crimes of opportunity and when the weather is nice, people tend to spend less time at home. They may also leave their doors or windows open more frequently. Not to mention, heat can make people pretty cranky, which can lead to agitation, and for some, aggressive criminal activity.

For licensed firearm dealers, this means the summer months are prime to assist those gearing up for home defense.

HOME DEFENSE VS. PERSONAL DEFENSE

Many gun purchasers, particularly those newer to gun ownership, may be apt to think buying a gun for personal protection is the same thing as buying a gun for home defense. They walk in asking for a handgun, probably a 9mm, suitable for everyday carry without realizing there may be better options when it comes to protecting their property.

It's up to you as the gun dealer to educate them about the differences and the variety of suitable options available to them.

"My impression is when shopping for a home-defense gun, most people are offered a handgun unless they specifically ask for a shotgun," said Linda Powell, director of media relations for Mossberg.

Due to the versatility and dependability of shotguns, Powell suggests dealers ask more questions such as "Have you also thought about a shotgun?" or "Do you want a gun you can use for other things, like hunting?"

"Most people can learn to shoot a shotgun quickly and find a pump action is really easy to operate," she added.

With over 12 million sold, the Mossberg 500 is one of the most versatile and reliable shotguns available on the market. Available in 28 models in either 12-, 20- or .410 GA, there's a variation for every user and every application.

Mossberg also offers quite a few options with adjustable stocks, which are great for accommodating height differences between spouses.

If an adjustable stock isn't available, Powell said she's learned it's a lot easier to accommodate a short stock than a longer stock. Someone who is 6'3" will be able to adjust and shoot a shorter stock more accurately than someone who's 5'3" with a longer stock.

Shawn Poulin, owner of NOVA Armory in Arlington, Va., said shotguns are the most popular firearm among the store's customers for home defense. Of their total shotgun sales, 60% are purchased for home defense and the other 40% for hunting/sporting. Shorter variants, like rifle-caliber pistols follow closely behind.

In his experience, due to supply chain issues, many manufacturers aren't currently meeting full consumer demand.

"Other brands, like Turkish manufacturers, have stepped up to fill that gap," he said. "Turkish companies making clones of popular U.S. models are around a third to half the cost."

"For entry-level shooters, brands like TriStar are growing in popularity

because they're a great option for those discovering what type of shotgun they want without breaking the bank," Poulin added. "There's no reason for customers to spend more than \$300-\$700 for a basic shotgun.

"What we've learned is we can offer our customers a great, quality shotgun at a lower price point by seeking out smaller niche distributors," he continued. "And the feedback from our customers on these products has been overwhelmingly positive."

When it comes to guns specifically intended for home defense, both Powell and Poulin shared similar sentiments — a salesperson's recommendations should be made based on each customer's unique situation. What's their level of shooting experience? Are there children in the home? Is the



As with all guns, when selling long guns for home defense, it's better to sell a relationship to customers than a product.

home single or multi-story? Are they a renter or a homeowner? All of these factors influence not only what the best gun for the person might be, but also recommended storage options and add-on accessories.

STORAGE OPTIONS

One of the reasons those purchasing a gun for home defense commonly request a handgun versus shotgun or rifle is because of concerns over storage options.

According to the NSSF, women accounted for more than 40% of all firearm purchases over the past two years,² and their number-one reason was for protection of their families and children. With children in the home, buyers are looking for a gun they can easily and confidently secure and many assume this means a pistol in a safe in their nightstand or closet.

In reality, there are just as many storage options for shotguns and rifles.

Mossberg has been a leader in packaging all of their guns with cable locks. Depending on individual needs, there are also other options like trigger blocks and safes.

More innovative and creative options, like products from Tactical Walls, offer safety and concealability without sacrificing accessibility.

A problem sure to resonate with many firearms owners, Founder Tim Matter needed to find a way to



Mossberg 500 — ATI Tactical



Mossberg 500 Retrograde



Tactical Walls ModWall

store firearms safely out of sight without losing quick access to them. His answer? Taking advantage of the unused space inside the walls. This concept led to the first Tactical Walls product, the 1450M — released Jan. 2013.

The 1450 is a full-length mirror designed to be inserted in the wall of a home between studs. It comes with your choice of electronic keypad locked steel safe or keyed lock steel locker and is now available in either a hinge or sliding option.

