

# SHOOTING INDUSTRY

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

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## SHOT SHOW 2024 REVIEW

- Super-Charged Event
- Top Self-Defense Products

## RETRO ISN'T DEAD!

- Lever-Gun Renaissance
- Close Look At: Cimarron Firearms

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Breaking Down Barriers:  
Diversity & Inclusion — p. 24

## ALL IN ONE GUN SOFTWARE HAS FINALLY ARRIVED

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## Nostalgia Still Sells

Similar to how styles from previous decades rise from the ashes to impact trends years later (e.g., '90s style is back in vogue today), retro firearms never truly go out of style.

Case in point: lever-action rifles are certainly in resurgence. At SHOT Show 2024, category anchors Henry and Marlin further expanded their product line of lever-action rifles, while Smith & Wesson announced its foray into the market, Aero Precision unveiled a prototype and — after teasing the concept at SHOT Show 2023 — Bond Arms' LVRB is due to be released Q2 this year.

Inside this issue, Bryan Hendricks provides further insight on the “lever-gun renaissance” currently taking place. As readers will see, innovation continues to expand the popularity of an iconic firearms platform.

Speaking of nostalgia, Laura Burgess and Ashley Gall contend it's a natural seller for Cimarron Firearms.

“Hold one of our historic replica guns, guns with a story, and you can feel the history and passion coursing through it, right into your hand,” lends Bryce Wayt, Cimarron VP of operations and media.

And if this isn't enough evidence to support a revival in the retro firearms segment, here's more: *Shooting Industry's* sister title *GUNS Magazine Old West*, an FMG Special Edition title, is currently in production and will be on newsstands next month.

### SHOT SHOW 2024 REVIEW

The largest SHOT Show ever demands robust coverage — and this issue delivers in three parts. See this month's lead *Industry News* story (p. 10), Editor Jade Moldae's talking points from the show (p. 46) and Massad Ayoob's predictions for your next crop of top-selling defensive guns (p. 40) for all things SHOT Show.



MARCH 2024

### A CALL FOR EXPANDING DIVERSITY

In this month's *Best Practices* column, first-time *SI* contributor Bethany Beathard encourages the industry to continue on its path of expanding the shooting sports to diverse audiences. Yes, a lot of progress has been made, but there's a lot at stake, as Beathard points out: “If the industry doesn't continue to create a welcoming environment, we'll lose the voting numbers needed to protect the rights we have as sportsmen, conservationists and gun owners.” See p. 24 for more.

**Have a reaction to these stories or anything else you read in *Shooting Industry*? Contact us anytime: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com).**

### NEXT MONTH: NON-LETHAL SALES

The three-part self-defense series concludes in the April 2024 issue, with Tim Barker examining non-lethal products. While it's a sales category that sits on the outer edges of what a “gun store” is all about, there are solid profit margins to be had on pepper spray, stun guns, tasers, batons and knives. Dealers share how they've incorporated these and related accessories into their mix of inventory.

Other highlights of the April issue include insights on avoiding e-commerce pitfalls, a look at top-selling products in the precision long-range segment, tips for increasing Google reviews and more. **SI**

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# Celebrating 75 Years of Rugged, Reliable Firearms®



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The acquisition, ownership, possession and use of firearms are heavily regulated. Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Whatever your purpose for lawfully acquiring a firearm – know the law, get trained and shoot safely.







For the firearms dealers who are along the border, this could provide an additional and valuable revenue source.

regulation complicates the process for those needing to store firearms at a border-state FFL, as the firearms would then have to be shipped back to the owner's state for transfer. This leaves the firearms owner unarmed on their return trip.

Locker services offer a practical alternative, eliminating the need for a transfer as the gun owner technically maintains possession of the firearms within a rented space. Hold My Guns is actively investigating the incorporation of locker services into our storage partners' offerings, recognizing their value not only for travel-related storage but also for the storage of NFA items.

Your continued support is crucial as we strive to expand our services and assist more gun owners. Safe travels!  
— Sarah Joy Albrecht  
Founder/Executive Director, Hold My Guns

## FINALLY, AN UNSELFISH PERSPECTIVE

I want to thank Barry Bookman (Letters, Jan. 2024) for his take on the ridiculous battle between home-based and local gun store FFLs. Finally, an unselfish perspective.

There's already way too much of an "us vs. them" mentality in the world today over every conceivable subject. Work together and everyone benefits. Push people away and everyone loses. **SJ**  
— Dave J., Billings, Mont.

## REACTION TO "SAFE & SECURE"

I read with great interest the story in the Jan. 2024 issue about the organization Hold My Guns ("Safe & Secure"). It is a great concept and idea. With the article demonstrating that FFLs can legally store weapons for individuals I would like to offer a suggestion.

This summer I plan to travel in my camper to Montana and Washington. During that trip, I would like to be able to drive into Canada. The problem is Canada prohibits firearms being brought in.

The solution I would like to see implemented is for firearms dealers along the American-Canadian border to offer a service to temporarily store and hold weapons for folks who carry guns in their vehicles or campers to store them at their locations.

For the firearms dealers who are along the border, this could provide an

additional and valuable revenue source.  
— Name withheld by request

**Editor's Note:** We requested a response from Sarah Joy Albrecht, founder and executive director of Hold My Guns. Here's what she had to say. Any further comments, send a note to [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com) anytime. — Jade Moldae, Editor

Dear Reader, you're spot on. Storage during travel to restricted areas is yet another practical reason firearms owners benefit from this service. Hold My Guns aims to provide secure storage nationwide and appreciates your support to make these efforts possible.

The ATF's "Open Letter on Safe Storage" (dated July 24, 2023) affirms custodial storage is considered a transfer. The Gun Control Act requires transfers occur within the gun owner's state of residency. This

**HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?** Let us know at [comments@shootingindustry.com](mailto:comments@shootingindustry.com), [facebook.com/shootingindustry](https://facebook.com/shootingindustry) or [linkedin.com/company/fmg-publications](https://linkedin.com/company/fmg-publications)



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## 2024 SHOT SHOW CONCLUDES WITH RECORD-BREAKING SUCCESS

Courtesy of NSSF

The SHOT Show, owned and operated by NSSF, concluded Jan. 26, 2024, with resounding success — setting new benchmarks for industry innovation, collaboration and engagement. With an expanded show floor, a record number of exhibitors and an array of new features and networking opportunities, the 2024 SHOT Show was the largest to date.

More than 55,400 industry professionals packed the 13.9 miles of aisles over four days at The Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum, eager to view new, innovative products used for target

shooting, hunting, outdoor recreation and law enforcement.

“The energy on the SHOT Show floor this year was off the charts,” said Chris Dolnick, NSSF SVP and chief customer officer. “The feedback we’ve received from our exhibitors and attendees has been amazing, and we can’t thank them all enough for helping us make the show what it is: the greatest trade show in the world.”

This SHOT Show marked the third year of expanded exhibit space at Caesars Forum, in addition to The Venetian Expo. More than 2,600

◀ With its largest exhibition footprint ever, SHOT Show 2024 delivered for both exhibitors and buyers.

companies displayed products and services in booths covering 821,000+ net square feet and attracting attendees from 117 countries and all 50 states.

### GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS & THE OUTDOOR INDUSTRY

The 2024 SHOT Show facilitated dialogue and collaboration between government officials and outdoor industry professionals at both the State Attorneys General Forum and the third annual Governors’ Forum.

The first-ever Attorneys General Forum was a resounding success, featuring the top law enforcement officers in six states. Iowa AG Brenna Bird, Montana AG Austin Knudsen, Indiana AG Todd Rokita, Ohio AG Dave Yost, Kansas AG Kris Kobach and Utah AG Sean Reyes all took the stage to discuss their efforts to stand up against the Biden administration’s increasing attacks on the firearm industry and law-abiding Second Amendment supporters across the country.

The third annual Governors’ Forum was standing-room only, where seven governors discussed the importance of firearm businesses to their economies and their efforts to attract firearm- and ammunition-related companies to relocate to their state. Nevada Gov. Joe Lombardo, Montana Gov. Greg

**Continued on p. 12**

## SIG SAUER EXPANDS UK OPERATIONS

SIG SAUER Inc. announced an alliance with Accuracy International Limited (AI) to expand its business operations in support of the British Armed Forces and law enforcement customers within the UK.

Accuracy International is a British firearms manufacturer based in Portsmouth, England with products fielded by military units and law enforcement globally.

“As part of our global strategic

growth plan, SIG SAUER is solidifying several key partnerships to meet the increased demand for our products in Europe and other NATO countries. The alliance with Accuracy International affords SIG an expanded presence, greater customer engagement and new collaboration in the UK to meet the diverse, immediate and future needs of the British military, law enforcement and other security and defense organizations,” said Ron Cohen, president of SIG SAUER.

“The benefits of the partnership with SIG SAUER are clear; our brand reputations are strong, the



product lines and customer bases are complementary and our company cultures are closely aligned,” said Tom Irwin, AI director. “SIG will benefit from AI’s extensive UK market expertise and manufacturing and logistical infrastructure to assist in the transition toward a fully independent SIG SAUER UK entity.”

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Continued from p. 10

Gianforte, Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen, Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon, Idaho Gov. Brad Little and Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp attended the event. Both events were moderated by Larry Keane, NSSF SVP for government/public affairs and general counsel.

## HONORING INDUSTRY LEADERS

NSSF announced its 2024 Hall of Fame inductees, honoring three industry leaders who left indelible marks on the industry and the shooting sports. The NSSF Hall of Fame was launched at the 2020 SHOT Show to honor industry leaders for their contributions to NSSF, SHOT Show and the heritage of target shooting and hunting in America. This year's inductees were Don Gobel, Grits Gresham and Bob Morrison.

NSSF presented its highest honor — the Ken Sedlecky Lifetime Achievement Award — to Steve Hornady, president of Hornady Mfg. Co., for his long-term commitment to the success of the industry and his support of NSSF's mission to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports.

## SHOT WEEK SUPPLIER SHOWCASE

The SHOT Week Supplier Showcase, a two-day event and a key component of the SHOT Show, garnered widespread acclaim for its success in connecting suppliers with manufacturers, fostering collaboration and driving efficiency across the supply chain. This year featured over 560 OEM third-party suppliers meeting with exhibiting manufacturers and exploring their needs for extrusions, fabrication, fabrics, machinery, metal, plastics, software, logistical support and tools.

## LIBERTY AMMUNITION LAUNCHES IN-STORE DEALER PROGRAM

Liberty Ammunition announced a new dealer program featuring quality self-defense ammunition at better price margins for retailers that stock Liberty products.

"Better retailers know that the



## The energy on the SHOT Show floor this year was off the charts."

Chris Dolnack • SVP & Chief Customer Officer  
NSSF

"You need to come to SHOT Show to see the latest and greatest technology, new designs and what people's needs are so you can provide them a nice solution to get their product launched," said Ron Natale, co-owner of Precision Laser Technology.

"We came to find potential new suppliers, meet up with all our current suppliers and get new ideas and insights into industry trends. It's one of the most important shows for us," said Petra Polson of Benchmade Knife Co.

## ALL-NEW ARCHERY PAVILION

This year, SHOT Show introduced the all-new Archery Business Pavilion, featuring exhibits from leading manufacturers and suppliers in the archery industry.

"It's been great to see a lot of crossover folks who are thinking about adding an archery department or already have one. Everybody comes to SHOT, so having an archery-specific section provides a level

majority (72%) of gun owners own a firearm for self-defense. They need to carry self-defense ammo, and retailer margins are better than commodity ammo. We are going to support our retailers and tell the story to consumers," said Gary Ramey of Liberty Ammunition.

Liberty Ammunition will provide retail partners with signs, counter displays, hats, shirts, in-store videos, gel blocks and other items to elevate its product presence in stores.

of convenience. I imagine this section will really take off in years to come," said Eric Griggs, owner and president of GAS Bowstrings.

## EDUCATION SESSIONS

Education sessions for firearm retailers, shooting range operators, exporters and law enforcement professionals continue to be an important segment of the SHOT Show.

SHOT University; the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP), in partnership with *American COP*; and Export Training Sessions offered in-person classes on compliance, marketing, training, exports, operations and much more.

## OFF-SITE SHOT WEEK HIGHLIGHTS

Many official show events cluster around the four days of the SHOT Show, creating SHOT Week. Among them was the NSSF/Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA) Golf Classic in support of HAVA, a firearm industry-run charitable organization that helps the healing of disabled combat veterans through participation in hunting and the shooting sports.

Also, Industry Day at the Range on the day before the SHOT Show gives invited media members and buyers the opportunity to preview and test the latest guns, gear and gadgets. This year featured more than 120 exhibitors and over 2,300 media and buyers.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Preparations have already begun for next year's 47th SHOT Show, which is slated for January 21–24, 2025, in Las Vegas.

