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SCORES OF NEW  
PRODUCTS IN ONE PLACE!

# SHOOTING INDUSTRY®

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

\$5 | DECEMBER 2024

## 2025 NEW BUSINESS YEAR EDITION

**Iron Sharpens Iron**  
*P20 Groups Refine Business*

**LEVER GUNS**  
**THE NEW AR-15?**

**"DE-EVOLUTION?"**  
*Embrace Change,  
Gain Profits*

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SHOT Show Preview —  
Breaking More Records! **p. 48**

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## Invest In Emerging Markets, New Gear

**AS** far as *SI* is concerned, we're already in the 2025 New Business Year. Inside this issue, there are several features focused on helping your business launch the new year — with a few concurring themes presented throughout.

### EMBRACE HISTORY, NEW MARKETS

In this month's *Best Practices* column, first-time *SI* contributor Evelyn Vidrine encourages dealers to embrace history, trends and new markets. While technically not a “new” market, first-time buyers still represent a largely untapped group.

According to Vidrine, these initial interactions are vital to changing the narrative when it comes to negative stereotypes in our industry.

“The only way to change our industry’s reputation from ‘gun-toting gangster’ to ‘helpful hero’ is by treating every single customer with respect — especially new buyers,” she contends. “This approach not only attracts first-time buyers but also builds long-term customer relationships based on trust and support.”

### REEVALUATING THE “CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE”

Concluding his three-part take exploring the “de-evolution” in the retail market, Hank Yacek identifies a “better way” to meet the needs of our customers.

“It’s when manufacturers, distributors and retailers work *together* on a common goal. The goal? To get products into the customers’ hands as quickly and easily as possible,” Yacek said. “We’re not inventing the wheel here. Other industries already do this through strategic partnerships, process transparency and inventory visibility throughout the entire supply chain.”

For more insights, see “Revisiting Our ‘De-Evolution’ — And Charting A Way Forward,” p. 34.



DECEMBER 2024

### NEW PRODUCTS!

Of course, a vital component to the start of any year is having the hottest new products on shelves, ready for customers. The first in a three-part 2025 New Product Showcase appears in this issue (pp. 52–68) — with more than 60 brands showcasing 100+ SKUs for you to consider stocking.

(Manufacturers, wholesalers and importers: There’s still time to appear in the February 2025 issue, which publishes two weeks after SHOT Show. Send new product information to [nps25@fmghq.com](mailto:nps25@fmghq.com).)

### NEXT MONTH: 70 YEARS, GOING STRONG

The January 2025 issue ushers in the 70th year of *Shooting Industry*. In honor of our platinum anniversary, each issue in 2025 will feature articles from decades past. Those pining for nostalgia should enjoy what’s highlighted each month.

The 2025 New Business Year was always going to be significant, no matter who was in the White House. With fear-based buying shelved for the foreseeable future, Tim Barker asks a panel of dealers what they plan on doing to be successful in a changed market. Additionally, the Southwick Associates team will once again include their new year forecast.

Other points of interest in the January issue include part two of the 2025 New Product Showcase, revisiting resources for first-time buyers, mentoring the anti-hunter and more. **SI**

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## BEING A “PARIAH DEALER” NEARLY THREE YEARS ON ...

**Editor’s Note:** It’s been almost three years since Matthew Sims wrote in, asking why — as a home-based dealer — he was being treated as a pariah by the industry. His note resulted in scores of emails. We’ve kept in contact with some of those respondents. Sam Summey and Darrell Taylor share their experiences in the two years since this series of letters struck a nerve with so many.

I’ve been in the firearms industry for 18 years, running my gunsmithing business from the basement of my home. Today, I am still repairing firearms.

Firearms sales have dwindled down to special orders for hard to obtain or searching for discontinued firearm models.

The demand for small, concealable handguns has dropped to near zero for me.

I regularly do firearms transfers for customers who have bought off of online sources. It’s funny: If they would have contacted me first concerning their needs, I could’ve probably saved them \$20–50 on the sale — even with North Carolina sales tax added.

I only deal with one “loyal” distributor for the most part now.

Sales of reloading components have

dwindled, too, since smokeless powder sources and primer availability have affected sales.

It’s my belief the escalation in prices have affected the “casual” recreational shooter.

I am seeing a fairly steady (for me) stream of requests for rebarreling of rifles that have had their rifling shot out.

I spent some time this afternoon perusing the GunBroker listings for Smith & Wesson Model 10 and Ruger Blackhawk revolvers. The prices for those common pieces are certainly elevated from our previous dialogue.

— **Sam Summey, Owner**  
B&S Gunsmithing  
Flat Rock, N.C.

I’ve had an in-home gun business for 30 years, in a small town, so I didn’t sell a lot. I had one supplier for several years, always paid on time and then — for some reason — they dropped me. (I probably didn’t sell enough to suit them.) So, I found another supplier. But it was difficult at times if this supplier was out of a SKU.

When the “pariah” letters came out in your magazine, I got several invites from suppliers and now have three suppliers. <sup>SI</sup>

— **Darrell Taylor, Owner**  
Taylors Guns & Tackle  
American Falls, Idaho

When the  
‘pariah’  
letters  
came out  
in  
your  
magazine,  
I got  
several  
invites  
from  
suppliers  
and now  
have three  
suppliers.

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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# Equipping The Independent Storefront Dealer

INSIDE *SHOOTING INDUSTRY*, EVERY MONTH IN 2025

For the past 70 years, storefront dealers have counted on *Shooting Industry* to deliver critical industry news updates, analysis on the latest trends and suggestions for welcoming new audiences. Here in 2025, *SI* is resolute in its support of the independent dealer as the industry adapts to the latest "new normal" and prevalence of online buying. Each issue is distributed to a retailer base three times more qualified and selected by their customers as *the* place to shop.

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**JANUARY**

### 2025 New Business Year Edition

- New Year Predictions, Challenges & Opportunities
- Marketing Trends Worth Pursuing
- Capitalize On Post-Holiday Sales Momentum
- 2025 New Product Showcase — Part 2/3

**BONUS SHOT SHOW DISTRIBUTION**

**Ad Sales Close:** 11-22-24  
**Ad Materials Due:** 11-27-24  
**Ships To Dealers:** 1-2-25



**FEBRUARY**

- Close Look: Concealed Carry Handguns
- Tech Advancements In Optics
- Call-In Spring Turkey Sales
- 2025 New Product Showcase — Part 3/3

**Ad Sales Close:** 12-30-24  
**Ad Materials Due:** 1-3-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 2-4-25



**MARCH**

- Close Look: Wheelguns For Plinking & Defense
- Lever-Action Appeal
- Expand Your E-Commerce Footprint
- Plus: SHOT Show 2025 Coverage & Product Launches

**Ad Sales Close:** 1-28-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 1-31-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 3-4-25



**APRIL**

- Close Look: Target & Hunting Handguns
- Secure Storage — Safes & More
- Precision Long-Range Shooting
- Private Label: Branding Benefits

**Ad Sales Close:** 2-25-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 2-28-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 4-1-25



**MAY**

- Market Update: Ammo & Reloading
- Concealment & Retention  
*Holsters, Belts & More*
- Summer Sales Event Tips
- Pursuing Varmint/Predator Hunters

**Ad Sales Close:** 4-1-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 4-4-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 5-6-25



**JUNE**

- Safety Products: Eye/Hearing Protection
- Fall Hunting Outlook
- New Tech In Self-Defense Training
- Home-Defense Long Guns

**Ad Sales Close:** 4-29-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 5-2-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 6-4-25



**JULY**

### Mid-Year Business Edition

- U.S. Firearms Industry Today Report
- Gun-Cleaning Products & Services
- Bowhunting: Get On Target
- Sporting Shotguns

**Ad Sales Close:** 5-27-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 5-30-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 7-1-25



**AUGUST**

- Range Profits
- New Tech For Hunters
- Opportunities In Muzzleloading
- Shine The Light On Flashlights

**Ad Sales Close:** 6-30-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 7-3-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 8-5-25



**SEPTEMBER**

- Knives For Carry & The Hunt
- Used Gun Market: Up Or Down?
- Catering To DIY Customers
- Silence Is Golden: Selling Suppressors

**Ad Sales Close:** 7-29-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 8-1-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 9-3-25



**OCTOBER**

- Trending Now: Handguns
- Elevate Online Business
- Gunsmithing Profits
- Accessories Abound

**BONUS NASGW EXPO DISTRIBUTION**

**Ad Sales Close:** 9-2-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 9-5-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 10-7-25



**NOVEMBER**

- Gear-Up For Year-End Profits
- High-End & Custom Guns
- Supplies For Preppers/Survivalists
- Non-Lethal Products

**Ad Sales Close:** 9-30-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 10-3-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 11-4-25



**DECEMBER**

### 2026 New Business Year Edition

- SHOT Show 2026 Preview
- Lessons Learned From 2025
- 2026 New Product Showcase — Part 1/3

**BONUS SHOT SHOW DISTRIBUTION**

**Ad Sales Close:** 10-28-25  
**Ad Materials Due:** 10-31-25  
**Ships To Dealers:** 12-4-25

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## PROMISING 50TH NASGW EXPO TEES UP '25 BUSINESS

By Jade Moldae

Given its close proximity to Election Day, the 2024 National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (NASGW) Exhibits and Annual Meeting — held Oct. 16–18 in Kansas City — was marked by two overarching questions: Who will be sitting in the White House come Inauguration Day in January, and how will the market respond?

Well, one of those questions has already been answered decisively. In the wake of a Republican trifecta of wins in the White House and both chambers of Congress, the second question remains — how will the market respond?

We sat down with NASGW President

Kenyon Gleason, who reflected on the impact of the 50th NASGW Expo, as well as the trends observed even before the election outcome was confirmed.

“The 2024 show went phenomenally well as we celebrated 50 years of the Expo,” he said. “Leading up to the show, there was a good level of concern going in with the election and whether or not people would be buying, but that actually proved to be the opposite of what transpired. A lot of very positive meetings took place and we sold out again this year.”

Gleason shared the feedback received from exhibitors had consistent themes.

“We heard time and time again about the value of show, the interest from

◀ First-time NASGW Expo exhibitors get two-minute “elevator pitches” to showcase their company and new products to buyers.

buyers and a cautious optimism of what the future was going to be like for our industry,” he said.

The Expo’s footprint is set up for a more relaxed environment — giving buyers two and a half days to connect with potential new partners.

“A number of new companies shared they were impressed with how many interactions they were having with distributors and even other manufacturers for potential partnerships and things like that,” Gleason noted. “One of the great benefits of the Expo is you really get to network with all facets of the industry. And you have the time to develop those relationships.”

While welcome, Gleason was surprised at the levels of optimism expressed by attendees.

“There was a lot of optimism about where things are going and what the future looks like,” he said. “Which was surprising, again, as the market has been so down this year in contrast to what it had been and people were nervous about where things were going. There seemed to be a sense of renewed optimism in the industry.”

### CONTINUED SUCCESS WITH ELEVATOR PITCHES

Introduced at the 2021 NASGW Expo, first-time exhibitors are given the opportunity to present a two-minute “elevator pitch” to buyers,

**Continued on p. 16**

## SDS IMPORTS CHANGES NAME TO SDS ARMS

SDS Imports announced that the company is now known as SDS Arms.

SDS Arms will continue to provide shooting and hunting enthusiasts with nostalgic, tactical, modern, value-priced firearms engineered and designed in its Knoxville, Tenn., facilities.

A veteran-owned company, SDS

Arms understands the importance of engineering products in the U.S., along with sourcing products around the globe to provide consumers with superior-performing products at price points that allow them to pursue their passion.

“Going from SDS Imports to SDS Arms doesn’t change who we are or what we stand for. Being known as SDS Arms now allows us to better identify with the consumer as to what we have



to offer in today’s ultra-competitive firearms market,” said Chris DiCenso, CEO of SDS Arms.

The SDS Arms umbrella includes five firearm brands: Tisas USA, Tokarev USA, MAC, Inglis and Spandau Arms.

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





## ANDERSON MANUFACTURING ANNOUNCES BRAND UPDATE

Anderson Manufacturing announced its refreshed brand, aimed at enhancing the company's messaging and marketing.

The new logo design features a striking horse emblem, celebrating the company's Kentucky roots, alongside bold, arched lettering reminiscent of bourbon-barrel branding, highlighting the iconic Bourbon Trail.

"The Anderson Manufacturing brand carries a legacy of craftsmanship and Kentucky pride. As with most decisions to rebrand, the Anderson look and feel needed this update to reflect the quality of our product lines, but also to stay in touch with our family heritage. We feel this combination carries the essence of pride and ambition we as a company and our employees hold when asked about Anderson Manufacturing," said Jennifer Tuttle, the company's director of marketing.

The brand refresh will be gradually rolled out, including updated roll marks on lower receivers and engravings across the entire product lineup. Anderson's social media and website will showcase the refreshed branding, and a complete overhaul of the website is in the works.

Anderson's mission is "to provide the industry's highest-quality firearms, parts and accessories that any law-abiding citizen can afford, in accordance with their Second Amendment rights."

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## HAVA RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM LIGHT FOUNDATION

Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA) announced a \$50,000 donation from the Light Foundation in support of its mission to help disabled military veterans adjust to civilian life after serving our country.

The donation followed the Light Foundation's annual fundraisers, Corporate Training Day and the Matt Light Celebrity Shootout held in Addieville, R.I.

The Light Foundation, founded by Matt Light and his wife, Susie, helps young people develop the skills, values and mindset they need to create a meaningful and productive future. Light is a former NFL player on the Super Bowl championship team, the New England Patriots.

The Light Foundation's mission is to "take young people out of their everyday environments and provide them with unique opportunities that ignite their passion, purpose and motivation to succeed." HAVA and the Light Foundation



Matt Light presents a check for \$50,000 to HAVA Event Manager/ Instructor, LTSA Chris Fleming (left).

continue to share a passion for helping others, whether disabled military veterans or disadvantaged youth, to have more productive and enjoyable lives.

"Seeing first-hand what the Light Foundation does for our nation's youth is nothing short of awesome. The hard work we have seen from Matt on the NFL football field translates to his hard

work in a youth program so desperately needed today," said HAVA's Chris Fleming.

HAVA is a 501(c)(3) organization formed by companies in the shooting and outdoor industry to raise awareness and assist disabled veterans with their healing process through guided hunts, shooting events and other outdoor sports activities. / [honoredveterans.org](https://honoredveterans.org)

## BASS PRO SHOPS, CABELA'S OUTDOOR FUND SUPPORTS CAMP LEOPOLD

Camp Leopold, the South Carolina Waterfowl Association's (SCWA) flagship outdoor education program, announced a \$30,000 donation from the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund.

This contribution strengthens the ongoing partnership between Camp Leopold and the Outdoor Fund, further enhancing the program's offerings for the 2024-2025 school year and benefiting over 800 students across South Carolina.

Since its inception in 2012, Camp Leopold has been committed to providing

environmental education rooted in the conservation principles of Aldo Leopold, a pioneering figure in wildlife conservation.

Continued support from the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund enables Camp Leopold to advance its mission of connecting K-12 students and teachers with the natural world through immersive, hands-on learning experiences.

Students engage with a diverse range of environmental topics on Camp Leopold's 1,600-acre campus, fostering critical thinking, sensory exploration and a deep sense of responsibility toward nature.

"We are deeply grateful to Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund for their unwavering support. This generous



donation directly enhances our ability to deliver high-quality educational experiences that inspire and educate students about the environment. Our partnership reflects a shared commitment to conservation and education that has a lasting impact on the lives of students," said Jami Lisenby, director of Camp Leopold.

/ [basspro.com](https://basspro.com)  
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## S&W PARTNERS WITH MARYVILLE PD

Smith & Wesson Brands Inc. announced its firearm contract award from the Maryville Police Department, the local agency serving Smith & Wesson's new home in the heart of east Tennessee.

The Maryville PD is transitioning to the M&P9 M2.0 and Shield Plus series for its officers' primary duty and backup pistols. In addition, the agency will be integrating the M&P15T SBR into its primary patrol rifle lineup.

This contract marks an important partnership between the company and the community, highlighting Smith & Wesson's dedication to supporting local law enforcement as they strive to enhance

public safety within the neighborhoods they serve.

"This partnership not only enhances the safety and preparedness of our officers, but also strengthens our connection to a company that shares our commitment to excellence and public safety. By equipping our force with the best tools available, we ensure we are prepared to meet the challenges of modern law enforcement while supporting local industry," said Tony Jay Crisp, Maryville PD chief of police.

"Smith & Wesson is honored to be the new duty sidearm and patrol rifle of choice for the Maryville Police Department. We eagerly anticipate years and decades of partnership with the agency that safeguards our community and new headquarters, just as we've



Smith & Wesson M&P9 M2.0

cherished our long-standing relationship with the Springfield (Mass.) Police Department since the 19th century. Together, we aspire to nurture a safer environment for all community members and build a legacy of trust and excellence in law enforcement," said Mark Smith, president and CEO of Smith & Wesson.  
[/ smith-wesson.com](http://smith-wesson.com)

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## FN AMERICA ANNOUNCES L.E. CONTRACTS

FN America announced that the Wake County (Raleigh, N.C.) Sheriff's Office selected the FN 509 Fullsize MRD-LE as its new duty pistol. The agency reached this decision after a year of testing multiple manufacturers' pistols.

Purchasing over 500 pistols, the Wake County Sheriff's Office is the first agency to deploy the new FN 509 Fullsize MRD-LE. With nearly 1,000 employees, the Wake County Sheriff's Office serves the largest county in North Carolina, with over 1.1 million residents across 12 municipalities.

The agency also selected the FN 509 Compact MRD-LE for its detectives and department staff along with customized FN 509s for its SWAT officers, purchasing optics-ready pistols and holsters. The company conducted classes on the duty use of red-dot optics and provided armorer training.

"As Wake County began their selection process over a year ago, they wanted a pistol that was safe, reliable,

accurate and optics-ready, plus a brand partner they could trust to stand behind their products," said Doug Grier, law enforcement business development director for FN America.

"The FN 509 was selected for its user-friendly design, striker-fire mechanism and overall performance. Deputies found it easy to handle and shoot accurately, which is essential in high-pressure situations. The weapon's reliability and durability were also key factors in the decision-making process," said Wake County Sheriff Willie Rowe.

Additionally, the Waterbury (Conn.) Police Department chose the FN 509 MRD-LE 9mm striker-fired pistol as the new sidearm for its 300 sworn officers. The order was fulfilled through FN Law Enforcement Distributor, Atlantic Tactical.

"Waterbury Police Department approached us in search of a new duty pistol that was reliable, durable and offered them future-proof, optics-ready technology," said Grier.

"During testing, our team fired in excess of 12,000 rounds through a single endurance test, along with several



**FN 509 Fullsize MRD-LE**

thousand more rounds fired over the course of adverse condition testing and in situation training scenarios, with zero issues to report," said Waterbury Police Department Sergeant James O'Brien.

The FN 509 platform has been tested beyond one million rounds. With a polished feed ramp and chamber, consistent feeding and extraction exceed every standard. The platform is compatible with a wide variety of training and duty ammunition. The FN Low-Profile Optics-Mounting System, adapted from its original development for the U.S. Army's handgun trials, greatly enhances precision and sighting versatility.

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

## BLUE PAYMENT AGENCY DEBUTS KNIFE-FRIENDLY WOOCOMMERCE PAYMENT GATEWAY

Blue Payment Agency, e-commerce payment solutions provider, announced a payment gateway for WooCommerce websites selling knives and bladed weapons, including automatic knives.

The new gateway handles application, approval and integration, and offers a personalized support service. The gateway and merchant account offer aims to provide stable, reliable and affordable credit card processing for U.S.-based WordPress websites in the knife and blade industry.

Standard payment processors like Stripe, WooPayments, Square and PayPal often restrict or prohibit weapon sales, increasing the risk of account closures and frozen deposits for knife websites. The team at Blue Payment Agency addresses

these challenges by providing merchant accounts explicitly approved for bladed weapon sales.

"We understand the unique challenges faced by legal knife, sword and collectible dealers. Our extensive experience in this niche allows us to provide solutions that meet our clients' specific needs while maintaining compliance and stability," said Alex Roy, president of Blue Payment Agency.

The company's knife-friendly payment gateway integrates both the NMI payment gateway and Authorize.Net with WooCommerce, allowing businesses to securely process online credit card transactions for a wide range of bladed products.

"Website owners often don't know that payment gateways have two components: the software integration piece and the merchant account itself, which a bank underwrites. Our solution combines specially approved merchant accounts with either NMI or Authorize.Net's payment gateway SaaS (software as a service), ensuring consistent, reliable



credit card processing for e-commerce knife sellers. Our goal is to eliminate stress and reduce errors for our clients. We guide them through every step, from application to final integration, at no additional charge," Roy said.

Blue Payment Agency offers one-on-one assistance, including personalized, screen-sharing, shopping-cart integration sessions to ensure proper setup and integration with WordPress websites using WooCommerce.

Established in 2014, Blue Payment Agency has built a reputation for expertise in high-risk payment processing, particularly in heavily regulated categories. The company's expansion into knife-friendly payment solutions for WooCommerce builds upon its long-standing focus on the tactical, self-defense, firearms and survival industries.

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



## BROWNELLS, TASK FORCE EXPEDITION ANNOUNCE FUNDRAISING DOCUMENTARY PREMIERE

Brownells and Task Force Expedition announced the premiere of the documentary "Beyond the Summit: Climbing for a Cause." The film showcases the collaborative climb of Mount Kilimanjaro by six teams, including Team Special Operations Wounded Warriors (SOWW), sponsored by Brownells. The project raises funds for veterans and first responders.

The documentary highlights the efforts of a collective of nonprofits specializing in critical areas such as suicide prevention, substance abuse rehabilitation, support for military personnel and their families and treatments for traumatic injuries and stress.



In addition to Team SOWW, five other industry-supported teams made the climb. Team American Suppressor Association Foundation (ASA) was sponsored by SilencerCo. Team Frontline Healing Foundation was sponsored by Crye Precision & Staccato. Team Special Operations Care Fund (SOC-F) was sponsored by Elevated Silence. Team UK (representing various organizations) was sponsored by Edgar Brothers and Reptilia.

"This film is an extension of our mission to support our warfighters by bringing attention to critical services that help individuals back to a healthy

and fruitful life. It's also a call to action to our warriors that they have not been forgotten," said Pete Brownell, CEO and chairman of the board of Brownells.

Task Force Expedition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that raises funding and awareness for vital causes through once-in-a-lifetime adventures. By documenting these expeditions, TFE creates compelling content that serves as a powerful force multiplier, amplifying the reach and impact of the nonprofits involved.

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

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

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One of NASGW's mottos — "Bringing shooting sports buyers and sellers together" — taking place in real time at the Nosler booth during the 2024 NASGW Expo & Annual Meeting.

## Continued from p. 10

sales rep groups and other manufacturers in the hour before the Expo's official start.