“It’s a great option for a bedroom or even an entryway that won’t look out of place and will accommodate a shotgun or full-size rifle,” said Matter.

However, because the mirror does require you to cut a hole in the wall, they aren’t ideal for renters. Tactical Walls also offers the 1242, a full-length concealment shelf that can be hung in the main living area or any other room of a home.

“The goal with all of our products is to give users the ability to stage different products throughout the home in places you spend a lot of time,” he said. “If something suspicious is going on, you don’t want to have to break visual contact to run upstairs and grab a gun out of your safe.”

It’s important to note Tactical Walls’ products are intended to be a supplement to a gun safe, not a replacement.

“Everyone should own a safe

designed to protect and keep firearms safe, but safes are designed to protect what is inside,” said Matter. “Our products are for families to live amongst and to keep your family safe. The tools you keep in our products aren’t family-heirloom valuables, they’re tools.”

Matter also noted unless you take the time to re-secure your safe after retrieving a firearm, you’re leaving it open. Any valuables or additional firearms then become vulnerable. With Tactical Walls’ products, you don’t have to worry about leaving your mirror or shelf open.



The benefit to the dealer isn’t necessarily in the initial sale itself. It’s the opportunity to sell extra accessories — lights, barrels, chokes, side saddles, ammunition, etc.”

Linda Powell, Director of Media Relations
O.F. Mossberg & Sons Inc.

Tactical Walls also offers a limited selection of custom designs like barn doors, clocks, tissue boxes and American flags which, like the mirrors and wall shelves, serve as functional pieces of home decor that can blend seamlessly with the rest of the home.

For those with large collections and safe rooms, Tactical Walls’ ModWalls are designed to hold a large volume of firearms versus one to three firearms like their other products.

“A customer spends hard-earned dollars on building a collection of firearms with variety, not unlike those who collect wine, watches or art,” reasoned Matter. “Someone can buy two to three panels and display their collection and easily add on as it grows.”

ModWalls also give off a *James Bond* or *John Wick* feeling many firearm owners are looking for while still keeping tools accessible.

All of Tactical Walls’ products are made in Virginia and sold directly to consumers, as well as through a smaller dealer network.

“Our ModWalls display well in retail environments where customers can see them and touch them in order to make a more informed purchasing decision,” Matter noted.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

As with all guns, when selling long guns for home defense, it’s better to sell a relationship to customers than a product.

“The benefit to the dealer isn’t necessarily in the initial sale itself,” advised Powell. “It’s the opportunity to sell extra accessories — lights, barrels, chokes, side saddles, ammunition, etc.”

“Sometimes for faster target acquisition we recommend a holographic sight, but it’s not really necessary,” added Poulin. “A tactical flashlight is more beneficial in the home.”

Taking the time to ask questions and understand the customer’s mindset and home setup before making tailored recommendations is the best way to gain not only a new customer, but a repeat customer. **SI**



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BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

GET READY FOR FALL HUNTING SEASON

Patrick Connaghan owns 717 Armory in Harrisburg, Pa. A dedicated hunter himself, Connaghan wishes the fall hunting season would just *"hurry up and get here."*

Connaghan's fall hunting season sales start to pick up in August.

"Rifle season doesn't start until November, but archery season starts earlier," he noted. The surge in traffic continues all the way through archery and rifle season, right into the winter holidays.

"Sales really stay ramped up from August until the end of the year," Connaghan said.

Over the past couple of years, the biggest change Connaghan has seen in his fall season is what he termed the "unavailability" of product. He cited the lack

of availability is partly because of supply-chain issues due to COVID, and partly due to the current administration.

"I think people are buying things so fast manufacturers can't keep up," he stated. "When COVID started, they were limiting how many people could go to work, and then people weren't going to work. It compounded the spiraling effect we had in our industry, and the industry still hasn't figured out how to crawl out."

Some segments of the industry are doing better than others, Connaghan noted. Guns are more available than they were, but ammunition still is not readily available. On the archery side of things, products generally are easier to get than they

"You've got to have good bow techs who have experience and know what they're doing. They need to understand what the customer is looking for and be able to answer questions."