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

"There are over 1,800 Type 06 FFLs in the USA. Most make commodity products and have nothing to talk about other than price. While they race to the bottom with price, we keep pace by making the most effective self-defense ammunition. We continue to improve product quality and provide retailers with a great margin," Ramey said.

[/ libertyammo.com](https://libertyammo.com)



A person wearing a black tactical jacket and tan cargo pants is holding a Tokarev TT12 rifle. The rifle is black and silver, with a curved magazine. The person's hands are visible, holding the rifle. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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# INDUSTRY NEWS

## SPRINGFIELD ARMORY ECHELON AWARDED L.E. CONTRACTS

Springfield Armory announced the Geneseo Police Department and the Henry County Sheriff's Office, both in Illinois, have recently adopted the Echelon 9mm pistol for duty use.

The Echelon was designed to set a new standard for modern, striker-fired duty pistols. With a host of revolutionary, patent-pending features, this modular and highly adaptable handgun is engineered with superior ergonomics and built to withstand the harshest conditions.

Driving the modularity of the design is the Echelon's patent-pending Central Operating Group, an entirely self-contained and serialized stainless steel chassis. The result is a system that is easily moved between available grip modules in seconds.

To support this adaptability, the Echelon features interchangeable grip



modules for a firearm that fits a wide range of officers' hand sizes.

Through Springfield, the department also acquired Safariland Level III Retention Holsters, Surefire X300 WeaponLights and Trijicon RMR HD red dot optics. Springfield Armory provided the department with transition training as well as armorer course training.

"Springfield Armory strongly supports the Geneseo Police Department and is proud to work with them on providing firearms for its officers," said Fred Mincks, Springfield Armory's law enforcement sales manager.

In addition to adopting Echelon

pistols for its officers, the Henry County Sheriff's Office also acquired Safariland Level III Retention Holsters and Surefire X300 WeaponLights through Springfield Armory. The deputies also will receive transition training and armorer course training.

"Springfield Armory has a strong commitment to supporting the law enforcement community. We are proud to have been able to provide such a capable firearm to the Henry County Sheriff's Office to help them keep our communities safe," said Mincks.

[/springfield-armory.com](https://springfield-armory.com)

## BENELLI USA NAMES PREMIER DEALER OF THE YEAR

Benelli USA announced Molly's Place Sporting Goods, located in rural Kennedyville, Md., is its Premier Dealer of the Year award recipient.

Established in 2010, Molly's Place has transformed from a small-town hunting shop into a dynamic retail destination under the co-ownership of brothers Nick and Chikki Shajwani. Thanks to their leadership, perseverance, forward-thinking and dedicated employees, Molly's Place has seen significant growth, attracting customers from all over the country to its sporting goods complex, which includes a restaurant and a convenience store. Throughout its growth, the company has maintained its family owned and operated style of business and kept personal customer service at the core of its operations.

Additionally, the Shajwani brothers established an omnichannel e-commerce operation, expanding their retail footprint.

"We deeply value the direct relationship we have with our entire dealer network. The Benelli USA Premier



From left: Patrick Boccabello (V. Pestilli & Assoc.), Dilan WorriLOW, Nick Shajwani, Chikki Shajwani, Tom DeBolt (Benelli USA) and Lee Colquitt (Benelli USA).

Dealer program is an elite group of dealers who have agreed to elevate that partnership to a level above and beyond the norm. Molly's Place is a prime example of that commitment, and we're pleased to present them with this well-deserved honor as our Benelli USA Premier Dealer of the Year," said Lee Colquitt, VP of sales for Benelli USA.

The Benelli USA Premier Dealer Program pairs the most respected shooting sports retailers in the U.S. with experiential retail floor presentations highlighting the Benelli, Franchi and Stoeger brands. This creative execution focuses on a dynamic branded display of firearms in a merchandising format that is high-tech, efficient and visually stands

out to educate and inspire consumers.

In addition to the enhanced merchandising experience, the program offers participating dealers additional benefits, including product fulfillment, featured exposure on BenelliUSA.com, consumer events and more. The Benelli USA Premier Dealer Program also combines in-store merchandising with digital and social media in an omnichannel approach to build brand and product awareness through Benelli's top customers.

Benelli USA is looking to expand dealer participation in its Premier Dealer Program with select partners throughout 2024.

[/benelliusa.com](https://benelliusa.com)

## WALTHER ANNOUNCES \$30 MILLION EXPANSION

Walther Manufacturing is expanding its presence in Fort Smith, Ark., creating an expected 76 new jobs over the next five years. The expansion represents a capital investment of up to \$30 million in the region.

“Walther Manufacturing is making a substantial investment in our Fort Smith factory to facilitate the expansion of our research development and manufacturing of U.S.-produced firearms and accessories,” said Tom Goike, Walther Manufacturing president and CEO.

Currently, Umarex USA/Walther occupies 185,000 sq. ft. in their facility. The expansion adds over 40,000 sq. ft.

to the existing operation, encompassing industry-leading design engineering, product management and manufacturing capabilities. The expansion is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2024.

“Arkansas is proud to be home to Walther U.S. headquarters, both because we love jobs and because we love our Second Amendment. After meeting with the company during my European trade mission this summer, I’m thrilled they’ve decided to double down on their investment and grow their facility here in the Natural State, helping Fort Smith and the entire River Valley grow,” said Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Walther established its operations in Arkansas in 2012, making Fort Smith its U.S. headquarters. Walther



Manufacturing is the fabrication entity that manufactures all U.S.-based products for Walther and Umarex USA.

“My connection to Umarex and Walther goes back many years. They are a key fixture in the high-tech manufacturing fabric of the Fort Smith Region and a partner who shares our goal of growing and recruiting a talented workforce,” said Tim Allen, president and CEO of the Fort Smith Regional Chamber of Commerce.

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

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## LAS VEGAS CAMPAIGN TARGETS ILLEGAL GUN PURCHASES

The NSSF, together with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Department of Justice (DOJ), announced a month-long public education campaign reminding greater Las Vegas area residents about stiff penalties facing individuals convicted of unlawful firearm purchases.

The “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” campaign, in its 24th year, drives home the message that anyone making an illegal firearm purchase faces a federal felony penalty of up to 15 years in prison and up to \$250,000 in fines. An additional 15 years can be added if the straw purchase is made with the intent of trafficking across state lines.

The program is funded in full by the firearm industry, and now also includes federal funding allocated to ATF by Congress. Las Vegas was chosen for this specific campaign by the ATF.

“The firearm industry has always been fully committed to keeping firearms out of the hands of those who should not possess them. This is a critical and never-ending effort. We are proud to launch this public awareness campaign in



NSSF President and CEO Joe Bartozzi with (from left) ATF Director Steve Dettelbach, U.S. Attorney for the District of Nevada Jason Frierson and Range 702 General Manager Kris Chanski during a “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” campaign launch in Las Vegas, Jan. 24, 2024.

Las Vegas, and (proud) of our more than two-decade cooperative relationship with ATF, DOJ and the entire law enforcement community to assist them in their efforts to reduce criminal acquisition of firearms,” said NSSF President and CEO Joe Bartozzi.

The Las Vegas area “Don’t Lie” campaign totals more than 33 million gross media impressions. This includes an outdoor campaign across 30 digital billboards along high-traffic roads and freeways, as well as a transit campaign throughout the region with the message: “Buy a gun for someone who can’t and buy yourself 15 years in jail. Don’t Lie for the Other Guy.” Ads are running on targeted bus routes utilizing 50 bus kings

and 75 transit station posters across the market. The campaign also includes 1,052 FM radio spots on five of the largest Las Vegas radio stations, more than 3.7 million targeted impressions across Facebook and Instagram and geofenced mobile display ads.

The “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” program also involves educating firearm retailers to better detect and prevent straw purchases by providing “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” retailer kits containing a training video and information for store owners and staff, as well as point-of-purchase displays aimed to deter illegal straw purchasers.

[/ nssf.org](https://nssf.org)  
[/ dontlie.org](https://dontlie.org)

## TISAS PARTNERS WITH CMP TO BUILD 1911 PISTOL

Tisas USA, a division of SDS Imports, announced a partnership with the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP).

Tisas is the first commercial manufacturer to build a 1911 pistol for CMP. Its M1911 A1 is a museum-grade reproduction of a mid-war M1911A1 as it was issued during the Second World War. It will be available in a CMP version, which will have the CMP logo on it, and sold exclusively through CMP stores.

Features of the Tisas M1911 A1 CMP model chambered in .45 ACP include a 5” barrel; U.S. property marked; manganese phosphate slide, frame and small parts; reprofiled ejection port; type-E hammer, two seven-round magazines; and two sets of grips including accurate reproduction brown plastic grips and walnut double-diamond checkered grips.



“We’re quite honored and very excited to have partnered with the Civilian Marksmanship Program on this project,” stated Tim Mulverhill, SDS/Tisas USA CEO. “Being able to take our historically accurate Tisas M1911 A1 and offer it in an exclusive CMP model is a great opportunity for Tisas to show their commitment to helping train and educate United States citizens in the responsible use of firearms.”

“The CMP is pleased to announce our partnership with Tisas USA to provide this

extraordinary CMP-branded, museum-grade replica of the M1911A1 to our many customers and competitors,” said Jerry O’Keefe, CMP chairman/CEO. “This pistol will make a great companion piece to the surplus M1911A1 pistols sold by the CMP or just a great pistol on its own to shoot or collect! This is part of CMP’s effort to expand our pistol offerings both in sales and competitions.”

[/ thecmp.org](https://thecmp.org)  
[/ tisasusa.com](https://tisasusa.com)

## ACCURACY SOLUTIONS ACQUIRES MCREE PRECISION

Accuracy Solutions LLC announced its acquisition of chassis manufacturer McRee Precision.

Scott McRee, founder of McRee Precision, is widely recognized as a pioneer of the aluminum rifle chassis, bringing his first aluminum chassis to market more than 20 years ago. His ingenuity earned him several U.S. patents.

Accuracy Solutions and McRee Precision began cooperative efforts in 2018. In 2019, after more than a year of research and development, the globally patented Fontcuberta Advanced Sniper and Tactical (FAST) Chassis Enhancement System was unveiled.

Eduardo "Edu" Abril de Fontcuberta first thought of incorporating the company's patented BipodeXt technology into rifle chassis design, and immediately introduced Accuracy Solutions to McRee.



Daniel Gyurec (left) and Scott McRee commemorate the closing of Accuracy Solutions' acquisition of McRee Precision.

Over the years, Accuracy Solutions refined and expanded its patented BipodeXt and FAST Chassis Enhancement Systems.

Up to now, Accuracy Solutions has focused on providing FAST Chassis Enhancement Systems to chassis manufacturers. The acquisition of McRee Precision changes that. Equipped with McRee Precision's patented technologies and know-how, Accuracy is well-positioned to develop its own FAST chassis.

"Accuracy Solutions cannot

overstate the importance of acquiring McRee. We didn't merely buy a chassis manufacturer; we bought McRee Precision, the widely recognized forerunner of the modern chassis system. This acquisition saves Accuracy decades of research, development and know-how acquirement," said Daniel Gyurec, Accuracy Solutions managing partner.

Accuracy Solutions expects new product offerings to be available shortly, while others are in development. **SI**

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# NEWSMAKERS



M. CAMPBELL

### SIG SAUER Retains Field Sales & Operations VP

Matt Campbell has joined SIG SAUER as the VP of field sales and operations. In this position, he is responsible for managing all field sales operations and staff supporting local retailers and distribution.

“Matt’s experience with retail customers and distribution, coupled with his proven track record of developing long-term strategic partnerships, will be an asset to our organization as we grow and our global footprint expands,” said Tom Taylor, SIG SAUER CMO and EVP, commercial sales.

Campbell joins the company after serving in various roles at Winchester Ammunition for the past 25 years; most recently he served as the VP of sales and marketing. Prior to Winchester, Campbell worked in national sales roles for Anheuser-Busch.



B. BACHMEIER

### Dead Air Silencers Taps Sr. Product Dev. Director

Dead Air Silencers hired Benjamin Bachmeier as the senior director of product development.

Ernie Beckwith, president and CEO of Dead Air Silencers, commented, “[Bachmeier’s] experience and approach to product development are key elements to the evolution of Dead Air.”

Bachmeier has nearly two decades of experience in the firearms, defense and aerospace industries from engineering, management and leadership positions. Most recently, he was a product manager for Magpul Industries Corp. He was also an employee of Advanced Armament Corp., and responsible for the

recent relaunch of the reformed Advanced Armament Company brand.



S. WOODRUFF

### A Girl & A Gun Appoints COO

A Girl & A Gun (AG&AG) announced the appointment of Sandra Woodruff as COO, a new position at the organization. Woodruff will lead cross-functional operations, including product development, member success and growth operations.