I've had the opportunity to witness the presentations in each of the years since, and it has become a must-watch event to discover up-and-coming companies in the industry. Gleason shared this has been an unmitigated success.

"Adding that feature has been the most successful development we've done at the Expo," he contended. "The opportunity for our new exhibitors to quickly share their elevator pitches with all those distributors has been remarkable. The feedback we get from distributors and manufacturers is unanimous — they love it."

## SCOPE PROGRAM UPDATE

The NASGW SCOPE data initiative is a suite of data-driven tools that collect, analyze and distribute information to strengthen businesses in the shooting sports — using data from manufacturers, wholesalers, point-of-sale providers and dealers. It has evolved into a vital source of information for industry companies to reference.

At the NASGW Expo, the SCOPE team hosts an annual update to share the trends they've observed in the market.

"It's the one time of year where we can share what's happening in the market to non-subscribers," Gleason said. "The numbers we showed were a little surprising to some people. At that time, we



**There are still segments in the market — even in a down market — that are doing well."**

**Kenyon Gleason • NASGW President**

had already observed a shift in the market in August and September. We're still down overall compared to last year, but it's not as 'doom and gloom' as people thought it was."

Gleason pointed out the first assassination attempt on President-Elect Donald Trump in Butler, Pa., July 13, created a noticeable uptick in sales in the SCOPE data.

"This sales bump carried into August and September, and then the start of the fall hunting season further elevated sales," he said. "We're not going to be breaking any records this year by any stretch, but there are still segments in the market — even in a down market — that are doing well."

## PLANNING FOR 2025 & BEYOND

The 2025 NASGW Expo & Annual Meeting will be held Oct. 15–17 in Grapevine, Texas, at the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center.

The 2020 NASGW Expo was scheduled

for Grapevine, but the pandemic resulted in the first (and only) cancellation of the Expo in its history. The NASGW Expo was last staged in Grapevine in 2013.

"The 2025 Expo is our makeup show for the one we lost in 2020," Gleason said. "We're happy to be visiting Texas once again."

Looking ahead to the future of the NASGW Expo, Gleason shared a significant shift will take place in its 2026 iteration.

"Starting in 2026, we will be changing the days of our show," Gleason said. "It will still be held in October, but instead of a Tuesday–Friday format, we are moving the show up in the week to a Monday–Thursday schedule."

Under this new format, Monday night during NASGW Expo week will feature the Annual Appreciation Dinner, with the Expo being held Tuesday–Thursday. Gleason shared this change is a result of the feedback NASGW has received from exhibitors in recent years.

"We've discovered people's habits and preferences have changed, and Friday during the Expo ends up being a really tough day for us on the show floor," he said. "A lot of people like it, as they use the last morning to see folks they hadn't seen — but a significant number of people want to leave Thursday night."

He continued, "We always survey and over the past 5–6 years here, we've seen more and more people tell us having the show end on Friday was becoming more challenging for them. We needed to do something moving forward."

According to Gleason, this move will have additional benefits to enhance the Expo.

"What we hear from convention centers and hotels is because of the way our show was structured, it was becoming increasingly difficult for us to find space to accommodate move-ins and move-outs," he stated.

Under the current format, exhibitors needed two weekends for set up and closing down. A Monday–Thursday schedule would require only one weekend — which would open up more venues for the Expo to consider, beginning in 2026.

Fresh off 50 years of Expo excellence, Gleason shared plans for the 2025 event are in full swing.

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



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## TRUETIMBER ACQUIRES BLIZZARD BUDDY

TrueTimber has completed the acquisition of Blizzard Buddy, a hunting apparel manufacturer specializing in outfitting hunters for extreme cold conditions. This strategic move will further strengthen TrueTimber's position as a technology and performance-driven brand, offering customers an expanded range of innovative products.

The Blizzard Buddy Extreme Cold Weather Hunting Suit has gained a loyal following among hunters who require superior protection and comfort in freezing temperatures. By integrating Blizzard Buddy's advanced technology and expertise into its existing product line, TrueTimber aims to provide hunters with an even greater selection of high-performance gear.

"We're thrilled to welcome Blizzard Buddy into the TrueTimber family," said



The Blizzard Buddy Extreme Cold Weather Hunting Suit keeps hunters warm in temperatures from -20° to 45° F.

Rusty Sellars, CEO of TrueTimber. "Their expertise in developing high-performance hunting gear perfectly complements our existing product range. This acquisition allows us to further expand our technical line and offer our customers an even broader selection of top-of-the-line products."

By joining forces with TrueTimber, Blizzard Buddy will have access to enhanced resources and a larger distribution network, enabling them to reach a wider audience of outdoor enthusiasts.

In the press release announcing this acquisition, TrueTimber emphasized the integration of the two companies won't interrupt operations.

"As TrueTimber and Blizzard Buddy integrate their operations, customers can expect a seamless transition," the release stated. "TrueTimber will continue to offer the same exceptional customer service and support that they have become known for, while incorporating Blizzard Buddy's expertise to enhance their product offerings."

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

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## SIG SAUER SECURES FOLLOW-ON RIFLE CONTRACT WITH INDIAN ARMY

SIG SAUER Inc. announced a second procurement contract with the Government of India, Ministry of Defence to supply an additional 73,000 SIG716 rifles. When the contract is completed, 145,400 SIG716 rifles will be in service with the Indian army.

The Government of India, Ministry of Defence first awarded SIG SAUER a contract for 72,400 SIG716 rifles in 2019.

The successful fielding and overwhelming soldier acceptance led to this follow-on award.

"We are proud to be a partner in the modernization effort of the Indian army, and prouder still that the SIG716 rifle achieves the Ministry of Defence's modernization goals with the second-largest army in the world. Since the initial fielding of the SIG716, we have received phenomenal end-user feedback on the performance and reliability of the platform. Throughout this time, we have strengthened and further solidified our partnership with the Indian Ministry of Defence, and are honored to earn their

# SIG SAUER

continued trust equipping their frontline infantrymen," said Ron Cohen, president and CEO of SIG SAUER Inc.

The SIG716 is an enhanced AR platform chambered in 7.62 NATO and featuring a 16" barrel, M-LOK handguard and a six-position telescoping stock. SIG SAUER designs and builds its SIG716 rifles in the U.S.

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

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## WINCHESTER AMMUNITION PLEDGES \$100,000 TO FOLDS OF HONOR

Winchester Ammunition announces its fourth consecutive pledge to the Folds of Honor Foundation, a \$100,000 commitment that will help provide educational scholarships to the spouses and children of fallen or disabled service members of the U.S. armed forces.


Since 2021, Winchester has contributed a total of \$425,000 to Folds of Honor.

"Winchester has a long history in support of the U.S. military dating back to the early 1900s. We're honored to continue our contribution to Folds of Honor and help the families that are truly in need," said Brett Flaughner, president of Winchester Ammunition.

Winchester introduced its USA VALOR series of ammunition in 2021, which pays tribute to Folds of Honor, the U.S. military



and first-responders. Since its launch, more than 200 million rounds of USA VALOR ammunition have been sold in boxes featuring the Folds of Honor logo in support of their mission.

More information on Winchester's support of military and veteran causes is available at [winchester.com/usavalor](http://winchester.com/usavalor). 

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



J. HAMMONS

### Anderson Manufacturing Grows Team

Anderson Manufacturing announced the promotion of Jeremy Hammons to VP of sales and marketing, and the appointment of Jennifer Tuttle to director of marketing.



J. TUTTLE

Hammons joined Anderson in 2012 as an assembly technician.

Anderson CEO Jeff Stawiarski said, "[Hammons'] decade-long journey at Anderson has positioned the company for current and future success."

Tuttle has 20+ years of experience and holds a master's degree in marketing. Her previous roles include director of marketing at SIG SAUER Academy, Silencer Central and Ballistic Advantage.

Stawiarski noted, "Jennifer's expertise will optimize our marketing strategy. ... Her knowledge of the shooting sports industry will undoubtedly strengthen the Anderson brand for future success."



C. FRASER

### Barrett Firearms Manufacturing Announces U.S. Gov't. Sales Director

Cameron Fraser was appointed the director of U.S. government sales for Barrett Firearms Manufacturing.

Barrett CEO Bryan James stated, "Cameron Fraser has built a career on excellence in his military roles, and he brings strong ties with the U.S. defense industry and a passion to deliver leading-edge technologies to our government customers."

Fraser joins Barrett with more than two decades within the Australian army and the U.S. Army HQ G8 Branch.

He earned a B.S. in environmental management and

three master's degrees in capability management, systems engineering, and military and defense studies.



T. TAYLOR

### SAF Presents Award & Elects Board Member

The Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) presented its inaugural Golden Bowtie Award to SIG SAUER Executive VP of Global Brand Development and SAF Board Member Tom Taylor, and



K. GLEASON

elected Kenyon Gleason, president and secretary of the NASGW, to its board of trustees.

Recipients of the Golden Bowtie are people and/or organizations who have made significant contributions of time, talent and treasure to SAF and its mission.

SAF Founder and EVP Alan M. Gottlieb said, "I am thrilled we can now recognize people like Tom who go above and beyond to support SAF and its mission."

Gottlieb stated, "[Gleason's] vast experience across all facets of the industry will be welcomed as we continue to fight those who wish to trample our civil liberties."



J. KURTENBACH

### Silencer Central Taps Media Manager

Joe Kurtenbach joined Silencer Central as the senior manager of media and relationships where he serves as the primary point of contact for industry and media inquiries, working directly with ambassadors, influencers, writers, publishers and industry partners.

Logan Hutchinson, director of marketing at Silencer Central, said, "As we continue to experience rapid growth, Joe brings the same energy and passion that drives our success."

Kurtenbach, a U.S. Army veteran, brings 13 years of industry

experience to Silencer Central, having served as a senior editor at *American Rifleman* and *Guns & Ammo*.



D. MILES

### OSCF Welcomes Board Member

Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) welcomed Dave

Miles to its board of directors.

Miles is the president of Baron Technology Inc. He also served in roles at National Wild Turkey Federation, National Shooting Sports Foundation and O.F. Mossberg & Sons.



K. PURYEAR

### Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors Adds Board Member

Kelsey Puryear, COO at Murray Road Agency and co-owner of SHOT

Show Industry Day at the Range, was recently elected to the Pass It On - Outdoor Mentors board of directors.

"Kelsey's extensive experience in media planning and event management, paired with her lifelong passion for shooting sports, makes her an incredible addition to our team," said Pass It On CEO Brittany French.



M. TEUTIMEZ

### Lancer Systems Hires Sales & Marketing Manager

Lancer Systems named Molly Teutimez as its new sales and

marketing manager where she will lead the commercial sales team and develop and manage sales strategies to enhance customer satisfaction.

Lancer President Bill Lutton shared, "Molly Teutimez is passionate about our industry and has built her career with excellent communication and project management skills to support our



professional shooting customers.”

Teutimez joins Lancer with more than 10 years of experience in sales management, marketing and operational sales, most recently with American Outdoor Brands.



J. STUART

### Sierra Bullets And Barnes Bullets Names Commercial Sales VP

As the new VP of commercial sales for Sierra Bullets and Barnes Bullets, Jay Stuart is tasked with leading domestic and international sales efforts and securing business opportunities.

“I am thrilled to have him on board and believe he will play an integral role in propelling our brands forward,” said Jim Bruno, CEO of Sierra and Barnes.

Stuart previously worked with companies such as Vista Outdoor,

Union Sportsmen's Alliance, Boy Scouts of America and Remington Outdoor Company.



K. HYKIN

### Trailblazer Firearms Names President

Trailblazer Firearms selected Kevin Hykin as its new president.

For the past three decades, he worked in the automotive industries and international sales. An engineer by education, Hykin is a certified New Product Development Professional (PDMA), has a Six Sigma Black and an MBA.



M. WINZENBURG

### ZeroTech Optics Adds Marketing Manager

Mack Winzenburg is now serving as the marketing manager for ZeroTech Optics USA.

“Mack's experience and passion completely align with the ZeroTech's team, brand vision and lifestyle,” said Nathan Dudney ZeroTech Optics USA president.

He joins the team with experience from Weatherby and Gun Fighters Inc.



B. WARCHUS

### MGE Wholesale Adds To Sales Team

MGE Wholesale announced the addition of Bryan Warchus to its growing sales team.

Warchus has over 20 years of firearm industry experience with current and future MGE dealers. He has held positions in retail sales, retail management and wholesale sales.

Warchus also served as a reserve patrolman and armorer with the Portage, Indiana Police Department. **SI**

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BY MASSAD AYOOB

## TRENDS OBSERVED AT AN ALL-FEMALE GUN SHOP

**P**revious issues of *Shooting Industry* have featured numerous articles and columns (including this one) with a focus on retail firearms emporiums owned by women. When I was recently teaching judicious use of deadly force in Slidell, La., several folks told me my gun shop tour might be spiced up by a local store and range owned *and staffed* entirely by women. I was intrigued and paid a visit. What I found was definitely interesting and instructive.

A bit of history is in order. Along about 2006, one Robert Midkiss built the FITS gun shop and range in Slidell. His chosen name for his business stood for “Firearms Instruction, Training & Sales.” (Today’s owners joke it now stands for “Females In Tactical Shorts.”) The founder passed away not long after, and for many years his widow, Taffy Midkiss, ran it. Joel Freeland took ownership in 2016. A high school classmate of Freeland’s, Candy Straughan, was a middle school English teacher who was also a certified firearms instructor — and ended up teaching part-time at FITS.

Along came 2020 and the pandemic.

Straughan told *SI*, “When COVID hit, they kicked us out of our classrooms, and I did online teaching in junior high. However, the range was still open, so I

could teach full-time there. Meanwhile, Jennifer Gebhardt had started doing administration stuff for FITS during the pandemic. By then, I was ready to get out of being a schoolteacher. Jennifer and I bought the business from Joel in July 2021. At that point, we had been running the operation for a while anyway.”

### A FAMILIAR ORIGIN

FITS is both a retail gun shop and a firearms training center. Straughan’s path to becoming an advanced firearms instructor parallels in many ways the sort of thing that brings customers to her: a precipitating incident.

“I became an instructor because I wanted women to be empowered,” she shared. “Sixteen years ago, I was married to a husband who worked out of town and who was away when someone tried to kick in my front door. It seemed like an eternity from my phone call to 911 to the outcome. I had a cell phone in one hand and a tennis racquet in the other and three little kids.”

Thankfully, the cops got there in time.

Straughan continued, “I knew then I needed a level playing field if something like that ever happened again. My

◀ Massad Ayoob with members of the FITS team, including Jennifer Gebhardt (left) and Candy Straughan (right).

husband wasn’t a shooter, but he was not unwilling for me to get into guns. I’d shot guns my dad or granddad handed to me loaded, so that was the start of my journey.”

Straughan admits to having a “rocky start” learning how to handle firearms effectively, but it all changed thanks to some help from the principal of her school.

“My school principal and I had a conversation, and she said, ‘I can teach you to shoot a gun.’ That was the start of my connection,” Straughan shared. “It wasn’t long before she told me, ‘You should teach women how to do this!’”

Thus began Straughan’s fast-moving odyssey of advanced training at many schools under many experts — culminating with her recent certification as an Advanced Rangemaster Instructor under the legendary Tom Givens.

“

**We’re just trying to get past the stereotypes. A lot of both genders come back after their first exposure.”**

**Candy Straughan** • Certified Firearms Instructor  
*Firearms Instruction, Training & Sales*

Today, she says of FITS, “We hold regular concealed carry permit classes for our state and for Mississippi’s Enhanced Carry, then we do a whole bunch of ladies’ nights for new shooters — gateway instruction.”

On occasion, FITS offers the next steps up, including holster-draw clinics and “Should I Shoot?” classes.

“We use the USCCA curriculum. Our teaching staff are all USCCA- and NRA-certified instructors,” she informed. “Our state had permitless carry come in as of July 4, 2024, and we go over state laws for permitless carry. Some of those we offer free as a service to the community and from there, a lot of people decide



to take our CCW class for the permit — which still has some distinct advantages.”

## PERCENTAGES

When I first walked into FITS, I noticed two things: Every single person behind the counter was female, and every single customer on the buying side of the counter at that particular time was male.

Straughan told us, “Our female customer percentage has definitely increased. A lot of our classes are 50/50 between the genders. But coming to our range alone, we see more males. We’re just trying to get past the stereotypes. A lot of both genders come back after their first exposure.”

FITS does offer all-female classes.

“Ladies’ night is held twice a month. The discounted price includes trying different guns with us providing ammo, though we encourage them to use their own guns if they have them,” Straughan shared.

“Ladies’ night is three hours of safety and shooting training; each woman fires an average of 15 rounds with one-on-one instruction. A few fire five and say, ‘That’s enough,’ and we tell them, ‘I’m proud of you [for trying].’ At least as many have so much fun that afterward, they get a firing lane and we let them shoot some more — supervised.”

How have gun sales to women been? Straughan explained.

“Over the past few years, our highest selling guns have been the Smith & Wesson Shield series, especially the EZ models with the easy-racking slides — 60% in .380 and 40% in 9mm,” she said.

## GETTING ACTIVE BEYOND RETAIL SALES

FITS is affiliated with Armed Women of America, formerly known as The Well-Armed Women (founded by Carrie Lightfoot). Gebhardt, Straughan and their team are also very active with Women For Gun Rights, formerly the DC Project, and

have spent a lot of time at the state capitol fighting for gun owners’ rights.

By the way, it turns out FITS is not *entirely* testosterone-free behind the counter. Jennifer’s dad, Charlie Donovan, is a retired cop and the current staff gunsmith. A few men also work part-time in gun sales and as range safety officers.

For a long time now, female customers have been increasingly important to the bottom line of retail gun shops and have been disproportionately powerful and persuasive in testifying on behalf of gun owners’ civil rights in legislative environments.

This influence has increased profoundly since the pandemic, which raised America’s consciousness as to the importance of self-reliance in all sorts of emergencies — including self-protection and family protection.

All of us in the firearms industry can learn from Jennifer Gebhardt and Candy Straughan’s experience at FITS in Louisiana. **SI**



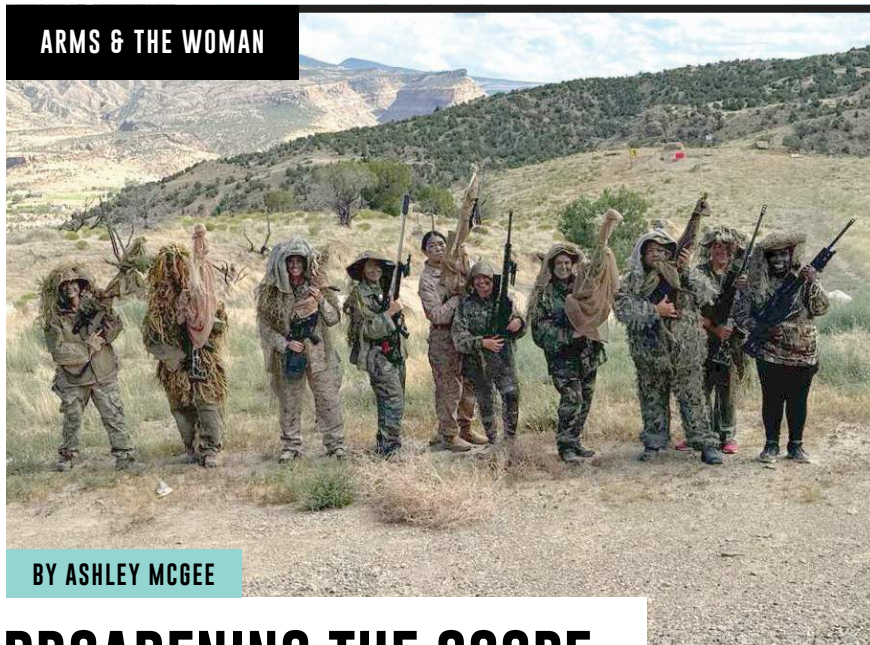
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BY ASHLEY MCGEE

## BROADENING THE SCOPE: LOOK BEYOND HANDGUNS

**I**n recent years, the rise in female firearm ownership has caught the attention of the firearms industry. Yet, despite this promising trend, many dealers continue to underestimate the scope of women's interest in firearms, often limiting their focus to handguns for personal defense. This narrow perspective not only overlooks the full breadth of female customers' needs and preferences but also leaves a significant business opportunity on the table.

The reality is, more women are getting involved in various shooting sports and hunting activities, which utilize shotguns and rifles. Dealers who embrace this trend and educate their customers about the full spectrum of firearms available will not only increase sales, but also foster a more inclusive and informed community of female shooters.

### THE RISE OF FEMALE SHOOTERS BEYOND HANDGUNS

According to data from the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), women now make up a significant portion of new shooters and hunters. The 2022 NSSF report noted a 25% increase in women who purchased firearms over the past two years. Notably, the report highlighted an increasing interest in shotguns and

rifles, particularly for sports like skeet, trap shooting and long-range precision shooting.

This diversification in female interest is evident in programs like A Girl & A Gun's (AG & AG) Sniper School. In August 2024, AG & AG hosted 13 women at its annual Sniper School, held at the Cameo Shooting and Education Complex in Palisade, Colo.

The location was the perfect backdrop for the riflecraft, fieldcraft and snipercraft instruction blocks presented by instructors from Defenders USA. Students were able to engage known- and unknown-distance targets from 100 yards to 2,003 yards (1.138 miles). Savage Arms, Ruger, Stag Arms, Primary Arms and Vortex equipped the participants with scoped rifles and spotting scopes to use at the event.

Despite the perception long-range precision shooting is a niche interest dominated by military and law enforcement professionals, the event attracted everyday women who were eager to expand their shooting skills beyond traditional boundaries.

"I was personally interested in learning more about long-range shooting just because it's so different and there aren't a lot of opportunities for civilians, so I knew other women were likely interested too," said Robyn Sandoval, AG & AG president and CEO.

Participants turned BDUs into ghillie suits, and then half the team applied concealment principles to take up hasty hides in the terrain while the other half topped a nearby ridge with binoculars. Despite the stalkers' best efforts, the sniper students successfully remained hidden.

The instructors worked with the students to have a clear understanding of ballistics and atmospheric factors that affect bullet trajectory, provided calculations to help ladies dial in faster and record accurate DOPE for known- and unknown-distance targets. They also led discussions on camouflage and oversaw the construction of participants' ghillie suits and the overwatch exercise.

"It wouldn't have been a true sniper school if we didn't also address concealment," said Sandoval.

### THE IMPACT OF LIMITING ASSUMPTIONS

When dealers pigeonhole female customers into the personal-defense category, they inadvertently communicate a message their store may not be fully equipped or willing to cater to a broader range of interests. This can deter women from exploring shotguns for bird hunting, rifles for long-range shooting or carbines for competitive sports.

According to AG & AG COO Sandra Woodruff, events like Sniper School open the door for women to explore new areas of shooting.

