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70 YEARS LATER, WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

SHOOTING INDUSTRY®

THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

\$5 | JANUARY 2025

2025
NEW BUSINESS
YEAR EDITION

SOUTHWICK'S
Market Outlook

Dealers Share
'25 Expectations

RIMFIRE
TAKES CENTER STAGE

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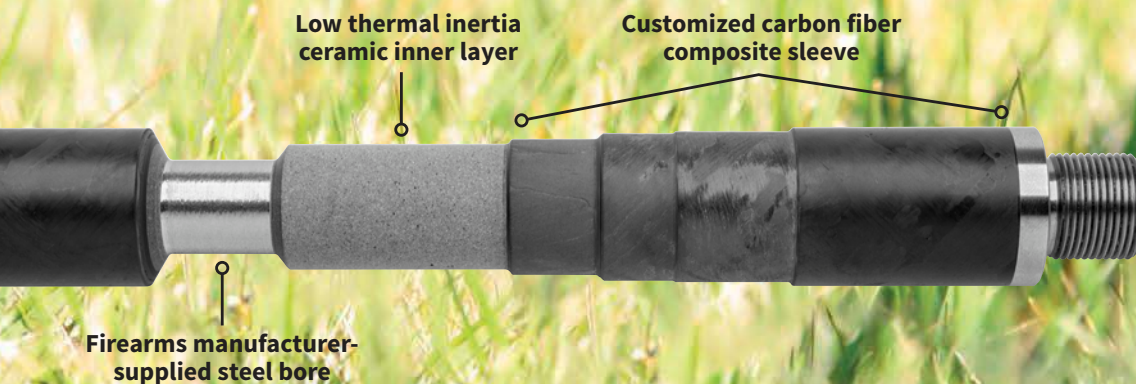
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Launching The New Business Year

Welcome to the 2025 New Business Year. This issue of *Shooting Industry* is a special one. Not only is it ringing in the New Year with numerous features — including Part Two of the expansive 2025 New Product Showcase — this edition is also *Shooting Industry's* 70th anniversary issue.

Thank you, *Shooting Industry* readers, for trusting us over the decades — we're looking forward to traversing the next 70 years together.

Here's to a successful New Business Year!

A SEARCH FOR NORMALCY

The industry once again finds itself at a crossroads: the past five years have had more than their fair share of bedlam moments.

In Tim Barker's "5 Forces Poised To Shape 2025" (pp. 30–33), Mark Stevens of The Syndicate consulting firm shared what will probably be a common sentiment this year.

"Let's just have a good year," he stated. "We don't have to have a great year. We don't have to have a terrible year. We could just have a good year."

One of the ways to make 2025 a "good year" is continuing to equip new gun owners, contends first-time *SI* contributor Annette Evans.

"A first-time gun buyer doesn't have to be a one-time customer if you can be trusted as a reliable resource," she says in "What Do New Gun Owners Need From Us?" (pp. 34–35).

MARKETING & CONNECTING WITH CUSTOMERS

There's no question marketing is going to be important this year to keep brands visible in an environment where fear-induced buying isn't the dominating driver of sales.

In "6 Marketing Trends Set To Define 2025" (pp. 46–47), FMG Digital Content Editor Ashley McGee uncovers ways dealers can set themselves up for success in a rapidly changing market.



JANUARY 2025

"Programs promoting competitions, hunting and range days can introduce newcomers to the enjoyment of shooting while reinforcing positive aspects of firearm ownership," she said. "Beyond attracting new participants, this shift also helps normalize the use of firearms in non-threatening, mainstream contexts."

Thanks to its ability to connect with end users effectively, Instagram should be a part of your 2025 business plans, according to Michelle Scheuermann.

"By utilizing a few tools available to Instagram Business accounts, you can create new avenues for your most enthusiastic customers and engage them to buy even *more* from you," she stated.

What tools are available? To find out, see pp. 48–50.

NEXT MONTH: TURKEY HUNTING, CCW TRENDS & MORE

The 2025 New Product Showcase reaches its finale next month in the February issue — which will be published less than two weeks after the conclusion of SHOT Show 2025, where some of the products featured made their debut.

Other points of focus in February include a spring 2025 turkey hunting preview, concealed carry handgun trends, innovation in the optics segment, merits of joining a buy group and more.

If you have a comment on anything you see in this issue, send us an email: comments@shootingindustry.com. **SI**

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HENRY IS A TOP PERFORMER

Editor's Note: The following letter is a response to the feature "Supporting The Brands That Support Us" (Nov. 2024), where dealers highlighted some of their favorite brands that stand behind their products and service to their stores.

Wow! I just finished reading the customer service piece in the most recent edition of your publication.

I was a bit taken back by the lack of inclusion of Henry Repeating Arms Company as a top performer in the firearms customer service world. As a reputable and quality dealer in the industry we have dealt with most manufacturers for customer service.

At our shop if you purchase a firearm from us and have an issue we handle the return, repair, warranty and ultimately the end-user customer satisfaction. Of all of the folks we have dealt with, Henry Repeating Arms Co. is by far the very best.

The Henry team is on the top of their game, with an award-winning customer service team. To be honest, I opine because

of Henry's commitment to the very best service experience possible some of the other firearms manufacturers have actually stepped up their game to compete.

Maybe a mention of the oversight or an acknowledgment of Henry's excellent customer service in a future article will garner you some extra credit. **SI**

— Duane Hammaker, Co-Owner
Guns Plus
Duncannon, Pa.

Duane, thank you for reading *SI* and for sending us your glowing feedback of Henry. We've shared this with the Henry team, which I'm sure they'll use as motivation to continue serving stores like yours well.

Too often we hear what manufacturers aren't doing well in their partnership with brick-and-mortar dealers, so this is quite a refreshing perspective!

Dealers, we invite further feedback here — what other brands would you highlight as valuable partners for your business? Send us a note anytime: editor@shootingindustry.com.

— Jade Moldae, Editor

“Because of Henry's commitment to the very best service experience possible some of the other firearms manufacturers have actually stepped up their game to compete.”

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

Let us know at comments@shootingindustry.com, facebook.com/shootingindustry or linkedin.com/company/fmg-publications





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VISTA OUTDOOR ANNOUNCES COMPLETION OF CSG TRANSACTION

Nov. 27, Vista Outdoor Inc. announced the completion of the sale of The Kinetic Group to Czechoslovak Group (CSG), following receipt of stockholder approval at Vista's special meeting of stockholders Nov. 25.

Under the terms of the merger agreement for the CSG Transaction, Vista Outdoor stockholders will receive \$25.75 in cash and one share of Revelyst common stock for each share of Vista Outdoor common stock they hold.

"The completion of our sale of The Kinetic Group to CSG marks a significant milestone for our company and represents the successful culmination of our Board's tireless efforts and robust process to deliver maximum

value for stockholders," said Michael Callahan, chairman of the Vista Outdoor board of directors. "We are confident our leading ammunition brands will be well positioned under CSG's ownership given its expertise in supply chain management and ammunition manufacturing, along with its shared commitment to expanding U.S. manufacturing and supporting NATO and allied nations. We also believe the transaction will create new opportunities for our dedicated employees and position The Kinetic Group for future growth and success."

"We are pleased to complete the transaction with Vista Outdoor and look forward to welcoming The Kinetic

Group's talented team to the CSG family," said Michal Strnad, CEO of CSG. "The Kinetic Group has a strong portfolio of leading ammunition brands, and we are confident our partnership will drive continued growth and innovation, as we deliver high-quality ammunition products to customers and create long-term value together."

Also on Nov. 27, Revelyst began trading on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker "GEAR." Oct. 4, 2024, Vista Outdoor entered into a definitive agreement under which funds managed by Strategic Value Partners LLC (together and its affiliates, "SVP") will acquire Revelyst in an all-cash transaction based on an enterprise value of \$1.125 billion.

With the successful completion of the CSG Transaction, the SVP Transaction is expected to close by Jan. 2025, subject to the receipt of necessary regulatory approvals and satisfaction of other customary closing conditions. Following the closing of the SVP Transaction, Revelyst will cease trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

"Until the SVP Transaction closes, we remain focused on advancing our strategic objectives, accelerating our GEAR UP efforts and delivering innovative, top-tier products to outdoor enthusiasts," said Revelyst CEO Eric Nyman.

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

SIG SAUER, NIBE DEFENCE ANNOUNCE JOINT VENTURE IN INDIA

SIG SAUER Inc. announced a joint venture with Nibe Defence and Aerospace Limited to advance small arms and ammunition manufacturing operations in India. This new partnership will support India's "Make in India" initiative, underscore both entities' commitment to the region and bolster SIG SAUER's role as the primary provider for India's defense needs.

"SIG SAUER is meeting the increased international demand for our products

by solidifying key partnerships across the globe. This important new alliance in India serves to meet that demand in one of the most significant regions for growth in the coming decades. The joint venture with Nibe Defence gives SIG an expanded presence, greater customer engagement and new collaboration opportunities to meet India's growing needs," said Ron Cohen, president of SIG SAUER.

Officials from Nibe Defence joined representatives from SIG SAUER and the Chief of Defence staff of the Indian Armed Forces for an official signing of a memorandum of understanding in Pune, India, in early November 2024.

As part of the "Make in India"

SIG SAUER

initiative by the government of India to accelerate the domestic manufacturing industry, the collaboration between Nibe and SIG SAUER will strengthen India's defense capabilities while reinforcing India's commitment to self-reliant defense manufacturing.

SIG SAUER's initial contract with the Government of India, Ministry of Defence was for SIG716 rifles in 2019, with a follow-on contract for additional rifles after their successful fielding.

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STREAMLIGHT CONTINUES BREAST CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Streamlight Inc. announced its continued commitment to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF) with a \$20,000 donation to support breast cancer research and prevention.

Each year, Streamlight contributes proceeds from sales of specially marked pink lights to BCRF, reflecting the company's commitment to improving outcomes and saving lives for those impacted by breast cancer.

As the largest private funder of breast cancer research worldwide, BCRF recently announced its commitment of \$70.3 million to support global breast cancer research in 2024–2025, awarding grants to over 260 researchers across 15 countries.

According to BCRF, a woman in the

U.S. is diagnosed with breast cancer every two minutes, with over 42,000 women and 530 men projected to die from the disease this year. Research has significantly improved outcomes, with breast cancer mortality rates down 44% since 1989.