Mark Austin, Owner
2nd Amendment Outdoors
Corinth, Miss.

were a year or so ago.

"Bowhunting products help us, but the category is not one of our main money makers," Connaghan shared.

That said, however, 717 has a 25-yard indoor archery range and full-service archery shop — led by bow tech Dave Mohn, who has over a decade of archery expertise under his belt.

In Corinth, Miss., Mark Austin owns 2nd Amendment Outdoors. His fall sales start to pick up in late July and continue to increase into August.

"Here in Mississippi, we have a tax-free weekend in August, which helps," he said. "We have dove season in the beginning of September and bow season the first of October."

Austin said the surge in sales continues through the first of the year.

The biggest change Austin has seen in hunting season sales over the past couple of years has been the lack of availability of ammo.

"A lot of folks have had to go to different calibers," he informed. "A lot of times they can't get the right ammo for the guns they want to shoot. It's been tough. I talked with a lot of folks at the SHOT Show and it's going to be a couple of years before it gets any better."

Austin also has seen some changes in the demographics of his customer base.

"I'm seeing a lot more younger kids coming in," he said. "I think maybe it's because of programs in the schools for trap and skeet.

Archery has really picked up around here as well. I think it's all because of the classes in the schools."

ARCHERY'S IMPACT

Archery sales are an important factor in the fall hunting sales at 2nd Amendment Outdoors. The store has an indoor archery range with a hunt simulator, so bowhunters can practice indoors during any weather in preparation for fall.

"We have a bow tech who can fit someone with the right size bow at the right draw length," Austin shared. "Then the customer can go onto the range and practice and shoot at different animals. We have foam animal targets on the range, and they can also go into the tech room and practice with different hunting scenarios and animals."

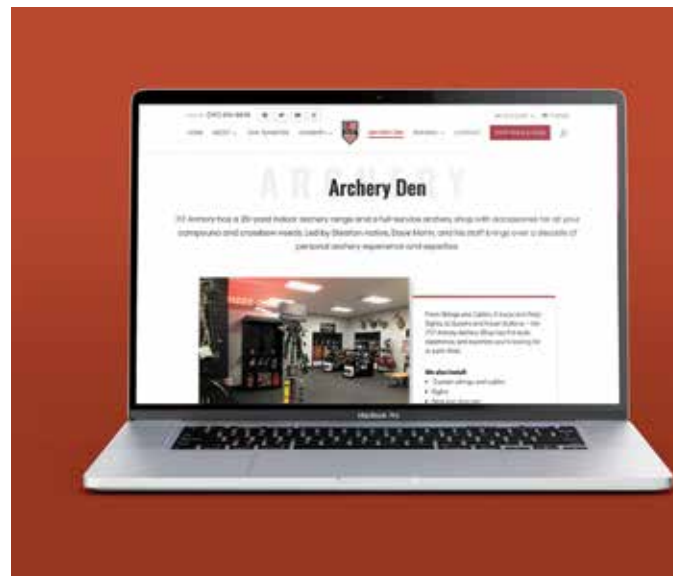
To make archery a successful component of

a retail store, Austin said the right staff — including a good bow tech — is a "must have."

"You've got to have good bow techs who have experience and know what they're doing," he said. "They need to understand what the customer is looking for and be able to answer questions. They also need to get a feel for the customer and how much they can carry and how far they're going to walk to where they're going hunting."

During the late summer and fall, 2nd Amendment Outdoors often holds a tent sale for clothing in the parking lot.

"Sometimes we also do an archery promotion," Austin said. "Archery is our first big-game hunting season of the year. We may do an event where people can shoot at a target, hit a certain spot and win a gift card. We're always trying

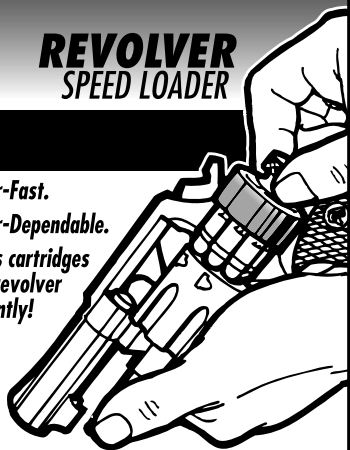


717's "Archery Den" houses a 25-yard indoor archery range (with four lanes) and a full-service archery shop to outfit both compound and crossbow hunters.