Robyn Sandoval, president and CEO of AG&AG, shared, “Sandra has been a key contributor on A Girl & A Gun’s leadership team ... Her passion and dedication to our leaders and members will further strengthen our position as one of America’s leading training organizations.”

Woodruff enjoyed a distinguished 35-year career in state government as the deputy director of fiscal management at the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. After she retired, she began consulting for state agencies and other clients. Woodruff has played a vital role in the AG&AG community since 2018, serving in various capacities.



### Lipseys Announces Exec. Changes

Jason Cloessner was recently promoted to VP of product development for Lipsey’s, and David Wascom, was hired as CFO after serving as the company’s CPA for nearly 30 years.

Cloessner, a 25-year veteran of Lipsey’s, will continue his role in leading the special make-up firearms division and continue cultivating industry partnerships that drive special collaborations and bolster Lipsey’s innovative exclusive offerings.

Flint Virgets, Lipsey’s executive industry director, shared, “Jason’s passion for product and building industry relationships has served him and Lipsey’s well over the past 25 years of his career. He’s part of the next generation of this company that will continue to guide its future.”

Of Wascom, Mark Emonet, Lipsey’s president and COO, stated, “Nobody is more qualified than David to be our next chief financial officer. His professionalism and unique experience with Lipsey’s businesses will serve us well.”



D. LANGSTON

### Scent Thief Welcomes Sales & Marketing VP

Scent Thief welcomed David Langston as its VP of sales and marketing where he is tasked with elevating the company’s strategic growth and market presence.

Langston’s career of 20 years includes establishing and nurturing brands such as Muzzy Broadheads, Hunter Safety System, Can Cooker and Wac’ Em Broadheads.



K. BUTLER

### NRA Women Names Woman Of The Year

SLG2 Inc. announced its founder and president, Karen Butler, was honored with the prestigious *NRA Women Golden Bullseye Award for Woman of the Year*. This recognition highlights Butler’s dedication and commitment to create a stronger camaraderie among women in the shooting sports community.

In a release, *NRA Women* stated, “Through her efforts, [Butler] has inspired thousands of once-hesitant women to transform themselves into

confident gun owners and hunters, launching them on their own journeys to becoming responsible for their own personal safety and that of their families.”



### KGM Technologies Welcomes Directors

KGM Technologies welcomed Bill Bracken as its director of government business development, and Sean Murphy as the director of sales and marketing.

KGM Founder Kyle Grob stated, “Their wealth of experience and deep industry knowledge will be instrumental in achieving our growth objectives and delivering exceptional products to our customers.”

Bracken will play a pivotal role in identifying and cultivating

new business opportunities and partnerships as well as developing government business.

He brings 15 years of experience in sales and business development to KGM.

Murphy leads the company’s initiatives to expand its presence and reach within the marketplace.

He has 12 years of experience in sales, marketing and training within the firearms and outdoor industry.



K. MANCHA

### Primary Arms Government Hires Sales Manager

Kris Mancha joined Primary Arms Government as the new field sales manager for its east U.S. territory that includes south Texas, AL, CT, DE, FL, GA, LA, Maine, MD, MA, MS, NH, NJ, NY, NC, PA, RI, SC, VT, VA and WV.

Scott Tirman, VP of sales for Primary

Arms, shared, “His knowledge and experience will make him an invaluable resource for our partners across his territory.”

Following his service in the U.S. Army, Mancha worked as a sales leader in both the custom engineered metal component and tactical gear industries.



C. BARTO

### Outtech Adds Regional Manager

The Outtech Sales Services team welcomed Cameron Barto as a regional manager for the independent channel where he will be working with retailers in WV, MD, DE, NJ and northern VA.

Prior to joining Outtech, Barto was a management trainee for a regional trucking firm. He is a recent graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where he studied marketing and supply chain management. [SI](#)

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BY MASSAD AYOUB

## ROYAL RANGE: FROM FLOODED METROPLEX TO 5-STAR FACILITY

All of us shooter folk have probably heard the line Jeff Cooper made famous: “A golf course is a waste of a perfectly good rifle range.” But did you ever walk through a multiplex movie theater and think, “Ya know, with backstops where the movie screens are, this could be a helluva set of indoor shooting ranges”?

In 2010, this thought occurred to three men who made the concept a reality in Nashville, Tenn. The co-owners of what is now named Royal Range are Joshua Winter (president); Scott McWilliams; and Art Cason (general manager).

My introduction to the place came in early December of 2023, when I arrived there as one of the lecturers at Tom Givens’ Professional Trainers Seminar.

“The GPS has to be wrong,” I thought as I approached. “The damn thing took me to a movie theater!”

Which is precisely what it was designed to be, and once was.

### WORTH THE GAMBLE

General Manager Art Cason explained, “This place started out as the Regal Cinema. Then came the ‘1,000-year flood’ that hit Nashville in 2010. The floodwater was 10’ deep in the lobby, which is now our retail sales area.

The original owners gave up on fixing it, and the place languished empty for half a decade. We bought it in 2015 and turned it into the range complex you see here.”

Art continued, “We have about 48,000 sq. ft., encompassing two floors, three indoor ranges, one 1,600 sq. ft. force-on-force scenario training area and multiple classrooms that seat up to 70 people, including an amphitheater setting. Of our three indoor ranges, one can take .50 BMG on full-auto, while the other two are rated for .308 Winchester full-auto. We have complete state-of-the-art audiovisual teaching equipment in all the classrooms and the meeting room. The force-on-force area has two floors with multiple staircase arrangements and movable walls.”

Royal Range employs over 60 people, with a mix of full- and part-time. About a third of them are instructors.

The general manager estimates the cost of refurbishing and repurposing the theater at approximately \$4 million. The gamble paid off: The estimated value of Royal Range today is set conservatively at \$12 million. Gamble may not be the word. When careful, well-informed planning is involved, it’s less a matter of luck and more a case of business acumen.

◀ Noted instructor Tom Givens (far left), runs a line of shooters at a match on one of the three pristine indoor ranges at Royal Range.

When I was there on a Friday, Royal Range was packed — the sales floor, ranges and classrooms alike. When I was there on a Saturday, it was *really* packed. Metropolitan Nashville is the most densely populated area in Tennessee with some 2 million people. And even in the bluer parts of the state, there’s no question: Tennessee is Gun Country.

### RANGE RENTAL & TRAINING

The public range is constantly busy at the Royal facility, and training is a huge part of the services they offer. Cason estimates in 2023, more than 25,000 people were trained under their auspices.

“We have 18 instructors teaching 20 private classes a week, and half a dozen or more classes we host with outside instructors,” he shared. “We’re a Gunsite class provider, hosting some of their specialty classes and their signature API 250 class.”



**When careful, well-informed planning is involved, it’s less a matter of luck and more a case of business acumen.**

He continued, “In addition to open-enrollment classes for law-abiding armed citizens, we hold a lot of government classes here — municipal, federal and state. We offer many POST-approved classes. We have the largest armed guard and active-shooter training programs in the state of Tennessee.”

Cason adds some of those classes, such as the active-shooter programs, are taught off-premises by Royal Range personnel.

He noted, “We’ve had several active-shooter seminars where we taught audiences of 500 or more.”

I had the opportunity to share some of this training thanks to Tom Givens.

Givens (rangemaster.com) is world-famous and teaches regularly at Royal Range. He gives his hosts top marks for their professionalism.

### RETAIL PROFIT CENTERS

The retail area was absolutely bustling whenever I walked through over a couple of days. I left with my wallet a little lighter: They had lots of hard-to-find merchandise on display, and at good prices.

Sub-sections of the retail space include The Silencer Shop with a vast array of sound suppressors, and a custom shop offering in-house builds on AR-15 and polymer pistol platforms.

Gun rental for the range is another profit center. Royal Range maintains some 350 fully automatic weapons, including belt-fed as well as magazine-fed. The customers shoot those under the strict and capable tutelage of the company's trained range officers.

Floating around in the

background I watched several interactions between sales staff and customers. Without exception, the folks behind the counter were friendly and patient. Another obvious key to commercial success.

How many guns do they move? Art told *SI*, "We've been open since

2016, and sold over 800,000 firearms as of April 2023."

Royal Range's annual gross is several million dollars per year. It is a classic example of innovative thinking combined with knowledge of product and focus on service resulting in spectacular success. **SI**



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BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

## FAMILY-OWNED BRANDS: OTIS TECHNOLOGY & MKS SUPPLY

There was a time when woman-owned businesses in the shooting, hunting and outdoor industry were few and far between. The pendulum has swung significantly in recent history with more women-led brands — mirroring present trends in firearms ownership, as more women are ardent, passionate firearms owners today than ever before.

In this month's column, we're going to look at two family-owned brands: Otis Technology and MKS Supply.

### DOREEN WILLIAMS GARRETT: OTIS TECHNOLOGY

At 17 years old, most girls are flirting with boys and partying. But not Doreen Williams Garrett. In 1985, at age 17, she was building a brand-new company, Otis Technology — an enterprise that changed the way the industry thinks about gun-cleaning equipment.

The previous hunting season, when she was 16, her grandfather trusted her to go deer hunting with his Winchester Model 94. While pursuing a buck into a swamp with her father, Garrett tripped on a root and tumbled into the mud, plugging up the rifle barrel and ending her hunt for the day.

Back in camp, she decided there had to be an efficient way for hunters to take cleaning supplies with them into the woods. The result of this thought was

The Whole Kit and Caboodle, the first pocket-sized full cleaning kit.

"The company became a family affair," noted Heather Pleskach, director of marketing for Otis. "Doreen, her parents and her three siblings all put their hearts and souls into it. They did a lot of grassroots efforts and attended a lot of shows and events."

For five years, the family assembled the kits on their dining table. Then in 1990, the company moved into a renovated horse barn in Boonville, N.Y. The following year they introduced the Tactical Cleaning System, and in 1992 introduced the Otis Elite Cleaning System. The company moved again in 1997 to its current location in Lyons Falls, N.Y., and has continued to grow.

Today, Otis is known more for its defense and tactical cleaning kits than for the original kit Garrett developed for hunters to take to the woods.

"Doreen had trouble breaking into the tactical side for a while," Pleskach said. "She was young and a female, and it was difficult for her to talk to people like 50-year-old four-star generals. Their attitude was 'What can I learn from this girl?'"

To overcome this, Garrett's father, Jerry Williams, stepped in as the face of Otis on the tactical side for many years and helped Garrett build the segment.

◀ Kara Brown-Boesenberg, fourth generation owner of MKS Supply, has praised the trend of women joining firearms companies as executives in recent years.

Once their military contracts were in place, the company built the facility they have today.

"They were able to reinvest in the company and build state-of-the-art infrastructure and vertically integrate the company to control supply chain and quality," Pleskach said. "Like many other companies, we've had opportunities to relocate, but we have a strong commitment to this area and to our employees, so we have kept our headquarters and operations here in New York and have invested in growth here."

For many years, Garrett was the CEO and CFO of Otis.

"Her sister, Denise, was the VP of sales and marketing, and her brother, Nick, was VP of engineering," Pleskach said. "Nick was 2 when Doreen started Otis, so he grew up at Otis. He loved the engineering and the machines, so he went to school for it and came back when he graduated. Her other brother, Larry, was VP of operations."

Around 2010, the company brought in a management team so the entire family could transition into more of an advisory role for Otis. Garrett became chair of the board, a position she continues to occupy.

"Doreen has maintained a close relationship with each person who has filled the role of CEO, and we see her regularly," Pleskach shared, "but she maintains an advisory status. She and the rest of the family have always fostered a culture of commitment to employees, integrity and family first, and it continues to be the culture of the company."

### KARA BROWN-BOESENBERG: MKS SUPPLY

Several states away, in Dayton, Ohio, Kara Brown-Boesenberg is the fourth generation of her family to have an ownership interest in MKS Supply.

"Growing up, I was always around the shooting sports traditions, as well as hunting," Brown-Boesenberg said. She started shooting when she was 8 years old, and accompanied her father, company president Charles Brown, to the range and on hunting trips when she was just a little older.

“Shooting has always been one of my passions,” she noted. “It’s an American tradition, and it’s always been a tradition in my family as well.”

Brown-Boesenberg was interested in joining MKS Supply, but her father had a rule: “It’s hard to be the SOB (son of the boss) or DOB (daughter of the boss). If you’re interested in finding out if working for this company is for you, you have to complete a college degree in whatever you want to study. Then you need to work for someone for five years. If you still want to explore the opportunities at MKS, come to me after you do that, and we’ll talk.”