Streamlight donated the proceeds from sales of its pink Nano Light keychain light, pink Siege AA ultra-compact lantern and pink Strion LED tactical light: \$1, \$2 and \$5, respectively, for each light.

“Our support for the Breast Cancer Research Foundation is a cause very close to our hearts. With survivors among our employees, we are honored to contribute to BCRF’s groundbreaking work. Our pink lights allow us to not only fundraise, but also raise awareness for this important cause,” said Streamlight Chief Revenue Officer Michael F. Dineen.

Streamlight first introduced its line of pink lights in 2008, and has since maintained its dedication to helping BCRF advance research and improve survival



Streamlight Siege AA Pink Lantern

rates for those impacted by breast cancer.
[/ streamlight.com](https://streamlight.com)

TEAM ONE NETWORK ACQUIRES BATTLE OF THE BADGES, EXPANDS L.E. CONNECTION

Team One Network, a leading provider of training for law enforcement and military professionals, announced its acquisition of the Battle of the Badges (BOTB), a premier law enforcement-exclusive shooting competition.

The Battle of the Badges, founded by Deputy Preston Woodrum of the Montgomery County (Va.) Sheriff's Office, offers officers a unique platform to test and sharpen their skills in a competitive, real-world environment.

“Battle of the Badges has always been about pushing officers to be their best while bringing them together in the spirit of camaraderie and competition. I’m excited to see Team One Network build on that vision and take it to the next level,” Woodrum said.

“Acquiring the Battle of the Badges allows us to extend our reach and create more opportunities for officers to challenge themselves and grow their skills,” said John T. Meyer Jr., president of Team One Network. “This acquisition



is not just about expanding, but about strengthening the law enforcement community through friendly competition, shared experiences and ongoing learning.”

The first events under Team One Network’s leadership will be held at Ben Franklin Range in Templeton, Pa., on May 28, and at the Izaak Walton League in Christiansburg, Va., on July 12. Additional events are in the works for Florida, Texas and other locations.

The Battle of the Badges is open exclusively to active and retired law enforcement professionals who compete

in shooting stages designed to replicate real-world scenarios. Sponsors also have unique opportunities to showcase their products and services directly to law enforcement professionals throughout the competition.

Founded in 2003, Team One Network offers a wide range of courses designed to enhance the readiness and skills of officers in critical situations. Its experienced instructors are veterans of law enforcement and the military.

[/ teamonenetwork.com](https://teamonenetwork.com)
[/ battleofthebadges.com](https://battleofthebadges.com)

HARDY FACEPAINT BACK IN BUSINESS, SHIPPING ORDERS

Hardy Facepaint announced it is back in business and selling its premium face paint for hunters.

The re-emergence of Hardy Facepaint into the hunting market brings an industry-favorite product back to hunters looking for a solution to the problem of face paint smearing during hunts and being difficult to scrub off afterward.

"I've worn face paint on my hunts and worked in the hunting industry for over a decade, and I've never found a better option than Hardy Facepaint. This product is simply too good not to be available to hunters, and we are ready to build off the success Brian and Mariah Hardy found



Since relaunching Aug. 2024, Hardy Facepaint has shipped more than 1,000 orders to customers.

years ago with the brand," said Danny Reed, Hardy Facepaint's new owner.

Hardy Facepaint was created by hunters who were frustrated with the typical options and is made in the

U.S. with high-quality, FDA-approved ingredients. The water-based, lightweight formula applies easily, doesn't smear and wipes off easily after hunts.

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



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Two Beretta 92XI SAO pistols are displayed. The Corsa model on the left has a black frame with yellow accents and a yellow magazine. The Gara model on the right has a black frame with orange and black accents and a black magazine. Both pistols are shown from a side profile, pointing towards the right.

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HENRY REPEATING ARMS SUPPORTS FIRST RESPONDERS CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION

Henry Repeating Arms recently donated another \$25,000 to the First Responders Children's Foundation at a celebratory National First Responders Day event in New York City's Times Square.

First Responders Children's Foundation helps support the children and families of first responders killed or injured in the line of duty. Henry's 2024 donation follows its \$25,000 gift in 2023 and its \$50,000 gift in 2022, bringing the company's total contributions to the foundation to \$100,000.

Founded in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, when 800 children lost a first-responder parent in the line of duty, First Responders Children's Foundation provides a range of services, from grants and scholarships to counseling and community engagement events. Its National First Responder's Day celebration includes a "Roll Call of Heroes" to honor the men and women who put the protection and safety of their communities above their own.



Henry VP of Communications Daniel Clayton-Luce (middle) presents a \$25,000 donation to First Responders Children's Foundation President and CEO Jillian Crane (left) with NYPD Chief Theresa C. Tobin (right) in Times Square on National First Responders Day.

"When tragedy strikes a first responder family, the First Responders Children's Foundation swoops in with an outpouring of love and financial support, and I hope that we will always be in the fortunate position of being able to support what they do. Their mission is vital to the well-being of the first responder community and these children who will be America's future," said Anthony Imperato, founder and CEO of Henry Repeating Arms.

Henry Repeating Arms' contributions are made through its charitable branch,

Guns for Great Causes, primarily focused on providing financial relief to families of sick children and children's hospitals. Guns for Great Causes also supports some of the nation's top-rated organizations benefiting military veterans, law enforcement and first responders, wildlife conservation, America's shooting sports and hunting heritage and those developing and promoting firearms safety education programs.

[/ henryusa.com](https://henryusa.com)
[/ 1strcf.org](https://1strcf.org)

SILENCER CENTRAL BREAKS GROUND ON NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY

Silencer Central has broken ground on an all-new warehouse and distribution center located adjacent to its headquarters building. The new 60,000-sq.-ft. facility will house state-of-the-art inventory and distribution lines for all Silencer Central products, as well as research and development infrastructure, including an indoor shooting range.

"I am immensely proud of the hard work and dedication of our team," said Brandon Maddox, Silencer Central CEO. "We recently celebrated a milestone of 100,000 suppressors shipped. Incredibly, by the end of 2024, we will have doubled that by shipping an additional 100,000 units. I am excited to see what the team can do with the added space and the technology we are building into the



facility. In the end, it will greatly benefit our customers, which has been the goal all along — making the process of buying a suppressor simple and easy."

The new building will house a completely automated warehouse system capable of fulfilling 2,000 orders per hour. Along with the speed automation comes an improvement in compliance with federal regulations, something that is vital to suppressor sales. In addition to the warehouse and distribution lines, the

new facility will add to Silencer Central's research and development capabilities by incorporating rapid prototyping technology and an indoor test range.

Moving the warehouse and distribution operations to a new building will free up roughly 20,000 sq. ft. of space in the Silencer Central headquarters, paving the way for additional staffing to keep up with the growth of Silencer Central and its business extensions.

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

BERETTA USA PATROL SHOTGUNS FIELDIED BY TENNESSEE WILDLIFE AGENCY

Beretta USA, a member of the Beretta Defense Technologies (BDT) alliance of companies, announced the delivery of A300 Ultima Patrol shotguns to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA). The contract also includes armorer training.

"We are proud to be adding such a high-quality shotgun to our officer gear. These guns are made in Tennessee, and will be put to good use serving Tennesseans — ensuring public safety and protecting wildlife species for generations to come," said TWRA Executive Director Jason Maxedon.



Beretta A300 Ultima Patrol Shotgun

"We are honored to support our home-state TWRA officers with a shotgun born from the needs of U.S. law enforcement and proudly manufactured at our Gallatin, Tenn., manufacturing facility. The A300 Patrol carries on the Beretta tradition of excellence, providing our law enforcement officers with a reliable, accurate and durable product they can trust," said Stefano Itri, VP of international sales at BDT USA.

The A300 Ultima Patrol 12-GA shotgun

was developed from Beretta's time-proven A300 action, engineered to be ultra-reliable and easy to manipulate. This new defense shotgun includes enlarged controls, an enhanced loading port, a thinner forend design with multiple M-LOK and QD sling mounting points and a 7+1-shot extended magazine tube, secured by a custom barrel clamp with integral M-LOK capability.

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USA COLLEGE CLAY TARGET LEAGUE CHAMPIONS NAMED

Athletes and teams representing 18 colleges and universities from various states competed at the 2024 USA College Clay Target League (USACCTL) National Championship held at Brittany Shooting Park near Bunker Hill, Ill., Nov. 1–2, 2024.

Jaxson Wilson of Lake Land College in Illinois was crowned the national individual champion, while Lindenwood University in Missouri took home the national team title.

The USACCTL Championship, presented by SCHEELS, featured 214 college athletes. Additional sponsors included the Bass Pro/Cabela's Outdoor Fund, Walker's, Mark Zauhar, Friends of NRA, Sportsman's Guide, Guns.com, Spandau Arms and Winchester.

With nearly 52,000 athletes having participated in the 2023-24 school year, the nonprofit USACCTL is America's largest clay-target shooting organization. The league offers trap, skeet, sporting



Smiles all around from members of Lindenwood University's team after becoming USACCTL 2024 national champions.

clays and 5-stand to secondary and postsecondary school teams across the country.

A record-breaking 989 student athletes, representing 77 college and university teams across the country, participated in USACCTL programs last year.

Every team must have school approval to participate, and each athlete must complete firearm safety certification beforehand. Tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships are provided to qualifying

seniors by the league and post-secondary institutions each year.

The league's co-ed and adaptive nature are key attractions to schools nationwide. Title IX compliant with both male and female athletes competing on the same team, the league also allows students with physical disabilities to take part. The USACCTL's priorities are safety, fun and marksmanship, in that order.

[/ college.usaclaytarget.com](http://college.usaclaytarget.com)

TRIJICON ACOG HONORED BY MICHIGAN MANUFACTURING ASSOCIATION

Trijicon Inc., global provider of innovative aiming solutions for the hunting, shooting, military and law enforcement markets, announced the Trijicon Advanced Combat Optical Gunsight (ACOG) has earned a 2024 Excellence Award from the Michigan Manufacturing Association (MMA). The ACOG was named the "Coolest Thing Made in Michigan."

The ACOG was selected from more than 30 nominated products through two rounds of consumer voting, with final selection by the MMA Excellence Awards committee.