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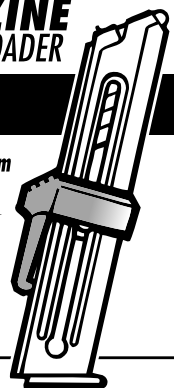
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Mark Austin of 2nd Amendment Outdoors has observed two prominent changes in the hunting segment over the past couple years: limited ammunition availability, and an uptick in younger customers pursuing the shooting sports and archery, especially.

to come up with something new and different to promote archery.”

Right now, customers want bows that are lighter and more compact.

“Bow companies are coming out with bows that are shorter, smaller, lighter and faster,” Austin observed.

HOW TO ELEVATE SALES OVER 2021?

This fall, Austin hopes to have an increase in customers and in sales from 2021, but also reckons the increased price of gas is going to have an impact on both hunting and on sales.

“The main thing we need to do in the store to have an increase is to have merchandise here for the customer,” he said. “If we can show the customer new items, I think we’ll get the increase.”

Austin praised gun companies for continuing to come out with new models and calibers, even with the events of the past couple years.

“When they first come out, you may get a limited supply,” he said. “Then it takes a while before you’re able to get any more. Anything new usually does well; customers love getting the latest and the greatest.”

One brand that’s always a consistent seller at 2nd Amendment Outdoors is Henry, according to Austin, who also noted they are sometimes hard to get.

At 717 Armory, Connaghan usually runs several promotions to

help get customers in and increase sales during the course of the fall season.

“We run specials for things like getting scopes bore sighted,” he said. “Sometimes we offer discounts on optics. What I can and can’t do depends on what inventory is available at the time.”

THE FINAL WORD

Connaghan’s advice for the fall 2022 season? Buy ammo now.

“Buy it whenever you can find it,” he advised. “Things aren’t like they were, where you could wait until the week before hunting season and you could get exactly what you wanted or needed for hunting. A lot of people who aren’t shooters during the rest of the year think things are the way they used to be, and they aren’t.”

From talking with manufacturers at the SHOT Show, Austin feels the current difficulty getting product is going to continue for a while.

“It’s going to be a tough year,” he predicted.

Although we’re going to be feeling the effects of disruption to the supply chain for some time to come, it does seem customers are ready for life to get back to “normal.” A good fall sales season would go a long way toward all of us getting back to doing the outdoors activities we all love. **SI**

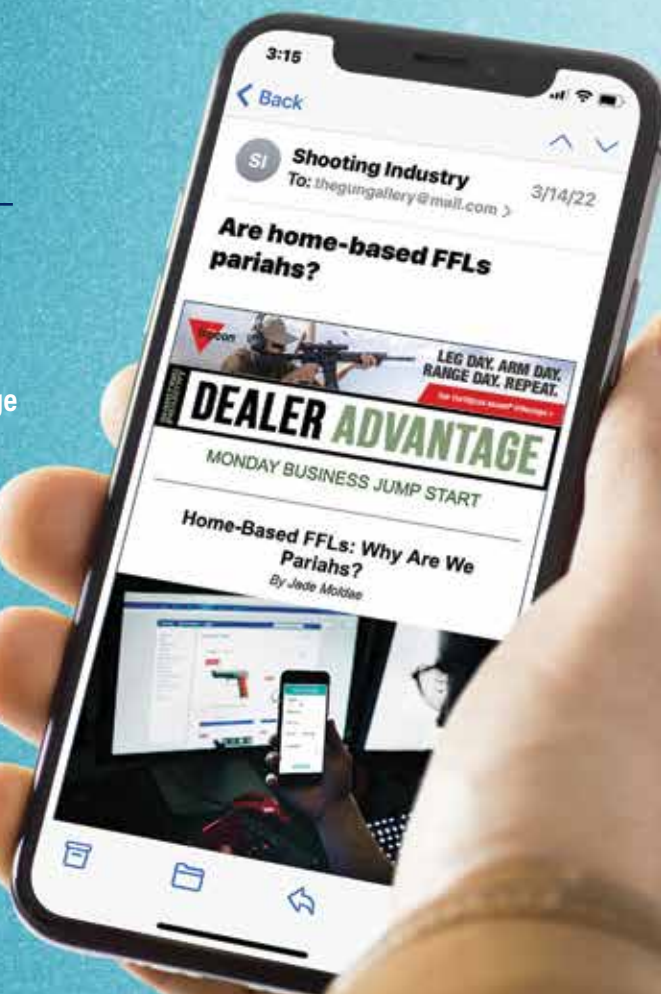
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Tac Shield's **RZR MOLLE GUN BELT** is a slim-profile belt constructed from 7,000-lb. rated 1.75" wide nylon webbing designed to sit outside belt loops. It securely snaps together with the robust quick-release Cobra Buckle. Internally, the belt's "loop" portion of hook-and-loop fastens to the Tac Shield inner belt. Its outer layer of RZR MOLLE skin is made from high-strength laminate and sewn onto the belt vertically every 1.5". The RZR MOLLE is backward compatible with all MOLLE pouches, PALS and belt-mounted pouches. It's available in sizes S-XL.