**This is a large industry, but it’s like family. At MKS Supply, everyone cares about each other, and we’re passionate about what we do. It’s a tight-knit community and everyone’s happy to be here.”**

**Kara Brown-Boesenberg** • Owner  
MKS Supply • Dayton, Ohio

Accordingly, Brown-Boesenberg went to the University of Dayton and earned a degree in education.

“I became a teacher, and taught for six years,” she recalled. “One year I taught in the inner city, and the other five years I taught in the suburb where I lived. Even though I loved



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teaching, I knew my path was going to be something in this industry.”

One of the things that made her hesitate about joining MKS Supply, Brown-Boesenberg shared, was the amount of travel involved.

“My dad traveled a lot, and we all know the first quarter of the calendar year is filled with a lot of industry shows and travel in general, and I didn’t know how it would work with being a mother,” she said. “So, one summer I went to MKS and said, ‘I know being the daughter of the boss is a difficult task, but I’m willing to put in the extra work and the extra hours and see if this is something for me.’”

She worked the entire summer in the warehouse at MKS without pay to try it out.

“I absolutely loved it,” she said. “I love working in this industry and I love working with family.”

Brown-Boesenberg thinks the best way to be a good leader in a company is to do every job.

“It helps you understand the complexities of whatever that job might be,” she added. “When I was working in the warehouse, I learned about our inventory system and ATF regulations. Then when I decided to come here full-time instead of teaching, I started working in the office on a small scale with buying group customers, and

worked up to wholesale distributor customers.”

In 2019, she entered into a minority ownership agreement with her father. Since then, she has continued to work closely with MKS Supply’s manufacturing partners, as well as managing accounts and maintaining oversight of company marketing strategies.

Brown-Boesenberg said the culture at MKS Supply reflects the overall atmosphere of the firearms industry.

“This is a large industry, but it’s like family,” she stated. “Here at MKS Supply, everyone cares about each other, and we’re passionate about what we do. It’s a tight-knit community and everyone’s happy to be here.”

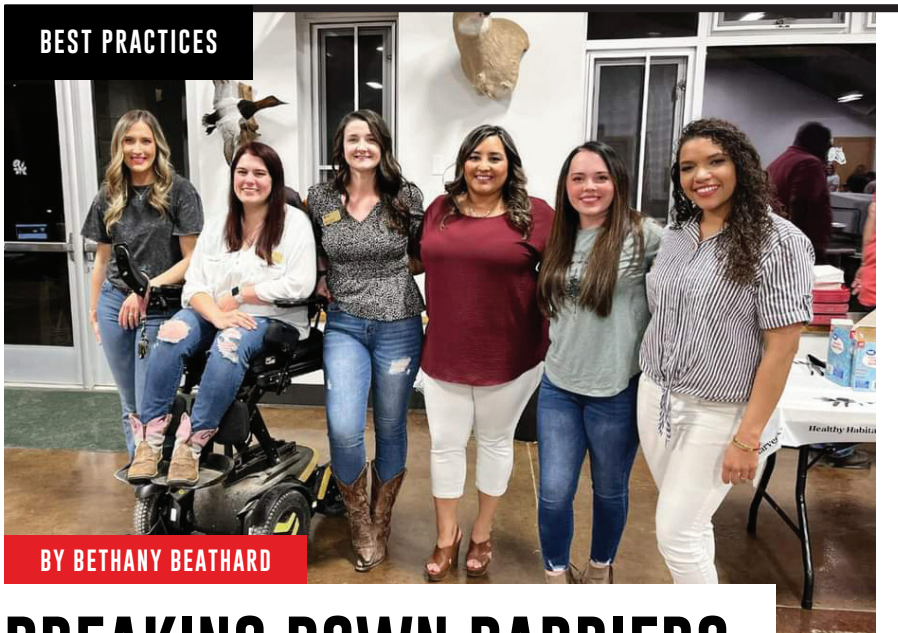
This is especially true for women in the industry, Brown-Boesenberg noted.

“It’s fun to be a part of this industry, especially being a woman,” she said. “It hasn’t always been this way, but we’re seeing more women in executive positions in this industry. Here at MKS Supply, four of our 12 employees are women. Our controller through the years has always been a woman. I think the industry welcomes it now, where it used to be an old boys’ club.”

Two women at two companies with different backgrounds have one thing in common: an unyielding passion for this industry and what it represents. **SI**



## BEST PRACTICES



BY BETHANY BEATHARD

# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

**T**he landscape in the outdoor industry is changing. For the past decade, statistics have shown women are leading as the growing demographic in the hunting and fishing segments.

In addition, we're seeing a rise in diverse hunters and self-defense shooters from various ethnic and cultural groups. It's important to continue fostering a welcoming environment for incoming hunters, especially those from marginalized groups within the industry. If the industry doesn't continue to create a welcoming environment, we'll lose the voting numbers needed to protect the rights we have as sportsmen, conservationists and gun owners.

Recently, we have seen initiatives like R3, non-profit hunting heritage programs and inclusive groups designed to promote growth and foster community. To see the development of groups like these shows the industry has realized the need and made efforts toward improvement.

## CURRENT STATE OF DIVERSITY

For decades, the hunting and outdoor sports industry has been marked by a noticeable lack of diversity — with marketing representation predominantly driven by specific demographics. The historical roots

of these outdoor activities are often traced back to cultural traditions and historical practices for all groups and genders. This lack of diversity has perpetuated stereotypes and barriers, creating an environment where certain communities may feel excluded. Understanding this historical context is crucial for addressing the disparities and working toward a more inclusive future in hunting, sport shooting and self-defense activities.

As we delve into the historical aspects, it becomes evident fostering diversity requires a concerted effort to forward progression and promote access for individuals from all walks of life.

## PERSPECTIVE ON REPRESENTATION

I — a biracial woman who is an avid sportswoman, promotes support of the Second Amendment and educates women on self-defense — find myself in many of those up-and-coming communities. I always say, "If you can't see it, you can't be it."

Representation is a great tool to create a welcoming environment for those in these targeted markets. If someone can look at an organization's publication and see themselves as a part of it (because they resonate with the people pictured) — it says a lot! However, this is not to be confused

◀ Bethany Beathard (far right) and other attendees of NWTf's Women in the Outdoor ladies event at the Hunting Heritage banquet.

with inclusive. We don't want to exclude prior dominant groups or create a new, unrealistic setting. I have had personal involvement with NWTf's Women in the Outdoors program in Oklahoma. This is a great community where women from all walks of life can grow as sportswomen through mentorship and friendships.

In addition, I have worked with various organizations to help promote representation in various marketing materials. Best of all, the brands and organizations reached out to me specifically to add diversity. I was pleased to have those great conversations and complete the tasks. We need more conversations and initiatives like that.

## PROFESSIONALS' INSIGHTS

In an interview with Brittany Jill of Britt Jill Marketing, she underscored the importance of mentorship.

"The shooting and hunting industry can introduce more diverse people through mentorship," she stated.

NSSF actively promotes this with their +ONE initiative, which asks mentors to pledge to bring someone new hunting or sit with them.

As a woman in the industry, Jill mentioned she has a lot of friends who don't hunt, and their husbands don't hunt; they've never been around hunting. She explains to them, and openly shares on social media, how amazing it is to watch the woods wake up, hear the animals come to life and the excitement of just seeing them in their natural habitat. Generally, after explaining hunting isn't just killing, they start to open up to the idea.

"After we cook them some back straps, normally, they'll tell me they really want to start hunting now!" Jill shared.

Jill has worked with companies such as Barnett Crossbows, Muddy, Hawk, Big Game, Stealth Cam and more. She understands the importance of the industry connecting with its customer base and incoming users. She revealed innovation in women's gear — such as bows and camo — has contributed to women having a place in the industry.

"Now more than ever, I get the sense

women are starting to feel like we do belong. We don't have to wear our dad's or husband's old camouflage that doesn't fit anymore or use an old bow that's too heavy," she said.



**By showcasing individuals from various backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and ages participating in hunting, sport shooting and self-defense training, the industry can break down stereotypes and dispel the notion these activities are exclusive to a particular demographic.**

#### **IMPORTANCE OF REPRESENTATION & OUTREACH**

To truly welcome and engage a diverse audience in the shooting sports, the industry must prioritize and embrace diverse representation in marketing, media and campaigns. Images and narratives play a powerful role in shaping perceptions and influencing participation.

By showcasing individuals from various backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and ages participating in hunting, sport shooting and self-defense training, the industry can break down stereotypes and dispel

the notion these activities are exclusive to a particular demographic. Diverse representation reflects the reality of the broad spectrum of enthusiasts and sends a strong message of inclusivity.

This approach attracts new participants and creates a more welcoming atmosphere for those who might have previously felt marginalized or underrepresented in the shooting sports community.


Proactive outreach programs and educational initiatives are essential to further expand diversity in shooting sports. We see groups like Shoot Like A Girl, Hunters of Color, Artemis Women, NWTf hunting heritage programs, Wheelin' Sportsmen, JAKES and Women in the Outdoors excel because they invest in programs providing education, training and resources.

These initiatives include mentorship opportunities, community and workshops designed to make newcomers feel comfortable and confident in engaging with these activities.

By partnering with community organizations, schools and local clubs, the industry can continue establishing connections and fostering a sense of community. Outreach programs introduce new participants to the skills and joys of hunting and sport shooting and contribute to building camaraderie and a supportive community within the shooting sports landscape.

#### **STILL WORK TO DO**

While acknowledging the progress made over the past decade, it's clear there is still work to be done. The momentum for change is evident, and with ongoing efforts, the shooting sports community can continue to build a more inclusive and vibrant environment for individuals of all backgrounds.

By prioritizing representation, outreach and education, the industry can ensure the outdoors remain accessible and welcoming to everyone — safeguarding the rights and traditions cherished by sportsmen, conservationists and gun owners alike. 

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# LOADING UP

BY TIM BARKER

## Must-Have Self-Defense Long Guns & Accessories

When customers are considering self-defense options, they'll most likely wind up with a handgun of some sort. But there are those who, for a variety of reasons, want something significantly larger.

Long guns may not be the biggest selling category, but they represent a solid opportunity to tap into a steady demand for self-defense firearms. We saw what happened during the pandemic and social unrest of 2020, when shotguns and other long

guns disappeared from store shelves.

This is the second of a three-part series exploring self-defense sales. Last month, we looked at handguns and next month we'll conclude with an exploration of non-lethal options. Here, we consider the role of shotguns and rifles in this critical self-defense sales category.

Clearly, there's not as much variety compared with the handgun sector. For many people, the conversation about a self-defense long gun begins and ends with a 12-gauge pump shotgun. There's a good reason for that, suggests John Harvey, owner of Oak Ridge Gun

Range in Orlando, Fla.

"You don't have to be a very good shot," he said. "It's something with a lot of power at close range. And you hit what you point it at."

Still, in conversations with gun stores around the nation, we see the market does run a bit deeper.

### WHAT'S SELLING?

The popularity of pump shotguns is driven by a range of factors. Some customers point to the ease of use. They are often seen as more reliable than semi-auto shotguns. Some sales are driven by tales of intruders being frightened off by the sound of a

shotgun racking. Then there's the price factor, says Scott Stirrat, owner of Idaho Guns & Outdoors in Boise, Idaho.

A customer can walk out the door with a dependable shotgun — they sell a lot of Mossberg Mavericks at around \$250 — without having to stretch too far.

“That’s obviously a lot cheaper than most handguns,” Stirrat noted.

For those willing to spend a bit more, the Mossberg 500 and Remington 870 lines offer a lot of options for customers seeking a classic pump, noted Steve Pavolic, general manager of Target Shooting Solutions in Avondale, Pa.

“Those are the two most popular and I think we sell the most of those models to folks,” he confirmed. “Any of their variants in those families of shotguns.”

Yet, there are other options out there besides these traditional stalwarts.



Elite Tactical Systems Carbon Smoke Gen 2 AR-15 30-Round Magazine



Federal Premium Personal Defense Buckshot - 20 GA w/ FLITECONTROL Wad

“  
**Regardless of whether it’s a shotgun or rifle, there’s a good chance the customer will consider adding ammo, a carrying case and cleaning kit.**

In Orlando, Harvey still sees brisk business with Mossberg’s 590 Shockwave, with its pistol grip and barrel at just over 14”.

“Shotguns are selling like hotcakes since they made it legal to have a really short barrel,” he shared.

There are the semi-automatic shotguns, too. They may not be right for novices, but they can appeal to more advanced shooters, according to Stirrat, whose shop sells semi-autos from Mossberg and Beretta.

“Those are people who are going to spend \$1,000 or more,” he said.

For customers who want something a little more exotic, there are the double-barrel pumps like the KelTec KSG, which holds as many as 14 shells in its dual tubes. Topping the \$800 price point they aren’t a top seller, but they do grab some attention.