"Most of these ladies had never shot targets beyond a few hundred yards or recorded DOPE," she said. "Watching them learn the concepts, apply techniques and hit steel targets well over a mile away was a thrilling experience."

For firearms dealers, the lesson is clear: by failing to present women with options beyond handguns, they're missing an opportunity to help them achieve these kinds of breakthroughs. Moreover, this narrow focus on handguns can perpetuate stereotypes, reinforcing the idea female shooters are only interested in self-defense.

### WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY ABOUT WOMEN & RIFLES

Statistically, the increase in female participation in shooting sports and



hunting is a significant indicator women's interests extend beyond handguns. A 2023 report from the NRA showed women accounted for nearly 30% of new rifle purchases in the last two years, with a significant uptick in bolt-action and AR-15 platform rifles. This surge coincides with a growing number of women participating in competitive shooting events.

Nearly 70 women ranging in age from 30–79 participated in AG & AG's 2024 Multigun Challenge at its annual Fall Fest event. As the only all-ladies multi-gun match in the country, the match isn't just about winning prizes, although that is a bonus; it's about enjoying camaraderie, tackling fun and challenging stages in the natural terrain, welcoming new competitors and growing a strong female presence in the 3-Gun family.

"About half of our squads were first-timers," said Sandoval. "The women who arrived on Tuesday were not the same women when they left on Sunday."

While women still dominate handgun purchases — making up 45% of all new handgun owners in 2023 — they are increasingly looking for rifles and shotguns to suit their growing interests in hunting and sports shooting. This trend represents a lucrative opportunity for dealers who can tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to meet the needs of female customers.

## WHAT DEALERS CAN DO

### 1. Diversify The Sales Approach

Rather than assuming female customers are only interested in handguns, firearms dealers should make it a point to introduce women to a broader range of firearms. Highlight rifles and shotguns that are beginner-friendly or suited for different sporting activities. Offer educational material and resources about shotgun sports like skeet and trap or introduce the basics of long-range shooting.

### 2. Host Female-Centric Events & Training Programs

One effective way to engage female customers is by hosting

events specifically designed for them. Consider partnering with organizations like A Girl & A Gun or establishing relationships with local trainers to offer courses focused on different types of firearms.

### 3. Offer Product Demos And Test Opportunities

For women who may be hesitant to dive into purchasing a rifle or shotgun, a product demo or "try before you buy" opportunity can be immensely beneficial. This allows female customers to experience different firearms firsthand and make an informed decision about what suits their needs best.



**When dealers pigeonhole female customers into the personal defense category, they inadvertently communicate a message their store may not be fully equipped or willing to cater to a broader range of interests.**

### 4. Train Sales Staff To Be Open-Minded

One of the most common complaints from female customers is feeling patronized or dismissed by sales staff. Training your sales team to engage with women on equal footing and without assumptions will go a long way in creating a welcoming atmosphere.

## SUCCESS STORIES AS PROOF

The women who participated in AG & AG's Sniper School came away with a new passion for long-range shooting and an increased interest in purchasing precision rifles and scopes. This kind of experience can be transformative, not only for the women who attend but also for dealers who support their journey.

Marsha Lapid, a participant at the event, expressed her excitement at surpassing her personal goals: "I had a goal to shoot at least 300 yards since previously, my furthest shot was 200 yards. Not only did I achieve that goal, but I far exceeded it! I was so content when I reached 1,500 yards, but the team of amazing instructors and ladies encouraged and helped me ring steel at 2,003 yards!"

This enthusiasm represents a market waiting to be tapped. By supporting women's shooting experiences beyond handguns, dealers can play a critical role in fostering a more inclusive and thriving shooting community.

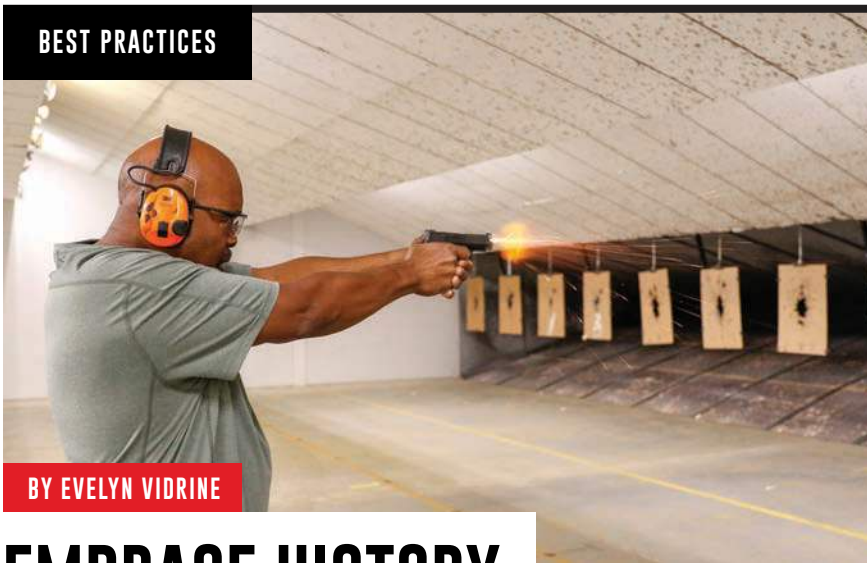
## MOVING FORWARD: EMBRACE THE FULL SCOPE

The firearms industry has made great strides in acknowledging and embracing female firearm owners. However, it is time to expand the vision even further. By moving beyond assumptions and embracing the diversity of women's interests, dealers can build stronger relationships, boost sales and contribute to a more inclusive culture in the shooting sports.

Dealers who continue to focus solely on handguns for women are doing both their customers and their businesses a disservice. Instead, they should recognize that women's interest in firearms is broad, diverse and growing.

With the right approach, forward-thinking dealers can open the door to new possibilities for their female customers — and seize a significant opportunity in the process. **SI**

For more info: [agirlandagun.org](https://agirlandagun.org)



BY EVELYN VIDRINE

## EMBRACE HISTORY, TRENDS & NEW MARKETS

Setting the record straight from the get-go: I didn't start my marketing career in the firearms industry. Nope, I wasn't raised in a house where tactical gear was part of everyday wear. I have a degree in kinesiology and was initially headed toward a career in personal training.

But then one weekend in college, I happened upon a small gun show in Lafayette, La. It was there I made my first pistol purchase — a stunning vintage 1973 Smith & Wesson .22 with a mother-of-pearl inlay. As I was filling out the paperwork, something struck me.

Owning a gun is one thing, but holding a piece of history? It was a whole different ballgame. Where had this little gun been the past 35 years? How many times had it changed hands? Was it a family heirloom, or was it confiscated in some old-school crime? (Probably not that, but a girl can dream.)

As I pondered the journey that little pistol had taken, I realized firearms aren't just objects collecting dust, waiting to unleash chaos. Firearms are woven into the fabric of American history, representing freedom, independence and self-reliance. They're an integral chapter in our nation's story, and will, inevitably, be an integral chapter in its future.

### TIME FOR SOME TOUGH LOVE ...

Truth be told, the market is oversaturated. I don't care what you're

selling — from Kydex holsters to hunting rifles — there are 100 other companies selling the exact same thing. You can try to stay ahead of market trends, but with so many competitors it feels impossible to stay relevant.

I'm a marketer in the digital age. I feel your pain. But I want to tell you a quick story to share some perspective.

I live in Columbus, Miss., a small, historic, bible-belt town. Hunting and shooting are ways of life here. Everyone I know has an arsenal (truly, if the grid goes down, this is the place to be). With so many gun owners, one would think there are countless places to buy firearms and all the accouterments.

In reality, there is but one firearm king in north Mississippi: Gary's Pawn & Gun. In March 1978, Gary's opened its doors to the public. Since then, Gary's (and its two brick-and-mortar locations) has been the primary firearm retailer in the area.

The whole Gary's sales team serves up a hefty dose of Southern hospitality to every customer who walks in the door. The most notable characteristic of this retailer, however, is they go out of their way to patiently educate inexperienced buyers. Those first-time buyers then become regular customers, as do their children and grandchildren. Humans are creatures of loyal habit. If you treat your customers well, they will remember and it will matter when they're trying to decide where to buy.

◀ In a saturated market, the finest details matter when it comes to developing a loyal customer — or losing one. What are you doing to set your store apart?

Outside of customer service, there are other ways to change the way you do business. Let's dig in.

### PRODUCT BUNDLES FOR NEW FIREARM OWNERS

Offer comprehensive packages for new firearm owners. These can include must-have accessories like safety locks, cleaning kits and beginner-friendly safety guides. If you don't offer a product, talk to others who do about partnering. By bundling products tailored for new buyers, it enhances your brand's value. You know why your store matters and why gun ownership is important, but you need to demonstrate this to people who don't see our industry's value.

### EDUCATING (AND ENGAGING) NON-FIREARM OWNERS

We are all well aware our industry is consistently misconstrued. Many non-firearm owners harbor misconceptions or fears about firearms. So simply telling someone who has never so much as seen a gun in person that they "need" a product is just not enough.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" when it comes to guns and firearm accessories. Sure, there are better products than others, but every single person has his or her own preference. Take the time to learn the best sellers in your local market, and then take even more time to learn which of those represent the best fit for a new gun owner.

Some of you may roll your eyes and think, "*I know everything about my inventory. What does she know?*" So, I'd like to ask: When was the last time you sat down with a new customer and learned what products they are interested in and why?

When someone who is new to the industry walks in the door (whether it be your physical store, or online) and starts asking questions that may seem elementary, you should go above and beyond for them. The only way to change our industry's reputation from "gun-toting gangster" to "helpful hero" is by treating every single customer with respect — especially new buyers. This approach not only attracts first-time buyers but also builds long-term



customer relationships based on trust and support.

Education is a powerful tool for broadening your market reach. By providing educational resources, workshops and seminars focused on the importance of firearms, their proper usage and safety protocols, you can demystify these concerns. You can even partner with certified safety instructors who offer classes in person or online to establish your brand as a responsible and knowledgeable entity.

### EMBRACE MODERN TECHNOLOGY

How often have you said, “We don’t need marketing. We sell just fine with word of mouth?” Guess what? You’re wrong.

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**Humans are creatures of loyal habit. When you treat your customers well, they will remember, and it will matter when they are trying to decide where to buy.**

Technology is moving forward at warp speed, and I know for a fact too many of you barely have a functioning website. Leveraging modern technology is essential to your future as a retailer.

Knowing where to start can feel overwhelming, but even taking baby steps toward using modern marketing tools (yes, like AI) can enhance every aspect of your business. If you do not know where to start, there are plenty of firearm-specific marketing agencies offering assistance in this area. Many of these agencies are willing to work with any budget. *Any budget.*

A well-designed website and an active social media presence allow you to reach a broader audience and

## ICONIC FIREARM BUSINESS FOR SALE

Sharps Rifle Company, founded in 1848 by Christian Sharps, is known for firearms innovation, long-range accuracy, and high-quality products. After 11+ years at the helm, we are contemplating transitioning to retirement and offering the company for sale. Consider the possibilities of owning this historic and profitable rifle company, which has a well-known presence in media and history.

Sharps today focuses on the AR/MSR rifle platform, which has a loyal following in the military, LE, and civilian markets. Segments include hunting/outdoor enthusiasts, sports shooters, competitive shooters, and manufacturers/gunsmiths of AR platform products. We have a subscriber base of over 20,000 discrete contacts and over 8,000 active customers. Please see our online store @ [www.srcarms.com](http://www.srcarms.com) for a better overview of Sharps offerings.

Constantly innovating, the new owner will assume three in-force patents for AR bolt carrier group systems and six trademarks. Two of these patents are for controlling the flow of gas through the bolt carrier group, a key advantage for shooters using suppressors. This proprietary technology and Intellectual property can position the right buyer with significant competitive market advantages.

Sharps Rifle’s loyal following, innovative engineering and patents make it a great fit for the right buyer. Our CEO, Jay Johnston, can provide full details and patent information at [jjohnston@sharpsriflecompany.com](mailto:jjohnston@sharpsriflecompany.com).



engage with customers directly. Sharing informative content, updates on new products and customer testimonials builds trust around your brand. Online tracking platforms, like Google Analytics, provide valuable insights into your specific customer’s behavior.

Knowing your customer base and their buying patterns enables you to tailor your offerings to meet evolving demands. It’s like having a crystal ball, but more accurate and less posterous.

### CATER TO FEMALE FIREARM OWNERS

For some time, one of the fastest-growing demographics in our industry has been female firearms owners. According to several recent studies, women now account for nearly 40% of all first-time gun buyers in the U.S. This shift presents a significant opportunity for retailers and manufacturers to cater to their specific needs and preferences.

Creating products and marketing strategies that appeal specifically to women can help tap into this still-burgeoning market. This includes

offering firearms ergonomically designed for smaller hands, stylish yet functional accessories and personalized training sessions.

Understanding and respecting the unique motivations and concerns of female firearm purchasers can lead to increased sales and brand loyalty.

### CHANGE IN APPROACH NEEDED

The future of our industry depends solely on our ability to reach new firearm owners. It’s inevitable we will continue to lose our Second Amendment rights if the way we sell does not change. The world has changed. Consumers have, too. The way we sell firearms has not.

Fear is driving a wedge deeper between our industry and those opposed to it. The only one who can mend this is you. Now is the time to embrace the opportunity to grow and evolve.

Let’s work together to rebrand the industry. Let’s remind the nation we’re the reason for its existence, and show them how we can positively influence the future. **SI**



# *The People Have Spoken*

**“We the People” have spoken, and spoken resolutely.**

**By Jade Moldae**

**A**gainst all odds — two assassination attempts, a felony conviction and the fallout from January 6 — Donald J. Trump will be our nation’s 47th president.

Consequently, the firearms industry can prepare for a brand-new market in 2025 and beyond. A historic night

brought an overwhelming victory for gun owners in both the presidential election and U.S. Senate races. (And, after an eight-day delay due to razor-thin margins in some districts, the Republicans secured a trifecta as the House of Representatives remained in their control.)

The outlook for the next two years, at least, will look similar to what the industry experienced in 2017: A departure from a fear-based market. But, as you may be aware, our industry isn’t the same as it was in 2017. The pandemic, social unrest and contentious 2020 election formed a trifecta of its own that resulted in millions of first-time gun owners joining our ranks.

In the “new normal” of

2025, our industry will be presented with a fresh set of obstacles to overcome, but they far outweigh the alternative — especially in the long term. Let’s hear some reactions (and predictions) to a resounding victory.

## **REACTIONS TO ELECTION NIGHT**

In the lead up to Nov. 5, this election was dubbed — by both sides — “the election of our lifetime.”

According to NSSF, the number of first-time gun buyers since 2020 equals the population of Florida (22.3 million). In an article published earlier this year on NSSF’s website, NSSF Manager of Public Affairs Matt Manda stated, “One thing’s for sure. Those Americans can make



“

**The broad and diverse coalition of voters that turned out to re-elect President Trump is absolutely consistent with the broadening demographics we in the firearm industry have witnessed among the gun-owning community over the past four years.”**

Joe Bartozzi • President and CEO • NSSF

a difference on Election Day.” And make a difference they did.

NSSF President and CEO Joe Bartozzi hailed the dynamic coalition that contributed to President Trump’s second term.

“The broad and diverse coalition of voters that turned out to re-elect President Trump is absolutely consistent with the broadening demographics we in the firearm industry have witnessed among the gun-owning community over the past four years. It is certainly a welcomed expansion,” he said.

Alan Gottlieb, chairman of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA), celebrated the voters who made a difference on election night: gun owners.

“America’s gun owners saw the threat of a Kamala Harris presidency and took action,” he said. “Millions of ‘gun voters’ turned out to reverse the nation’s

course on firearms rights, and keep Kamala out of the Oval Office.”

According to NASGW President Kenyon Gleason, the conclusion of this election has two sides to it.

“There’s a lot to consider in the shooting

sports market about the impact of the Trump victory and return to the White House,” he said. “On the one hand, it’s good for the Second Amendment as a whole. But in terms of sales, it’s hard to say what this will do. It could flatten sales because the fear of losing our rights has diminished, but if the economy grows, people should have a lot more confidence in their future and should be making more money to buy shooting industry products.”

NSSF’s #GUNVOTE initiative proved to be especially effective this election cycle, shared Larry Keane, NSSF SVP for government and public affairs.

“Through our record-setting #GUNVOTE campaign, NSSF successfully encouraged

tens of millions of gun owners to register to vote, educate themselves on the issues and vote on Election Day,” he said. “NSSF looks forward to the end of the Biden-Harris ‘whole-of-government’ attack on our industry. Democracy won.”

## SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK

Jacquelyn Clark, co-owner of Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center in Lakewood, Colo., is forecasting a stronger market for the time being.

“The biggest impact we’ll see is the positive effects of a strong economy on the recreational shooting industry. I’m not expecting another ‘Trump Slump’ — it seems like dealers were wary of that possibility this go-round and didn’t needlessly stock up,” she noted. “Some of that was due to the fact we saw the least amount



**Left:** A multi-faceted effort that included both print and digital advertisements, NSSF’s #GUNVOTE campaign in the 2024 election cycle was very effective mobilizing and educating voters. **Above:** Bristlecone’s Jacquelyn Clark predicts there won’t be a repeat “Trump Slump” due to cautiousness from buyers in the lead-up to the election.

of pre-election buying compared to the past few election cycles. My perception is the American people are ready for a strong economy and some much-missed discretionary spending in the coming year. Then we'll see extra dollars coming in."

Likewise, Southwick Associates Vice President Nancy Bacon predicts renewed enthusiasm and proximity to the holidays could provide a short-term boost in sales.

"We anticipate firearm sales to continue the normalization that has already begun, recognizing there are more gun owners now than there were going into the first Trump presidency, and economic concerns may be waning," she said. "Consumers who have been on the sidelines

may feel more comfortable purchasing now after the second interest rate cut and post-election euphoria anticipating a better economy. This growing optimism will likely create an uptick in sales through the holiday season."

However, Mark Gore, president and owner of Black Wing Shooting Center in Delaware, Ohio, cautioned unpredictability could continue to hamper business planning.

"These election results come with uncertainty about future demand and pricing (due to proposed tariffs) in the firearms industry," he said. "It's very likely retail demand will be flat or down, but the pandemic-era addition of millions of new gun owners should help to provide a level of stability."

“

***We anticipate firearm sales to continue the normalization that has already begun, recognizing there are more gun owners now than there were going into the first Trump presidency, and economic concerns may be waning.***”

Nancy Bacon • Vice President • Southwick Associates

Gore shared what will separate successful stores and ranges from unsuccessful ones.

"Our business plans to continue focusing on the entertainment and experience side side — ranges, events, outings, product launches — and less on an uphill attempt to drive growth in retail firearm sales," he said. "Growing the sport by bringing in new shooters and gun owners will be the key to success."

#### LONG-TERM IMPACT

Given the vast differences in policy between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, the industry was preparing for a worst-case scenario. Overnight, those plans were shelved.

It should go without saying: The long-term impact of a second Trump presidency will be far-reaching for our industry.

"We are gratified the American people elected a president who will

respect the Constitution, including the Second Amendment, as well as respecting the rights of tens of millions of law-abiding firearm owners, hunters and recreational sport shooters," NSSF's Bartozzi said. "Likewise, we know President Trump appreciates the hundreds of thousands of well-paying jobs and the billions of dollars in economic activity the firearm industry brings to America."

Ava Flanell, *SI* contributing editor and owner of Elite Firearms & Training, highlighted President Trump's power, as president, to appoint federal judges. (With the Senate in Republican control for the next two years, at least, this will prove very important.)

"I'm happy to see President Trump won a second term. We have already seen many good judges appointed by him in his first term that have helped



Mark Gore of Black Wing Shooting Center is hopeful the industry can find a level of "stability" in this new market.



overturn unconstitutional rulemaking by the ATF," she said. "More conservative judicial appointments will help ensure the firearm industry can continue thriving because our Second Amendment rights will be protected."

It's not all rosy, though. Bacon, of Southwick, predicts state-level threats will rise.

"President Trump's victory for a second term will alleviate fears of more federal firearm restrictions, but we expect states will continue to push their own restrictions, creating pockets of fear buying," she stated.

One example, Colorado has been a recent hub of activity for anti-

gun/industry forces. Proposition KK, a measure that would impose a 6.5% state tax on the sale of firearms and ammunition, passed with 54.4% of the vote.

CCRKBA's Gottlieb cautioned the fight for our rights isn't over — with anti-gun organizations ready to strike back.

"In this election, the Democrats shot blanks and the voters buried their gun ban agenda," he said. "But ... the fight to defend gun rights is not over and every gun owner who helped win this battle must remember the war on gun rights is ongoing."

#### KEY TO SUCCESS?

"Consistency" was used by Gore above and also

by one of our panelists off record, which will have widespread ramifications of its own.

In this new market, if we can find a sense of consistency — rather than extreme highs or sudden lows — it will foster greater long-term growth. Additionally, this new market will afford

companies the opportunity to drive success through innovation — which will also create new pockets of interest from consumers. **\$1**

What do you think will be the keys to success moving forward? I'd love to hear from you: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com).

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***In this new market, if we can find a sense of consistency — rather than extreme highs or sudden lows — it will foster greater long-term growth.***



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BY BRYAN HENDRICKS

# *Are Lever Guns The New AR-15?*

## **GUNMAKERS RIDING THE CREST OF AN EXCITING TREND**



**As** politicians intensify demands to ban or restrict civilian access to AR-15-style rifles, the public is pivoting to the venerable lever-action rifle.

Driving the shift, manufacturers are modernizing a platform recently considered a relic with tactical trim and

accouterments to accommodate the same accessories shooters use with their modern sporting rifles.

Instead of the log cabin look of American walnut, blued steel and buckhorn sights, modern versions have a “zombie apocalypse” vibe highlighted by synthetic black stocks and factory-equipped Picatinny rails to hang lights, forearm grips, slings and bipods.

Factory-threaded barrels accept suppressors and flash hiders.

Traditional lever guns are renowned for their target acquisition speed through iron sights. It’s why they are still so effective when hunting deer and pigs in forests. Tactical versions equipped with electronic red dot sights are even faster. Levers also bear a lot more firepower than an AR-15 and with a lot more chamberings.





## ADAPTABILITY FINDS FAVOR

It seems preposterous a repeating platform nearly two centuries old competes with a modern semiautomatic one that has dominated the shooting industry for decades — but it's not as implausible as it seems. The lever-action rifle has a storied history as a battle rifle. Its high-capacity tubular magazine gives it formidable firepower.

Some models, like Browning's BLR and Henry's Long Ranger, have tubular magazines to accommodate bottleneck cartridges with Spitzer tips. This level of adaptability finds favor with modern shooters who fear the modern sporting rifle will be legislated or litigated out of the marketplace.

Jeb Burnett, owner of ARMTAC Suppressors of Natural Steps, Ark., believes this fear is misplaced. The AR-15 platform is here to stay. Too many people of all political persuasions own and like them, Burnett said, and any serious effort to ban AR-15s would face too many legal and legislative hurdles.