NIGHT FISION

(313) 293-7100
nightfision.com

Night Fision has **NEW BLADE HEIGHT OFFERINGS** for three manufacturers in its Optics Ready Stealth (ORS) Series product line. For full-size GLOCKS, the .330-.353 and the .469-.494 allow users to choose their perfect blade height to combine with any number of popular optics and plate combinations. For slimline GLOCK owners, an additional taller blade height is now offered for the GLOCK 43x MOS and 48 MOS, respectively. SIG SAUER pistols owners who retain their standard dovetail now have an additional taller blade height available. Lastly, the Heckler & Koch VP9 2020 upgrade pistol will now have two new blade heights to choose from: a .350-.387 and a .450-.517.



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MEC-GAR USA

(860) 635-1525
mec-gar.com

Mec-Gar USA has added upgraded 9mm **10-** and **19-ROUND CZ 75B MAGAZINES** to its product line. The magazine consists of a 17-round tube with a black aluminum +2 basepad installed. For states with restrictions, the 10-round magazine tube is dimpled to reduce capacity. Each magazine has Mec-Gar's proprietary anti-friction coating that makes loading and unloading the magazine easier when shooting and leads to fewer malfunctions.



ANDERSON MANUFACTURING

(859) 689-4085
andersonmanufacturing.com

A4 10.5" AM-15 CARBINE PISTOL

With the launch of its A4 series, Anderson Manufacturing introduces four new firearms. The **A4 10.5" AM-15 CARBINE PISTOL** features an A2 front sight with Magpul rear sight and SBA3 tactical pistol brace. The **A4 16" AM-15 CARBINE RIFLE** is a complete rifle assembly, AM-15, MOD03-CT1, 5.56 NATO, FSB carbine. The **A4 16" AM-15 MID-LENGTH RIFLE** is complete rifle assembly, AM-15, MOD03-CT1, 5.56 NATO, FSB mid-length. Lastly, the **A4 20" AM-15 RIFLE** is a complete rifle assembly, AM-15, MOD03-CT1, 5.56 NATO, FSB rifle.

WALTHER ARMS

(479) 242-8500
waltherarms.com



Walther's PDP is now tailored specifically for female shooters with the **PDP F-SERIES** pistol. The ergonomics of the grip were reengineered for the exact biomechanics of women's hands and design modifications include a reduced trigger reach, reduced grip circumference and reduced force necessary to operate the slide for those with smaller hands. The red dot-ready F-Series 9mm pistols are offered with a 3.5" or 4" barrel and include two 15-round magazines.

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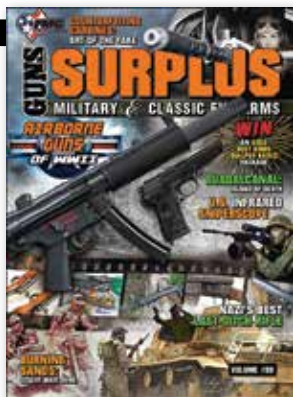
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FMG PUBLICATIONS

(866) 820-4045
fmgpubs.com

History always has stories to tell. In FMG Publications' latest Special Edition issue of **GUNS MAGAZINE SURPLUS & MILITARY CLASSIC FIREARMS**, articles highlight the impact of machine guns adapted for use in the skies, investigate the nature of "mobile warfare" by destroying tanks without serious casualties and explore weapons such as the Browning Auto-5, HK91, ZB26, Franchi SPAS-12. Handguns and edged weapons played roles in world history, too. The mechanics of the Czech vz.52 and even the part played by the machete in modern combat get a closer look in the 132-page issue.