The Manufacturing Excellence Awards is an annual statewide celebration of the exceptional contributions that Michigan manufacturers make to their workforce, their communities, the economy and the industry. The program promotes the inspiring stories of Michigan's

manufacturing industry, the thousands of unique manufacturing companies across the state, the hundreds of thousands of Michiganders employed in the industry and the local communities that support it.

"For more than a century, Michiganders have been making cool and innovative products that have had an incredible impact on our state and country," said MMA President and CEO John J. Walsh. "Trijicon's Advanced Combat Optical Gunsights are an exceptionally deserving product to receive the coveted title of 'Coolest Thing Made in Michigan.' These made-in-Michigan precision-aiming solutions disrupted the industry with a product that increases the effectiveness and safety of our warfighters and first responders. My heartiest congratulations to the entire Trijicon team."

"We would like to thank our employees for their dedication and focus on quality (and) our president, Stephen Bindon, for providing all Trijicon employees with an outstanding place to work. And thank you to the Michigan Manufacturing Association for the opportunity to



highlight our company and how important manufacturing is to Michigan," said John Trull, Trijicon's VP of sales and marketing.

The Trijicon ACOG is built to withstand the harshest environments and features a forged aluminum housing that offers exceptional durability. The housing contains a fixed magnification system paired with a calibrated BDC reticle, illuminated by fiber optics in bright conditions and by tritium in low or failing light, eliminating the need for batteries. Its iconic reticle allows for fast target acquisition, easy ranging and solid aiming, with red, green or amber reticle colors available to suit various environments.

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

GUNBROKER.COM, CREDOVA TO OFFER BNPL OPTION

GunBroker.com has announced a new partnership with Credova, a leader in Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) financing solutions. This collaboration introduces a transformative approach to purchasing firearms and accessories, making it easier and more accessible for both buyers and sellers.

With the integration of Credova's solutions, GunBroker.com FFL sellers can now offer financing for their listings directly on the site as part of the checkout process. This opens the door for buyers who may want a higher-cost product, but require financing support to complete the transaction.

For buyers, the partnership with Credova revolutionizes how they shop for firearms. Unlike traditional layaway plans that require full payment before receiving the product, Credova's BNPL



option allows buyers to receive their items immediately while spreading their payments over time.

"The addition of Credova as a financing partner is a great benefit for GunBroker to bring to its buyers and sellers," said Jared Smith, CEO of AMMO Inc. (GunBroker's parent company).

"GunBroker has long been a cornerstone of the firearms industry, providing an essential platform for FFLs of all sizes to thrive," added Brian Billingsley, Credova president. "Offering financing solutions to these businesses is not only vital to the shooting sports industry but also to the individual communities they serve across the U.S. economy."

[/ gunbroker.com](https://gunbroker.com)
[/ credova.com](https://credova.com)

OSCF'S "KEEPERS OF THE WILD" PSA SURPASSES \$1.5M IN EARNED MEDIA

The Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) "Keepers of the Wild" Public Service Announcement (PSA) has generated over \$1.5 million in donated media value since its September 2024 launch.

As the largest media campaign to improve cultural acceptance of gun ownership, hunting and target shooting among the general population, the 60-second PSA features double-exposure visuals showing landscapes across the country and narration educating viewers on how hunters and target shooters have been primary funders of wildlife conservation for over 80 years.

"With research showing that the activities of hunting and target shooting have lost the support of more than ten million voting-age Americans in recent years, this messaging is more important than ever," said Jim Curcuruto, OSCF executive director. "It's time for the outdoor industry to wake up to the fact



that we are losing cultural acceptance at an alarming rate. We need to reach beyond the choir with messages that highlight the vital contributions that gun owners, hunters and target shooters make to conservation."

OSCF is working with project partners to distribute the "Keepers of the Wild" PSA to a network of 11,000 radio and television stations nationwide. The campaign is projected to generate over \$5 million in donated value and exceed 300 million impressions.

OSCF encourages organizations connected to hunting or target shooting to promote the PSA through newsletters, social media and website postings. [S](https://outdoorstewards.org)

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M. SALERNO

Celerant Technology Promotes Chief Growth Officer

Michele Salerno is now serving as the chief growth officer for retail software provider, Celerant Technology. She will spearhead the company's expansion initiatives to forge new retail partnerships and build on client retention as well as oversee Celerant's marketing strategy.

Ian Goldman, president and CEO of Celerant, shared, "With growth so tightly coupled with many of our partners, Michele is poised to spur tremendous growth in our company."

Salerno brings nearly two decades of leadership to the role.

She graduated cum laude from The City University of New York with dual concentrations in marketing and management.



L. DUCHENE

Kinsey's Inc. Adds Buyers

Kinsey's Inc. welcomed two new buyers to its team: Louie DuChene and London Sasse.



L. SASSE

Alex Cameron, Kinsey's director of purchasing, shared, "Their individual skill sets will be an incredible addition to the company as a whole and we've already begun to see the positive effect of their work on their respective teams and overall sales."

DuChene joins the company with a background in FFL distribution, where he spent several years buying firearms, suppressors and other accessories. He was a production manager for Speer Ammunition leading up to the Vista (Federal) acquisition.

Sasse spent the past decade working for Dick's Sporting Goods' purchasing department.



R. MCCANNA

Dallas Safari Club Welcomes CEO

Dallas Safari Club (DSC) announced the hire of Rob McCanna as its CEO. He will also serve as the CEO for DSC Foundation.

"Rob is not only the right person for the job, but we feel with his industry experience and proven success as an executive-level leader, combined with his commitment to excellence, this represents a blockbuster hire," said DSC President Ray Mulholland.

McCanna most recently served as the president and CEO of Walther Arms Inc. Other notable career roles include president of ORCA Coolers and various executive-level positions during his 17 years at Remington Outdoor Company.



B. JONES

5.11 Tactical Names CFO

5.11 Tactical announced the appointment of Bryan Jones to the position of CFO

following Jim McGinty's recent retirement from the role. Jones will focus on strategy, managing risk and fulfilling revenue and profit targets. McGinty will remain involved in the company by taking on a consultatory role in 2025 with a planned exit by the start of 2026.

"Bryan is a transformational leader with a growth mindset who is often sought out for partnership by his peers as well as others throughout the organization," stated Troy Brown, CEO of 5.11 Tactical.

Jones joined 5.11 nine years ago with finance experience from roles at Johnson & Johnson, Volcom and Deloitte. He earned a bachelor's in economics from the University of California, Santa Barbara and an MBA from the

Paul Merage School of Business, University of California, Irvine.



T. RICKS

Lyman Products Taps Marketing Director

Lyman Products welcomed Tom Ricks as the director of sales and marketing for Lyman and its family of brands where he will lead sales, marketing and customer service efforts.

Ricks joins Lyman with over 25 years of experience in sales and marketing. Most recently, he held leadership positions in marketing and leading with ESPN Outdoors and B.A.S.S. business units. He also gained experience from positions at Pure Fishing Inc. and Kimberly-Clark Corp.



J. FISCHER

Banshee Brands Inc. Names VP, COO

Banshee Brands Inc., the parent company of RETAY USA and Breda America Group (Breda AG), appointed JP Fischer as the VP of sales and Dave Barrera as the COO.



D. BARRERA

Fischer will spearhead the strategic growth and sales efforts for both product lines.

Christian Handy, CEO of Banshee Brands, said, "JP is well respected and highly regarded within our industry and he will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in our future growth as an organization."

Fischer brings over a decade of experience in the outdoor sports market from roles at Christensen Arms, Benelli USA and Smith & Wesson.

Barrera will oversee the execution of the company's strategic plans and manage day-to-day operations as Banshee Brands continues to expand.

"As we're growing our organization and building both the RETAY USA and Breda AG brands, it's important that we have a solid foundation," said Handy. "Dave's leadership background and experience with putting systems and processes in place will ensure we have that."

Barrera brings over two decades of experience to his new role. He is a U.S. Air Force veteran and has over a decade of experience serving clients in the tactical industry.



V. MCCOY

Sellmark Corp. Taps Global Marketing VP

Vanessa McCoy was appointed the new global VP of marketing at Sellmark Corp., assuming leadership of five of the company's seven brands: Sightmark, Firefield, KJI, BulletSafe and INFORCE.

James Sellers, CEO of Sellmark Corporation, said, "[McCoy's] expertise in building brand presence and engaging audiences across international markets will play a pivotal role in our journey toward continued global growth."

McCoy joins Sellmark with a career spanning over 20 years.



R. HOLM

Leica Appoints Marketing Director

Leica appointed Ryan Holm the director of marketing for Sport Optics where he will focus on revitalizing brand perception, building solid relationships with wholesale and delivering fully integrated marketing campaigns across e-commerce, social media, public relations, and direct sales support.

Holm has over 20 years of outdoor industry experience in marketing, media and brand development.



S. LAVIN

CAHSS Names Research/ Partnership Director

The Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (CAHSS) named Scott Lavin the new director of research and partnerships. He will continue efforts to deepen the Council's understanding of public engagement in hunting and shooting sports, guiding strategic partnerships, research and data-driven program development.

CAHSS Executive Director Dr. Steven Leath expressed, "Scott's deep knowledge of both conservation and R3 practices makes him an exceptional fit for this role." **\$1**

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BY MASSAD AYOOB

BACKUP GUN SELLING POINTS

In the world of armed self-defense, a “backup gun” is a second firearm that can supplement the first in a number of scenarios. Many of those scenarios are things the average customer at a gun shop might not have thought of, but will recognize are realistic when they are brought to their attention. *Voila!* A sale is made.

It's been 70 years since *Shooting Industry* debuted its first issue. Then, the primary buyers of backup handguns were cops and high-risk retailers, as well as stalking victims or others particularly at risk. Michigan State Police were on the cusp of becoming the first law enforcement agency to issue a smaller handgun and require it be carried concealed as backup while on uniformed patrol — something much more popular in today's American police circles.

If the officers carried a Colt Official Police, their chosen backup was likely to be the same brand .38 Special in a smaller size, the all-steel Detective Special small-frame snubbin'. Or, it was perhaps the first aluminum-frame revolver — Colt's much lighter Cobra version of the same gun, which had been introduced in 1950.