However, Burnett acknowledges the lever gun is increasingly popular among a younger demographic.

"It was the AR-15 before the AR-15," he stated. "It was fairly ubiquitous in law enforcement. It was the truck gun of choice for a lot of people. It was the carbine everybody went to before the modern sporting rifle."

The lever gun's adaptability and its potential for customization drives its popularity, Burnett added.

"Gun people are weird," he quipped. "We love new, cool [expletive]. We like innovation. We like to buy things that are unique and neat. I think this is driving it more than any gun control aspect of it. Maybe in California or Massachusetts or New York, yeah, but everywhere else, no."

“

**IT SEEMS PREPOSTEROUS  
A REPEATING PLATFORM  
NEARLY TWO CENTURIES  
OLD COMPETES WITH A  
MODERN SEMIAUTOMATIC  
ONE THAT HAS DOMINATED  
THE SHOOTING INDUSTRY  
FOR DECADES — BUT IT'S  
NOT AS IMPLAUSIBLE AS IT  
SEEMS.**

With nearly 24.5 million modern sporting rifles in private circulation, the AR-15 market is probably glutted. Modernized lever guns have all the attributes rifle enthusiasts like, so it's pathfinding its own frontier.

"With the lever-action platform, you're looking at the biggest renaissance and innovation in the firearm industry," Burnett proposed.

"You are seeing a lot more innovation on the lever-action platform with rails, stocks and threaded barrels."

Burnett installed suppressors on three lever-action rifles this September alone. Two were chambered for .45-70 Government and one was .38-55 Winchester.

"A lot of what you're seeing, especially in states that don't allow it [AR-15s], is a high demand for lever guns with threaded barrels," he explained. "You have a lock breech gun that doesn't have the ancillary noise of a semiautomatic action cycling the gun. It's quieter. Its advantage over a bolt-action platform is the follow-up shot is faster. You have the advantage of a repeater but with the fixed breech or lock breech capability of a bolt gun that really shines when used with suppressors."

## STRAIGHT-WALL APPEAL

Adding to its appeal is the fact some states that restricted metallic centerfire cartridges for deer hunting now allow straight-wall centerfire cartridges. Starting in 2024, for example, Arkansas allows straight-wall centerfire cartridges during the dates of its traditional muzzleloader season in mid-October. This sparked an avalanche of sales in Arkansas for lever guns chambered in .357 Rem. Magnum, .44 Rem. Magnum and .45 Colt — and especially .350 Legend and .360 Buckhammer.

"The Picatinny rail, forends with rail sections and adjustable stocks — all that stuff is a carryover from AR-style platform rifles," Burnett quantified. "A significant amount of redesign was done for any of that stuff to work on those platforms. Taking



**HENRY REPEATING ARMS AXE .410 BORE**



Smith & Wesson entered the lever-gun market earlier in 2024 with the Model 1854 Series. The .45 LC model pictured embodies the spirit of modernity with a threaded barrel, M-LOK synthetic forend and XS Sights ghost ring rear sight.

the modern aspect of the AR and putting it on a platform dating back to 1860s is cool and people dig it.”

#### HENRY'S PIVOT

Andy Wickstrom, president of Henry Repeating Arms, said the trend to tactical-style lever guns compelled Anthony Imperato, the company's founder, to expand his vision for the company's future. Henry's tactical X Series runs point in this strategy.

“It wasn't that long ago Henry was mostly known for its brass guns,” he recalled. “Our X Series has been our most popular type classification for a couple of years.”

The challenge for Henry Repeating Arms, according to Wickstrom, is producing a modern lever gun that maintains a traditional look and feel. Because of its prominence in retro pop culture, the lever gun does not incite the same passion as a modern sporting rifle.

Wickstrom contends there is value in maintaining the lever gun's nostalgic identity while keeping it relevant with

contemporary shooters.

“I own ARs and occasionally my kids take them to range, but it's not something I'll carry around and go hunting with,” he noted. “People want something fun they can be proud of and isn't divisive in nature.”

At the same time, Wickstrom conveyed that Henry also recognizes the need to provide an option for gun buyers who want a tactical-style lever gun to serve diverse applications.

“When I see a light on a lever, I think of home defense,” Wickstrom remarked. “There are different accessories you can use in the hunting field, too. Our marketing strategy presents our guns not from an offensive standpoint but to protect our homesteader from bedpost to fencepost.”

Wickstrom is astonished by how effective modern electronic sights are on a lever gun for hunting.

“I have a .45-70 I use most of the time hunting deer here in Wisconsin at 100 yards or less,” he said. “I've always used a Leupold DeltaPoint. When my kids started

hunting, they both wanted 45-70s, too. We sell the mounts for many different varieties of red dots and HALO sights. Our guns are very conducive to that. They're all the same pattern, so they are compatible along different models.”

Wickstrom echoes Jeb Burnett when he says lever guns are ideal for suppressors. The devices work well with low-pressure handgun cartridges for which many lever guns are chambered.

“Right now, the X Gun is our most popular centerfire,” Wickstrom confirmed. “The H012MX, our .357 Magnum X gun, has synthetic furniture and a threaded muzzle so you can put a suppressor on it. If you're running .38 subsonic, running the lever is louder than the shot. It's an amazing thing.”

“

**THE TACTICAL LEVER GUN IS NEW AND FUN AND ITS POTENTIAL IS VAST. SINCE THEY ARE AVAILABLE IN SO MANY DIFFERENT CHAMBERINGS, THEY CARRY A HIGH POTENTIAL FOR REPEAT CUSTOMERS.**

Wickstrom acknowledges synthetic stocks have replaced walnut as the standard. Consequently, Henry uses high-quality materials, which need no upgrade.

“My kids believe wood is a downgrade from synthetic,” he shared. “That isn't tactical, it's just normal. I think there will always



be a place for nice American walnut. However, for anybody who has had a wood stock crack, it doesn't happen with a synthetic stock."

He continued, "We don't make ketchup-bottle stocks and forearms. We use glass-filled material that is very, very striking to the eye. It's not light. It's heavier than wood, it's more durable and, of course, it holds accessories."

### MARLIN'S "DARK" RESURGENCE

The tactical market inspired a resurgence in all other lever-action brands, including Marlin, which is now a Ruger brand.

"The Dark Series opened up a new market I don't know we were aware existed," admitted Eric

Lundgren, Marlin's longtime product manager. "Ruger's 'Dark' gun is exactly the gun new consumers of lever guns are looking for."

Marlin's "Dark" stocks are black polymer. The metal is matte black, 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 acquisition, but you can also mount an optic on a factory rail.

Currently, Marlin's Dark Series consists of a Model 1895 and Model 336 (1894 variants are coming soon).

### VAST POTENTIAL

Smith & Wesson's "new" 1854 model is chambered in .44 Rem. Mag. and .45 Colt. The standard version has a black synthetic stock and bead-finished stainless steel barrel. 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.

These adaptations demonstrate how far ahead of its time the lever gun was from its beginning. The tactical lever gun is new and fun and its potential is vast. Since they are available in so many different chamberings, they carry a high potential for repeat customers. **SI**



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# Revisiting Our “DE-EVOLUTION” — And Charting A Way Forward

BY HANK YACEK

Since we have taken a high-level survey of the firearm retail landscape and identified many of its rough spots, dead-end trails and bridges in need of repair in the first two articles of this mini-series, I would like to finish on a note of optimism. Yes, we can chart a forward-looking path for our industry that can potentially fix a lot of the struggles and adversarial relationships we try to navigate.

In my long tenure exploring the firearm retail wilderness, I have seen hopeful moments that attempted to produce a positive move forward for the dynamics of our specific supply chain. Many of these moments have been fleeting, short-term concepts or, in a few cases, new ways of doing business that have persisted and fundamentally made our industry better.

## IT STARTS WITH ONE WORD

Let me define some principles of how this can become a far better industry than it is today.

When able, I will refer to cases where the industry got it

right and where it went wrong. It's my hope to describe a more holistic approach that could significantly improve things — not just based on profitability, but from vastly improved customer satisfaction.

It all starts with one important word: *Collaborate*.

One thing we tend to forget as members of the firearm industry supply chain is we are in the business of customer service. It's the centerpiece of what we do. And it doesn't matter if we manufacture the product, distribute it or place it on the retail shelf. At the end of the day, we're in the business of solving customer problems and delivering solutions in such a way it makes them happy and eager to participate in our industry. When we stay focused on this being our primary goal, many issues become apparent.

All too often in our long history, manufacturers would eagerly (and I don't fault them



for being excited) market a new widget out to the masses and spend significant money to drive customers to the retail shelf, only to end up not having product in the supply chain until many months (and in some cases, years) after the media campaign was launched.

Some manufacturers learned their lesson well and radically changed their business practices to correct this (yes, you, Ruger — well done!) but, unfortunately, this is still the case with many brands. Retailers are frequently the agents who deliver disappointment to eager customers who are, cash in hand, ready to buy the latest-and-greatest new gadget not yet on the retail shelf.

Often, it is the customer who makes the retailer aware the product was announced. So here is our first interaction with the word “collaborate” to move us forward. The devices we walk around with every day in our pockets (I am talking phones, not carry pistols here!) can alert us at a moment’s notice about things important to us.

I regularly opt into many brands’ text alerts, which notify me when they have specials, events or promotions. Why don’t manufacturers utilize the same tools already in widespread use to better connect to their retail partners?

Imagine if a manufacturer texted their partnering retailers to say, *“Industry partners, we are launching a media campaign next weekend about our new pistol. Be ready for customers. Your distributors have product on the way and should be available in the next 48 hours. Stock up and profit!”*

Collaborative communication is the most basic step forward on our path. Let’s get rolling and take our next step of collaboration: *Data sharing.*

## DATA SHARING

We are deeply entrenched in what is typically called a “push supply chain.” To put it another way, our inventory system operates

from a manufacturer-down concept, which can simply be described as a *“Hey everyone, here’s what we made this month. Go sell it!”*

This mindset has the manufacturer, arguably the least connected entity to the consumer, making all the decisions on what they *think* the customer wants. The result? Excesses of unwanted items, while having in-demand items in short supply (again disappointing customers when they can’t find what they want). This model usually creates headaches for every rung of the supply chain because they have valuable cash tied up in unwanted or excess inventory.

## One thing we tend to forget is we are in the business of customer service. It’s the centerpiece of what we do.



Why not instead flip the process around and live in a pull supply chain? A pull supply chain puts the customer first and lets them dictate — through sales data visibility — what to manufacture. This reverses *“Here is what we made, go sell it”* to *“Here is what we need, go make more.”*

There are multiple sources of retail data available to every entity in our industry. GearFire’s RetailBI, NASGW’s SCOPE, GunBroker’s Analytics Tool, and the list goes on. Yet only a small fraction of businesses use this incredibly valuable data to make decisions that would vastly improve the supply chain.

## PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The next waypoint of our collaboration journey is *product development.*

You might hear the following quite regularly: “I wish someone would make this!” or “Why aren’t they making this rifle yet?” The supply chain is habitually at the mercy of manufacturers, designers and engineers to make decisions around product development based on best guesses of consumer demand, coupled with long development cycles.

A while back, I was part of a research team that looked at what are known as SMUs or “Special Make-Ups” in our industry. This is the fancy term for “limited edition” or “short production run” items. When looking at the history, roughly two-thirds of every SMU brought to life fails to produce real profits for the supply chain.

This is usually tied to some well-intended individuals at a manufacturer or distributor board room thinking, “Hey, I have a neat idea that I think will sell” and they then run off to the factory and make a couple thousand of these units with the hope it will sell through quickly. However, they find out the consumer really doesn’t like it for some intangible reason.

At the end of the sales cycle, no one really knows why it didn’t speak to the consumer — so they go back to the drawing board (with limited learning in the process), and try again with another high probability of failure. Over time, manufacturers become gun-shy to produce more of these items as history dictates they will more than likely fail.

In the landscape of modern retail, this can easily be fixed and result in a far more agile, profitable and customer-centric supply chain. This solution is known as “pre-selling.”

Many industries — from video games, pop-culture products or even entities like Kickstarter — all clearly prove pre-conceptualization and pre-selling of products is a

common and well-accepted form of retail today. In essence, products are presented to the consumer *before* they're manufactured. It tests the waters to see if the consumer really wants it and allows for agile ideation to modify a potential product to adapt to the consumer's desires.

A pre-sale approach also creates an immediate pass-through of the products. Once manufactured, every single unit of the product is pre-sold. I could write an entire article on this concept alone. (And if you think I should, let the editor know.)

The centerpiece here: Should this pre-sale fail to close enough sales, it never goes to production. The only cost and risk were the conceptualization and marketing of the item. This allows the consumer to give feedback such as, "I would have bought it if you had just changed XYZ." The company can then regroup, make adjustments and push this new (accepted) concept out to the masses.

As a result, the company has closer connections with consumers, and this system allows vastly faster ideation and minimizes the financial risks of making SMUs. By using this go-to-market strategy we can bring better alignment with the entire supply chain while making the customer feel like they have a say.

### FUMBLE AT THE GOAL LINE

So, where is the downside? Once we have all these wonderful products being manufactured, how do they get into the hands of the consumer in a truly efficient and customer-centric way? Now, readers, is our next leg of the collaboration expedition: *The customer experience*.

All too often a scenario plays out where a customer heads to a local gun store to find a very specific product hoping to find it in-stock, only to be disappointed they do not have it. They then gallivant all over town hoping to find it at another local store. Four stops later and still no luck so they head home, disappointed and hop online, navigating the vast internet — finally finding it on the manufacturer's website.

Scenarios like this cut the local retailer out of the loop, losing the sale along the way. It creates an adversarial relationship between the manufacturer and the retailer, as the manufacturer is also the competition. There's a better way.

### PARTNERSHIP & TRANSPARENCY

Remember at the beginning of this article I stated we're in the business of customer service — and with it comes customer satisfaction. All along this journey, we have done nothing to make it more enjoyable, easier or satisfying to our customer base.

**What is this  
'better way?'**  
**It's when  
manufacturers,  
distributors and  
retailers work  
together on a  
common goal.**



The key to this is that through trust, alignment and common goals, we can make our industry as fluid, seamless and customer-centric as possible. So, what is this "better way?" It's when manufacturers, distributors and retailers work *together* on a common goal. The goal? To get products into the customers' hands as quickly and easily as possible.

We're not inventing the wheel here. Other industries already do this through strategic partnerships, process transparency and inventory visibility throughout the entire supply chain.

Nordica, a manufacturer of skis, is a great example. Instead of trying

to build competency in implementing a direct-to-consumer platform and cutting out their retailers, they chose instead to focus on what they do best — making skis. Though their website draws significant traffic to entice customers, they made the decision to leave the management of the sales cycle to their strategic retail partners.

What Nordica (and many other manufacturers of winter sports products) has done is help retailers close more sales. This is accomplished by funneling sales to their partnered retailers and leveraging them to be their fulfillment partners to either deliver the product in their stores or ship the product to the end user. This system creates alignment of the supply chain and has retailers seeing manufacturers as partners, not competition.

Not only does this create a healthier supply chain for Nordica's retailers but even more importantly it gets the products into the consumer's hands faster. And the result is a happier customer in the process!

### STEPPING OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

Every single example I have given here can be accomplished today with existing technology. If only we could collectively step outside of our comfort zone and adopt better ways of doing business other industries are already doing — and doing successfully.

We often worry about how we are losing customers over time. Part of it has to do with clinging too tightly to old ways of doing business that no longer satisfy the expectations of the modern customer. These "old ways" have served us in the past, but to truly grow our customer base, maintain profitability and create a supply chain aligned with the needs of our customers the time to change is now!

I can clearly see the industry could be at the end of the trail. We just need to take those brave next few steps, creating a better one as a result. **SI**





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By Carolee Anita Boyles

# PUTTING “FUN” IN GUNS



**S**elling firearms — or running a range — is serious business.

Fail to do even one bit of paperwork correctly, leave an *I* undotted or a *T* uncrossed, and it could land you in a world of hurt.

While you're taking your business seriously, have some levity with what's on the shelves. Alongside core products — such as guns, ammo and hunting gear — stock some inventory that's purely just for fun.

## CAMP CO

One company with a wide array of fun products for gun stores and shooting

ranges is CampCo. Founded by Motti Slodowitz in 1991, CampCo has a 25-year history of manufacturing items with a sense of humor as well as a strong inventory of mainstream shooting and tactical gear.

Emily Osorio, purchasing director for CampCo, said Slodowitz is the brains behind all the company's “fun” products. They include barware and kitchen products, toys,



puzzles and pillows styled like various firearms.

For the kitchen, CampCo has a range of products including cookie cutters in the shapes of an Uzi, a .50-caliber bullet, a revolver and a hand grenade, as well as egg rings for fried eggs in the shapes of a 1911 pistol and a revolver. Other kitchen novelties include a 50-caliber fork for cooking hot dogs over coals, red and yellow plastic hand grenade condiment dispensers and shotgun shell salt and pepper sets.

Slodowitz's ingenuity doesn't stop in the kitchen. Have an itchy back? CampCo has a .50-caliber back scratcher to scratch it.

Or maybe you have a customer who wants his gun-themed décor to extend throughout the house. Perhaps he'd like a revolver toilet paper holder filled with bullet-printed toilet paper or a revolver-cylinder penholder for his desk.

Then there are the pillows. Shaped like rifles, revolvers, pistols and a Tavor rifle, they're big

enough for sleeping or adding a "gunny" touch to the living room.

The really fun stuff, though, is for the game room. CampCo has four firearms models made of Lego-style building blocks: a sniper rifle, machine gun, shotgun and a pistol. If your customer is more of a puzzle guy, CampCo offers wooden puzzles in two styles of rubber-band guns, six 3D knives, a revolver and a shotgun.



## WHILE YOU'RE TAKING YOUR BUSINESS SERIOUSLY, HAVE SOME LEVITY WITH WHAT'S ON THE SHELVES.

Osorio noted both the building blocks and wooden puzzles — which come with instructions — are big sellers for the company. "If the customer loses their copy, we can send them a PDF," she stated. "Our mugs are good sellers also."

Mugs come shaped like grenades, with brass knuckle and pistol handles, and shaped like shotgun shells.

The most popular category of their novelty items, according to Osorio, is barware, which includes shot glasses modeled after

.50-caliber rounds, shotgun shells and revolvers.

"Don't overlook the tactical stockings for Christmas," she added. "Those are seasonal, but they're very popular at Christmastime."

And there's always the Gatling gun bubble maker for outside during the warm months of the year.

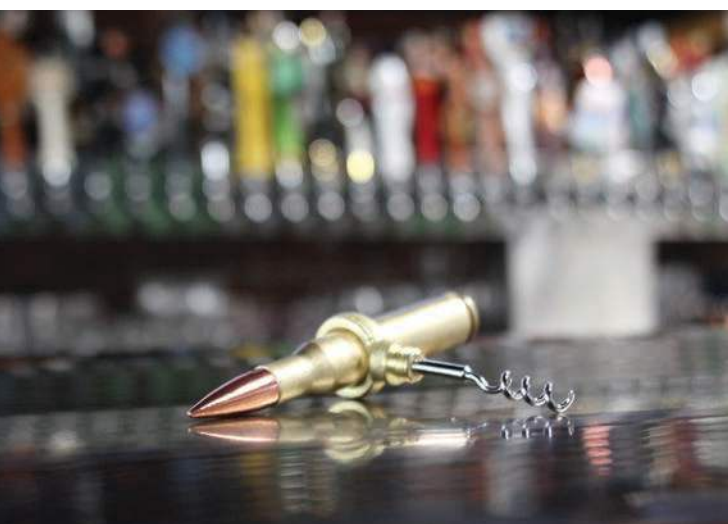
### GUNFUN SHOOTING TARGETS

Changing gears to products for shooting ranges, GunFun Shooting Targets provides enough different paper targets and shooting games to keep anyone entertained on the range. Originally a printing company, GunFun utilizes fluorescent inks and bright white paper to produce eye-popping targets that make shots easy to see.

Targets range in size from 9.5"x12" up to 35"x45". Categories include animals with vital organs, blacklight targets, weird creatures and, of course, we can't forget zombies.

One category of targets, "Games," mimics old-style games you'd find at a carnival or circus. Shooters can take aim at tree rats (squirrels), cornhole bags and a target, bowling pins, dart boards, cards in a deck, pool balls, sharks or the broad side of a barn. Another category, "Holidays," has themed Valentine's, Halloween, Christmas and birthday targets.

For the more serious shooter, GunFun also has traditional silhouette and qualification targets, as well as targets for IDPA, IPSC and USPSA. They also produce plastic and cardboard hangers in a variety of configurations.



Whether it's the Caliber Gourmet Revolver Pillow or the .50 Caliber Bullet Corkscrew, CampCo has a variety of decorative options for enthusiasts. With Christmas just days away, one last push for fun, unique add-on items could result in additional profits for you.

## PARRIS MANUFACTURING COMPANY

Parris Manufacturing Company's line of toys actually began with producing training rifles for the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy in World War II. At the start of the war, when draftees were being sent to training camps, there weren't enough rifles available to train them. Parris Manufacturing

was already experienced in woodworking, so the Department of Defense asked them to produce more than 2 million wooden dummy training rifles for training draftees until enough real rifles could be manufactured.

After WWII ended, the company switched from making dummy rifles to producing toy rifles and pistols, including frontier

and cowboy pistols and rifles. All of the replicas in the line are based on historical firearms, including those used by frontiersmen and those used during the American Revolution.

In 2019, Parris Manufacturing rebranded as Parris Toys but maintained its focus on replica toy guns. Besides replica firearms, Parris Toys also makes a Galactic series of futuristic guns, as well as cowboy hats, targets, toy law enforcement badges, bow and arrow sets and other classic wooden toys such as a walking-stick duck and bear, a stick horse and a dolphin pull toy.

Aaron Smith is the toy buyer at Farm King, which keeps its six stores across Illinois and Iowa stocked with a healthy inventory from Parris Toys. Smith shared their toys are quite popular with customers.

"They're replicas so a lot of them look very realistic, but of course with the orange tips to indicate they're toys," he said. "And they make a lot of noise, so they're popular with little kids."

According to Smith, what Farm King sells the most of is replacement caps.

"We sell a ton of those," he noted. "People buy the toys, and the kids use them over and over again. So, they're toys that are really being used. They aren't toys that are under the tree and then the day after Christmas it's forgotten."

These are the same cap guns those of us who are in our 60s and 70s played with when we were kids.

"Most of the other toy guns in the market are

electronic," Smith observed. "They make sounds or they shoot darts or something like that. These are the old-fashioned cap guns. They're noisemakers."