TEKMAT

(877) 269-8490
tekmat.com

Designed to keep firearm components organized and protect workbenches, **GUN CLEANING MATS FOR GLOCK 42/43, GEN3 AND 44 MODELS** by TekMat feature dye sublimation printing diagrams and parts listings of the specific firearm to aid in takedown and reassembly. The ultra-soft, oil- and water-resistant gunsmithing mat's 11" x 17" size provides enough room to fully disassemble a handgun with extra room for tools and accessories. TekMats also include non-skid neoprene backing to secure the workspace to a workbench or table while keeping harmful chemicals, oil and dirt from penetrating down to finished surfaces. The mats are pliable and easily roll up for compact storage, and come in a variety of colors including blue, pink and FDE.



3. EVEN INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS GENERATE RETURNS

Customer service and experience expert Shep Hyken, whose keynote presentation was titled “I’ll Be Back,” revealed the following statistics: 52% customers are willing to pay *more* for better service, while 83% would be willing to switch businesses due to bad service. (Firsthand evidence of this: We’ve had dealers write in over the years who have confirmed customers value being treated well and will pay more for better service than what’s available at impersonal big-box retailers or faceless online merchants.)

To secure repeat business, Hyken shared it takes “being better than average — all the time.” Hyken also imparted the following wisdom from his shortest customer service speech ever: Be nice. This may sound cliché, but it’s increasingly hard to come by these days. (Ausley shared his team makes it a priority to say “we appreciate you” to customers in words and actions.) The stores that are welcoming really do stand out.

4. A “ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL” APPROACH TO MARKETING WON’T WORK

Rob Southwick of Southwick Associates shared updates on his firm’s extensive consumer segmentation research. The five largest consumer segments, or personas, include: Skills Builder, Hunter, Family Guardian (largest segment), Urban Defender (fastest growing) and Prepared For The Worst.

Each persona has a different motivation to buy and preference once they make a purchase — which is why a “one-size-fits-all” approach to marketing won’t cut it. A multi-faceted campaign is needed to connect with more potential customers.

5. DIVERSITY KEY TO FUTURE GROWTH

Building on the point above, one of the hallmarks of the buying surge over the past two years is more women and minorities are buying firearms for the first time than ever before. Phillip Smith of the National African American Gun Association

has experienced explosive growth in his organization, boasting 45,000 members today.

For stores/brands looking to make inroads in non-traditional communities, Smith emphasized this point to attendees: “We have a lot more in common than differences. Embrace that difference.”

6. A SENSE OF COMMUNITY DOES WONDERS

Similar to the first point, it’s evident consumers are looking for authentic connections and to *belong*. Your store or range can help set that precedent by becoming involved in charitable efforts.

“IF YOU WANT YOUR CUSTOMERS TO BE THERE FOR YOU, GUESS WHAT — YOU MUST BE THERE FOR THEM.”

Clay Ausley, Fuquay Gun

During the Customer Retention panel, Jacquelyn Clark, co-owner of Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center in Lakewood, Colo., shared some insights on how charitable events have impacted her facility’s relationship with customers.

“People want to do business with and be loyal to organizations that they ‘like’ and feel are good community citizens,” she said. “We’ve done a number of fundraising events for local non-profits over the past year — L.E.- and veterans-based — that involve a competition on the range where proceeds are donated.”

Bristlecone hosted a sales event to benefit victims of the Marshall Fire this past winter, providing another way to connect with the community.

“If you’re using social media and email to market these events on the front end, then communicate how successful they are and how much is raised on the back end. It can go a long way toward building brand loyalty, and in turn customer/member retention,” she advised.

7. DEVELOP ENTHUSIASTS OF THE BRAND

Kristin Marlow, CMO of Staccato, was instrumental in the rebranding effort from STI Firearms to Staccato in mid-2020. During the Customer Retention panel, Marlow explained how the rebrand unlocked an entirely new segment of customers — diverse in age, ethnicity, location and gender.