If the Smith & Wesson was the department's choice, the little five-shot Chiefs Special of 1949/1950 was the typical backup. The rationale there was if the officer had to reload from the then-prevalent belt loops or dump

pouches, the cylinder latch worked the same way, and the cylinder rotated in the same direction.

As time went on in the police world and speedloaders became standard — except for agencies that were early adopters of Auto pistols — it was common to see an officer carrying a K-Frame Smith & Wesson as the uniform service revolver but a D-Frame Colt snubbin' for backup, since the same size HKS speedloader would feed both guns.

Let's look at some of the selling points for backup handguns today.

WHO NEEDS A BACKUP?

Carrying a second revolver became popular in the mid-1800s, when fighting men realized five or six shots might not be enough to win a gunfight and revolvers of the time were slow to reload.

That argument finds deaf ears today with many cops and armed citizens, who think, “*My primary carry handgun carries 16 or 18 rounds of 9mm. In the unlikely event I need more, it will be quick to reload, so I don't need to carry a second handgun.*”

Those customers need to consider the following:

- If they're caught off guard and disarmed at gunpoint, a second hidden gun might be the only thing that keeps them from being executed by the criminal perpetrator(s).
- The gun on their hip might not be accessible when they're down on their

◀ A Springfield Hellcat in a pocket holster represents a more than capable backup option to a customer's larger primary carry gun. (Note the distinctive U-Dot rear sight, which has proven popular among Springfield users.)

back or side in a street fight, or seat-belted behind a steering wheel when confronted by armed carjackers. But an ankle holster with a small second gun may be much more accessible under those circumstances.

- Their primary weapon may be snatched from their holster (a particularly critical concern for open carriers) or knocked from their hand in a struggle.

- A surprise attack may not afford time to draw their primary handgun, while their hand already surreptitiously on a pocket pistol will allow a much faster draw.

- If their primary handgun malfunctions and can't be rapidly cleared, drawing a backup will likely be the fastest avenue to survival.

- If their primary carry sidearm has to go in for repair or go into evidence after a self-defense incident, they have another suitable gun ready to carry, a particular concern in waiting period states.

- Finally — a particular concern for the armed citizen — in a sudden emergency, the second gun on their person allows them to arm a competent companion. Two competent people are more than the sum of their parts, capable of triangulating and practicing what police call “contact and cover.”

Bring up these selling points! They help turn on the light bulb that makes the customer realize, “I and the people I protect can be safer if I have this thing!”

BACKUP GUN CONSIDERATIONS

A simple and intuitive-to-operate firearm is a bonus when choosing a backup. Your customer favors a cocked and locked 1911 or Hi-Power as primary? A compact cocked and locked pistol like the Smith & Wesson CSX 9mm or the Colt Defender .45 might be a logical backup choice. Primary carry is a GLOCK? Another, smaller GLOCK will have logical appeal to the potential purchaser.

Interchangeability of ammunition is a very strong selling point. When I

carried a GLOCK 17 9mm, my ankle gun was often the “baby GLOCK” G26 in the same caliber, because either would feed the spare 15-shot G17 magazines.

Similarly, when the GLOCK 22 in .40 S&W was America’s most common standard-issue police pistol, the “baby” G27 in the same caliber was hugely popular for the same reason. Remember the HKS speedloaders feeding either the K-Frame S&W revolver or the D-Frame snubbie Colt? Same principle, same sensible logic.

Some customers’ wardrobes, physical builds and lifestyles will allow only tiny guns for backup. Many of the super-popular Ruger LCP .380s serve more as backup than primary.

Gun gurus Craig “SouthNarc” Douglas and Simon Golub have done much to rekindle interest in KelTec’s P32, a .32 Auto the size and weight of yesteryear’s .25s. They’re so tiny as to be “cute,” which, sadly, is also a selling point but another reason to have one

“

Bring up these selling points! They help turn on the light bulb that makes the customer realize, ‘I and the people I protect can be safer if I have this thing!’

or more in your showcase.

Where to carry is another concern. Sell the customer an ankle holster, a pocket holster or perhaps even a belt holster. You’ll give the owner a repertoire of choices that will enhance their ability to carry the insurance of a second gun no matter

how they’re dressed.

Finally, quote authority figures a well-read customer will recognize. The late Louis Awerbuck always carried a backup. So does Clint Smith. Self-defense guru John Farnam currently carries a matched pair of compact 9mm Autos, one on each hip. The late Bill Jordan’s pet .357 Combat Magnum was always backed up by a Chiefs Special Airweight in his hip pocket. Famed NYPD gunfighter Jim Cirillo carried three to four handguns (plus a shotgun) when assigned to the Stakeout Squad, and in retirement, wore a .45 GLOCK 30 backed up by a .40 GLOCK 27. I knew all these men. They carried those extra guns for very good reasons.

Backup guns make sense. The more you can put the above arguments for backup in front of your personal protection customers, the more product you will sell ... and the better protected those customers will be. **GI**

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BY BETHANY BEATHARD

FAMILY FOCUS: WHY MORE MOMS CHOOSE TO CARRY

More moms are turning to concealed carry as part of their approach to their family protection plan. This shift reflects a growing societal focus on personal safety, with women and mothers increasingly taking proactive steps to protect themselves and their loved ones. As safety concerns rise, so does the desire for self-reliance and control over potential threats.

THE GROWING TREND (IN NUMBERS)

The rise in concealed carry permits among women, especially mothers, is evident in recent statistics.

According to a 2022 Social Science Research Network (SSRN) report, women made up 29% of permit holders in 15 states, an increase from 28% the previous year. The NSSF has documented a 77% rise in female gun ownership since 2005.

While these figures don't include mothers, there's no doubt they're there. And, as this movement toward concealed carry continues, it will trend up.

WHY MOMS ARE TURNING TO CONCEALED CARRY

One of the primary reasons mothers are embracing concealed carry is the rising concern about personal and family safety in an unpredictable world.

This is reflected in why Shauna

Mahoney, owner of Moms Who Carry, has chosen to carry.

"I carry because I am the first line of defense for my family in an increasingly dangerous world," she said.

With increases in crime rates, home invasions and highly publicized incidents of violence, many moms feel a growing need to ensure they can protect their loved ones and themselves. The ability to carry a firearm provides them with a sense of control and preparedness in the face of potential threats.

"As a mother, I carry a firearm to keep my daughter safe in an unpredictable world. Whether it's the risk of kidnapping or encounters with aggressive animals while hunting, being prepared is important. It's a smart choice for any mom who wants to protect her child and themselves," stated Allie Butler, a brand creator and social media influencer. We see another key factor driving this trend is the desire for self-reliance. In situations where law enforcement may not be able to respond immediately, many mothers want the ability to promptly defend their families.

Vermont Homeland Security has reported a child goes missing or is abducted in the U.S. every 40 seconds. Additionally, they reported more than 800,000 children are reported missing

◀ One of the primary motivations for moms who carry concealed is the ability to safeguard their families without having to rely on others for their immediate protection. As a result, training is going to continue to be of utmost importance to this segment. (Image: SIG SAUER)

each year, and another estimated 500,000 go missing without being reported in the United States. How alarming is that?

Rather than relying solely on external protection, moms are seeking ways to take their family's safety into their own hands. My personal slogan in a mom-preparedness series I made on Instagram was "Be prepared, not scared." Taking this responsibility can make all the difference in a critical situation.

The role of social media in promoting concealed carry among moms cannot be underestimated. Online communities, influencers and advocacy groups like the Armed Women of America (formerly known as The Well Armed Woman) have helped create spaces where women can share their experiences, receive training advice and gain confidence and community. These platforms normalize the idea of an armed female taking control of her self-defense — providing resources and support for mothers and other women considering concealed carry as a means of protection.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR DECISIONS

Women are a buying force, which is being recognized by firearm manufacturers. They're likely to innovate and design firearms marketed toward women. Beyond the guns themselves, we can expect to see a rise in the production of concealed carry accessories, such as holsters and bags designed for discreet, yet practical, carry by moms and women in general.

From purses to holsters to carry-designed leggings, we are witnessing the industry adapt and manufacture carry items specifically designed for the vast female wardrobe.

"I usually use my Moms Who Carry Fabriclip and Mod Wing IWB holster in the appendix position. I wear a lot of beltless pants and often wear the holster on my Comfort Concealment belt," noted Mahoney.

Growing awareness of Second Amendment rights and gun ownership laws has contributed to the rise of patriot mothers adopting everyday carry. With

“

I carry because I am the first line of defense for my family in an increasingly dangerous world.”

Shauna Mahoney • Owner
Moms Who Carry

gun laws making headlines and being used as a hot-button issue out on the campaign trail in the lead-up to November's election, they feel empowered to exercise those rights responsibly. Gun ownership is at the core of our constitutional rights; some feel it is their civic duty to exercise that right.

The influence of media and

personal stories continues to highlight how firearms have been used effectively in preventing harm. This provides both inspiration and reassurance to moms who may be considering concealed carry as a viable option for family protection.

THE FUTURE OF MOMS & CONCEALED CARRY

With 29 states now allowing constitutional carry, barriers to carry have gradually been removed, which will likely lead to a further increase in moms choosing to carry. Of course, this is an opportunity for you, the dealer, if you offer training classes with a focus on drawing from concealment.