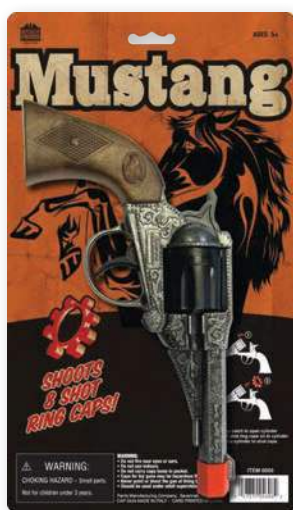
**WHILE FOLLOWING THE RULES, HAVE SOME FUN WITH YOUR INVENTORY. THIS WILL DRIVE DOLLARS TOWARD THE BOTTOM LINE AND PUT A SMILE ON YOUR CUSTOMERS' FACES AT THE SAME TIME.**

### MIXING IN FUN

Take your business seriously and be sure you do all your paperwork and follow all ATF's regulations.

But while following the rules, have some fun with your inventory. This will drive dollars toward the bottom line and put a smile on your customers' faces at the same time. **SI**

For more info:  
[CampCo.com](http://CampCo.com)  
[GunFun.com](http://GunFun.com)  
[ParrisToys.com](http://ParrisToys.com)



**Top:** Grill masters will appreciate CampCo's collection of BBQ aprons, grilling multi-tools and Combat Condiment Dispensers (pictured). **Bottom:** Parris Manufacturing Company has a wide variety of products that would appeal to parents who want to introduce their children to the "fun" side of the shooting sports, with the Cowgirl Holster Set and Mustang eight-shot action cap as options.



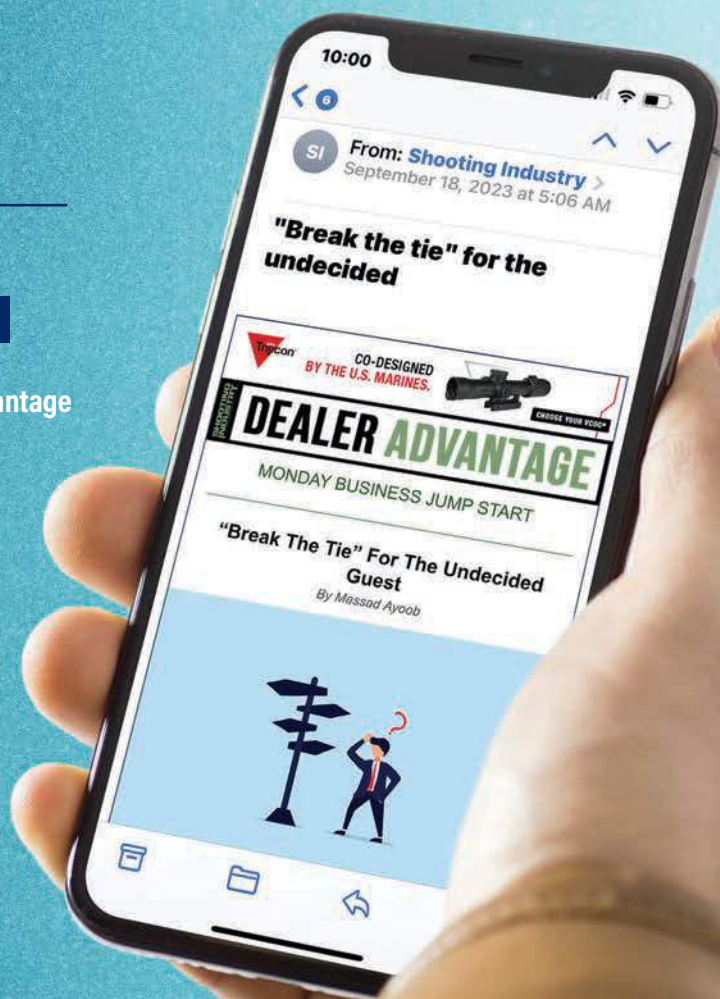
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**SHOOTING  
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BY DOUG VANDERWOUDE

# IRON SHARPENS IRON

## PERFORMANCE 20 GROUPS SPUR BUSINESSES FORWARD

**W**hen I owned my store/ range, the second-best business decision I ever made was joining a Performance 20 (P20) Group. The first? Well, that would be selling my facility. (I'm joking, of course.)

A P20 Group is a collection of like-minded business owners who get together to improve their business practices. The firearms model migrated over from the auto industry. Although it's called a "Performance 20 Group," there are often five to 12 members per group in the firearms industry.

### ORIGINS

The first firearms P20 Group was launched in 2006 by Richard Sprague, owner of Sprague's Sports in Yuma, Ariz., and Miles Hall, then-owner of

H&H Shooting Sports in Oklahoma City. This original group is still meeting. Previously, Sprague was in a P20 Group in the auto industry, as his other business venture sells truck caps and accessories.

Experiencing the benefits of being in a P20 Group, Sprague decided to reach out to some other owners on the firearms side about starting one. Sprague and Hall contacted other business owners they perceived as being good operators (somehow, I passed the sniff test and was a founding member of this group), and held an informal get-together at the 2007 SHOT Show in Orlando, Fla.

### NUTS & BOLTS

Most P20 Groups meet twice a year (in person) and submit quarterly reports to receive a breakdown at the end of each quarter. Each group has a moderator familiar with successful business metrics to keep the group discussions on point and moving along. (Contact information for two of them is at the end of this article.)

Each quarterly report is large and divides each business into sizable segments. They are then broken down into categories covering everything from general business overhead and range usage to more detailed inventory and line-item data.

**“**  
**BASED ON WHAT I'VE LEARNED IN MY P20 GROUP, I'VE CHANGED THE WAY WE LOOK AT MARKETING, ADDED NEW SUPPLIERS AND EVEN CHANGED HOW I REWARD EMPLOYEES.”**

**Jeanelle Westrom • Owner**  
Davenport Guns • Davenport, Iowa

These metrics are displayed with each member's figures across the pages of the report. A store's position on each page (left to right) changes by its performance numbers for a particular metric. For example, if your store is on the left side of a page, you're doing better than the group average; if you're on the right, you're behind the group average in a



particular area.

Seeing everyone's numbers on one page really puts everything in the open. Although at times it's painful to see where you land, it offers opportunities to discuss ways to improve your performance in a particular category with the group. For example, Hall was doing much better than I was in holsters. I could see his numbers and get details from him on how he excelled — and then implement them. When the next report came out, I could see if my store had improved.

### WHAT DO YOU GAIN?

The impact of being in a P20 Group was monumental for me: I went from being a gun peddler to a businessman. Before being part of a P20, I was all about the top-line number — how many guns could we sell, what kind of advertising and great promotions could we execute, etc. I was a prime example of shoveling the coal and not steering the ship.

Being in a P20 Group forces you to slow down and look at your business from a 30,000-foot view. I'll never forget looking at the numbers before the first meeting. One of the reports breaks down the percentage of sales dollars versus the percentage of inventory

dollars per category — the closer these two percentages are, the better you're managing your inventory dollars.

The first report showed 33% of my \$800,000 in inventory was tied up in handguns, which were 35% of my sales dollars. Looking at this alone, I thought I had a good handle on my inventory dollars. However, it changed drastically when I got to the shotgun category — which was 10.8% of my inventory and *under 1.7%* of my sales. It doesn't take an inventory specialist to understand how messed up that was.

Jeanelle Westrom, owner of Davenport Guns in Davenport, Iowa, had this to say about her membership in a P20 Group.

"After sitting in multiple meetings with others involved in a P20 group over the years and hearing about how beneficial it was to them, I jumped at the opportunity to join the group Dick Abramson and the USCCA were starting," she recalled. "Everyone involved is successful in their own right. The benefit of having a group of folks across the country to access when issues arise is priceless. Based on what I've learned in my P20 Group, I've changed the way we look at marketing, added new suppliers and even changed how I reward employees."

Another significant advantage I found in being in a P20 Group is the discussions outside of the actual meetings, which were centered on problems and issues I was dealing with in my business. These conversations tended to be much deeper, focusing on profit margin, inventory turns, engaging employees or conversion rates.

An additional benefit — relating to what Westrom observed above — is you have access to the other P20 Group members year-round. Problem-solving an issue? Call your fellow members and learn how they handled it. Unsure if a supplier is giving you the best price, an insurance provider is making you jump through more hoops, employees requesting new benefits or need direction on which buy group is best for you? Answers to all are available from successful peers.

“

**WE DRIVE  
SUBSTANTIAL  
VALUE IN HAVING  
THIS GROUP OF  
PEERS IN OUR  
INDUSTRY WE  
CAN LEAN ON  
FOR ADVICE,  
EXPERTISE AND  
EXPERIENCE.”**

Mark Gore • President & Co-Owner  
Black Wing Shooting Center • Delaware, Ohio

### THE OTHER SIDE

It can't all be good, though, can it? Well, there is a lot of work involved in getting the reporting together four times a year. Each member must configure their reports exactly to the group's particular formula, which can be very time-consuming. The struggle



P20 Groups aren't a new concept in the industry — but there's a strong case they should be more widespread. *SI* Editor Jade Moldae was able to sit in on a discussion held at P2K Range in El Cajon, Calif., March 2013. Here, Johnny Dury of Dury's Gun Shop leads a session with fellow group members on some of his store's best practices. (Image: Jade Moldae)



Jeff Poet of Jay's Sporting Goods noted joining a P20 Group has had a profound impact on how he runs his operation. "We have gained a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of our business metrics," he said.

of reporting coincides with how easy it is to get the data out of your POS (Point of Sunshine) system. Some, like Axis, are set up with the reporting mimicking much of what a P20 Group requires already. Other systems will take more effort.

In order to have productive discussions, all members need to report all figures accurately and timely. Nothing can sink a group faster than not having accurate, timely reporting. This gives pause to some wanting to join, as they're not willing to share their true numbers. I will say, it is a little nerve-racking knowing everyone in the group is seeing your numbers — it's kind of like sitting around with your friends in your underwear. But, vulnerability is one piece that binds the group together.

Besides reporting, there's a time and cost commitment. Ownership is required to attend two on-site meetings annually, usually held at one of the

member's locations or at the site of a strategic partner in the industry.

The on-site meetings are extremely valuable, especially when you are the host facility. Hosting a meeting is similar to having a board of directors tour your operation (with all the stress as well) and do a deep dive on your business. Fellow members will interview key members of your staff for insight, examine departments and look over your processes. Your P20 Group members are your peers — you all own successful businesses in your industry, providing unfiltered feedback. Think of how much expense would be incurred just to get these experts on-site.

Mark Gore, president and co-owner

## “SIMPLY, JOINING A P20 GROUP IS ONE OF THE BEST BUSINESS DECISIONS WE’VE EVER MADE.”

Jeff Poet • President  
Jay's Sporting Goods • Michigan

of Black Wing Shooting Center in Delaware, Ohio, has been a member of the industry's original P20 Group with Sprague for almost two decades. He shared the value membership in such a group brings to his operation.

"On top of sharing detailed financial information and best practices, we drive substantial value in having this group of peers in our industry we can lean on for advice, expertise and experience," he said. "When we run into difficult situations or have a big decision to make, we have a quasi board of directors we can ask for guidance."

### WORTH EXPLORING?

Jeff and JJ Poet from the legendary Jay's Sporting Goods in Michigan (with

two locations, each 90,000 sq. ft.) joined a P20 Group after 45 years in business. Jeff shared the impact it has had on his store.

"Few things have had more of a positive impact on our overall operation and bottom line than joining a P20 group," he stated. "We have gained a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of our business metrics, which allow us to identify problem areas that had historically gone undetected or overlooked."

He continued, "This new perspective has prompted improved strategy development as well as implementation which has significantly improved our decision-making, execution and profitability."

It turns out, meeting with some of the best minds in the industry sharpens everyone's business acumen.

"Most importantly, the exposure to and collaboration with some of the top-performing retailers in our industry has positively influenced our performance by providing a level of accountability previously missing at a peer level for Jay's Sporting Goods," Jeff said. "Simply, joining a P20 Group is one of the best business decisions we've ever made."

### HEAR MORE AT SHOT SHOW

If a business as successful as the Poet's can experience that much benefit, don't you think joining a P20 Group is worth exploring?

To that end, don't miss the P20 Group presentation at SHOT Show, featuring a panel discussion with many of the P20 Group members quoted in this story, moderated by Richard Abramson on Tuesday, Jan 21st from 9:30–10:30 a.m. (More info is available at [shotshow.org/shot-university](http://shotshow.org/shot-university).)

You can also reach out to Jim Barndt of NCM Associates ([jbarndt@ncmassociates.com](mailto:jbarndt@ncmassociates.com)). Barndt is the current moderator of Richard Sprague's group and will have a booth at SHOT Show. Abramson and I are always willing to field questions. You can contact us at [richard@profiturbine.com](mailto:richard@profiturbine.com) and [doug@range-systems.com](mailto:doug@range-systems.com), respectively. **ST**





# MENTAL HEALTH: IT'S OK TO TALK ABOUT IT.

Everyone struggles sometimes.  
Sometimes we need help.  
And that's okay!

As firearms owners, we often have a tough time admitting when we need help, and that is particularly true with our psychological struggles. One great way to check in on yourself and your mental state is to take a free and anonymous screening.

Walk the Talk America is made up of gun people who want to help other gun people while protecting our rights.

Take a free & anonymous screening  
at [WTTA.org/LOVE](https://WTTA.org/LOVE)



Follow us [@walkthetalkus](https://@walkthetalkus)  
Learn more at [WTTA.org](https://WTTA.org)



Fort Valley State University students identify their dominant eye — setting them up for success at the target shooting range as part of their Academics Afield program experience. (Image: Josh Smith / Academics Afield)

BY CINDY SANDOVAL

# A Collegiate R3 Success Story

## Academics Afield Program Builds Hunting Communities, Increases Outdoor Access

**C**ollege is often a time of self-discovery, and many students seek out new experiences through campus clubs, studying abroad and trying new activities.

Academics Afield is a college learn-to-hunt program created by the

Georgia Wildlife Federation in 2019 that aims to introduce students to shooting sports, hunting and a better understanding of conservation. Supported in part through multistate grant funds administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), this initiative is introducing hundreds of young adults to hunting, including students at five Historically Black

Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the Southeast.

According to the 2022 National Survey on Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, 14.4 million Americans participated in hunting in 2022. Of those, 1.5 million identified as African American.

“With almost 20 million college students across the country, these diverse networks offer an opportunity to create and welcome non-traditional hunters [who] are not familiar with hunting culture or may not pursue hunting due to lack of knowledge, access or social support,” said Breanna Bashford, Georgia R3 coordinator with the Georgia R3 Initiative. “Research on college students shows many of them are at a point in their lives where they are

creating their identities, they are figuring out who they are, what they want to do, how they want to spend their time and they are very open to trying new things like hunting.”

### REACHING UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

After beginning at two Georgia colleges in 2019, multistate grants allowed the Academics Afield program to expand to universities in North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas.

The program now includes HBCUs Alabama A&M University, Albany State University, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Fort Valley State University and Tuskegee University. The original program workshops at the two founding universities featured diverse groups



of students, with over half of the participants being female and 29% identifying as minority students.

"We were reaching a diverse audience through the program, but we asked what we could do to further bolster participation with underserved communities," noted Bashford. "With this in mind, we used multistate grant funding to expand among HBCUs and foster learn-to-hunt communities in these institutions."

Bashford points out Academics Afield is a resource and framework for colleges, but a large part of the program's success is flexibility and acknowledging different groups have different barriers to entry for hunting and target shooting. Prior to establishing programs at HBCUs, students completed a beliefs and values survey to enhance implementation and understand student barriers to hunting and other outdoor pursuits.

Of the 700 HBCU students surveyed, 72% had never been hunting

and over 50% of students did not feel welcome by the hunting community. At Fort Valley State University, a land grant institution as well as an HBCU, Dr. Oreta Samples helped lead the effort to bring Academics Afield to campus.

"I think many of our students joined the program out of curiosity; they were not familiar with hunting or shooting sports and wanted to learn more," said Samples. "After the mentor-led target shooting lesson, I think many students started to envision themselves as potential hunters and shooting sport participants; they learned the basics and are excited to continue to learn more."

#### EMPHASIS ON MENTORSHIP

Along with mentor-led trips to the range, Fort Valley State University students participate in a variety of activities through their campus Academics Afield program. During the yearlong program, students learn curriculum about wildlife biology, hunting strategy, firearm training

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**After the mentor-led target shooting lesson, I think many students started to envision themselves as potential hunters and shooting sport participants.”**

**Dr. Oreta Samples**  
*Fort Valley State University*

and animal processing. Students also come together for a wild-game meal after a mentored hunt.

The program model aims to generate peer-based mentoring and help students develop the confidence to continue hunting into the future. In addition to increasing confidence in outdoor pursuits, the program also builds a better understanding of how hunters contribute to conservation and resource stewardship.

"Our administration was very supportive of this course and creating a hunting community on campus for students," added Samples, whose university work focuses on public health. "Along with creating an avenue for students to experience hunting, the program can also build a better understanding of elements

like wildlife management and ecology that support student learning and explore the 'one health concept' — our health is tied to the health of our environment."

#### A LINK BETWEEN HUNTING & CONSERVATION

Academics Afield efforts are part of a growing R3 community working on Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation to combat the declining number of active hunters across the country. R3 programs, workshops and courses work to reverse this trend.

"Hunting and conservation are inherently linked," Bashford explained. "They are linked through our existing funding models with hunter license sales and federal excise taxes on sporting arms and ammunition funding fish and wildlife agency conservation work, and they are linked through the deep connections hunters gain with nature."

For Bashford, this program is a way to build this connection and welcome new hunters to a lifelong passion for nature and outdoor pursuits.

To learn more about Academics Afield and creating a collegiate hunting community, visit the R3 Practitioner's Guide: [gwf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GWF\\_AA\\_PractitionerGuide\\_Digital\\_020124.pdf](https://www.gwf.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GWF_AA_PractitionerGuide_Digital_020124.pdf). **SI**

**Editor's Note:** This feature is courtesy of Cindy Sandoval, communications specialist for the USFWS Office of Conservation Investment.



Academics Afield participants prepare for the start of an early-morning dove hunt. (Image: Josh Smith / Academics Afield)





◀ If SHOT Show could be summarized using one image, this one would be difficult to beat. With more than 100,000 products on display from 2,700+ exhibitors, dealers can get their hands on just about any product imaginable. (Image: NSSF)

With more than 816,000 net square feet — equivalent to 18+ acres or enough space to fit 547 F-16 fighter jets — the SHOT Show is the largest event held at The Venetian Expo, third largest trade show in Las Vegas and eighth largest trade show in the U.S. This mega trade show continues to deliver for both buyers and exhibitors alike.

Coincidentally, Inauguration Day will be held a day prior to the opening of SHOT Show, and it's likely there will be more than a few celebratory high-fives and fist bumps from those reveling in what a second Trump presidency could do for our industry.

#### EVENTS OF "SHOT WEEK"

While SHOT Show's official dates are Jan. 21–24, 2025, its presence in Las Vegas informally begins Sunday, Jan. 19, with the seventh annual NSSF/HAVA Golf Classic held at Bear's Best Las Vegas. This charity event raises money for Honored American Veterans Afield (HAVA), an industry-run

# SHOT SHOW 2025 PREVIEW

## More Records Poised To Fall During Industry's Premier Event

By Jade Moldae

**J**ust weeks away now, the 2025 SHOT Show is returning to The Venetian Expo and Caesars

Forum in Las Vegas Jan. 21–24. Owned and sponsored by NSSF, the 47th SHOT Show will be its biggest one yet.

If this sounds familiar, it's because some variant of this phrase has been used in each of *Shooting Industry's* SHOT Show previews since the expansion to Caesars Forum in 2022. SHOT Show 2025 will feature more than 2,700 exhibitors, up from 2,500 in 2024.



▲ The addition of the Caesars Forum in 2022 helped to ease overcrowding in The Venetian Expo. (Image: NSSF)



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**With all these new exhibitors, it's an opportunity at the beginning of the year for buyers to make fresh connections and kick-start 2025 orders.”**

MELISSA SCHILLING • MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS • NSSF

organization that helps the healing and reintegration of disabled combat veterans back into normal life through participation in hunting and shooting sports.

“This event is one of HAVA's major fundraising initiatives. It also gives the industry a chance to get together prior to the craziness of SHOT Show and have a wonderful day, while supporting our disabled veterans,” said Tom Taylor, HAVA founder and executive director. “We're once again sold out and sincerely appreciate the incredible support HAVA gets from the industry.”

Monday, Jan. 20 features the start of two landmark events: Industry Day At The Range (at the Boulder City Rifle & Pistol Club) and the Supplier Showcase (the Venetian Fifth Floor Palazzo Ballroom).

Held 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m., Industry Day At The Range affords buyers and members of the media a chance to see new-for-2025 products from dozens of exhibiting manufacturers. There are shooting lanes for all types of firearms, as well as tents set up for non-firearms exhibitors and other product demonstrations.

First launched in 2017, the Supplier Showcase has proven a very popular addition to SHOT Week

— evidenced by its rising footprint. In 2017, more than 260 material suppliers exhibited at the Showcase. There will be more than 500 participating in the two-day event in 2025.

The Supplier Showcase has slightly differing operating hours from The Venetian Expo Levels 1 and 2, running 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. on Monday, and 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m. on Tuesday.

## NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

In an *SI* article published last December promoting the 2024 SHOT Show, NSSF Senior VP and Chief Customer Officer Chris Dolnack noted attendees had listed “networking” as one of the most influential aspects of SHOT Show.

“In our post-show research, ‘networking’ has consistently ranked higher and higher. It was in the top five, it's now in the top three. If this is what the customers want, then we need to deliver it,” Dolnack said at the time.

Three marquee events returning in 2025 are the All Star Jam Concert, Industry Networking Reception and Industry Happy Hour. They all have the same purpose in mind, according to NSSF Managing Director, Exhibitions & Events Melissa Schilling.

“SHOT Show attendees will have three fantastic opportunities to network directly after the closing of the show Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening,” Schilling said. “Networking experiences, like the All Star Jam Concert and happy hours, are what attendees and exhibitors continue to ask for. We've listened, and have made it very convenient for

everyone with these venues right after the close of the show.”

Held 5:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. the opening night of SHOT Show, the All Star Jam Concert represents a significant networking event that's early enough for attendees to partake in right after the show closes, but not too late for it to be the only networking event of the evening for those desiring to do more.

The other two networking events, Industry Networking Reception and Industry Happy Hour, will be Wednesday and Thursday, respectively, 5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.

SHOT After Dark will once again be an event option, giving nightly opportunities for attendees to mix with colleagues at various venues in Las Vegas later in the evening (separate fees apply). Upgrades, such as open bar packages, are also available.

A new avenue for networking and company team building, Vegas Unlocked, is available through the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority. A “show your badge and save” initiative, Vegas Unlocked will give 2025 SHOT Show badge holders access to discounts on dining, entertainment, attractions, tours and more.

## EDUCATION FOCUS

SHOT University returns for a full slate of events Tuesday–Thursday during SHOT Week. For added convenience, each session will be held in the Murano Ballroom, Level 3 of The Venetian Expo.