“Because we have so many different types of customers — and because there are so many new gun owners in the market — we see building a brand as incredibly important,” she said. “A strong brand rises all tides.”

Marlow noted Staccato is focused on standing for something that connects with people emotionally — which will encourage them to stay connected to the brand over time.

“We protect freedom and celebrate those who embody freedom,” she said. “That’s everyone from law enforcement officers to the mom protecting her kids to the friends who do crazy things like the Tactical Games. This comes out in our marketing in how we ‘show up’ as a brand. People first. A defined look and feel, voice, tone. Not dark and tactical. Light and approachable. Easy to use.”

It’s a formula that has worked, evidenced by the growth the brand has experienced over the past two years. **SI**

SAVE THE DATE

If you’re a forward-thinking dealer, marketer or industry executive, consider attending the 2023 Marketing & Leadership Summit. It will be held May 8–10 at the JW Marriott Savannah Plant Riverside District in Savannah, Ga. For more info: nssf.org/summit.

MARKETING & LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

BY JADE MOLDAE

7 TAKEAWAYS FROM NSSF'S NEW SUMMIT

AN event three years in the making, the 2022 NSSF Marketing & Leadership Summit was held May 10–12 at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort in Austin, Texas. This first-ever event combined elements of the NSSF Summit and CMO Summit, giving more than 200 manufacturers, dealers, wholesalers and marketers two days filled with an array of insights, education and networking opportunities.

Speakers at the event included firearms industry CEOs, dealers, internationally acclaimed business consultants, inspirational retired Navy SEAL Jason Redman and more.

With this being NSSF's first Summit since 2019, there was a tangible sense of enthusiasm and energy from attendees — who were able to take home dozens of takeaways to their teams. There were,

however, several concurrent themes presented throughout each of the panel discussions and presentations. Here are seven that caught our attention.

1. THE "MOST HUMAN" COMPANY WINS

In the opening talk of the summit, marketing strategist Mark Schaefer observed one of the impacts of the pandemic, increased isolation/loneliness, has changed the way consumers connect with advertisements. Schaefer argued the "most human" company wins, with human-centric advertising key.

"Consumers today believe us, not our ads," he said.

To make your brand "more human," include real people in advertising campaigns in an authentic (maybe even vulnerable) way. Schaefer recommends companies should be "of" a community rather than just "in" a community.

◀ Shooting Industry Editor Jade Moldae (right) moderated a panel discussion on customer retention strategies at the NSSF Marketing & Leadership Summit, featuring the perspectives of (from left) Kristin Marlow, Staccato; Clay Ausley, Fuquay Gun; Jacquelyn Clark, Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center.

Of course, this is something engaged storefront dealers are already doing and reaping the benefits.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE IS KING

It doesn't take much for a customer to leave a place of business — in fact, many leave as a result of one employee. During the Customer Retention panel, Clay Ausley of Fuquay Gun in Fuquay-Varina, N.C., shared the following with attendees: "I read many years ago 68% of the customers who stop doing business with a store is due to the actions of one employee."

It may sound counterintuitive, but if a customer has an issue with the service or product they received and you're able to solve the problem, they're likely to become a more loyal customer than one who never had an issue at all.

As Ausley explained to the audience, "The customer now knows for a fact should they have a problem, you're there for them. They don't know the other stores will care as much as you do about their needs and satisfaction. They now feel they can trust you."

Stores making connections with customers, and meeting their needs, will stand out from the rest.

"If you want your customers to be there for you, guess what — you must be there for them," Ausley said.

Continued on p. 45

PRIMARY WEAPONS SYSTEMS LAUNCHES DEALER DEMO PROGRAM

Primary Weapons Systems (PWS), known for their long-stroke, piston-driven ARs, announced the release of a demo and range program for dealers in 2022. The program allows dealers to purchase one complete rifle or pistol at the lowest price possible for use as a demonstration gun or range gun. This promotion is limited to one firearm per dealer annually.



PRIMARY WEAPONS SYSTEMS MK114

"The long-stroke, piston-driven operating system really sets PWS apart. Once a customer feels the soft recoil of our system and sees how little maintenance the system requires compared to a standard direct impingement, it's an easy sell. We've had great success with our existing dealers

who have indoor ranges, and hope to get PWS into more ranges," said Ben Peters, PWS director of sales.