“They’re pretty popular,” said Stirrat, in Idaho. “They’ve been out for a while now, so people are probably not as excited as they were five years ago. But they are still something we keep in the store.”

#### ARS & “THE BRACE FACTOR”

Bringing AR rifles into the self-defense conversation is sure to spark a robust debate, particularly when we’re talking about neighborhoods with little space between houses.

“I usually try and steer people away from them for self-defense,” Stirrat affirmed. “You don’t want to be shooting rifles in the house if you can help it because it can go a long way and over-penetrate.”

At Target Shooting Solutions, most of the inquiries about ARs for self-defense come from novice shooters.

“They come in after hearing an AR is a good home-defense weapon,” Pavolic relayed, “but they don’t know much about anything else.”

When someone does opt for the platform, it’s common to start with an entry-level rifle like those offered by Diamondback. If they’re willing to spend more, they’ll look at Smith & Wesson and Ruger. And when it’s for home defense, rifles with shorter barrels tend to be more popular — bringing us to “the brace factor.”



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have a  
really short  
barrel.”**

**JOHN HARVEY** • Owner  
Oak Ridge Gun Range  
Orlando, Fla.

The legal status of these devices — which effectively allow anyone to create a short-barreled rifle without applying for a tax stamp — has been a source of chaos for gun stores and gun owners in recent years. The latest ruling, by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, has once again made them legal. However, the issue is unlikely to be truly settled until the U.S. Supreme Court weighs in.

This leaves stores and their customers in a sort of limbo. Do you load up on guns with braces? And are your customers willing to buy them?

Seeking clarification, Orlando's Harvey contacted his ATF representative after the latest ruling.

“She contacted her superior for guidance and her superior sent a letter,” Harvey recalled. “The letter said: ‘Contact your lawyer.’”

After the recent court ruling, customers at Target Shooting Solutions started buying some of the braces that were already in stock before the previous legal setback. The store, however, is hesitant to jump fully back into this particular market.

“We haven't gotten many of the factory-braced pistols in,” Pavolic said. “We're not really sure where the market is with these and we don't want to buy a bunch of stuff that's just going to sit around.”

#### ACCESSORIES

Similar to handguns, long guns can generate a healthy amount of add-on sales, particularly with the infinitely customizable AR rifles.

Target Shooting carries a wide range of optics, scopes, magazines, stocks and forends.

“Maybe the gun comes with just a standard one and they want to upgrade to an M-LOK to have better attachments for grips, flashlights, lasers and whatever they want to customize it with,” Pavolic explained.

Some of the more popular shotguns (like the Mossberg 500/590 and Remington 870)

also have a range of available accessories, including slings, M-LOK adaptors, side saddle shell holders, magazine tube extensions and replacement stocks.

“People are quick to put flashlights on them,” said Harvey, in Orlando. “Sometimes they'll go with a laser, although it's just really not necessary on a shotgun. But they saw something in a movie.”

Regardless of whether it's a shotgun or rifle, there's a good chance the customer will consider adding ammo, a carrying case and cleaning kit.

“They also buy relatively expensive eye/ear protection,” Harvey added. “The electronic muffs are very handy and the prices of those have come down. They're not nearly as expensive as they used to be.”

#### TRAINING

For shops with a range, training classes can be a great way to generate additional revenue — both from class fees and from extra sales generated by the classes that expose attendees to different guns and accessories.

Target Shooting Solutions offers AR classes (the demand hasn't been there for shotgun courses) ranging from intro to more advanced courses. At the upper end, the courses emphasize upper-level techniques, including shooting on the move and shooting under stress.



Streamlight TLR RM 1 & TLR RM 2





Shotguns are a steady self-defense seller at Idaho Guns & Outdoors. Owner Scott Stirrat (pictured) points out customers can defend themselves and their families with a dependable shotgun and not worry about breaking the bank to do so.

The classes are generally offered once a month, depending on the demand. Those advanced courses don't tend to generate a lot of extra sales, since those customers already have most of the gear they need. But it's a different story with the introductory courses.

"They may rent a gun to use for the class and then decide to buy it," Pavolic said. "Or they may buy a rifle with the

intention of taking the classes."

As with handguns, long guns represent a strong market for self-defense sales when the right combination of product offerings and price point is met.

Next month, we'll look at non-lethal options, with insights from dealers about this personal- and home-defense alternative. **\$1**

This is the second installment of a three-part series exploring the self-defense market by Tim Barker. Check out last month's feature on handgun sales at: [shootingindustry.com/in-focus-self-defense-handguns](http://shootingindustry.com/in-focus-self-defense-handguns). The series concludes in the April issue with a look at non-lethal products.



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By Bryan Hendricks

# Lever-Action Rifle Renaissance

## New Markets Emerging For Traditional American Firearms

**T**hough recently relegated to the nostalgia bin, lever-action rifles are generating fresh enthusiasm for old, time-tested technology.

Gunmakers are investing heavily to update designs, metallurgy, hardware and chamberings in rifle designs that seem to have vanished from the American hunting and shooting environment.

Smith & Wesson, for example,

recently entered the lever-gun market by introducing an updated version of the 1854 rifle. Its only commonality with the original is its oversized lever ring. S&W chambered the new 1854 in .44 Rem. Magnum, a cartridge introduced in 1956. The standard version has a black synthetic stock and bead-finished stainless steel. It also has slots for attaching a bipod, tripod or shooting sticks.

Atop the 1854's receiver is a Picatinny rail for mounting a telescopic sight or an electronic sight. The crown is threaded for a suppressor.

Of course, the 1854 is a modern firearm disguised as a relic. Smith & Wesson rides it into a surprisingly crowded arena that includes Henry Repeating Arms, Ruger/Marlin, and even some strong foreign makers.

## POP CULTURE'S IMPACT

Anthony Imperato, founder and CEO of Henry Repeating Arms, said lever guns are enjoying a renaissance because a large segment of the American shooting culture retains a romantic connection with the old American West, especially with the firearms defining that period.

"We've promoted the fact the lever action is truly an American design," Imperato said. "Today, someone could argue the AR-15 is currently 'America's Rifle,' but let us not forget there are tens of decades where the lever action was the rifle of choice in America. It put many dinners on the supper table.

"With 'Yellowstone' and many movies — it just put wind in the sails of the lever action,"

◀ The Marlin Model 336 was the cover gun of the recently published March 2024 issue of *GUNS Magazine*. Editor Brent Wheat heralded it as “a classic reborn.”

Imperato continued. “When you see Kevin Costner walking across the screen with a lever action, it carries some weight.”

Don’s Weaponry in Rose City, Ark., carries the largest selection of lever guns in central Arkansas, with something to appeal to every historical preference. Manager Lyn Forester acknowledged, ironically, Hollywood does indeed drive the renewed interest in lever-action rifles. As much as pop culture campaigns against guns and gun violence, guns are virtually synonymous with American cinema, and gun enthusiasts pay close attention to what actors use onscreen.

“It goes all the way back to the ‘Silverado’ movie in 1985,” Forester reasoned. “They were making fewer and fewer Westerns. People

“  
**Ironically,  
Hollywood does  
indeed drive the  
renewed interest  
in lever-action  
rifles.**

were concentrating on police dramas and action movies. ‘Silverado’ actually started a little resurgence. The early ‘90s saw ‘Dances With Wolves,’ ‘Tombstone,’ and ‘Wyatt Earp.’ Some of the recent ones, like ‘Hostiles’ with Christian Bale. A lot of moviegoers are young people. You will see a lot of those things rejuvenate as long as Hollywood is exposing young people to it.”

#### **HENRY: A MAINSTAY IN THE MARKET**

Henry, the major player in the lever-action market for the past 20 years, almost singlehandedly kept the lever gun relevant when it entered a gasping marketplace in the 1990s.

“When I started Henry in 1996 — our first guns shipped 1997 — it was a point I would say the lever action was really beginning to fade away,” Imperato noted. “Winchester, at that point, was diminished. Marlin was significant in the space at the time, but it certainly smelled like it was going to be a firearm of the past.”

Imperato introduced a lever-action, .22-caliber rimfire, an everyman’s gun. Shooters bought a lot of them. Bigger bore models followed.

“That entry is what got us started on this very nice ride to where we eventually hit a position where we were 95% of the lever-action market over the past 25 or 26 years,” Imperato stated. “We believe we not only saved the lever-action segment of the firearms industry, but we

surpassed in volume what it had been.”

When American hunters outgrew the tired old .30-30, Henry helped keep the lever gun relevant by chambering affordable models for modern cartridges like .308 Win., .243 Win., 6.5 Creedmoor and .223 Remington/5.56 NATO.

Henry recently introduced its Long Ranger model in .300 Blackout. It has much of the same hardware as the S&W 1854.

Forester believes Henry struck a chord among shooters with the .300 Blackout by offering a fully suppressed .30-caliber rifle.

“If you’ve got a .308 and it’s suppressed, it’s still going to be somewhat loud because it’s supersonic,” Forester said. “The .300 Blackout gives them a subsonic round choice that’s truly suppressed.”

In addition to Henry’s rifles for bottleneck cartridges, Henry and Marlin also make a suite of lever guns chambered for straight wall pistol cartridges — .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum and .45 Colt.

#### **MARLIN’S BOLD RETURN**

Marlin, the “Pale Rider” of the lever gun community, is back in the game after spending a few seasons on injured reserve. It was a neglected — some might say abused — brand Ruger obtained from the wreckage of Remington’s bankruptcy.

Chris Killoy, president and CEO of Ruger, maintains that a robust market demands a bold Marlin presence. The gun designs were already in place, as were the tools and the talent to make them, he confirmed. The brand merely needed Ruger’s commitment to revitalize it.

“The lever-action market has always been solid and stable,”



Henry Repeating Arms Long Ranger Express





Image: Ruger/Marlin



**Top:** A time-honored classic with some modern touches, the Marlin SBL Series is available in two SKUs: the Model 1895 (.45-70 Govt.) and Model 336 (.30-30).  
**Bottom:** The lever-action market isn't limited to just rifles. Don's Weaponry stocks Henry's line of .410-bore shotguns, the Axe .410. (Brass Axe .410 pictured above in image.)

Killoy said. "Take Marlin out of there and it makes a big difference. The Marlin brand was strong. When we brought Marlin out of bankruptcy, we got 100 tractor-trailer loads of goods and materials. We didn't have to start from scratch."

Indeed, Ruger further benefited by having key former Marlin employees on board. Chief Engineer Bruce Rozum joined Ruger from Marlin shortly after it was acquired by Remington in late 2007, while long-time Marlin Product Manager Eric Lundgren transferred to Ruger following Ruger's acquisition of Marlin.

"Ruger was very fortunate to have Bruce's design expertise on Marlin," Lundgren said, "especially because our approach to the design review was to refer to the North Haven design intent."

Marlin has reintroduced its most popular models, the 336 Classic (featured on the cover of the March 2024 issue of *GUNS Magazine*, *SP's* sister publication), the Model 1895 and the Model 1894. The 336 is chambered for the enduring .30-30. The 1895 is chambered in .45-70 Government. The Model 1894 is chambered for .357 Magnum and .44 Magnum.

Marlin's Dark Series, a truly modern tactical platform, is an audacious bid to claim the tactical share of an evolving and expanding lever-gun market.

"The Dark Series opened up a new market I don't know we were aware existed," Lundgren said. "Ruger's Dark gun is exactly the gun new consumers of lever guns are looking for."

The Dark's furniture is made of black polymer. The metal is black matte, including an anodized aluminum handguard under the barrel with slots for mounting accessories. The polymer buttstock also has accessory slots.

A factory muzzle brake threaded onto a stubby barrel can be quickly replaced with a suppressor.

An optic front sight and a tritium ring allow for low-light target

“

**The lever-action market has always been solid and stable.”**

**Chris Killoy**  
*President & CEO*  
Sturm, Ruger & Co.

acquisition, but you can also mount an optic on a factory rail.

Marlin is currently shipping seven models, including the Model 1895 Dark. Marlin's website indicates Dark versions of the 336 and 1894 will be available in 2024.

#### **THE LONGEST-RUNNING AMERICAN CARTRIDGE IS ... ?**

Despite modern flourishes, there is still a demand for replicas of famous rifles from the 1800s. These are works of art in terms of metal finish, walnut grade, brass trim and tight wood-to-metal finish. Even they, however, are built to withstand modern chamber pressures of the .357 Remington Magnum and modern .45 Colt loads.

Ironically, these guns are mostly made in Italy by Uberti — which also makes excellent and faithful Colt Single Action Army reproductions. They adhere faithfully to original designs, but their metallurgy and hardware are designed to withstand the pressure of smokeless powder loads. An 1873 Winchester reproduction in .45 Colt is a perfect addition to any collection.