Other courses focusing on situational awareness, responsible gun storage in the home and the legal aspects of defending one's family will be popular additions to your training curriculum. **SI**



Top: The ROSE Seminar Series, featuring renowned shooter Lena Miculek, has been a popular avenue for women to connect with the SIG SAUER brand and learn more about firearms safety, carry and more. (Image: SIG SAUER)

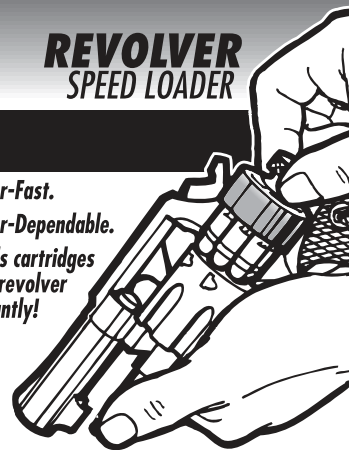
Bottom: Firearms designed for women, such as the Walther PDP F-Series, are becoming increasingly common. (Image: Walther Arms)

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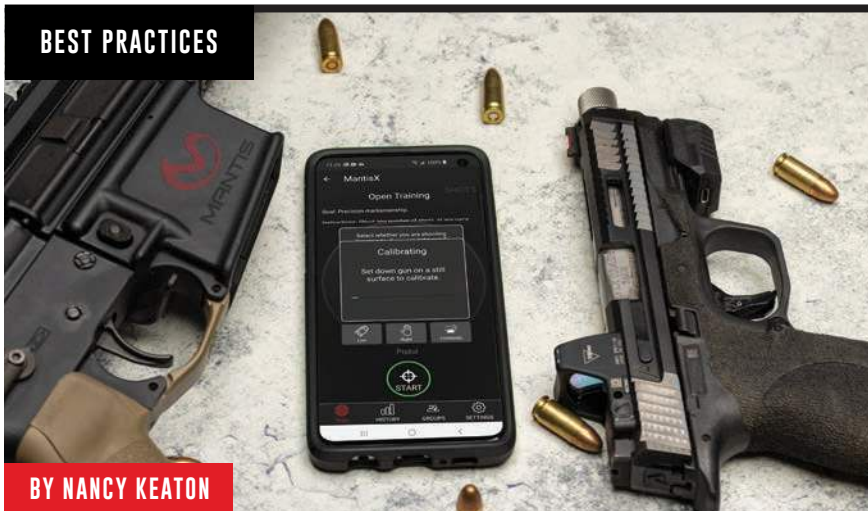
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BY NANCY KEATON

HELP CUSTOMERS MAINTAIN SKILLS THROUGH DRY-FIRE

Well, it's that time of year. Rain, snow, sleet, ice — yuck. No one wants to go out in those conditions. So, we stay home, nice and warm and dry.

Even if there's a nice, warm and dry indoor range nearby, finances can be tight this time of year. Buying ammo for practice is almost a luxury, but it doesn't mean shooting skills have to take a complete backseat. This is where retailers can step in and help their customers during these times.

UPKEEP FOR A PERISHABLE SKILL

The most helpful strategy retailers can employ to help their customers during this time is to encourage dry-fire practice and stock up on the various products that will help keep them motivated and having fun.

Dry-fire practice truly helps a shooter keep up their skills, even without recoil simulation. Lanny Basham, Olympic and World Champion, even utilized dry-fire practice before the Olympics and still pulled off a win.

He says for two years he was unable to shoot on a range except for only six days. But, he shared, "The imagination is an extremely powerful part of your mind."

He continued, "Though I could not actually go to the range, I did continue training. Five times a week after my family had turned in for the night, I simulated shooting for two to four

hours in a spare bedroom, a technique called dry-firing. I made the U.S. international team in 1978 and won the World Championships that year in Seoul. Mental practice alone cannot replace good range training, but it serves as an effective supplement when actual training is not possible because of weather, injury, money or time limitations."

If dry-fire practice kept an Olympian's skills sharp, imagine how much it can help the casual shooter.

By carrying a variety of dry-fire aids customers can use at home to maintain skills, retailers can be crucial to helping spread the word of the importance and effectiveness of dry-fire practice.

There is a large variety of dry-fire products available for all budgets and space availability for practice. Products range from inexpensive dry-fire cards to systems such as the MantisX to the Smokeless Range.

Let's take a look at some of the more well-known options.

FOR THOSE ON A BUDGET

Dry-Fire Training Cards: A deck of over 50 cards containing dry-fire drills. These drills can not only improve skills, but also offer a variety of actions to help prevent boredom.

Laser Cartridges: A laser cartridge in the chamber allows the user to utilize their live-fire gun like a laser gun for practice with a large variety of laser-

◀ **MantisX** is a leader in the dry-fire training category — offering at-home training options for owners of both handguns and rifles. (Image: MantisX)

reading targets.

Dry-Fire Mag: A dummy magazine that fits in a real firearm, but does not allow the introduction of real ammunition. It allows for trigger work without requiring the slide to be racked between each shot. It's especially helpful for those who are worried they may develop the habit of racking between every shot carrying over to live-fire.

SYSTEMS

Various systems also range in price, but offer immediate feedback and can add even more fun to help prevent boredom and encourage further practice.

Strikeman Laser Firearm Training System: Utilizing a laser cartridge, targets and a smartphone, it's one of the more affordable systems.

DryFire: This system can be used with a laser or training gun with laser and will work on a phone or laptop.

LaserLyte: A training system utilizing a laser cartridge and targets, and also offers a training pistol.

MantisX: A system that attaches to a gun and gives feedback on shooting performance through an app. It can be used for both dry-fire and live-fire on the range.

Laser Ammo: Laser Ammo offers a wide variety of systems and products for a variety of budgets, from laser cartridges to recoil training guns and reactive targets to the Smokeless Range interactive system.

Pro-Shooter: This system operates on a Wi-Fi network and an app and will support up to 15 targets. It can be used with a laser cartridge or one of their gas-blowback training guns for simulated recoil.

SIMULATION GUNS

For improved dry-fire training without the possibility of ammunition getting in the mix, simulation guns represent another profitable option for retailers to keep in stock.

SIRT Gun: SIRT stands for Shot Indicating Resetting Trigger. The "dummy" gun has a laser and is unable to accept ammunition. It can be used to practice various shooting skills and enables trigger work without racking the slide after each shot. It can work

with a variety of dry-fire laser target systems.

CoolFire Trainer: A product that replaces the barrel of a real gun to provide some recoil by acting like an airgun. Again, live ammunition cannot be introduced.

BOOKS

Here are two books on dry-fire training I'd recommend taking a look at: *The Dry-Fire Primer* by Annette Evans (who, coincidentally, has a feature in this very issue) and *Dry-Fire Training Reloaded* by Ben Stoeger, a professional practical training instructor.

BEST SELLERS FOR BRICK-AND-MORTAR

Dealers weighed in on which dry-fire product (or products) sell best.

At Rainier Arms in Wichita, Kan., Inventory Manager Darien Pete noted MantisX system is a perennial top seller for the category.

"We carry MantisX for handguns and ARs," he said. "It's electronic and has an app that can track all your movements. They're definitely one of the best in the industry, if not the best."

It is a similar story at Sporting Systems in Vancouver, Wash., according to Sales Representative Chase Loomis.

"MantisX is one of our best-selling products. There are hundreds of dry-fire products in the industry, but this, in our opinion, is the best value for money spent on dry-fire training,"

he said.

Jared Millhouse, sales associate and trainer at Oregon's Indoor Shooting Range in Lebanon, Ore., shared the system they carry is the one from Strikeman.

"It's very easy to set up and simple to use and comes in multiple calibers," he observed.



Dry-fire practice truly helps a shooter keep up their skills, even without recoil simulation.

Millhouse also recommends the Dry-Fire Mag in conjunction with a laser cartridge.

"It's more affordable because you can just use it with the laser cartridge," he said. "One of the tricks I use is to get bike reflectors and place them in different areas and when that laser hits it you see the reflection. That allows you to know if you've hit your target."

Like the other dealers interviewed here, Millhouse had praise for the MantisX system.

"If you are willing to spend the money and want to know more about

yourself without having to go to an instructor or have someone critique you, the Mantis helps you get detailed information and drill down into exactly what you're doing. It is going to be more costly, but it does give you a lot of feedback," he said.

LOOKING ONLINE

In addition to talking to the three dealers above, I also looked online for dry-fire products to find top sellers.

A Girl & A Gun Women's Shooting League offers various dry-fire products through its website. The best-selling product is the deck of Dry-Fire Training Cards.

Looking at Amazon for best sellers, the first product is Snap Caps for a shotgun, followed by Strikeman's Dry-Fire Laser Training System.

Searches can be filtered by best-selling items, which can help a retailer determine items to carry in-store. There are many more products than those mentioned here; these are simply the more well-known and recommended options.

EXPLAIN THE BENEFITS & EMPHASIZE SAFETY

Be clear and articulate about the benefits of dry-fire:

1. It's convenient, giving customers the ability to practice in the comfort of their own home.
2. It can provide immediate feedback to help fix shooting errors.
3. It's customizable to the skills customers want or need to work on.
4. And, most of all, it will save them money while maintaining and/or improving their shooting skills.

Be sure to advise customers of the safety precautions to take when practicing dry-fire. Maybe even consider creating a one-page handout that outlines the precautions to be taken each time they practice.

Then, be sure your staff is up-to-speed on all things dry-fire so they can advise the customer appropriately.

From there, your store can benefit from becoming a local leader in selling dry-fire products — and even conduct a dry-fire class or seminar to further elevate interest during these colder months. **SI**



The SIRT Training Pistol can be used to practice various shooting skills and enables trigger work without racking the slide after each shot.



Image: Bird Photographer TH / Adobe Stock

2025 INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

Impact Of Election, Anticipation Of Better Economy To “Normalize” Sales



SOUTHWICK
ASSOCIATES

— By Nancy Bacon & Ben Scuderi, Southwick Associates

While most expected the surge of 2020 purchasing to drop immediately afterward, as it did in other buying increases, that didn't happen. Instead, sales

continue to post gradual declines in the nearly four years since, seeking a new normalization. 2019, which is often seen as the last “normal” year, may not be the new standard moving forward, as consumer and market characteristics have changed.

Let's take a look at what happened in 2024 before we give our thoughts on 2025.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Coming out of a stronger-than-expected Q4 2023, sparked in part by fears over the October

attack on Israel, 2024 began with a first-quarter decrease in NICS firearm background checks.¹

The 5% decline from first-quarter 2023 was a stronger start to the year than most expected. The typical summer slump brought background checks down 9% in the second quarter, lower than most anticipated with background checks for handguns continuing to decline more than long guns.

Firearm background checks started increasing in July, as the looming presidential election brought more uncertainty with the attempted assassination of President-elect Trump, President Biden stepping down from re-election a week later and Vice President Kamala Harris announcing her campaign the same day. Subsequently, background checks increased 5% in the third quarter, leaving year-to-date background checks through October down 3.5% over the prior year. Handgun background checks declined 4.5% through October, as checks for long guns increased 1%.

Background checks through October were down in all regions of the U.S., except for New England and West South Central, which had slight increases. Each has had states in the region that have changed restrictions — both positive (removing the need for a permit to purchase a firearm) and negative (restrictions on owning certain types of firearms) — that has

driven these.