There are 18 à la carte training course available on a range of topics, including: a guide to maximizing sales



with suppressors; the merits of adding a credentialed gunsmith to your business; harnessing AI for retail success; unlocking loyalty through memberships and more. Prices on the courses vary, \$40 for NSSF members, \$75 for non-members.

(One of the planned sessions at SHOT University explores the value of Performance Groups. Doug VanderWoude's feature earlier in this issue ["Iron Sharpens Iron," pp. 42–44] serves as a preview of how these groups refine even the most successful businesses in our industry.)

The law enforcement community — which continues to be one of the fastest-growing segments of the SHOT Show — has educational resources of its own during SHOT Week.

*Shooting Industry's* sister publication *American COP* has partnered with NSSF for the second year in a row to sponsor the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP).

This year's LEEP lineup has 14 classes for law enforcement professionals to attend. Each session provides insights for real world, on-scene applications of various technology and training methods. A one-time fee of \$45 provides access to all 2025 LEEP courses for those who qualify.

*American COP* Editor Erick Gelhaus is hosting a session titled "Trends In Law Enforcement Training," which will be held Wednesday, Jan. 22 from 1:30–3 p.m. in the Lido Ballroom 3004-3006.

Schilling shared NSSF partnered with MILO for a special LEEP session taking place Thursday, Jan. 23 from 8 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Officers will be able to experience live-fire training using a MILO Laser Simulator.

"LEEP participants will be able to take what they've learned from classroom sessions and use them in a scenario-based training

in the MILO Laser Simulator," she said.

To elevate international business, SHOT Show is presenting four export training sessions (also available à la carte) Tuesday, Jan. 21 and Wednesday, Jan. 22. These 90-minute sessions will help current and prospective exporters stay compliant and competitive in the international market.

### SHOT SHOW EXTRA RETURNS

After a hiatus, SHOT Show eXtra is returning in 2025. It will be held in a two-day format, Wednesday, Jan. 22 and Thursday, Jan. 23, in the Palazzo Ballroom on the fifth floor of the Venetian Expo — the same venue used for the Supplier Showcase.

"SHOT Show eXtra will follow a similar formula as the Supplier Showcase," Schilling said. "Once the Supplier Showcase concludes Tuesday afternoon, eXtra exhibitors will have a turnkey booth ready to go Wednesday morning to connect with prospective buyers."

According to Schilling, the return of SHOT Show eXtra helps even more companies get off the waiting list. (Prior to the expansion of SHOT Show to the Caesars Forum, the waiting list consisted of literally hundreds of companies.)

The reintegration of SHOT Show eXtra to the 2025 SHOT Show will help buyers discover the next generation of shooting, hunting and outdoor industry companies in one, easy-to-browse floor plan.

"With all these new exhibitors, it's an opportunity at the beginning of the year for buyers to make fresh connections and kick-start 2025 orders," Schilling added.

### CAESARS FORUM'S IMPACT

As mentioned earlier, the 2022 addition of the Caesars



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**The SHOT Show is the largest event held at The Venetian Expo, third largest trade show in Las Vegas and eighth largest trade show in the U.S. This mega trade show continues to deliver for both buyers and exhibitors alike.**



◀ With such an expansive event, NSSF's Melissa Schilling advises attendees to plan — and plan early — to make their show a success. (Image: NSSF)

Forum has magnified the scope of companies and products on display at SHOT Show.

In 2024, the Caesars Forum Academy Ballroom housed the Archery Business Pavilion. It's returning again in 2025 and will feature onsite archery shooting lanes in the ballroom, enabling buyers to examine archery and bowhunting products firsthand.

Outside Caesars Forum, the Great Outdoors Plaza has provided a fresh element to the show. This year, there will be more mobile ranges for buyers to experience live-fire shooting.

"Six mobile ranges will be in the Great Outdoors Plaza in 2025, an increase over 2024," Shilling noted.

The Great Outdoors Plaza will serve as the staging area for each of the networking events Wednesday and Thursday evening directly after the close of the show.

## CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM AUCTION

Just announced, NSSF's Celebration of Freedom Auction features more than 30 bucket-list items consisting of everything from one-of-a-kind firearms to exclusive hunting and shooting experiences.

Among the items up for bid include collectible rifles, once-in-a-lifetime North American and African hunts, the opportunity to build a Savage Arms rifle at Savage's manufacturing facility in Westfield, Mass., a "Richard Childress Experience" that includes a private tour of the NASCAR Hall of Famer's race shop and a shooting lesson and lunch with four-time Olympic Skeet Gold Medalist Vincent Hancock and more.

"This is up there with the greatest auctions I've ever seen," said Dolnack. "The entire industry rallied together to bring this auction to life to support all that NSSF is doing to ensure a bright future for America's gun owners and the industry that makes exercising our Second Amendment rights possible."

All funds generated from the auction will support NSSF's #GUNVOTE voter registration, education and get-out-the-vote campaign.

The auction is open now through the conclusion of SHOT Show, Jan. 24, 2025.

**For more info: visit [nssf.org/auction](https://nssf.org/auction).**

## SAVE THE DATE(S)

The 2025 SHOT Show will be the 26th SHOT Show held in Las Vegas — more than any other city. Las Vegas has been the continuous home of the SHOT Show since 2010. The 2026 and 2027 dates have already been revealed: the 48th mega trade event will be held Jan. 20–23, 2026, while the 49th will take place Jan. 19–22, 2027, both in Las Vegas.

Less than 50 days remain until the opening of SHOT Show 2025. For those dealers attending, there will literally be thousands of opportunities available. Schilling cautioned against waiting until the last minute to finalize your team's strategy.

"Come up with a game plan of what you want to get out of the show and schedule meetings ahead of time. There are so many tools available a lot of attendees — and even exhibitors — don't take advantage of. So, plan. And plan in advance what you want your SHOT Show experience to look like," she concluded. **SI**

**For more info: [shotshow.org](https://shotshow.org).**



▲ Dealers can hear firsthand from designers, inventors, engineers and even company executives throughout The Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum all week during SHOT Show. (Image: Jade Moldae)

# 2025 *NEW*

# PRODUCT SHOWCASE

By Jenna Buckley

ALL OF THESE PRODUCTS AND MORE ARE  
AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY ONLINE. VISIT:

[SHOOTINGINDUSTRY.COM/CATEGORY/FIRST-LOOK](https://shootingindustry.com/category/first-look)

## SCORES OF NEW PRODUCTS, HOT OFF THE PRESS!

Answering the age-old question, “What’s new?” will be a whole lot easier after you review the first leg of the three-part 2025 New Product Showcase.

Over the next 16 pages, you’ll get to see products from industry mainstays and companies appearing in the pages of *SI* for the first time. From firearms and safety equipment to archery and ammunition, there’s something for every store to consider stocking in the New Year.

Next month, we’ll reconvene for part two of the 2025 New Product Showcase. Until then, we hope you close out the 2024 Business Year on a high note.

(If you’re a manufacturer, wholesaler or importer with a new-for-2025 product, send descriptions and images to [nps25@fmghq.com](mailto:nps25@fmghq.com) for inclusion in the Feb. 2025 issue.)



### HOLOSUN

(909) 594-2888  
[holosun.com](https://holosun.com)

The **DRS-TH** from Holosun is a fusion optic that combines advanced red dot sight technology with thermal imaging capabilities. The optic features a 1024x768 resolution display at 50 fps, enabling users to see clearly in various lighting conditions. The DRS-TH integrates a 256x192 thermal sensor and multiple thermal image palettes, including White Hot and Highlight modes, ensuring unparalleled visibility. With a durable IP67 waterproof rating and a user-friendly design, the DRS-TH also boasts a rechargeable battery life of up to 10 hours, making it a reliable companion for extended outdoor use. Its LED multi-reticle system allows a seamless overlay of thermal imaging on standard visuals, redefining versatility in optics.



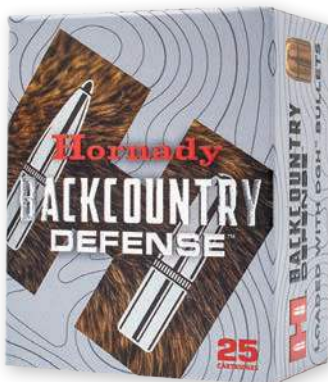
### HERITAGE MFG. CO.

(800) 845-3776  
[heritagemfg.com](https://heritagemfg.com)

From Heritage Mfg. Co., the **COACHWHIP** side-by-side coach gun was designed to transport shooters back to the rugged beauty of the American frontier. Built for close-range versatility, the 12-GA shotgun features 18" barrels with a classic bead sight for quick target acquisition, exposed hammers and double triggers, a break-open action and tang safety, case-hardened frame and a rich walnut stock.

The **BADLANDER FIELD MODELS** line expands with extended 18" barrels available in .410 bore, 12 GA, 20 GA and 28 GA. The extended barrel enhances precision and handling, while the signature black chrome finish provides durability against the elements without sacrificing style. Mounted between the barrels, a brass bead sight sits ready to guide each shot true. Each Badlander Field Model comes with twin triggers and a two-position safety on the tang.





## HORNADY MANUFACTURING

(800) 338-3220  
hornady.com

For 2025, Hornady introduces **338 ARC**, purposely designed for hard-hitting subsonic performance that delivers 1.5 times more energy than the 300 Blackout Subsonic. Engineered for consistent pressure, the 338 ARC provides reliable cycling with both supersonic and subsonic loads. Featuring the 307-grain SUB-X bullet in the Hornady Subsonic line and the 175-grain HP in Hornady BLACK, the 338 ARC represents the ultimate 338 cartridge that fits in AR-15 or micro bolt action.

**BACKCOUNTRY DEFENSE** features the DGH (Dangerous Game Handgun) bullet, providing maximum penetration and no deflection. It is available 9mm Luger+P 138-grain DGH; .357 Mag. 165-grains DGH; 10mm Auto 200-grain DGH; .44 Rem. Mag. 240-grain DGH; .454 Casull 300-grains DGH; .460 S&W Mag. 300-grain DGH; and .500 S&W Mag. 500-grain DGH.

**AEROMATCH** bullets are designed specifically for high-volume competitive shooters. Small batches of 3,000 sequential bullets are available in case quantities featuring six 500-count boxes. Individual 500-count boxes will also be available. Aeromatch is available in .22 cal. 69-grain featuring HPBT profile; .22 cal. 77-grain w/ cannelure featuring HPBT profile; .30 cal. 168-grain featuring HPBT profile; .30 cal. 175-grain featuring HPBT profile; 6mm 105-grain featuring Compound profile; and 6.5mm 140-grain featuring Compound profile.

The **HIGH SPEED 3-IN-1 POWER CASE TRIMMER** brings three case preparation steps into one space-saving tool. The powerful motor spins at 2,000+ RPMs, allowing users to trim, chamfer and deburr in one quick step. The trimmer features a click-adjustable micrometer for precise and consistent trimming. It is compatible with cases from .22 cal. up to .30 cal., and lengths from 1.450" to 3.5".

## STURM, RUGER & CO.

(336) 949-5200  
ruger.com

The **SR1911 "STREET EDITION" SERIES** celebrates Ruger's rich tradition. This first pistol has the 75th anniversary logo and "75 Station St.," the address of where the company's manufacturing began (pictured). The other "Street Edition" SR1911s share common design elements. Each pistol represents its own Ruger facility — "1 Lacey Place" in Southport, Conn.; "411 Sunapee St." in Newport, N.H.; "271 Cardwell Rd." in Mayodan, N.C.; and "200 Ruger Rd." in Prescott, Ariz. Production will be limited to 500 of each model. The Commander-style pistols are chambered in .45 Auto and feature a 4.25" stainless steel barrel. The slide is engraved and also includes the Ruger logo and an American bald eagle.



## STREAMLIGHT INC.

(800) 523-7488  
streamlight.com

The **TLR-1 HL-X USB/TLR-1 HL-X** from Streamlight features a white power LED and a special optic that produces a concentrated beam with optimum peripheral illumination. The new light delivers 1,500 lumens and 20,000 candela over a 283-meter beam distance when using two Streamlight SL-B9 li-ion 850mAh USB-C rechargeable battery packs. Rear switches to the left and right of the trigger guard provide ambidextrous operation, and there are both "High" and "Extended High" actuation switches. Fabricated from 6000 series machined aluminum with a black anodized finish, the TLR-1 HL-X has a switch housing made from impact- and chemical-resistant engineering polymer. It weighs 5.19 oz. using two SL-B9 batteries (4.94 oz. with two CR123A batteries) and is 3.45" long.

The rechargeable **STINGER 2020 S** is duty-ready, featuring 2,000 lumens and a body-mounted switch with intensity mode selector and battery status indicator. Like the original Stinger 2020, it sports an ergonomic flat design that lets users hold the light without losing their grip and features an easy-to-use mode selector switch that eliminates the need to cycle between modes with each use. Run times range from 2 hours on high to 24 hours on low, with a strobe mode that runs for 3.25 hours. The Stinger 2020 S is IPX7-rated and is waterproof to 1 meter for 30 minutes.



TLR-1 HL-X USB/TLR-1 HL-X



STINGER 2020 S



TACLITE 2.0  
8" BOOT

## 5.11 TACTICAL

(866) 451-1726  
511tactical.com

5.11 Tactical's **A/T 8" AR 670-1** boot is built to withstand the rigors of military use or high-impact careers. The boot's AR 670-1 certification coupled with 5.11's signature A.T.L.A.S. (All Terrain Load Assistance System) technology, provides servicemen and women with the confidence of wearing a military-approved boot boasting the cushion and rebound needed to keep feet comfortable and fresh all day long. The boot also features a suede and 1200D nylon upper, Echo Foam high energy return, Force Foam lightweight impact cushioning and an ASTM slip- and oil-resistant rubber outsole.

Available in both a 6" version in desert and black, as well as an 8" version in black, the **TACLITE 2.0 BOOT** is equipped with 5.11's A.T.L.A.S. for enhanced stability, optimal performance and maximum comfort when carrying heavy loads or navigating uneven terrain. Its Ortholite insole is lightweight, breathable and boasts excellent moisture management properties. The 5.11 Echo Lite high-rebound EVA midsole provides support and comfort. Additionally, the Tactlite 2.0 Boots are designed with a durable outsole that offers excellent traction on various surfaces.

The **RANGER 2.0 MID** features a durable suede upper combined with breathable mesh construction that ensures both protection and ventilation. Removable 5.11 A.T.L.A.S. technology offers additional stability and support. The 5.11 Echo Lite high-rebound EVA midsole enhances comfort, reduces fatigue and provides superior shock absorption. The multi-directional rubber outsole delivers exceptional grip and traction on various surfaces, while the Ortholite insole keeps feet cooler and drier during extended wear.



REVEL CLASSIC

## SAVAGE ARMS

(800) 370-0708  
savagearms.com

From Savage Arms, **REVEL CLASSIC** and **REVEL DLX** takedown lever guns bring a fresh perspective to the classic lever-action rimfire rifle. The rifles' lever-action mechanism delivers smooth and reliable cycling, while the crisp trigger ensures precise shot placement. Standout features include quick takedown capability, simple disassembly for cleaning and maintenance, an upgraded contoured walnut stock with intricate stippling and an oversize lever loop for swift, effortless operation. Both REVEL models are available in .22 LR, .22 WMR and .17 HMR.

The **110 MAGPUL SCOUT IS NOW AVAILABLE 5.56 NATO, 6MM ARC, 300 BLACKOUT AND .350 LEGEND**, joining the existing lineup of 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win. and .450 Bushmaster. The 110 Magpul Scout features a 16.5" matte-black button-rifled barrel with a muzzle brake and adjustable iron sights. The Scout platform also has an integrated and removable rear peep sight, a fully adjustable AR-15 style front sight post, 10-round AICS-style detachable magazine (except the .450 Bushmaster model), user-adjustable trigger and three-position tang safety. Models are available in black, FDE and right- or left-hand configurations.

Chambered in 9mm, the **STANCE XR** micro pistol has a capacity of 13+1 and a quick-release optics (QRO) plate. Standout features include ambidextrous magazine release and slide catch, stippling grip texture, two interchangeable backstraps, a short, crisp trigger, 3.2" barrel, removable chassis, easy takedown with takedown lever, snag-free functional sights, steel slide with a beveled front and ported, wide slide serrations.



R3D 2.0

## XS SIGHTS

(888) 744-4880  
xssights.com

XS Sights announces line extensions in the **DXT2 PRO SERIES** and **R3D 2.0** night sights. DXT2 PRO Series sights are now available for the SIG SAUER P320, P365, P225, P226, P228, P229, SP2009, SP2340, X-Macro, X-Compact and P365XL; Springfield XD, XD-M, XD-S, XD-S MOD.2, XD-E, Hellcat (not optics-ready and will not fit the XD-S Mod 2 OSP); Smith & Wesson M&P M2.0 — Full Size and Compact, SD9, CSX; and FN 509, Reflex. R3D 2.0 is now available for the Smith & Wesson CSX.



## ELITE TACTICAL SYSTEMS

(855) 887-5452  
etsgroup.us

Elite Tactical Systems (ETS) Group's **OMEGA 9MM ETS MAGAZINE FOR THE GLOCK 18** is compatible with all standard double-stack 9mm GLOCKS. ETS engineered the Omega Magazine to combine the durability of steel with the lightweight, impact-resistant properties of ETS polymer. The Omega Magazine features hardened steel feed lips, a patent-pending Omega Joint and a military-grade Teflon coating for corrosion resistance. Weighing 50% less than all-steel magazines, it offers 30-round capacity, 100% drop-free reliability, and compatibility with Gen 1–5 GLOCKS. The ergonomic design ensures easy handling, and it is fully compatible with GLOCK extensions.



## SMITH & WESSON BRANDS INC.

(800) 331-0852  
smith-wesson.com

Smith & Wesson Brands Inc. has released the **M&P4** rifle series for the military and L.E. professional market. M&P4 rifles come in barrel lengths of 11.5" or 14.5", feature select-fire capabilities, six-position buttstocks and can achieve effective ranges of 300 or 600 meters, depending on the model. The upper and lower receivers are coated in a black anodized finish and the bore and chambers are chrome lined to resist corrosion. Additional features include Picatinny rails, hinged trigger guards, chromed firing pins, mil-spec bolt carriers and an ejection port dust cover.



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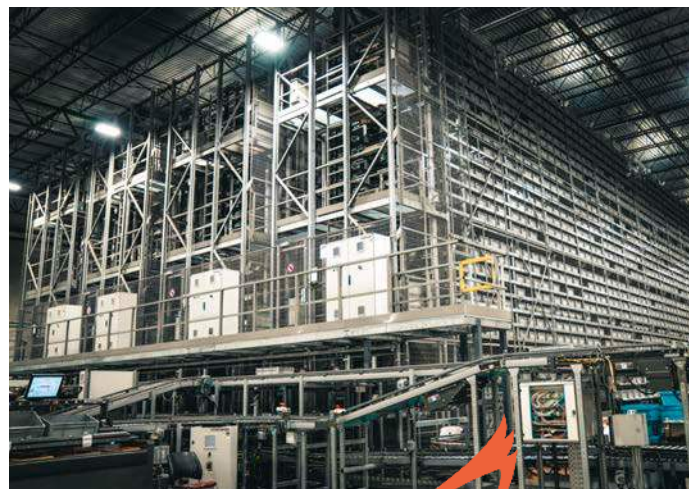


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## TAURUS USA

(800) 327-3776  
taurususa.com

The Taurus **22TUC** is a compact and reliable .22 LR pistol designed for everyday carry and personal defense. With its user-friendly tip-up barrel design, shooters can load effortlessly without the need to rack the slide, making it an ideal choice for both new and experienced firearm owners. The 22TUC boasts a reliable double-action trigger, ensuring consistent ignition with rimfire ammunition, and nine-round capacity.

The **TAURUS 608 COMPETITION** revolver is equipped to handle the demands of fast-paced, high-accuracy shooting. Its custom-tuned trigger can be adjusted without the need for a professional gunsmith, offering shooters a level of customization rarely seen in out-of-the-box firearms. Key features include eight-shot capacity, moon-clip cuts and USPSA and ICORE competition-readiness.

## BEAR CREEK ARSENAL

(919) 439-8133  
bearcreekarsenal.com

Bear Creek Arsenal launches an **AR PISTOL CHAMBERED IN 5.56 NATO** with a compact 4.5" barrel. The pistol boasts a robust build with a pistol brace for reliability and durability in various shooting conditions. The Parkerized heavy barrel with 1:7" twist provides a balance between compactness and accuracy, making it an ideal choice for close quarters and maneuverability.



## C&H PRECISION

(912) 445-5803  
chpws.com

C&H Precision's **EDC ENCLOSED (EDC-EN)** rugged and compact pistol optic is specifically designed for concealed carry, but also offers exceptional performance for duty, home defense and recreational shooting. The EDC-EN is compatible with the RMsC footprint, is available in both red and green multi-reticle options and features a 2.5 MOA dot and a 34 MOA circle. It has 10 brightness levels, a shake-to-wake smart power management system, is made of aircraft-grade aluminum and IPX7 waterproof rated.

## DARK 30

(817) 813-6848  
dark30.com

Dark 30 introduces the **D30 DEFIANCE**, a 360° pan tilt zoom (PTZ) vehicle-mounted thermal camera. An integrated directional indicator simplifies target location, enhancing accuracy during critical moments. Compatible with any vehicle with a 12v cigarette lighter, users may control the device's angles and rotation with the included low-latency HDMI screen or via their phones with the Dark 30 app. Adjustable panning speeds provide optimal performance across various environments. At its core, the Lynred sensor ensures exceptional image quality, delivering the sharp and detailed thermal imagery. The D30 Defiance comes equipped with multiple mounting options, including magnets, suction cups and direct screws.



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







CPNV01 NIGHT VISION  
MONOCULAR

## CENTERPOINT OPTICS

(800) 527-3703

centerpointoptics.com

CenterPoint Optics' **CPS2060** spotting scope has a powerful 20-60x zoom range, while the 60mm objective lens maximizes light transmission. It features two Picatinny mounting rails for additional accessories.

The **CPB1042** binoculars boast 10X magnification and 42mm objective lenses. The fully coated lenses deliver bright and sharp views, even in low-light conditions. A top focus wheel allows for smooth and effortless focusing.

The **CPLRF6221K** laser rangefinder measures distances up to 1,100 yards and features 6X magnification and a 22mm objective. Its scan mode provides continuous distance readings while panning, ideal for tracking moving targets. The built-in inclinometer allows for angle measurement.

Key features of the **CPNV01 NIGHT VISION MONOCULAR** include day and night vision modes, 6X optical zoom and 8X digital zoom, 2" display, 2.5k UHD AVI video resolution, built-in IR illuminator, illuminated buttons and a micro SD card slot.