“The longest-running American cartridge is the .45 Colt,” confirmed Forester of Don's Weaponry. “As of this year, you're looking at about 152 years of continual production of that cartridge.”

The difference is modern loadings are truly high-performance, as are the rifles shooting them. **SI**



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# THE SUN NEVER SETS IN CIMARRON COUNTRY

BY LAURA BURGESS & ASHLEY GALL

Image: Cimarron Firearms

**S**tanding in any aisle at the 2024 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, a sea of tactical-style pistols, rifles and shotguns stretch as far as the eye can see. For retailers looking to boost sales and drive repeat business, innovation comes in one color: black.

But look, what's that? Something shiny down the way. No one is buying shiny guns but it's worth a look — so you drag your tired self over to a booth that resonates with something familiar from your youth.

It's Cimarron Firearms, makers of authentic replica Old West Firearms. You step into the booth and are warmly greeted. You wrap your hand around a smooth two-piece walnut grip and flip open the cylinder of the Preacher. The single-action revolver was designed with a .45 Colt conversion cylinder installed and a .44-caliber percussion cylinder included for fast reloading. The Cimarron Preacher pays tribute to the highest-grossing Western movie of the 1980s, "Pale Rider," starring Clint Eastwood as the mysterious, lone avenger, the Preacher.

Smiling, you think how this

beautiful gun would look in your display case, but how do you convince your customers to purchase an American Old West replica? More importantly, how do you sell it to the emerging younger generation of gun buyers? Is the Western ideal dead?

Not so, says Bryce Wayt, VP of operations and media for Cimarron Firearms.

"The concept of the Western ideal, the lone gunslinger saving the day, never dies. It's very much ingrained in American culture but evolves with every generation," he contends. "It's why our Hollywood series of revolvers like The Man

with No Name, the Wild Bunch Combo, the Tuco, the John Wayne Rooster Shooter and the 'Pale Rider's' Preacher revolver, are our consistent bestsellers. People resonate with the cool, take-no-hostages attitude of Clint Eastwood, even today, years after he made and starred in 'Pale Rider.' Hold one of our historic replica guns, guns with a story, and you can feel the history and passion coursing through it, right into your hand."

### DISPLAY- & HEIRLOOM-WORTHY

It's that same passion for the Old American West and the guns carried by settlers, soldiers, Texas Rangers, bank and train robbers, the Pony Express and Conestoga waggoners, the overland coach drivers — and even a few saloon keepers — that got Mike Harvey started collecting, trading and selling the real-deal guns.

Harvey's passion wasn't just limited to the financial side either, as he started up Old West shooting events the entire family could participate in. In 1979, he opened up a retail store in his hometown of Fredericksburg, Texas, to support his growing collection and customer base. Realizing there was enough demand to support modern-made replicas, Harvey partnered with Italian gunmakers such as Uberti and Pietta to produce authentically crafted Old West firearms, down to the stamping fonts no longer used today.

What consistently sets Cimarron Firearm replicas apart from the competition is the attention to detail. "No Gun Before Its Time" is one of the company's mottoes. Guns are designed from originals in Harvey's extensive historic collection and must pass fit, form and function before they are offered to the public.

Cimarron's guns are display case- and heirloom-worthy, and built to perform on the range, in competition and out hunting.

The lever-action rifle, the bedrock of settlers and lawmen of

the Old West, is still an exciting rifle for hunting antelope and other mid-sized game.

### AN EASY SELL

For retailers chatting up customers on the other side of the counter, many attributes of the Cimarron Firearm line are an easy sell. For new shooters, the ease and simplicity of a revolver make entry into the shooting community more comfortable.

If customers question the use of a revolver for home defense, Cimarron's array of revolvers includes many bear-stopping calibers. Competition shooters will find the Arizona Ranger SA revolver perfectly suited for a staged shootout with its fast-acting competition-style finely tuned U.S. action, competition hammer and trigger/bolt spring that is lighter and smoother with a crisp, no-creep trigger pull.



**The concept of the Western ideal, the lone gunslinger saving the day, never dies. It's very much ingrained in American culture but evolves with every generation."**

**Bryce Wayt, VP of Operations & Media**  
Cimarron Firearms

Engage the historian in your customers with the U.S. Cavalry 1873 Henry Nettleton revolver inspired by the very rare and highly sought-

after first-generation Colt pistol inspected by the then-Ordnance Dept. Principal Sub-Inspector in Charge, Henry Nettleton. Or for the semi-auto fan, there's no history richer than Fayette County Texas, High Sheriff Jim Flournoy and his "professional" relationship with a little bordello in LaGrange, affectionately known as the Chicken Ranch.

### SUPPORTING CUSTOMER PREFERENCES

For rifle aficionados, Cimarron carries a variety of lever-action, black powder, carbine, sporting and long-range rifles. The 1894 26" barrel, .30-30 Cimarron Exclusive is a top-selling rifle based on the most famous lever-action hunting rifle designed and patented by John Browning and introduced in two iconic cartridge chamberings — the .32-40 and the .38-55. Referred to as the ultimate lever-action design by firearms historians, Cimarron's 1894 rifle is just one of many examples of its never-ending desire to share the spectacular roots of American history and firearms culture.

While manufacturers of traditional hunting calibers ended production, forcing reloaders to expand their range, Cimarron Firearms quietly partnered with Steinel Ammunition to produce .45-60 Win. and .50-95 Win. ammunition, supporting customers and the many true-to-original replicas designed and produced by Cimarron. Cimarron ammunition is currently tested in its high-tech ammunition testing facility and the company continues to research and develop new "classic" calibers.

When that repeat customer comes in and fondles a few semi-autos from the popular gun manufacturers, and then with a sigh, says he has too many or ones just like this — it's time to pull out a shiny or blued Cimarron Firearms revolver and ask if they've seen the new Nicolas Cage Western "The Old Way," because some passions and some guns never go out of style. **SI**



# Fabric & FIREARMS

BY JAY PINSKY

## *Trio Of Businesses Under One Roof Offers Surprising Advantage*

**W**hether you need protection from the cold or criminals, Angie Russell has you covered.

The former U.S. Air Force spouse owns a trifecta of hometown stores catering to almost anyone who wants a gun, a quilt or an extra personal touch

to just about anything.

Owning three completely different businesses may seem abnormal. Angie's diverse entrepreneurship is extraordinary because all three businesses are under the same roof. Walk through the front door at 10 S Fifth St., in rural Warrenton, Va., and turn right to find yourself at Highflyer Arms. Turn left, and you're in Quilting Essentials & More. Split the difference and walk to the back to find Flying High Engraving.

"I believe we have a fantastic combination of shops. Think of an old mercantile; everything you need in one place; one-stop shopping," said Russell.

The odd combination of commerce choices at first glance lends to some rather unique unsolicited marketing.

"You might be surprised at how many husbands come in and say 'I need to tell my wife about this; she is a quilter.' Or the opposite: the wife comes in and says her husband loves guns: 'He will never believe this shop.' Believe it or not, they all complement each other," Angie remarked. "I believe our uniqueness has made many people curious, leading them to come and check it out. Men are dragging in their ladies, and ladies are dragging in their men. A win-win in my book: new customers and couples spending time together."

### **HOW IT STARTED ...**

The three-tiered mini-mall of rural merchandising didn't start out as one odd idea; it resulted from a retired U.S. Air Force U-2



Dragon Lady pilot's lifelong dream, his savvy wife and a little business luck.

The gun shop came first in 2014.

"My husband, David 'Super Dave' Russell, always loved guns," Angie began. ("Super Dave" was Dave's call sign as a pilot). "It began in high school when he was on the JROTC rifle team and continued in college at the U.S. Air Force Academy. One of our many

assignments in the military was at Elmendorf AFB, in Anchorage, Alaska, where Dave took to hunting and tinkering with building his own rifles. Dave's new hobby began."

Angie said Dave was ready for a change after 24 years in the Air Force and several years as a government contractor.

"Dave and our son-in-law, Will

**“  
Our  
customers are  
more than  
just dollar  
signs. We  
want to build  
longtime  
friendships.”**

**ANGIE RUSSELL • OWNER  
HIGHFLYER ARMS**



**Top:** When two worlds collide: quilting tools and accessories flanked by flags of firearm manufacturers. Customers see and experience both the quilt shop and gun shop when they walk through the front door. **Bottom:** Angie Russell, right, shows off a Mossberg shotgun she engraved as a birthday present for Jay's wife, Wendy Pinsky.

Bennett, opened an after-work, evening and Saturday hobby business in Old Town Warrenton," she recalled. "The space was tiny, and I believe they started with 10 long guns, 89 pistols, four [AR] receivers, a little ammo, some patches and AR-15 lower parts kits."

According to Angie, the shop transferred to a manufacturing license a few years later.

She said if Dave built any custom guns for anyone, ATF regulations stated he had to have "Highflyer Arms Warrenton, VA," on the firearm, which led to the purchase of the engraving machine.

"This was the beginning of Flying High Engraving," Angie said.

#### **... HOW IT'S GOING**

With Dave's dream still reaching cruising altitude, Angie's dreams began to taxi down the make-it-happen runway of her life.

"While Dave had opened his hobby business, I was still working my dream



job at the local quilt shop, but in Feb. 2019, the owner decided to retire,” she shared. “This moved me to work full-time with Dave and to run the laser engraver at Flying High Engraving and Highflyer Arms. Quilting was still my passion, so in Oct. 2020, Quilting Essentials & More began with a display of my favorite Aurifil quilting thread and a few bolts of fabric.”

Unfortunately, three years into their husband-wife team business, Dave lost his battle with cancer, passing away Feb. 9, 2023. Just over one year later, Angie and all of her friends and family who work with her continue to mourn his loss while building upon Dave and Angie’s dreams coming true.

One key member of the team is Highflyer Arms Manager Ryan Randolph. Young, intelligent and dripping with integrity, Ryan is the consummate gun shop guru for today’s diverse market of experienced and novice gun owners.

Randolph sees the combination of three stores under one roof advantageous for a few reasons, some not so apparent to the stereotypes

many people might assume frequent gun stores or quilt shops, for that matter.

“Sharing a room with the quilting part of the store and having the sweet ladies over there also helps to create a more inviting environment for a wider range of people to learn and purchase firearms for personal protection, many of whom would not otherwise consider purchasing a firearm,” said Randolph. “The engraving business is perfect for our type of work. We specialize in NFA sales, particularly silencers, which for many is a stepping point into building their own short-barreled rifle [SBR]. SBRs must legally be engraved once approved and assembled. Engraving is also perfect for our type of FFL [07] as we manufacture rifles from time to time, and when we do, they are also legally required to be engraved with our store name and place of manufacture.”

#### “PEOPLE SKILLS” VALUE

Angie sees great value in the three stores’ various products and personalities. Still, she also considers the stark differences an opportunity

to hone customer service skills, a commonality all successful businesses share.

“I believe the biggest skill we have all improved on is our people skills,” said Angie. “We welcome everyone who comes through the door; it doesn’t matter which side they are headed. Our customers are more than just dollar signs. We want to build longtime friendships. I haven’t asked the guys to learn anything about the quilting side, but the ladies have embraced learning about handgun safety and self-defense and have taken a concealed carry class with our certified NRA instructor, Bill Little.”

Ryan validated Angie’s belief that, oddly enough, the three stores feed each other new customers.

“Working in the same space as a quilting/fabrics store and engraving business provides a unique marketing and integration of customers for a firearms business,” said Ryan. “Many customers who come in for firearms are interested in learning how to quilt or bringing their spouse back to learn. The inverse of that is also true; many firearms customers have been introduced to Highflyer through their spouse who first went to the quilting side of the store.”

#### THE NEGATIVE SIDE

Despite mostly positive experiences, Angie admits having three stores and a wide range of clients can sometimes produce negative feedback.

“Do I believe any of the stores have hurt business for either of the others? If anything, I would say that the gun shop may have hurt the quilt shop,” she said. “I have some customers who are completely against guns. It’s their right to not like them. If they feel uncomfortable coming into the shop because of the guns, they’re welcome to shop online — everything in the quilting shop is online, and I would be happy to mail it to them or deliver it curbside.”

Angie has had success, though, bringing anti-gunners to our side.

“I would also like to say I have helped many ladies not be afraid of



Angie Russell’s three shops — Highflyer Arms, Quilting Essentials & More, and Flying High Engraving — are in the same space at 10 S Fifth St., Warrenton, Va.

“  
**Working in  
 the same space  
 as a quilting/  
 fabrics store  
 and engraving  
 business provides  
 a unique  
 marketing and  
 integration  
 of customers  
 for a firearms  
 business.”**

**RYAN RANDOLPH • MANAGER  
 HIGHFLYER ARMS**

guns, and I have connected them with our certified instructor to help them not be afraid, which also leads them to enjoy shooting and get their concealed carry,” she added.