The Pacific region was down the most (12%) after the surge in background checks last year driven by substantial restrictions. It's important to note although year-to-date October background checks were down 3.5% over the prior year, they were still 17% higher than before the pandemic surge.

IMPORTS

As of the end of September, firearm imports continued to decline with a decrease of 10% over the prior year. As expected, handguns led the decline (down 17%), followed by rifles (down 8%), while shotgun imports increased 13% over the prior year. Ammunition imports were up 9% YTD in September, and scope imports increased 11%.

Many factors drive imports, including new product coming in for the start of 2025, demand for home- and self-protection approaching the election and its at-the-time unknown outcome — plus concerns about current wholesale and retail inventory — likely combined to drive the latest import trends.

POINT-OF-SALE DATA

While background checks and imports can show one side of the picture, actual retail point-of-sale data from RetailBI tells what is happening at the independent dealer level.

RetailBI, powered by Gearfire, captures sales data from Gearfire's AXIS retail point-of-sale

system, representing sales from more than 2,000 independent and e-commerce dealers across the U.S.

“
Although year-to-date October background checks were down 3.5% over the prior year, they were still 17% higher than before the pandemic surge.

Insights provided by RetailBI showed YTD October firearm sales down almost 13% over 2023, a steeper decline than seen in NICS background checks. YTD October ammunition retail sales were down 5% over 2023 as reported in RetailBI. Retail inventory continued to be high through the year, but also declined as retailers worked to align their inventory and selections.

Through the end of October, retail firearms inventory decreased 8% over the prior year, and ammunition inventory increased 9%. Although inventories remained much higher than pre-pandemic years, the overall sales levels continue to be higher than pre-pandemic as well.

For the most part, distributor and retailer inventory is “clean,”

as the pandemic surge flushed inventories of old or slow-moving products throughout the channel.

THE CONSUMER PERSPECTIVE

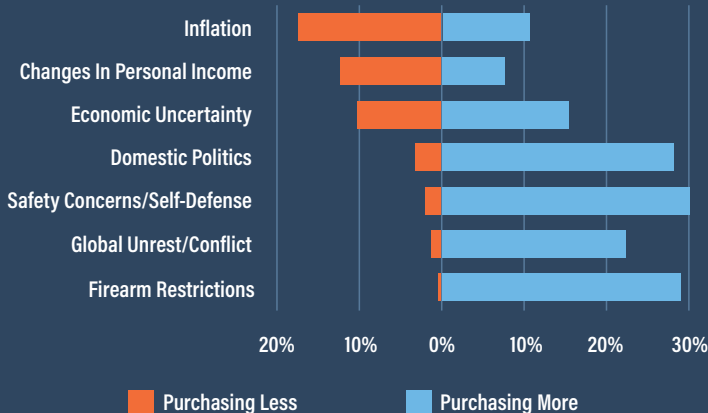
Of course, the main driver of the market is the consumer, and to best understand the market and where it is headed, we need to understand the consumer. How they perceive the world around them is what drives them to purchase or not.

Economic pressures continued to moderate through 2024. Even so, it's important to remember consumers have essentially experienced 10 years of inflation in less than four years. Although prices are not rising as fast as they were, they're still significantly higher than they were just four short years ago, remaining fresh in consumer memory.

Inflation is still

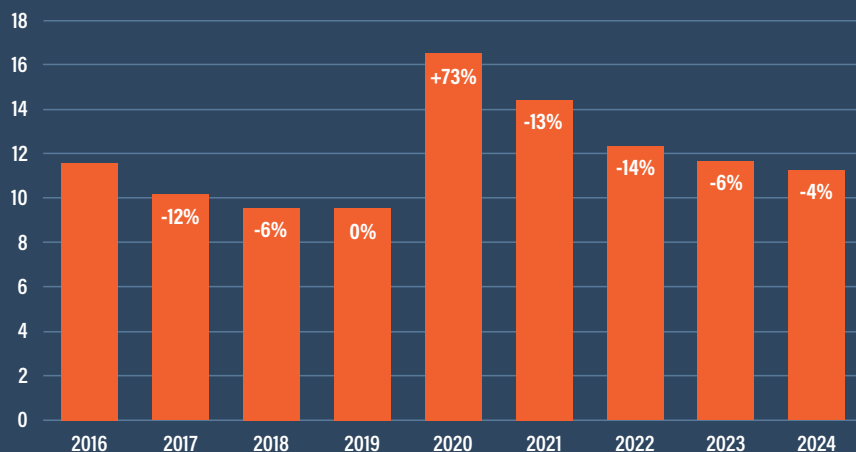
FACTORS AFFECTING FIREARMS PURCHASES

Q3 2024



HISTORICAL COMPARISON OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

TOTALS JAN.-OCT. (IN MILLIONS)



suppressing sales, though maybe not to levels seen in early 2024.

According to Southwick Associates' consumer-tracking study, at the end of Q3 2024, inflation was still the top reason cited for purchasing fewer firearms, followed by changes in personal income. Inflation was also the top cited reason for purchasing less ammunition in Q3 2024, followed by availability. Even if many ammunition shelves seem full, consumers still perceive availability issues in some cases at the time of this writing.

On the flip side, consumers cited safety concerns, potential firearm restrictions and domestic politics as the top factors causing them to purchase more firearms. The 2024 presidential election created big unknowns as to how consumers might

react depending on who won.

At the time of this writing — one week past the election — it is still too early to determine how firearm consumers will react with both sides of Congress and the White House being in Republican control. Past experience indicates



We anticipate the firearms market to continue to 'normalize' in 2025 — with anticipated NICS checks down 5%.

there will be less concern regarding new federal firearm restrictions, which typically lowers short-term consumer demand. State and local issues potentially impacting the ability to purchase firearms will still encourage sales in some areas.

SOUTHWICK'S 2025 OUTLOOK

The outlook we provided in the January 2024 issue of *SI* forecasted NICS background checks would end the year between 2016 and 2017 levels, although this writing is prior to the end of the year, we still anticipate this to be true.

As a result of the election, interest rate cuts and the inflation rate lowering, firearms consumers are likely to anticipate a better economy — which can boost sales. But expectations of less crime

and a halt on federal firearm restrictions will likely cause a pullback in demand for firearms.

Potential tariff increases will affect costs for raw materials and imported products, creating a new potential headwind for the industry to put greater pressure on manufacturers' margins and consumer demand.

In past downturns, we've seen optics and accessories increase — as consumers found lesser-priced items to purchase without breaking the bank.

The general assumption is higher-income consumers drive sales of higher-priced products, when the reality is there are certainly lower-income consumers who understand the *value* in purchasing a higher-priced product that will serve them well for years. Accessories sales may do better in 2025 compared to firearms.

The pandemic surge and subsequent increase in crime and uncertainty have brought many new firearm purchasers into the market. These new customers are different than the "traditional" stale, pale, male to whom the market has been accustomed. More women, Black and Hispanic purchasers have entered the market, with the primary purpose for purchase being protection for 80% of the firearm purchasers in the past few years.

As an industry, we need to continue to welcome and engage these new customers. Recognizing

family and friends are a key part of the purchase, and the trusted source for training for many new firearm purchasers, it's still important to ensure we provide them with trusted resources they may not seek out on their own. These new consumers in turn introduce their friends — our new consumers — to firearms.

While the election and unified government bring a likely pause on federal firearm restrictions in the next few years, there will still be state-level firearm restrictions being considered and applied. These will continue to bring pockets of ups and downs to the market. As well, the euphoria



As a result of the election, interest rate cuts and the inflation rate lowering, firearm consumers are likely to anticipate a better economy — which can boost sales.

for many surrounding the election and the anticipation of a better economy, may bring consumers who have been on the sidelines to purchase products.

As these opportunities and potential drawbacks play out, we anticipate the firearms market to continue to “normalize” in 2025 — with anticipated NICS checks down 5%. This decline is slightly greater than seen so far in 2024, but we think election concerns boosted recent sales. No other singular event is expected in 2025 to boost sales.

Unexpected political or international events can quickly change this expectation. As we noted

last year, now is the time for true innovation to drive consumers' interest to purchase. **SI**

Southwick Associates will continue to monitor the market and provide quarterly updates on the consumer and the market in its new subscription newsletter, *The Market Pulse*. Refer to *Market Pulse* for greater details, statistics and an in-depth read into the factors driving sales and profitability. For more information, contact Nancy Bacon at Southwick Associates (Nancy@SouthwickAssociates.com).



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2024  2025
LOADING...

BY TIM BARKER

5 FORCES POISED TO SHAPE 2025

Well, it's time to say goodbye to 2024 and a year marked by inflation, lackluster sales and a contentious U.S. presidential election. Now we say hello to 2025 and all of its uncertainty.

It's a perfect time to break out our forecasting hats and make educated guesses about what the coming year will bring. This year, we asked our panelists to tackle a range of topics including politics, the economy and what it's going to take to be successful.

Our group: Paul Bastean, managing director of Ultimate Defense Firing Range & Training Center in St. Peters, Mo.; Larry Hyatt, owner of Hyatt Guns in Charlotte, N.C.; John Phillips, president of Poway Weapons & Gear in San Diego; and Mark Stevens, founder of firearms industry consulting firm The Syndicate, based in Minneapolis.

1. POLITICS: STILL A SALES DRIVER?

Making it through the November elections without any chaos — and the Republican Party firmly in control of the federal government — leaves the industry in a mixed position.

On one hand, there's little reason to fear new laws or rulings that would negatively impact gun rights. On the other, it's not the kind of environment that sparks gun sales.

"When Trump won his first term, we had what we called the 'Trump Slump,'" said Hyatt, in North Carolina. "Our gun business slowed down, we think, because people weren't worried about restrictive laws being passed. They sort of took it out of the market."

Likewise, 2025 could be another quiet year, with customers lacking the motivation that sends them into gun stores in droves. And it may be more than just a 2025 problem, suggests Phillips, in California.

"My worry is it's not going to be just this year," he predicted. "My worry is it's going to be at least the next three years. I think it's going to be a grind for our industry."

But do politics even matter? Bastean, in Missouri, questions whether our elected leaders influence gun-buying habits. The economy, he argues, is a much stronger factor.