TIMBER RECON XTREME

## DAVIDSON'S INC.

(800) 367-4867

davidsoninc.com

In collaboration with Beretta USA, Davidson's Inc. launches the **CORSA** and the **GARA** that showcase the precision and reliability of the 92XI race line. Each model features an X-treme S DLC coated trigger, fiber optic front sights, and Toni System single port compensator and flared magwell. These single-action-only models are built on a VERTEC M9A4-style frame with LOK grips. Other features include a competition take-down lever, extended reversible magazine release, three 18-round Mec-Gar magazines with +4 round Toni System mag extensions, skeletonized hammer and a short-reset fire control match aluminum trigger. These pistols are a limited production run and consist of only 2,000 units per model.



CORSA



GARA



CARBON EON

## ELITE ARCHERY

(877) 503-5483

elitearchery.com

Featuring Elite's new SP2 cam system, new VX mods and new R.A.C. system, the **ARTUS** provides the latest advancements in adjustability and customization. At 30" axle-to-axle and with performance mods that reach an IBO speed of up to 340 fps, the compact hunting bow is built around a stable and forgiving platform. With its precision grip, S.E.T. technology and draw lengths from 25-30.5", the Artus provides unlimited adjustability for peak performance. More than a dozen color options are offered, including Pure Whitetail, Orange Ignition, Liquid Bronze and Slate Gray.

The **CARBON EON** blends lightweight agility and high-performance engineering. Weighing 4 lbs., this bow features the all-new SP2 cam, delivering speeds up to 336 fps with a smooth draw. The VX Mods let users dial in the holding weight from 70-90% for an unmatched personalized feel. Featuring Elite's signature dual-caged riser, the Carbon Eon offers stability and forgiveness with its 7.0625" brace height and sleek, wide limbs. S.E.T. technology and the 0.25" draw length adjustment allows users to fine-tune the setup for flight and accuracy.

## MUDDY OUTDOORS

(877) 269-8490

gomuddy.com

Muddy's **MTX SERIES** of neoprene rubber boots was created with budget-conscious whitetail deer hunters in mind. Whether hunting from the ground, an elevated blind or a platform in the trees, this footwear pair has outdoorsmen covered in temperatures ranging from 70° above to 60° below zero. The boots offer 100% waterproof protection, and handcrafted rubber provides long-lasting odor control and anti-aging properties. Fold-over calf pipes provide additional ventilation when things heat up and rugged rubber outsoles feature a 4x4 grip and slip-resistant soles for traction. Integrated 4" steel shanks in the footbeds offer lasting support for hardworking feet and the wide openings ensure the boots slide on and off with ease and accommodate tucking pant legs inside.

The **TIMBER RECON XTREME (TRX)** line of camouflage hunting apparel is comprised of base, mid, insulating, softshell and hardshell layers. Items in this complementary layering system provide moisture management, insulation, breathability and all-around comfort. Features include graphene-infused fabric for unparalleled durability and conductivity to help regulate body temperature, flexible four-way stretch material with chafe-free seams, flexible fits for full range of motion during activities, 100% windproof construction, built-in safety harness ports for easy attachment to treestand harnesses and ample zippered storage pockets for securing gear.

## FN AMERICA

(703) 288-3500  
fnamerica.com

The **FN SCAR 15P IN 300 BLACKOUT** has been optimized for the caliber, including gas regulator settings for subsonic and supersonic ammunition, a .30-caliber flash hider and a dedicated magazine. The non-reciprocating charging handle assembly enables all shooting positions and doubles as hand stops. Features include Picatinny rail with sling QD cup, mil-std-1913 accessory rails at four positions, ambidextrous safety lever and mag release. The lightweight and compact pistol weighs 5.65 lbs., has a 7.5" barrel and is 19.75" long. Packaged in a premium, soft-sided carry case, it ships with a dedicated 300 Blackout 30-round magazine from Magpul and is available in black or Flat Dark Earth (FDE).



BALLISTIC BRIEFCASE

## PREMIER BODY ARMOR

(704) 214-9951  
premierbodyarmor.com

The **FORTIS BALLISTIC BLANKET** from Premier Body Armor is designed for a range of applications, from creating a secure perimeter in executive protection to providing immediate coverage during emergencies. The SB115 Dyneema ballistic core provides superior defense against ballistic threats and is engineered to maintain performance even after frequent folding or bending. Two sizes are offered: the Alpha model measures 36" x 62" and weighs 17.4 lbs. The Bravo model is 31.5" x 36" and weighs 10 lbs.

The **BALLISTIC BRIEFCASE** is designed specifically for professionals in executive protection and private security. Combining sleek aesthetics with advanced level IIIA ballistic protection, the briefcase provides discreet, ready-to-deploy security in high-risk situations. Constructed with premium Cordura and Milliken Tegril Thermoplastic Composite fabrics, it offers exceptional durability while maintaining a lightweight, compact design that seamlessly integrates into everyday professional routines. It weighs 8.8 lbs., and measures 14" x 19.5" when folded.

## KIMBER MFG. INC.

(888) 243-4522  
kimberamerica.com

The **CDS9** from Kimber is a micro compact high-capacity handgun ideal for EDC. Anchored by a robust all-metal frame, the CDS9 is optics-ready and features an accessory rail for a light and laser. An ambidextrous safety and slide release come standard, as well as a reversible magazine release. G10 grips and an alloy frame are available on both models, and the CDS9 is immediately available with a threaded barrel with the TFS model. It comes with one 13-round and 15-round magazine; a concealable 10-round flush fit magazine is also available. Ergonomic extended grip 10-round models will also be available soon for regions with capacity restrictions.



## HEVI-SHOT

(541) 367-3522  
hevishot.com

HEVI-Shot expands options in its **HEVI-STEEL WATERFOWL** lineup. The four new layered steel pellet loads, in 12 GA or 20 GA, feature two different-sized precision steel pellets layered in the same shell, dependable ignition and a unique HEVI-Shot wad to produce tight and reliable patterns. Features of the layered shotshells include precision steel pellets, clean-burning propellant, dependable ignition, high velocity, two layered shot sizes in BB and #2, or #2 and #4 for 12 GA and #2 and #4, or #3 and #5 for 20 GA.



## FMG PUBLICATIONS

(866) 820-4045  
fmgpubs.com

From FMG Publications, **THE INSIDER: 20+ YEARS OF INDISCRIMINATE DELIBERATIONS ON TIMELY TOPICS** by Roy Huntington is a collection of *Insider* columns from *American Handgunner* while he served as editor. Intended to serve as a shooter's bedside reader, this is the culmination of more than 120 articles ranging in topic from guns and gear to dogs, old cars and good stories. There are other goodies too, like gunsmithing tips and tricks from FMG special editions and some unexpected photos of some pretty darn interesting guns.



## MISSION FIRST TACTICAL

(267) 704-0001  
missionfirsttactical.com

Mission First Tactical's **MFT CHEST PLATE AND ACHRO HARNESS** is a versatile platform designed to carry MFT Guardian 3-Hole, Blade Tech, Comp-Tac, Blackhawk and Safariland holsters. MFT's ACHRO Harness provides all-day comfort with its 3D padded mesh and four-point design for even weight distribution. Quick-release buckles allow for easy-on and off, even with one hand. The harness offers versatile mounting using industry standard patterns, a customizable fit for draw position and weight distribution and its strong, flexible material molds the user's body while providing sturdy support. MFT Chest Plate features include ambidextrous firearm access, a customizable fit and durable construction.



## REMINGTON AMMUNITION

(800) 243-9700  
remington.com

Designed to deliver flawless feed and function in .22 LR handguns or rifles, Remington's **RANCH HAND .22 LR** hollowpoint (38-grain) or round nose (40-grain) rounds are ideal for small-game hunting, varmint hunting and even plinking. Regardless of the firearm choice, Ranch Hand works in any barrel length and is available in 100-round cartons.

**NITRO-STEEL DUPLEX** shotshells offer a unique Duplex shot load, featuring a combination of two shot sizes for deadly patterns at all ranges. This innovative design ensures optimal performance in various shooting scenarios. A super tough and versatile four-petal shot cup both protects barrels and performs exceptionally well across a wide range of choke designs. 12-GA Nitro-Steel Duplex shotshells are offered in 2, 4, 6 and BB shot sizes.

## GEMTECH

(833) 350-9517  
gemtech.com

Now available with the Gemtech Abyss 5.56 and 7.62, and Neutron 7.62 are **DIRECT THREAD ADAPTERS** compatible with HUB 1.375-24" thread pitch. This new feature creates an overall lighter and more compact design across these suppressor series and ultimately provides flexibility for the end user to utilize other existing mounting systems on the market. These newly designed direct thread adaptors, for 5.56 and .30-caliber barrels, are also available for individual purchase to complement any existing Abyss and Neutron model that includes an ETM (Elite Taper Mount).



# MK3

### RIFLE MAGAZINE- 30 ROUND 5.56MM

MK3 cleaning is fast and easy. The magazine body is unitized, with no disassembly required or possible.

Easy, constant feeding is guaranteed by a bright white, anti-tilt low friction follower. A corrosion-free, heat-treated stainless-steel spring rounds out the assembly.

Loading is effortless, even by hand. Ammo status windows allow easy ammo checks, at a brief glance.

A choice of magazine shapes is offered, conventional Flat Bottom or our new unique monopod-use Round Bottom.

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www.TANGODOWN.com

SCAN ME





LTT HEAT SHIELD

## LANGDON TACTICAL TECHNOLOGY

(571) 385-2979  
langdontactical.com

The **FASTBACK OPTIC MOUNT** from Langdon Tactical Technology is a purpose-built solution to add a red dot low to the receiver of a 130-1 Tactical or A300 Ultima Patrol shotgun. The optic sits as far back on the receiver as possible to make emergency reloads over the top of the receiver faster and easier.

The **LTT HEAT SHIELD** with Labyrinth Cable Management (LBM) is completely free-floated from the barrel, ventilated and manufactured from a tough nylon polymer to ensure the user's hand is protected from heat. The LBM system allows users to neatly manage the wires that connect a remote switch to a weapon light without tools to prevent them from snagging or getting damaged and also provides added texture for a more secure grip. The Heat Shield's modular switch mount system enables the attachment a weapon light remote switch to the forend of a shotgun without using adhesives, zip ties or screws.

## SILENCER CENTRAL

(888) 781-8778  
silencercentral.com

Silencer Central teamed up with MeatEater to launch the **MEATEATER BY BANISH** suppressor. Designed for hunting, this 30-caliber suppressor is rated for cartridges up to .300 RUM. It features an anchor brake that reduces recoil by up to 40% in the open position and 30% when closed and delivers an additional 5 dB of sound reduction. Overall, the suppressor cuts average sound levels by 32 dB. The suppressor weighs 10.3 oz., measures 5.85" long and has a 1.73" diameter with an industry-standard hub mount.



## PULSAR

(817) 761-1771  
pulsarnv.com

Equipped with a 1280x1024 pixel resolution sensor and a built-in laser rangefinder, the **MERGER LRF XT50** from Pulsar offers a balance between a wide field of view and high magnification. It's the first Pulsar device to feature image stabilization, and its thermal imaging sensor ensures exceptional image clarity in all weather conditions. The Merger LRF XT50 has a detection range of up to 2,500 yards, even in complete darkness. Additional features include built-in photo and video recorder, Stream Vision 2 app, high-contrast HD AMOLED displays, eight color palettes, magnesium alloy housing, IPX7 waterproof rating and a wide range of operation temperatures.

## MAMMOTH COOLERS

(816) 295-6321  
mammothcooler.com

Measuring 13" x 8.5" x 11.5", the 12-quart **GOCUBE** from Mammoth Coolers is compact enough to carry into the backcountry yet robust enough to keep contents cool during all-day outings. Constructed of high-density nylon with thick TPU laminated material, the lightweight GoCube is both puncture- and tear-resistant. It's equipped with a water-resistant zipper and an antimicrobial liner to prevent mold or mildew. Its 1" thick foam insulation allows for more than 24 hours of ice retention.



## LASERMAX

(800) 527-3703  
lasermx.com

Designed to integrate seamlessly with the Ruger Max-9 pistol frame and ideal for low-light conditions, the **GS-MAX9-G** from LaserMax projects a bright green laser aiming point. Embedded in the trigger guard, the sensor instantly activates the laser every time the user establishes a firm grip on the pistol, automatically projecting a bright, visible aiming point. If preferred, the GripSense system can be disabled with a simple button press to allow the laser to be manually turned on and off whenever the user wants.





**SIERRA HOODED  
FULL ZIP JACKET**



## ALPS OUTDOORZ

(800) 344-2577  
alpsoutdoorz.com

ALPS Brands' **SIERRA VEST** is engineered to maintain comfortable core body temperature and unrestricted range-of-arm movement. The vest's construction consists of a 95% polyester and 5% spandex blend outer layer DWR-treated for weather resistance. The advanced microfleece interior fabric layer is soft and insulating for warmth. Four YKK zippered pockets (two chest pockets and two hand pockets) are generously proportioned. The drop-back hem and bungee-and-barrel lock adjustable closure system allow for custom-regulated ventilation. The vest is available in S-3XL and in three color options: Coyote Brown, Olive Green and Slate Blue.

Created for multi-season and mixed-weather wear, the **SIERRA HOODED FULL ZIP JACKET** is built for challenging outdoor environments yet is stylish and practical enough for everyday wear. The outer shell is made of a polyester and spandex blend and lined with soft, warm microfleece inner fabric. The jacket's DWR-treated outer fabric also offers water-resistant performance and bungee-style drawstrings with dual barrel locks provide optimal hood adjustment to keep out wind and rain. Available in S-3XL sizes and in three color options — Coyote Brown, Olive Green (pictured) and Slate Blue.

## SAFARILAND GROUP

(800) 347-1200  
safariland.com

Safariland's **INCOG X IWB HOLSTER** now accommodates GLOCK pistols with large lights. Key features of the Incog X include three sizes of concealment-enhancing clip strut shims, micro and full-size red-dot compatibility, microfiber suede-wrapped Boltaron body, optional magazine caddy with tension adjustment, over-the-belt polymer clips and passive trigger guard and ejection port retention.



## COLE FINE GUNS & GUNSMITHING

(800) 650-2653  
colegun.com

Cole Fine Guns & Gunsmithing introduces the **COLE PRO GRAND LUXE BERETTA A400**. The receiver, finished in matte black Cerakote is durable and boasts intricate laser-engraved Baroque floral motifs and scroll patterns. The premium walnut stock and forend pair with the classic Beretta 391-style metal forend flange. A precision trigger job delivers a crisp, clean and consistent pull, and an action polish provides smooth and effortless cycling. The Cole Pro Grand Luxe Beretta A400 is available in gold or silver filled engraving options and includes three Cole precision OBHP extended chokes in black or silver, a Cole reel style choke wrench, a choke tube case and a Cole pro hardshell case.

## SPARTAN BLADES

(910) 757-0035  
spartanbladesusa.com

The Spartan-Ronin **TORII** knife represents a collaboration between Spartan Blades' founders and Tu Lam of Ronin Tactics and pays homage to the Green Berets who served alongside their unit, C-1-1 (or The CIF), at Torii Station in Okinawa, Japan. The knife is engineered for close-quarters combat and has an ergonomic design for effortless carry and quick access. The fixed 6.5" premium D2 steel blade has a trailing point for cutting and piercing and is black powder coated for enhanced corrosion resistance. The molded sheath includes two MOLLE/belt attachments for secure retention options and rapid deployment capabilities. Its OAL is 11.5", and it weighs 8.4 oz. (knife only).





## JOHN RIGBY & CO.

+44 (0) 207 720 0757  
johnrigbyandco.com

The **RIGBY TRAVEL BAG** from London gunmaker John Rigby & Co. is handcrafted in Spain and features a vintage green cotton canvas exterior, and honey-colored cowhide leather handles, fixings and bottom base corners. A padded laptop pocket ensures a device is transported securely. The fully adjustable and detachable carry strap provides versatile carrying options, while the handy outer zip-closing front pocket allows for quick and convenient storage of small essentials.



## TETRA GUN

(704) 380-2887  
tetraguncare.com

Tetra Gun's **SUPPRESSANT CLEANER** is a bio-based material delivered in a non-aerosol pressurized can. The biodegradable active ingredients dissolve hard carbon fouling found in suppressors. Additionally, this technology allows for effective spraying at any angle, even upside down. Tetra Gun Suppressant Cleaner is safe on steel, titanium and aluminum surfaces, and is generally harmless to non-metal materials. It does not contain chlorinated solvents and has low VOCs. It is sold in a 7-oz. spray bottle.

## MDT SPORTING GOODS

(360) 922-3124  
mdttac.com

From MDT, the **JAE-G5 CHASSIS SYSTEM** is engineered with dampening throughout the entire chassis to eliminate vibrations and provide stability and a "dead" feeling during shooting. The forend has M-LOK pockets for the easy attachment of accessories. The barricade stop position, magazine latch height, cheek rest height and length of pull are all adjustable for comfort. It also comes with both a vertical and angled grip for optimal hand positioning. Users can effortlessly remove the cheek riser with a quick-release feature for easy bolt removal. The full-length ARCA rail allows for a variety of accessories. The JAE-G5 supports internal weights, weighs 6.6 lbs. and is 34.4" long.

The **MDT CRBN STOCK** is designed for hunters and precision shooters who demand portability without sacrificing performance. This innovative stock is crafted from foam-filled carbon fiber, offering a perfect balance of lightweight design and superior durability. The magnesium micro chassis provides a stable and secure bedding system with V-block technology for enhanced accuracy. The built-in ARCA rail offers flexibility for mounting accessories while maintaining a lightweight, rigid design. Other features include M-LOK slots on the bottom of the forend, front and back QD sling mounts, an adjustable cheek riser and length of pull. OAL is 31.25".



MDT CRBN STOCK

## STARLINE BRASS

(800) 280-6660  
starlinebrass.com

Starline Brass adds **8.6 BLACKOUT** to its growing lineup of high-quality brass. Utilizing a 0.338"-diameter bullet, the 8.6 Blackout was designed as a suppressed, subsonic round capable of firing a heavier projectile than the 300 Blackout. It can also be used in supersonic applications such as bolt action and AR-10-style rifles.



FAXON MATCH SERIES 12.5" 338 ARC GUNNER PROFILE BARREL



FAXON 12.5" 338 ARC PISTOL

## FAXON FIREARMS

(513) 280-8861  
faxonfirearms.com

Faxon Firearms announces barrels, firearms and complete upper receivers for Hornady's 338 ARC cartridge. All feature Faxon's Match Series barrels, crafted from 416-R stainless steel with precision 5R button rifling, with salt bath nitride coating and NP3-coated barrel extensions. Barrels include the **FAXON MATCH SERIES 16" 338 ARC GUNNER PROFILE BARREL**, **FAXON MATCH SERIES 14.5" 338 ARC GUNNER PROFILE BARREL** and **FAXON MATCH SERIES 12.5" 338 ARC GUNNER PROFILE BARREL**. Complete upper receiver groups include the **FAXON ION ULTRALIGHT 12.5" 338 ARC UPPER**, **FAXON 12.5" 338 ARC UPPER** and **FAXON 16" 338 ARC UPPER**. Complete firearm models include the **FAXON ION-X HYPERLITE 12.5" 338 ARC PISTOL**, **FAXON 12.5" 338 ARC PISTOL** and **FAXON 16" 338 ARC RIFLE**.





## X2 DEV GROUP

[x2devgroup.com](http://x2devgroup.com)

With X2 Dev Group's **TRIDENT** barrel, one upper can handle multiple roles. Features include sub-MOA guarantee with quality ammunition, extreme rigidity, specially timed flutes, light weight, nitrided for corrosion resistance and improved barrel life and an optimized heat profile for consistent group dispersion up through 473° F. Trident barrels with a 1:8" twist rate are available in 16", 14.5" and 12.5" lengths in .223 Wylde.



## SK CUSTOMS

(844) 475-4867  
[skguns.com](http://skguns.com)

SK Customs celebrates the folk saint of Santa Muerte, regarded in Latin American and Mexican Catholicism as a protector of the deceased and the personification of death. **SANTA MUERTE** is a limited-edition production run of 500 full-size Government model Colt 1911s chambered in .38 Super. Each pistol will include a special engraved edition number. The slide features toned illustrations of roses that believers of Santa Muerte hold particularly sacred. This symbolic Colt is completed with Blood Grips made from Kirinte featuring the iconic Rampant Colt.



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insureds in the firearms industry.



## FALCO HOLSTERS

(800) 490-7147  
[falcoholsters.com](http://falcoholsters.com)

The **CX02 3-D PRINTED OWB HOLSTER** from FALCO is designed for popular handguns like the GLOCK 17, 19, 26, 43, 43X, SIG SAUER P365 XMACRO and Smith & Wesson Shield M2.0. The holster is constructed using state-of-the-art laser sintering (SLS) technology, which builds the holster in one solid unit, including the integrated belt loops. While the CX02's integrated sweatguard protects the firearm from body moisture, its adjustable retention screw offers a personalized, secure fit. Compatible with 2" duty and competition belts, the CX02 is optics-ready for all available firearm models. The CX02 is finished with polycarbonate surfacing (PSS), giving it a matte appearance.

## VERSACARRY

(979) 778-2000  
[versacarry.com](http://versacarry.com)

The **BLACKOUT INSIDE THE WAISTBAND (IWB)** holster from Versacarry, the company's first laser/light-compatible holster, is tailored specifically for the SIG SAUER P365 and P365XL with a Streamlight TLR-7 attached. Crafted from vegetable-tanned water buffalo leather, the holster features the updated Versahub compatible metal belt clip, allowing it to be used with Versacarry's Versahub bedside mount.





## ROCKY BOOTS

(866) 442-4908  
rockyboots.com

Crafted from waterproof full-grain leather and featuring a 2mm neoprene half sock, Rocky Boots' **DRY-STRIKE SRX 6"** pull-on shoe boasts signature non-marking oil- and slip-resisting Dry-Strike outsole, ensuring exceptional traction. Complemented by light and flexible cement construction and Rocky Air-Port Lite sponge PU footbed with memory foam, this shoe guarantees enduring comfort. Dry-Strike SRX boots are available in Duck Camo in sizes 8–14, with medium and wide options.



## HECKLER & KOCH

(706) 568-1906  
hk-usa.com

With a width of less than 1" and an OAL of 6.03", the **CC9** is the smallest double-stack pistol HK has ever produced. Chambered in 9mm, it comes equipped with a 10-round and 12-round magazine for flexibility in concealment. The modular grip system with interchangeable backstraps allows for personalized customization. It comes optics-ready, has a tritium front sight and a blacked-out, serrated rear sight for quick target acquisition. Safety features include a trigger safety, passive firing pin safety, out-of-battery safety, safe take-down feature and a visual and tactile loaded chamber indicator built into the extractor. The CC9 has an integrated Picatinny-style rail for accessories, and optics can be mounted directly to the slide with its RMsC/407k footprint.