Angie is the lone employee who can and does work behind the counter of all three businesses.

“I am the only employee who works all of the stores,” Angie said. “I have my seller’s I.D., so I can sell guns and do background checks. My technique for selling guns is, ‘This one is pretty!’ So usually, I let the guys do their thing and am their backup if they need background checks done.”

Although Angie works in all three businesses, her heart belongs to quilting.

“I have to say I favor the quilt shop. It’s my passion,” Angie said. “I love what I can create with fabric. But just as much as I enjoy quilting, I also love to teach others to quilt. When they complete their first quilt, that big smile on their face is such a rewarding feeling. Balancing the other stores has

been a challenge. However, I have surrounded myself with an amazing team of professionals and talented people.”

#### **ADVICE FOR ENTREPRENEURS**

According to Angie, all three stores continue to prosper, and despite not planning this trio of oddly placed businesses from the beginning, she and her employees are doing well.

“Have fun with it. Think outside the box. It’s fun to be different.”

That’s the advice from Angie to fellow business owners who might consider odd-couple business models.

“Well, our combination is working,” she added. “Dave and I loved going to work with each other every day. We loved being together. We bounced ideas off each other and moved forward together. Now that he’s gone, I’ll continue to move forward with our dreams. I’ll keep his dream alive until it’s no fun anymore. Right now, I’m still having lots of fun.”

Fly high, Angie. Fly high. **SI**

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**SELF-DEFENSE**

**HOT SHOTS**

**FROM SHOT SHOW 2024**

By Massad Ayoob

**T**he NSSF's Annual SHOT Show always sees more new introductions than can possibly be covered in a 1,000-word article.

It reassures some customers to know they've bought the most expensive gun to protect their families. Of course, more of your clientele will be looking for *features*: capacity, size and weight and overall "shootability."

Here, we'll look at the new models with the most sales potential in their particular niches; the ones customers

have read the most about following their debut at SHOT Show.

#### STANDOUT HANDGUNS

In alphabetical order:

Beretta debuts an upgraded series of .32 ACP pocket pistols, called 30X, with lighter trigger pulls, more capacious magazines and better sights. There are even versions with muzzle brake, threaded barrel for suppressors and optical sights. On the other end of the size scale, Beretta adds a double action with frame-mounted decocking lever, the 9mm Model 92XI GTS. It's optic-ready, too.

For your upscale customers, Cabot introduces what may be the fanciest "2011" out there, a double-stack 9mm with an MSRP of about \$6,000. This is one of the hottest pistol types on the market right now. (At the other end of the price scale, Hi-Point now offers their Yeet Cannon in .380 ACP.)

Colt's 2020 series Python has hitherto been in stainless, and purists

◀ The DANIEL H9 — Daniel Defense's first foray into the pistol market — generated a lot of interest from buyers during SHOT Show.

pined for the exquisite old royal blue finish. Colt has answered this year with blue Pythons, beginning with the 4.25" barrel variation. I haven't had a chance to compare it to a legacy Python yet, but it sure looks good.

The Daniel Defense DANIEL H9 is a reimagining of the short-lived 9mm Hudson Mfg. H9 with low bore axis to reduce muzzle rise between shots. Daniel Defense says they spent almost a million 9mm rounds in T&E to make it more durable and reliable than the original, while only 1" thick in the slide. The original Hudson I shot was sweet indeed.



Colt 4.25" Blued Python

Diamondback Firearms introduced the SDR (Self Defense Revolver), a .357 Magnum, six-shot snubbie. Externally, it looks like a clone of the exposed hammer version of Kimber's successful K6 series. Features include "a fixed orange fiber optic front sight, dovetail fiber optic green rear sight and a fully captured crane link and cylinder assembly," according to the manufacturer. Weight is a bit over 21 oz., and it comes with Diamondback-branded rubber Hogue grips. MSRP will be \$777, high for a brand that has previously made its bones with low-priced handguns, but time — and the product — will tell.

GLOCK's big news for the year is the Model 49, a 9mm with a G17-size 4.5" barrel but a short (15-round) G19-size frame and optics compatibility. And, for your customers who find bigger bullets



reassuring, the compact G29 10mm and G30 in .45 ACP get the Gen5 upgrade treatment, though they're not optics-compatible as of yet.

SIG wasn't at SHOT again this year, but introduced an upgraded M17 9mm pistol with advanced features, and in .22 rimfire, a competition version of their P322 that looks like it will do great in Steel Challenge matches or just make a plinker look really good.

Smith & Wesson introduced its "Ultimate Carry" Airweight snub-nosed revolver in five-shot .38 Special or six-shot .32 Magnum. Available exclusively from Lipsey's, it's offered in a blue or stainless finish, has VZ "boot grips," a humongous XS Big Dot tritium front sight, a U-notch rear and no lock aluminum frame. The lock work was modified by S&W for a smoother DA pull, and those big sights are registered for 135-grain Speer Gold Dot and trendy-for-defense .38 Special wadcutters.

S&W wisely sought out input from some sharp, modern revolver instructors: Darryl Bolke and Bryan Eastridge. Priced between the standard models and the top-of-the-line 340 M&P, these are going to garner orders from your serious, hard-core self-defense wheelgunners.

Springfield Armory introduced a series of 1911 .45s that "refreshes" and updates their TRP (Tactical Response Pistol) built originally for FBI special units in the 1990s. They got a very positive review from 1911 expert Hilton Yam.

Stoeger, celebrating 100 years this year, introduced a shrunken version of their well-regarded economy-priced striker pistol to compete in the micro-9 market, with 10-, 11- and

12-round magazines available.

Stacatto replaced their double-stack 2011 9mm CS with the C model. Short butt for concealment, optics compatible, 4" barrel and shipping this summer. \$2,595 MSRP. Barrel is thicker and heavier than its predecessor's.

Taurus' top-selling Judge series of .410/.45 revolvers gets the carry optics treatment with a T.O.R.O. variation.



**More of your clientele will be looking for features: capacity, size and weight and overall 'shootability.'**

Walther may have noted the good sales of S&W's metal-framed M&P to serious shooters, and has introduced an all-steel version of their sweet PDP pistol. Its features work for home defense as well as match shooting. Their PDP-F series, also in 9mm, continues to be a bestseller among female shooters and smaller-handed males.

## DEFENSIVE LONG GUNS

A plethora of AR-15s were in evidence at SHOT, of course. One standout is the Wraithworks WARP-15, an ultra-light plastic lower rifle built to sell for \$500. It will definitely be of interest to your customers.

Diamondback introduces the DB9R TG-Nine, a 9mm carbine styled to somewhat resemble a Thompson submachine gun, with an MSRP of \$1,699.

Lever-action rifles are trending around the country. Many are selling to customers who are hedging their bets against a ban on autoloading rifles for home defense. Henry introduced their Lever Action Supreme, with traditional wood and blue steel motif but designed to work with AR-15 magazines.

Smith & Wesson surprised us all with their first lever action since the 19th century, the Volcanic. Their Model 1854 is quite Marlin-esque, and chambered in .44 Magnum.

Ruger now offers its LC carbine in .45 ACP. It features a folding stock and threaded barrel, and accepts GLOCK .45 Auto magazines: expect light weight, mild recoil and confidence-inspiring power.

Kahr is offering a pistol-caliber carbine that looks like a cross between a Thompson submachine gun and an AR.

KelTec debuted the KSG410 shotgun, expanding their bullpup-styled pump gun line. Chambered for the .410 shotshell, its dual five-shell magazine tubes put 11 rounds at the shooter's disposal counting one in the chamber. Mild recoil and maneuverability in a home-defense shotgun are selling points. They've also brought out a third generation of their folding 9mm carbine, the SUB2000, with a twistable handguard that allows it to fold with an optical sight mounted.

This column hits the tip of the iceberg — hundreds more products were released by SHOT Show 2024's 2,500+ exhibitors. Stay tuned for more standout products in other articles throughout the year.



Smith & Wesson Model 1854



# NEW PRODUCTS

TO VIEW HUNDREDS OF PRODUCTS  
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[SHOOTINGINDUSTRY.COM/CATEGORY/FIRST-LOOK](http://SHOOTINGINDUSTRY.COM/CATEGORY/FIRST-LOOK)

By Jenna Buckley



## SHADOW SYSTEMS

(469) 458-6808  
[shadowssystemscorp.com](http://shadowssystemscorp.com)

Optimized for 9mm pistols with threaded barrels (1/2x28), Shadow Systems' **HS923 SUPPRESSOR** is a lightweight, modular option for highly effective sound suppression. Users can choose the level of sound suppression needed and easily configure the HS923's length. It provides 24 decibels of sound suppression in the short configuration and 33 decibels in the long configuration. The patent-pending front cap allows a Shadow Systems pistol slide to be used for the installation and removal of the suppressor, facilitating length adjustments without the need for additional tools.



## SPANDAU SHOTGUNS

(865) 604-6894  
[spandauarms.com](http://spandauarms.com)

Spandau Shotguns, a division of SDS Imports, launches the **SPANDAU S2 12-GA** shotgun in four different configurations for turkey, waterfowl and upland hunters. It features an enlarged loading gate for easier loading and accepts Benelli-pattern extensions and choke tubes. The fiber optic front sight makes the point of aim easy to find, especially in low light conditions. Turkey models have 24" barrels and a black or Realtree APX camouflage finish. For waterfowls and upland hunters, 28"-barrel models are available in black and Realtree Max7 finishes.



## AIMPOINT

(877) 246-7646  
[aimpoint.us](http://aimpoint.us)

Designed specifically for use on shotguns with a ventilated rib, the **ACRO S-2** from Aimpoint enhances hit percentage for small game, bird hunting and sporting clays. The integrated carbon fiber reinforced mounting system positions the Acro S-2 on the lowest possible optical axis without adding unnecessary weight. Its 9 MOA red dot simplifies lead visualization, enhancing the automatic refinement of muzzle swing and positioning. For shooters who are cross-eye dominant, the sight allows the shooter to use their strong side while shooting without an ocular or having to switch sides altogether. To accommodate most standard shotguns, eight interchangeable adapter plates are included.



FLEX-PLUS

## SPYPOINT

(888) 779-7646  
[spypoint.com](http://spypoint.com)

The **FLEX-M** and **FLEX-PLUS** cellular trail cameras from SPYPOINT are equipped to enhance the scouting experience with easy setup, versatile capture modes and constant connectivity. Features of the Flex-M include a 0.4-second trigger speed, 28 MP photo resolution, 720p video with sound and 90' flash and detection range. The Flex-Plus boasts a 0.3-second trigger speed, 36 MP photo resolution, 1080p video with sound and 100' flash and detection range. Both models have multi-shot, continuous, time-lapse and time-lapse+ modes.



## BOND ARMS INC.

(817) 573-4445  
[bondarms.com](http://bondarms.com)

The **HONEY B** from Bond Arms is available in multiple calibers: .22 Mag., .22 LR, .380, 9mm and .38 Special. The revolver boasts a 3" barrel for accuracy and precision and is equipped with a front sight blade and rear sights integrated into the frame. Factory sights are set to a 10-yard zero (additional barrels in various calibers can be purchased from Bond Arms' website). The Honey B weighs 17.5 oz., has an OAL of 5.5" and a standard 7-lb. trigger pull.



## TRIJICON INC.

(800) 338-0563  
trijicon.com

Trijicon expands its Tenmile HX series with the 5-25X50 FFP riflescope that ensures speed and precision at all hunting distances, and the reticle offers red or green center dot illumination for contrast against all backgrounds. MOA elevation and windage subtensions can be used at any power setting without any additional calculations. With up to 80 MOA of adjustment, users can rely on crisp, precise exposed adjusters that feature a zero stop to avoid an accidental shift. A repositionable magnification lever accommodates different shooting positions and rifle configurations. Fully multi-coated broadband anti-reflective glass with excellent light transmission, true detail and color with zero distortion deliver edge-to-edge clarity.



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## WHITE FLYER TARGETS

whiteflyer.com

White Flyer's **ECO FLYER** targets are environmentally compatible and, in some instances, exceed the performance of traditional pitch targets. The targets are PAH-free, do not contain pitch or sulfur and offer superior heat resistance. ECO FLYER targets are offered in two 108mm versions, AA and Pheasants. As production expands, ECO FLYER targets will be available throughout the entire sporting clays line and 110mm International.



## EAA CORP.

(321) 639-4842  
eaacorp.com

EAA Corp. and Girsan have announced the 10mm **WITNESS2311 HUNTER**. This double-stack 1911 pistol combines precision to acquire distant targets with practical features, meeting the exact standards of those in the pursuit of game. Key features include a 6" barrel, 16-round capacity, standard double-stack magazine compatibility, adjustable rear sight, fiber optic front sight, magazine well, accessory rail, ambidextrous safety and a hunting trigger for enhanced performance.