"The American population has gotten to the point where they just don't pay attention to people stomping their feet so much anymore," he said.

Indeed, recent historical events have given us a pretty high bar — in terms of what it might take to spark emotion-based buying.

"How do you create more fear than a pandemic and a riot at this point?" questioned Stevens, in Minnesota. "Anyone who lived through 2020 knows anything new in terms of demand is going to feel like a drop in the pond."

2. A STABLE ECONOMY WILL BE KEY

Less volatility isn't necessarily a bad thing, of course. Stevens expects the economy to be more stable.

"Let's just have a good year," he stated. "We don't have to have a great year. We don't have to have a terrible year. We could just have a good year."

There are, however, potential wildcards — particularly Trump's promise to aggressively employ tariffs on imported goods, which will elevate costs.



YOU HAVE TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO GO WITH THE TOOL. IT JUST SO HAPPENS THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE ARE PROFIT CENTERS FOR US. IT'S THE LEAST AMOUNT OF OVERHEAD WITH THE MOST AMOUNT OF RETURN."

Paul Bastean • *Managing Director*
Ultimate Defense
St. Peters, Mo.

"The big question right now is whether or not we're going to see tariffs on things like Chinese steel, which our industry relies on," Stevens noted. "If raw materials go up, there will be inflation in pricing in the firearms industry. How it gets navigated is anyone's guess."

Bastean is optimistic inflationary pressures will continue to decline. Even if tariffs cause short-term pain, they should spur

more American-based production. It's also impossible to ignore the impact this perception has on the economy, he added.

"I think there are a lot of people who have a lot more faith in the Donald Trump economy than they did the Joe Biden economy," he said. "I think we'll see more people spending than we did with the Biden administration."

There's little reason, however, to expect significant changes in the labor market. Finding and keeping good employees is likely to remain a tall task for everyone.

In California, the state's rising minimum wage requirements have forced Poway Weapons & Gear to push wages even higher for its employees.

"It certainly has added to the cost of business, and we passed it on through our range time and other costs," Phillips shared. "Finding employees is a challenge, so we're exploring ways to motivate or incentivize existing employees to stay with us."

In North Carolina, Hyatt says labor costs are particularly high compared to four or five years ago. The biggest challenge has been staffing the store's technology department, which handles key tasks, including online sales, inventory management and compliance.

"We had to farm it out to a company that has a lot of employees and they're available 24/7," Hyatt said.

Overall, the labor pool has been a bit better lately, but it still costs more to keep the best workers. And it's not easy to replace them if they leave.

"You hire three to get one. No matter what the resume says or what you learn in the interview, you don't know who you've hired," Hyatt explained. "After a couple months, when the honeymoon is over, that's when you know what



type of employee you have. And it doesn't always work out."

3. INNOVATION — BEYOND NEW PRODUCTS

As things stand, there doesn't appear to be a lot to get excited about in terms of new products coming down the line. But that's not particularly news, Hyatt suggests.

Top: To appeal to customers in what might be a relaxed market, John Phillips says his team is focused on making range visits an "experience" for guests. **Left:** Larry Hyatt advises dealers should stay financially flexible this year, to avoid getting tied up in capital on excess inventory.

"In the past few years, we haven't had a huge number of new products," he said. "We're always going to see a new caliber introduced, but not all of them catch on. It's a pretty conservative business."

At his store, small handguns are still drawing the most interest from customers. And the demand for handgun optics is on the rise.

Missouri's Bastean has a similar take.

"We've done everything we could possibly do to a handgun, a rifle and a shotgun," he noted. "For the past couple years there hasn't been anything revolutionizing the industry. And I don't believe we'll see it for a while, especially if we see a slowdown in the firearms industry in Trump's second or third year."

But it doesn't mean there isn't room for innovation at some point.

"I think there absolutely is," Bastean said. "We've seen some innovation with the red dot sights. They've gotten smaller, they've gotten more resilient and more used to abuse."

Stores in California, on the other hand, are dealing with a different landscape, thanks to the state handgun roster that limits which guns can be sold there. Last year saw the addition of about a dozen key guns, with more coming in 2025.

"This has certainly kept the firearm sales up higher than what they would have been had it not happened," Phillips observed.

When Stevens thinks of innovation, he sees it from an overall perspective — rather than what any particular gunmaker is doing. He points to steady improvements in manufacturing processes that have helped gunmakers build better guns, more efficiently.

"It's almost like an under-the-radar innovation," he said. "Maybe you won't even be able to see it but you'll know the result. If last year it took you 18 months to get the pistol you wanted, this year it took you nine. This is significant."

4. ALTERNATE REVENUES

If you can't count on unrest, political pressures or some dazzling new innovation to spark gun sales, it may be time to take a hard look at other ways to generate revenue. Simply putting a "guns for sale" sign out front probably won't be enough to succeed this year.

With this in mind, Stevens urges shops to look beyond the gun. Instead of waiting for customers to come through the door, find ways to encourage them to come in. This can be done with promotions, training, range competitions, classes, memberships and digital content created for customers.

"Think training. Think

memberships. Think community building inside of our space,” Stevens added. “Whether it’s consumers, gunsmiths or manufacturers, there’s just tons of money to be made by bringing people together. This is something we’ve historically been terrible at.”

In North Carolina, Hyatt puts a heavy emphasis on training through an outdoor range able to handle rifle, pistol and shotgun classes. Without an indoor range, they don’t do as well as some competitors when it comes to concealed carry classes. Instead, they focus on precision rifle, AR-15s and sporting clays.

“We can do things you can’t do at an indoor range, particularly with rifles and shotguns and moving around,” Hyatt shared.

While not everyone feels comfortable with the strategy, Hyatt’s shop charges a \$29 paperwork processing fee with all gun sales. It offsets one of the advantages online gun stores have — in not having to deal with customer paperwork. They also offer a \$49 service to help consumers sell to each other.

“There is room in our industry as the paperwork processor to help individuals sell their guns to other individuals and get a fee-based business on it,” Hyatt said.

Monthly and annual memberships can also provide a steady stream of income. Offering discounted training, range fees, product discounts and access to exclusive sales events can also help build loyalty.

“Our membership revenue is one of our most significant revenue streams,” noted Phillips.

One of the keys is having a staff dedicated to boosting those membership numbers by helping customers understand the value.

“We’re always out showing people how they can lower their overall range costs,” Phillips added.

“And we help them find discounts on the products they’re buying in order to train and stay efficient.”

In Missouri, Bastean touts the store’s strategy as a three-pronged approach built around the retail shop, range and training classes: It’s a place to buy a gun and accessories — and to get knowledge and experience needed to use them effectively.

“ IF YOU CAN’T COUNT ON UNREST, POLITICAL PRESSURES OR SOME DAZZLING NEW INNOVATION TO SPARK GUN SALES, IT MAY BE TIME TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT OTHER WAYS TO GENERATE REVENUE.

“You have to have knowledge and experience to go with the tool,” Bastean said. “It just so happens the knowledge and experience are profit centers for us. It’s the least amount of overhead with the most amount of return.”

5. THE BOTTOM LINE

So, what is it going to take be successful in 2025?

Bastean argues it will take dexterity, an ability to quickly read customer needs and offering something other than guns.

“Being prepared to have the right product at the right time is going to make a pretty big difference in how much success you see,” he said. “The margin on guns is getting so

cutthroat. Having some service or product with a higher profit margin is going to be essential to survival.”

For Phillips, the key is running an efficient organization.

“I mean pricing, labor and incentives, whether it’s customer incentives or employee incentives,” he shared. “You’re going to have to be very cost conscious and focused on trying to make great experiences for customers so you’re able to pull them back into the shop.”

Hyatt sees ready access to cash as an important tool for 2025. He worries some stores may already be hobbled by deep inventories accumulated in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

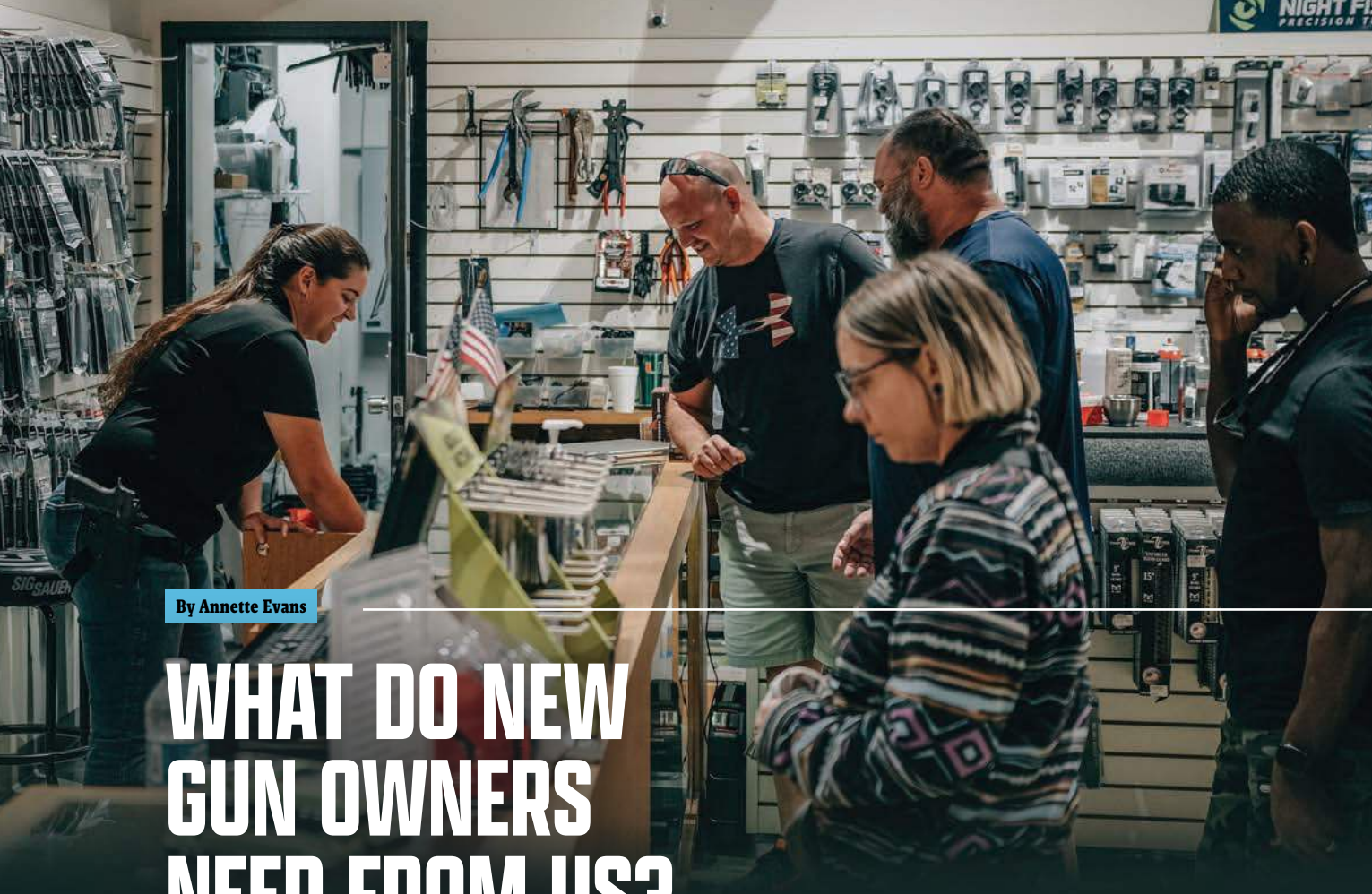
“They can’t buy what sells because they’ve got their money tied up in stuff that doesn’t,” Hyatt said. “This is a real risk for the gun industry. Getting rid of this excess inventory so they can participate in the business world is going to be critical, because this is a very capital-intensive business.”