Dealers can contact PWS Sales to sign up for the demo/range program, and can choose between the MK1 MOD 2-M line, MK1 MOD 1-M line or MK1 PRO line for this promotion. / primaryweapons.com

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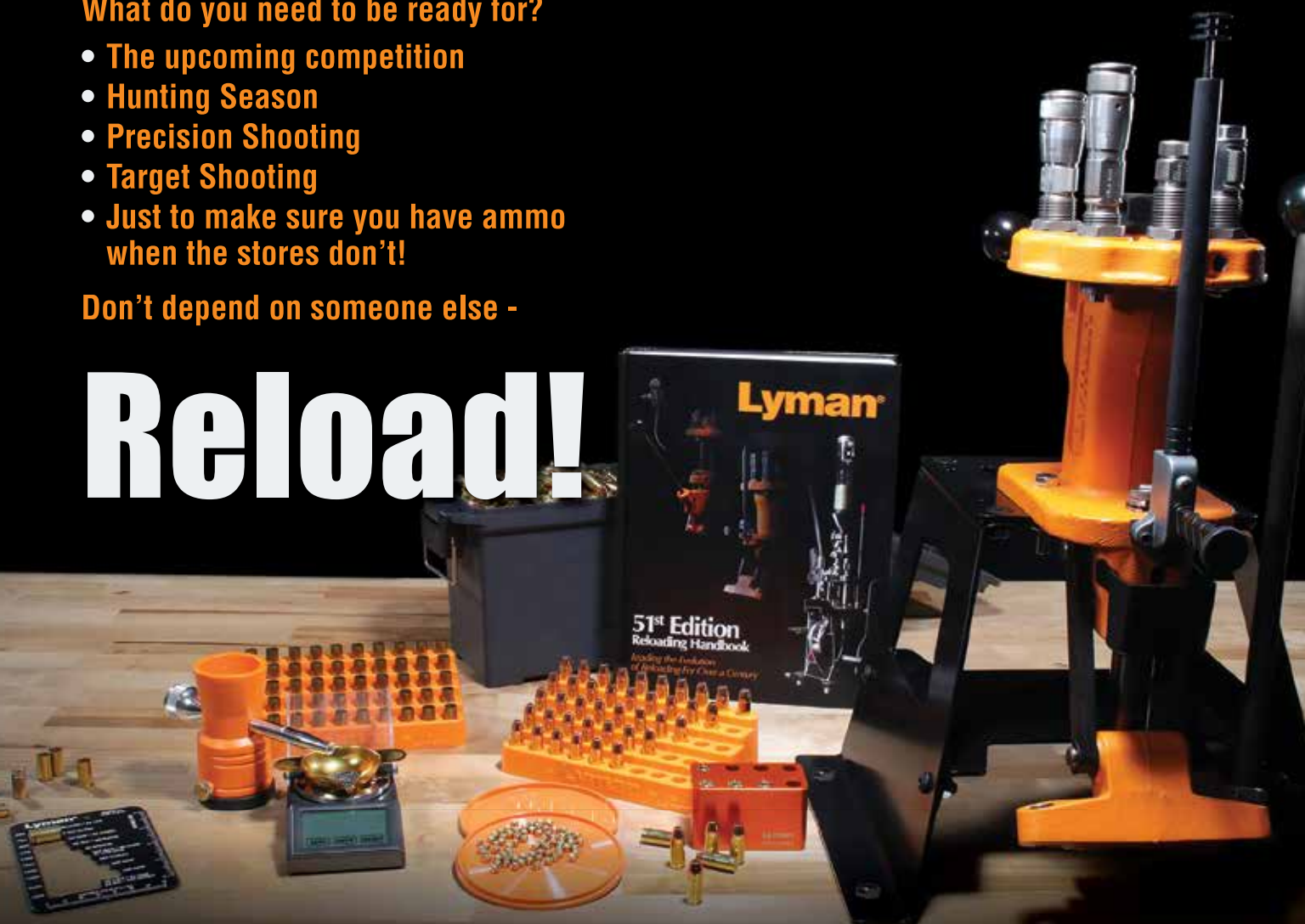
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