## OTIS TECHNOLOGY

(800) 684-7486  
otistec.com

The **SPORTSMAN'S RANGE BOX** gun-cleaning kit from Otis contains over 60 components to clean rifles, pistols, shotguns and inline muzzleloaders. The box itself is portable for range trips and doubles as a gun vise. The kit includes: 100% cotton patches, slotted tips and patch savers; 16 bronze bore brushes; Memory-Flex cables and thread connector; obstruction removers; T-handle and stud; .223 cal./5.56mm chamber brush, pin punch, end brush, straight pick, locking lug scraper, scraper, short AP brush, male and female rod; 5.56mm B.O.N.E Tool; adjustable forks, magwell vise block for .223/.556; Shooter's Choice FP-10 Lubricant Elite and 10cc syringe of Grease; double-ended AP brushes; microfiber gun cloth; chamber flag and instruction manual.



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**Tisas USA**

## SAFETY RECALL NOTICE

Tisas USA has learned of a potential safety issue with certain Tisas USA 1911 pistols. Tisas USA is voluntarily initiating a recall of these pistols to protect the safety of its customers. For more information please visit the link below or scan the QR Code. **DO NOT** attempt to load or fire your Tisas USA pistol if listed below. Doing so could possibly lead to property damage or severe injury.

Tisas USA will upgrade any affected pistols pursuant to this recall. Tisas USA will cover any expenses related to the inspection and upgrade of the subject firearms.

<https://tisasusa.com/tisas-safety-recall-2024-0001/>

**PISTOLS SUBJECT TO RECALL**

- 1911 DUTY B45DG (RAIDER)**  
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- 1911 DUTY NIGHTSTALKER 45**  
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- 1911 DUTY NIGHT STALKER 10MM**  
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- 1911 DUTY ENHANCED 45**  
SKU 10100551 - UPC 723551443972
- 1911 REPUBLIC OF TEXAS 45**  
SKU 10100514 - UPC 723551442821
- 1911 MATCH 45**  
SKU 10100511 - UPC 742309782514

**SDS IMPORTS**

## NEW PRODUCTS

### LEUPOLD & STEVENS INC.

**(800) 538-7653**  
[leupold.com](https://leupold.com)

The **BX-4 PRO GUIDE HD GEN 2** binocular line from Leupold uses high-quality glass and improved lens coatings to deliver the resolution, clarity and glare reduction hunters and shooters demand. A new addition to the Gen 2 design is the option of swappable, Form-Fit eyecups that help keep eyes fresh through hours of glassing.

### ROCK RIVER ARMS

**(866) 980-7625**  
[rockriverarms.com](https://rockriverarms.com)

The **XM24 TACTICAL** bolt-action rifle from Rock River Arms works with .308 Win. and .338 Lapua. The rifle's 26" heavy-contour stainless steel barrels are air-gauged to guarantee maximum bore precision, cryo-treated for molecular stability and treated with a black matte nitride finish. The barrels secure to the proprietary 700-style receiver via a barrel nut system that delivers solid and precise fitment and alignment. An oversized bolt handle and precision single-stage TriggerTech Primary trigger system provide control management. The 20 MOA base scope rail allows optics mounting, and the rifle is fed through a single-stack five-round detachable box magazine. It weighs 13.2 lbs., and is 46.25" long.

Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, shared data from his firm's quarterly surveys — which indicate consumers are more likely to make a firearms purchase this year compared to Jan. 2023. Self-defense as a motivator to buy remains the top factor in driving a customer to a potential firearms purchase.

To capture more sales in 2024, Southwick highlighted the importance of innovation in the marketplace, relating to the initial takeaway above. Additionally, Southwick recommended companies can stand out through telling their brand stories. (For brick-and-mortar dealers, you have a ready-made opportunity to highlight your brand's connection to your local community, as you're a locally owned business. Seek out local partnerships this year.)

Gearfire VP of Data Analytics Kaleb Seymour sifted through a treasure trove of data that's included in RetailBI, which tracks online and in-store transactions from 2,500 stores. One data set was particularly stirring: Comparing in-store sales to online sales in 2023, an in-store firearms purchase was accompanied with additional products in 45% of transactions. Online, an add-on purchase to a firearm was only accomplished 12% of the time.

The lesson here: the opportunity for securing add-on sales is greatest during in-store interactions. Make sure your sales team looks for ways to expand a sale, rather than being order takers.

Another “nugget” — Seymour recommends dealers look for optimized data to influence their buying decisions in an ever-changing retail landscape.

“This empowers retailers to effectively monitor market dynamics, optimize their stock levels and ensure customer satisfaction by having the right products available at the right time,” he shared.

As director of research for NSSF, Salam Fatohi shared findings from recent projects and previewed those arriving later in 2024. In its recent research, NSSF has seen the largest growth from African-Americans, Latinos, consumers aged 18–34 and

women. One research project slated to be complete later this year is an in-depth report on magazine ownership.

Fatohi shared these reports have a twofold ambition.



**Dealers speak to sales reps all day long, but hearing the inspiration and passion directly from the founder or designer really takes the relationship to a whole new level. Stories sell, not price points.”**

**B.A. Stear** - Founder  
*Shoot Indoors Franchising LLC*

“The NSSF research department is member driven, and our budget largely revolves around studying topics that help our members better understand the market and consumer habits,” he said. “This helps the largest manufacturers to independent firearm retailers make business decisions and increases the value of being an NSSF member.”

### 3. “STORIES SELL, NOT PRICE POINTS.”

Southwick's recommendation for companies to stand out through brand stories especially resonated with me. I immediately thought of *SP*'s target

reader, the independent storefront dealer. Your store is an essential part of the community — enabling customers to exercise their Second Amendment rights, as well as being a resource to help them defend themselves and loved ones. Having a physical presence in your community gives you a significant advantage over the competition.

During the research breakfast, I wrote the phrase “community thread” in my notes — a reference to a memorable title from an article published in *SP*'s Nov. 2022 issue (“Become Part Of Your Community Thread” by Brenna McCoubrey).

At the close of her story, McCoubrey said, “The more we, as dealers and range owners, become involved in our surrounding environment, the more likely the ‘local gun shop’ becomes a staple in what we collectively call ‘community.’”

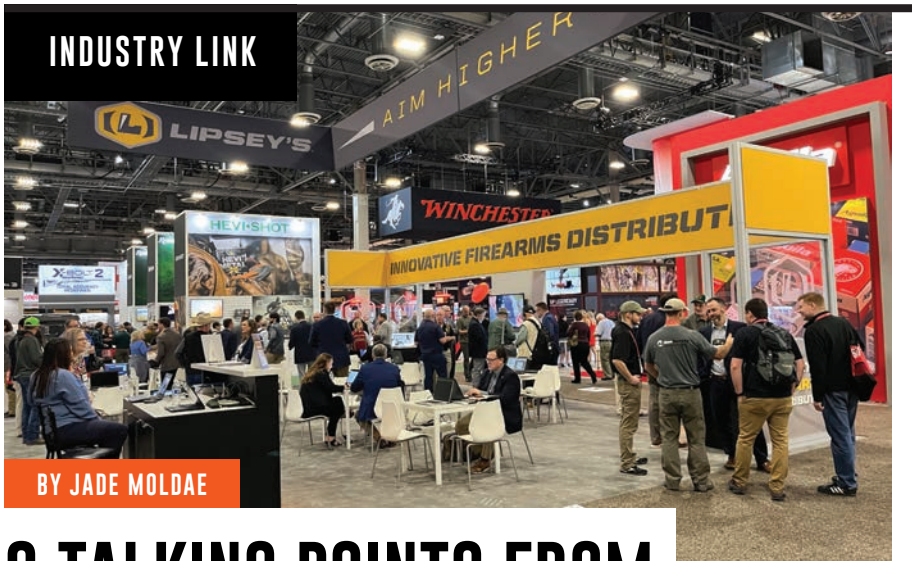
Attending an energized event like SHOT Show certainly showcases the “community” aspect of our industry. I asked B.A. Stear, founder of Shoot Indoors Franchising LLC (which opened its fourth location in Colorado, fifth overall, earlier this year), on the greatest advantage of attending SHOT Show. The second half of his response related well to Southwick's observation.

“Looking for new products, physically handling them and meeting the people responsible for their creation is a significant advantage of attending in-person events like SHOT,” he said. “Dealers speak to sales reps all day long, but hearing the inspiration and passion directly from the founder or designer really takes the relationship to a whole new level. Stories sell, not price points.”

(Stear's response provided an excellent idea for a future article — expect us to unpack the “stories sell, not price points” concept in an issue later this year.)

What were some of your biggest takeaways from this year's SHOT Show? I'd love to hear from you: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com).





BY JADE MOLDAE

## 3 TALKING POINTS FROM ROBUST SHOT SHOW

There was a time, at the height of the pandemic and shutdowns, when prognosticators proclaimed large-scale trade shows were past their prime and no longer needed to conduct business in a digital world. Using SHOT Show 2024 as a reference point, it's safe to say that assessment has been blown out of the water.

The largest SHOT Show ever — in terms of exhibitors (2,500+) and exhibit space (816,000+ sq. ft.) — SHOT Show 2024 delivered an exceptional event. The Supplier Showcase, SHOT Show After Dark events and Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum exhibit halls produced a “target-rich environment” for countless networking, ideating and new partnership opportunities to fuel growth.

Heather Pleskach, Otis Technology director of marketing, left SHOT Show 2024 with a robust outlook for the year ahead.

“SHOT Show is all about connecting and relationship building, and it's not just limited to sales,” she said. “We cultivate and grow relationships with other manufacturers, suppliers, influencers, writers, organizations, etc. — all in the name of developing win-win opportunities. If only 10% of what we dreamt up at SHOT comes to fruition, 2024 will be a great year for us.”

The only “issue” with a trade show of this size is it's impossible to see and write about everything. Taking Pleskach's “10%” perspective above — if this massive, boisterous trade show could

be boiled down to three talking points, here's what I'd say stood out most at this year's edition.

### 1. INNOVATION THROUGH DIVERSIFICATION

It's been a gripe over the years from some: there are few things truly “innovative” in the industry today, with skeptics pointing to century-old (and older) designs like 1911s and lever-action rifles still being produced.

However, as those reading this are well aware, these platforms have been refined with modern touches. Double-stack 1911s are growing ever-popular (the Staccato booth was a hub of activity throughout SHOT Show), while lever-action rifles can be both suppressed and fed with AR-style magazines today (the Henry Repeating Arms Lever Action Supreme checks both boxes).

(Speaking of lever guns, SHOT Show 2024 reaffirmed there is *significant* interest in this platform from both manufacturers and end users alike. If you missed it, make sure you read Bryan Hendrick's “Lever-Action Rifle Renaissance” feature [p. 30]).

Numerous manufacturers announced their entry into new product categories — one could argue, “innovation through diversification” — at SHOT Show 2024. As noted in my column last month, Smith & Wesson's entrance into the lever-action segment (Model 1854) generated substantial interest from attendees, as did the Daniel Defense DANIEL H9 striker-fired pistol. Other manufacturers

announced diversification efforts at SHOT.

Taurus USA debuted the Expedition, its first-ever bolt-action rifle, during SHOT Show. Based around the Remington 700 action, the Expedition delivers sub-MOA accuracy thanks to its hammer-forged barrel, according to Taurus.

“I expected people to be excited for the rifle,” said Caleb Giddings, Taurus general manager of marketing. “But I didn't expect there to be a literal line at the booth for people to get their hands on the samples we had on display. As feature-packed as the Expedition is, and coupled with an MSRP under \$1,000, we're expecting these things to fly off the shelves.”

Black Rain Ordnance entered *two* new markets this year with its BRO Bolt-Action Series and BRO Handgun Series. The Bolt-Action Series is available in three models, while the Handgun Series is initially chambered in 9mm (Black Rain has plans to release additional chamberings).

This is just a small sample size of companies expanding their reach to appeal to new customer groups.

It's a sign of two things: 1) Manufacturers are once again able to prioritize R&D projects — as opposed to keeping up with rampant demand; and 2) Manufacturers are looking for ways to appeal to a broader base of customers. Both developments will, ideally, get customers into their local gun stores to examine these new introductions firsthand.

### 2. DATA, RESEARCH INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT

The following won't be a new point for those of you who regularly read *Shooting Industry* from cover to cover. To achieve success in a soft market, a few things are becoming more and more apparent: If you're not investing time in analyzing your point-of-sale trends, looking at research from NSSF, Southwick Associates and others or networking with fellow dealers to uncover helpful margin boosters, growth is going to be more difficult to come by.

The SHOT Show Research Breakfast, held Wednesday morning during SHOT Show week, provided telling insights into today's market.

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