## X-VISION OPTICS

(833) 993-2383  
xvisionoptics.com

**SHADOW 10** binoculars from X-Vision Optics offer a night viewing distance of 130 yards in complete darkness and a daytime range of 330 yards. Highlights include 2-8X magnification, 88° field of view at 100 yards, 320x240 LCD for sharp visuals, two-second warm-up time, photo and video capabilities and built-in tripod mount. IR output is 850nm with four brightness levels. The compact binoculars weigh 0.95 lbs. and are powered by AA batteries.



## BUSHMASTER FIREARMS

(800) 883-6229  
bushmaster.com

Bushmaster Firearms' varmint-focused hunting rifle, the **V-RADICATOR**, is chambered in .223 Wylde and can use both .223 and 5.56 ammunition. With offerings in an 18", 20" or 24" 416R stainless steel fluted barrel, the V-Radiator gives hunters a variety of ammunition options. The flattop upper and BFI handguard supply ample room for the long-range optics needed. The V-Radiator series also comes equipped with a stainless steel thread protector, Picatinny rail and is outfitted with Magpul's MOE K2-XL grip and PR Carbine Stock.



## WORLD OF WINCHESTER

(888) 213-0058  
worldofwinchester.com

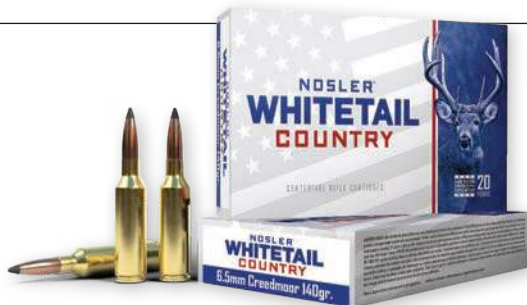
**WINCHESTER SUPREME OPTICS** launches with binoculars, spotting scopes, range finders and riflescopes for outdoor enthusiasts. Spotting scopes feature premium HD glass, durable construction and are fog-proof and waterproof. Riflescopes feature premium HD glass, black-anodized aluminum housing, are fog-proof and waterproof, offer fingertip turret adjustment for windage and elevation and zero-reset turrets can be quickly adjusted back to zero. Binoculars boast high-quality BAK4 prisms and WINcoat coating with HD glass, a high-performance chassis, twist-up eyecups, nitrogen-filled and sealed optical system and knurled focus adjustment knobs. Range Finders deliver fast, accurate, and reliable measurements, boast premium HD glass, waterproof rubber armor housing and 40-hour run time.



## FRANKLIN ARMORY

(775) 783-4313  
franklinarmory.com

Franklin Armory's **G-S193** trigger and slide kit for the GLOCK 19 Gen 3 provides the ability to actively select between regular semiautomatic and Binary firing modes and safely cancel the release round. G-S193 features include a Binary/semiautomatic selector paddle, front and rear tritium night sights, optics-ready to accommodate multiple adapter plates (sold separately), semi/Binary mode indicator on back plate, high-tactile front and rear slide serrations and anti-glare slide top serrations.



## NOSLER INC.

(800) 285-3701  
nosler.com

Designed specifically for deer, **WHITETAIL COUNTRY** from Nosler features two bullets: Solid Base and Straight-Wall. Solid Base incorporates a fifth-generation tapered jacket and a heavy solid base to deliver deep penetration and optimal expansion. Its boattail design and aerodynamic profile ensure accuracy and wind resistance. Straight-Wall bullets are tailored for the slower impact velocities typical of straight-wall cartridges. It boasts a flat base, a thin jacket at the tip and a lead nose. This cutting-edge design is fully compliant with straight-wall cartridge regulations. Whitetail Country is available in 6.5 Creedmoor, .270 Win., 7mm-08, .30-30 Win., .308 Win., .30-06 Sprg., .350 Legend and .45-70 Govt.

## MKS SUPPLY

(877) 425-4867  
mkssupply.com

MKS Supply, the exclusive marketer of Hi-Point Firearms, introduces the Hi-Point **995P**, **1095P** and **4595P** pistols. All three share key features: a HiViz fiber optic front sight, ghost ring rear sight, back plate that accepts a standard buffer tube, rear Picatinny rail, QD sling capability and an intuitive thumb magazine release. The 995P has a 13.25" barrel with 1/2x28 threading, OAL of 20.5", weighs 6.1 lbs. and comes standard with a 10-round magazine. The 4595P has a 14.25" barrel with 0.578"x28 threading, OAL of 21.875", weighs 6.5 lbs., and comes standard with a nine-round magazine. The 1095P has a 14.25" barrel with 0.578"x28 threading, OAL of 21.875" and weighs 6.5 lbs.



## EAA CORP

(321) 639-4842  
eaacorp.com

The Girsan **WITNES2311 BRAT** from EAA Corp is a compact, double-stack 1911 with a 3.4" barrel, designed with concealed carry in mind. The Brat comes with an 11-round magazine in .45 ACP or a 17-round magazine in 9mm. Standard features include Novak-style three-dot sights, an extended beavertail grip safety, ambidextrous thumb safety, skeletonized hammer, removable magazine well, accessory rail and a hard travel case.

## CANYON COOLERS

(866) 558-3267  
canyoncoolers.com

The **PRO 85** from Canyon Coolers boasts an 85-quart capacity. Standout features include front and side drain plugs, pressure-injected foam insulation, front and rear lip slots, oversized latches, sun-resistant polymer and a zero-clearance hinge. An optional divider keeps contents organized and transforms into a food-grade table. The Pro85 is available in three colors: Sandstone (pictured), Diamond and Azure Blue.



Dealers, we'd love to hear from you!

Great! I've got some thoughts.

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comments@shootingindustry.com



## VUDOO GUN WORKS

(435) 359-2890  
vudoogunworks.com

Vudoo Gun Works' **VUDOO PRECISION RIFLE BAG**, designed in collaboration with Savior Equipment, is made with rugged, weather-resistant materials. Fully customizable compartments keep gear organized while thick, high-density padding shields a firearm from the toughest conditions. Additional features include an on-the-go cleaning rod sleeve, Velcro interior walls, full-length accessory pocket, removable scope and muzzle covers and a rugged 600D ripstop shell.



## CROSSBREED HOLSTERS

(888) 732-5011  
crossbreedholsters.com

CrossBreed's rifle sling series debuts with three models made of premium 5-oz. cowhide leather. For scout rifles and carbines, the **SCOUT** (pictured) is a 1" wide one-piece sling that easily holds to the shoulder. Built on a two-piece configuration, the **WALKER** works with carbine- and rifle-length arms to provide extra width that evenly distribute the gun's weight. The 2" wide shoulder strap is backed by a soft suede lining to enhance comfort. The two-piece designed **TRACKER** is made for maximum comfort. The Tracker adds a robust foam padding sandwiched between the base 5 oz. cowhide and soft suede backer. All three slings utilize Chicago-style screws to secure the sling swivels and to make sling length adjustments.



## APEX AMMUNITION

(662) 441-2739  
apexammunition.com

APEX Ammunition expands its popular TSS/S3 Steel Waterfowl Blend line of shotshells with the addition of a **20-GAUGE, 3"** load combining 7/8 oz. No. 2 steel and 1/4 oz. No. 7.5 Tungsten Super Shot. These handcrafted "duplex" loads are versatile for a variety of hunting situations with the steel patterning especially well for closer shots over decoys followed by the TSS which has greater retained energy at longer ranges for improved terminal performance to reduce crippling. The zinc coating on APEX's S3 Steel pellets reduces friction, resulting in more consistent pellet drop when loading the shotshells and better movement of the pellets against each other in the firing process. APEX TSS/S3 Steel Blend waterfowl shotshells are also available with No. 4 steel and 7.5 TSS.



## HIGH SPEED GEAR

(877) 301-2116  
highspeedgear.com

From High Speed Gear, the **GEN 2 AR10 X2R TACO** pouch accommodates larger AR-10-style magazines. It is engineered with a larger fabric bracket and small geometry tweaks to ensure a perfect fit for large-bodied magazines. The pouch delivers the same versatile retention as the original X2R TACO, ensuring magazines are held securely in place. It's constructed from laser-cut nylon laminate and woven thermoplastic and boasts a streamlined profile. Equipped with 0.5" MOLLE, it can be mounted on both MOLLE platforms and belts and includes two HSG clips for convenience. It is compatible with multiple over-the-top retention options for additional security.





## KUIU

(800) 648-9717  
kuiu.com

Crafted from abrasion-resistant and waterproof 840D nylon, **WAYPOINT ROLLER BAGS** from KUIU provide exceptional durability while maintaining a lightweight feel. Available in two sizes, 3,000 cu. in. and 6,500 cu. in., each roller bag can handle rough conditions while keeping gear safe and organized. Heavy-duty telescoping handles, reinforced grab handles and oversized wheels make travel easy. Features include a large main compartment, compression straps and mesh dividers, an expandable lid compartment, integrated high-impact molded base and corner reinforcements. Multiple grab handles and daisy chains make it easier to secure, lift and transport. It is available in KUIU colorways Gunmetal and Bourbon.

The **SUPER DOWN HAVEN LINE** features a jacket with a back cinch hood adjustment for improved visibility and hearing, along with a raised collar and neck gasket. The bibs are equipped with fully adjustable and removable suspenders, six kidney heat pack pockets and ultra-warm, fleece-lined hand pockets. Together, the jacket and bibs ensure warmth on the stand during even the coldest late-season hunts. Another feature of this jacket is a layered safety harness port for easy integration with a treestand. It also combines an innovative down-proof, windproof and ultra-quiet knit fleece with high-quality and hydrophobic Quixdown insulation, making it the warmest and lightest late-season whitetail hunting line on the market.

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## TRIJICON INC.

(800) 338-0563  
trijicon.com

The Trijicon **RMR HD** is specifically designed for the evolving needs of law enforcement and the military. It carries over the legendary durability and footprint of the RMR with new technologies. The RMR HD is designed with a top-loading battery; an innovative, forward-mounted light sensor that automatically adjusts reticle brightness; and a new reticle that allows users to switch between a complex reticle or single crisp dot.

## FEDERAL AMMUNITION

(800) 379-1732  
federalpremium.com

Federal Premium adds to its **PRAIRIE STORM** product lineup, part of its Pheasants Forever royalty program. Additions include 12 GA, 2.75" Magnum; lead loads in shot sizes 4, 5 or 6; and 28 GA, 3", 1 oz., No. 6. These upland loads utilize the rear-opening FLITECONTROL FLEX wad, a mixed payload of standard lead or steel pellets, and FLITESTOPPER lead or steel pellets to produce full, consistent patterns through any choke. Its unique wad-shot system improves the lethality of steel.



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## 2025 **NEW** PRODUCT SHOWCASE

### LEICA

(800) 480-5422  
leicacamerausa.com

The **GEOVID PRO 42 ORANGE EDITION** in 8x42 and 10x42 from Leica is equipped with a precise laser rangefinder, measuring the equivalent horizontal range (EHR), factoring in barometric pressure, temperature and terrain features for accurate, long-range shots up to 3,200 yards within 0.3 seconds. With Applied Ballistics software, the binocular is capable of highly accurate calculations for enhanced performance in the field. The models feature connectivity via Bluetooth and integration with the Leica ProTrack system. Optics are enhanced with Leica's Perger-Porro prism system, delivering exceptional color fidelity, contrast and image sharpness. With a high light transmission rate, the large field of view delivers maximum overview and safety, even in low-light conditions.



### RICO MICRO RH25V2



### IRAYUSA

(800) 769-7125  
irayusa.com

iRayUSA, distributor of InfiRay Outdoor thermal optics, announces the **RICO MICRO RH25V2** and **RL25V2** multi-function thermal optics in 640 or 384 resolution. A machined magnesium alloy housing reduces weight, and the USB-C port allows for simplified file transfer and the ability to power the MICRO from an external battery pack. The internal video recorder includes crisp audio and 64 GB of internal storage. An improved 1440x1080 AMOLED display and is paired with an eyepiece that offers more comfortable viewing and clip-on compatibility for optics up to up to 6X magnification. The MICRO V2 also uses InfiRay's latest 12  $\mu$ m sensor, an improved NETD rating of  $\leq 18$ mK, and a manual-focus f/1.0 objective lens.



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customers are going to look at convenience and comfort. Where are they treated well?

Nicole Guvenoz, compliance officer at GAT Guns in East Dundee, Ill., has a unique perspective on achieving long-term customer loyalty.

“We want the customer to come in through the life of their shooting career. We want them to come in, buy their gun, learn about it, shoot it here, buy their ammunition here and bring it in when they’re ready to trade it in. Then we buy it from them, and they buy a new gun from us. All of this, in the big picture, is all about customer service and kindness and how it can translate into a lifelong customer.”

Gun stores aren’t charities, of course, but those who come across as too “salesy” can turn off customers. Susan Romanov owns Family Fun Indoor Range in Sevierville, Tenn. She shared her approach to sales in the June 2024 issue.

“I wanted to create a place where individuals, especially women, would feel comfortable and safe learning about firearms,” she said. “We aren’t in the business of selling products, but we do help you make more educated buying decisions.”

Some may scoff at the first half of the second sentence in Romanov’s quote, but a subdued approach to sales has helped her business flourish. Something to consider ...

## EXPERTISE IS PRICELESS

In an era of misinformation and keyboard commando “experts,” the trust you, as a brick-and-mortar dealer, have built in the community is invaluable. Expertise at the counter is where your store shines compared to big-box stores.

After receiving advice from a big-box retailer that owning a rifle in 6.5 Creedmoor would “be a waste of money” several years ago, Allen Bennett decided to open a store of his own. His store — Full Circle Reloading and Firearms in St. Charles, Mo. — has cultivated a sterling reputation among the local community’s cadre of long-



Stores with a clean, bright and modern appeal are going to be viewed as more welcoming to new customers. Dealers have frequently shared a smile and a “hello” go a long way toward finding common ground.

range shooters. Bennett and his team provide value to customers by helping them make good buying decisions.

“Don’t get me wrong, I want their money,” Bennett said, “but I want it honestly. I don’t want them to buy something just for the sake of making a sale.”

Jason Gentz, owner of Gentz Sporting Arms in Lakeville, Minn., has decades of experience hunting game all over the U.S. And it shows when he’s talking with a customer.

“You can know the product all day long and know every part number and all that stuff. It doesn’t mean you know how to use it,” he suggested. “The majority of my business is referral. [Customers] will say, ‘Talk to this guy. He helped me out. He answered all my questions.’”

As a dealer, your words carry significant weight with customers — often determining whether a customer goes with product X or product Y. Raleigh Whalen, director of sales for Weatherby, acknowledged as such earlier this year.

“After all the marketing has been done, all the advertising out there and all the reviews, the person behind the counter remains the crucial link in getting the product in the customer’s hands. The more they know, the better they can do making a sale.”

The tactile experience of the shooting sports is best served on the

industry’s front lines: the independent dealer. Encourage your team to continue refining their knowledge and enhancing the value they can bring to every interaction with a customer.

## SPEAKING OF TRUST ...

With the 2025 New Business Year almost upon us, I wanted to take a moment and thank you for trusting *Shooting Industry* to be part of your business portfolio. We know such trust isn’t given out freely, and our team works tirelessly throughout the year to earn it, every issue.

Next month, we’re celebrating our 70th anniversary (along with our sister publication, *GUNS Magazine*). A lot has changed since our very first edition, but nearly 850 issues later, our endeavor remains the same: to empower independent storefront dealers and range operators and help them succeed.

Our industry has been on a rather tumultuous ride over these past few years, but we’re resilient, savvy and battle-tested. We look forward to continuing as your business partner in 2025. Whatever it brings, we’ll be ready.

Have a comment, reaction to a story, topic suggestion or just want to connect? Send me an email anytime: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com). **SI**



BY JADE MOLDAE

## WHAT WE LEARNED FROM YOU THIS YEAR

**R**eflecting on the 2024 Business Year, it was (a little) less chaotic than recent history but still with its own set of unique obstacles for dealers to overcome. Throughout this year, dozens of dealers from across the retail spectrum shared valuable insights with their peers — putting the phrase “cooperation breeds success” into action.

In a moment, we’re going to revisit some things we learned from you in 2024. But first things first, how about that Red Wave?

Following Donald Trump’s historic win on election night, we immediately entered a new market. Threats to limit the Second Amendment, at least at the federal level, appear stayed for now.

Looking back at late 2016 — following Trump’s first triumph — North American Arms President Sandy Chisholm observed the following in the Jan. 2017 issue (which has stuck with me, given how the 2024 election turned out): “I expect the market will soften noticeably as the ‘fear of restrictions’ driver has seemingly been taken out of the selling equation. With the selling frenzy about to subside, I think product innovation will become increasingly important.”

Innovation will be one of the keys to success moving forward. Throughout this year, dealers shared how they thrived in today’s retail landscape.

### HOLDING THEIR INTEREST

As noted in my lead feature this

month (“The People Have Spoken,” pp. 26–29), the industry is in a decidedly different position here in late 2024 compared to late 2016. For one, too many companies were burned following the 2016 election to make the same mistake twice of overstocking inventory. And two, there are now millions of first-time gun owners to engage and connect with.

Earlier this year, Hyatt Guns (Charlotte, N.C.) Owner Larry Hyatt noticed a renewed focus on R&D as the industry emerged from the buying frenzy of 2020–2022 — especially among smaller semi-auto pistols with easy-to-manipulate slides.

“[And] thank goodness for that, because it doesn’t work having to deal with products designed for 19-year-old Marines, and then trying to get those products in the hands of a 65-year-old female,” he said.

Hyatt’s take represents one of the obstacles facing the industry in this latest “new normal.” Our focus needs to be on removing barriers of entry.

Whether it’s upgrading the appearance of your store, enhancing the “customer experience” for those shopping in-store or online, stocking products with a wide range of appeal, quality instruction at the range and in the classroom, etc. — these refinements will create long-lasting impressions.

Main Line Armory, located in Malvern, Pa., opened in early 2023 and has been very successful at welcoming

in new shooters. Co-owner Katie Butler estimates more than half — *half* — of her customers are new to shooting.

“A lot of people are interested in firearms, and when you build something that entices them to come in and spend time, it makes it easier for them to actually take that step,” she said.

Mike Rust, general manager of H&H Shooting Sports in Oklahoma City, noted the problem isn’t attracting new shooters — it’s holding their interest.

“The challenge isn’t getting those first-time shooters, it’s keeping them,” he said. “We need to figure out a way to keep them better entertained and enthused with all shooting sports offers.”



**The tactile experience of the shooting sports is best served on the industry’s front lines: the independent dealer. Encourage your team to continue refining their knowledge and enhancing the value they can bring to every interaction with a customer.**

Earlier in this issue, Black Wing Shooting Center (Delaware, Ohio) Owner and President Mark Gore expressed the entertainment factor is going to be increasingly important for stores and ranges.

“Our business plans to continue focusing on the entertainment and experience side — ranges, events, outings, product launches — and less on an uphill attempt to drive growth in retail firearm sales,” he said.

### CUSTOMER SERVICE IS KING

It’s no secret: shoppers are going to shop where they feel welcome. Our industry has grown leaps and bounds in this area over the past several years.

However, as it becomes more and more competitive with big-box and online stores, customer service is going to play an increasingly prominent role. If price and selection is similar,

Continued on p. 69



# BRAG ABOUT HOW MANY YOU SHOT, NOT HOW MUCH YOU SPENT.



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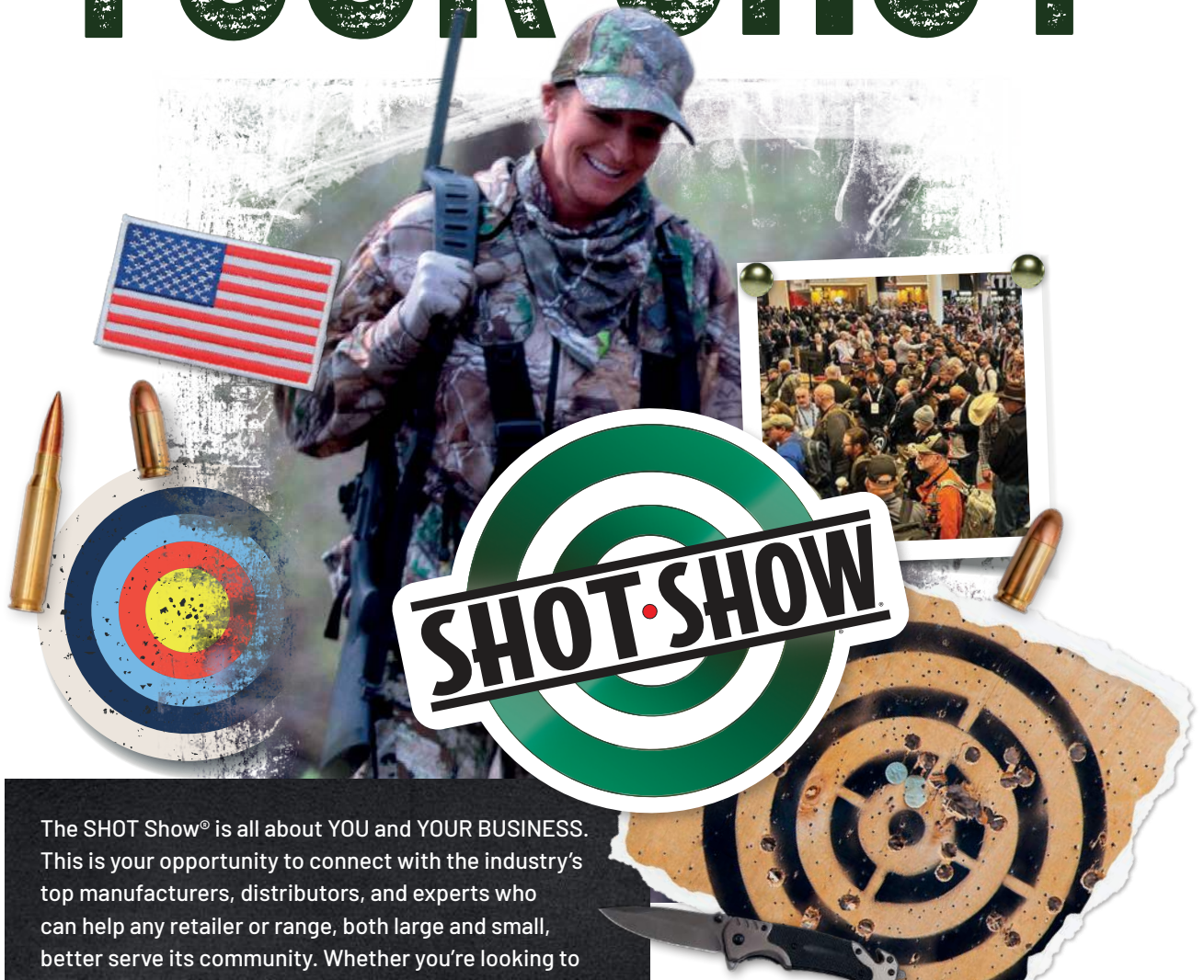
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