Stevens’ advice is to remember customers, particularly in a quiet economy, have tremendous power. They often have many options for how they spend their money.

“Give a damn about your customers. That’s number one,” he advised.

“They don’t need any of this. This isn’t bread. This isn’t steak,” he continued. “If you already have one or two defensive handguns in your household or whatever hunting equipment you need, you don’t need anything else. It’s all wants at that point. So treat your customers awesome, and they’ll take care of you forever.” **E**

Dealers, what’s it going to take to be successful in the 2025 New Business Year? We want to hear from you: editor@shootingindustry.com.



By Annette Evans

WHAT DO NEW GUN OWNERS NEED FROM US?

Buying a gun is only the beginning of a new customer's journey. Whether the first-time buyer is interested in a new hobby or defending themselves, there's quite a bit more they should (or must) add to their shopping cart so they can be the safe and responsible gun owners we would all prefer to have as our friends, neighbors and customers.

The problem is it can be overwhelming for new gun owners to figure out what those things are and where to get them. You can help by putting them all in the same place.

MUST-HAVES

A gun is just a mechanical lump of metal and plastic,

inconveniently shaped for using as a blunt weapon, until its user learns the basics of safety and operation.

Selling someone their first gun is only enough to turn a customer into a gun owner. For a buyer who wants a new hobby, guiding them to a qualified instructor may be enough. For a buyer who needs a defensive tool right now, sending them home to wait until they can get to your recommended instructor is perhaps less useful.

Taking a few minutes to demonstrate the basic safety rules, to teach loading and unloading (with dummy ammunition!) and to walk through performing simple manipulations doesn't take a lot of expertise and may save a life. Even if the customer

doesn't remember everything, giving them the chance to see and try basic skills in person is a start for them to build on later, when they are able to learn and practice more.

Without ammunition, a gun is just a mechanical oddity. The entire reason they exist is to throw projectiles at targets. While picking the right ammo that will work with our guns is obvious after a few trips to the range, some new gun owners may never have even fired one before.

While we normally suggest trying several options before putting the money into buying a gun of your own, not everyone does for a variety of reasons. Besides, even if someone knows how to figure out and find the correct caliber for their own

first gun, it doesn't mean they know how to choose the best ammunition for their purposes.

What's appropriate for the range is often not appropriate for self-defense — and we all know there are a lot of gimmicks out there. Consider offering a package deal with reputable practice and defensive ammunition together, or at the very least include pointing out appropriate choices when selling to someone who has identified themselves as new to guns.

Gun stores are required to have secure storage or safety devices available for customers to buy, and new guns often come with simple trigger or cable locks. Offer better and steer new gun owners toward higher-quality alternatives instead of what we know to be cheap options offered merely for compliance with the letter of the law.

A full-size safe might be out of budgetary range, but a small lockbox able to be attached to a bed or other large piece of furniture might not be. Even a hard-sided case with higher quality locks and a security cable can be a workable solution that's safer and more secure than a flimsy trigger lock easily defeated with a simple screwdriver.

It's not just about upselling; it's about offering something closer to real protection against theft and unauthorized use.

NICE-TO-HAVES

Whether it's wise or not to buy a first handgun and plan to carry it right away, many people do. You might encourage education and practice before taking this step, but it doesn't mean they will listen.

Regardless, you can set them up for success by making a safe holster or other carry method available. For range or training use, an outside-the-waistband holster paired with a sturdy belt is ideal and may be a good starting point for a brand-new user who does intend to conceal carry their gun "someday," along with a concealment holster.

While universal or unstructured holsters may be simpler, a store can

set themselves apart by offering higher-quality options matching the gun being purchased and meeting safety standards such as trigger protection, gun retention (including by friction fit), an opening that does not collapse and secure attachment mechanisms.

Earn extra bonus points by having sample holsters and dummy firearms available so shoppers can handle and try before they buy, perhaps as part of a short class offered to all new gun buyers.

Replacement and upgrade parts and accessories might not be part of an initial sale, but the desire for them often comes quickly on the heels of any gun purchase. New gun owners are not immune. They can, however, be a bit less knowledgeable about exactly what to buy.

It's especially true for increasingly popular optical sights. Choosing a specific option, then figuring out how to attach it to the gun can be confusing for anyone — especially with the various footprints, mounts, plates, screws, torque settings, backup sights and everything else that goes with them.



SELLING SOMEONE THEIR FIRST GUN IS ONLY ENOUGH TO TURN A CUSTOMER INTO A GUN OWNER.

Having package deals with installation included — for optical sights, common repairs and more — are an easy button for the new or uncertain gun owner who doesn't want to DIY changes to their expensive equipment investment. It's a bonus, as it will allow them to focus on learning how to safely and appropriately use their new gun instead of worrying about making

sure their modifications work properly and aren't detracting from their shooting experience.

KNOWING THE LAW

Gun laws are complicated, and they deserve to be a separate area of attention. When and where can you bring your gun in your vehicle? What is required to legally carry your gun on your person? How and when is it appropriate to use a gun defensively?

The details vary from place to place, and it can be overwhelming and confusing for a new owner, who might not even be aware of how regulated guns are.

You need to be careful about offering legal advice, but you can provide reliable sources to help a new gun owner get their bearings in their new legal landscape. They can range from referrals to trusted instructors or specialized attorneys, to reliable printed material, to high-quality websites and videos. Many of the concealed carry insurance services also make educational resources available, often for free to non-members.

Just pointing out gun laws are complicated may be enough to set a new owner on the path to learning them instead of assuming they know what is necessary from random comments and videos.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

A first-time gun buyer doesn't have to be a one-time customer if you can be trusted as a reliable resource.

It's not just about making money, though. It's also about helping new gun owners also be the responsible gun owners they can and should be. It's about welcoming someone into our world instead of allowing them to fumble around, lost, confused and afraid of the equipment they just bought for fun or empowerment. It's about turning the dial toward safer handling and storage across the board, and being part of reducing the accidental property damage, injuries and deaths that can result when a person is new and unfamiliar to their guns. **SI**

RIMFIRE TAKES CENTER STAGE

Surging Popularity Creates Lucrative Retail Opportunities

BY BRYAN HENDRICKS

Once relegated to plinking and small-game hunting, rimfire

platforms are becoming increasingly popular in competitive target shooting. Far-sighted manufacturers are meeting the needs of this emerging market, and far-sighted retailers are reaping the benefits.

A WORLD OF ITS OWN

Manufacturers have long offered high-quality rimfire rifles, mostly in .22 LR, but also in .22 WMR and .17 WMR. Weatherby, Ruger, Anschütz, CZ, Remington, Winchester and Browning have made collector-grade .22 rimfire rifles. Remington's dedicated target models, the Model 540X, 541X and the Model 37 Rangemaster were decades ahead of their time and hinted at what was coming.

In the early 1990s, Ruger's highly adaptable 10/22 platform captured the fancy of the customization crowd. The 10/22 is accurate out of the box, but aftermarket

barrels and stocks make it a legitimate target rifle.

Ultimately, this led to an entire industry of rifles, barrels and accessories like stocks, suppressors and a host of accuracy-enhancing accessories like gear bags and rests. In the silhouette of the more elite centerfire market, the rimfire market has largely stayed in the shadows, but it's a long shadow.

John Childs is a manufacturing sales representative for H&G Outdoors, serving north Texas and western Oklahoma. He shoots competitive rimfire events, giving him a front row seat to this unique culture and market. He says it has created brisk demand for an entire universe of specialty products.

"Demand is definitely growing," Childs said. "It's on an uphill turn, but a lot of retailers haven't figured out that long-range rimfire has got legs. Ken Wheeler says rimfire is the biggest growth segment. I was kind of blown away when I heard him talking numbers. The products I've seen come around are amazing."

Wheeler is the director and owner of the Precision Rifle Series (PRS). He said in a



podcast it's a popular perception people enter the PRS world through rimfire and advance to centerfire. In reality, he acknowledged, rimfire is actually a world of its own.

"The more I've gotten to know the rimfire community, it seems like guys started in rimfire, and they stayed in rimfire," Wheeler said. "It's wildly entertaining, and it's really similar to centerfire stuff where you need a lot of the same fundamentals. Being a father of two young kids, that's how I'm going to get them in PRS. One hundred percent, I'm going to teach them how to shoot a .22."

When Childs shot his first PRS match with .22 rimfire, he shot at 35 yards.

"I realized how much fun that was," Childs said. "Now I'm shooting monthly rimfire matches where I shoot out to 400 yards."



IN THE SILHOUETTE OF THE MORE ELITE CENTERFIRE MARKET, THE RIMFIRE MARKET HAS LARGELY STAYED IN THE SHADOWS, BUT IT'S A LONG SHADOW.

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE ...

Accu-Tac is on the front lines of this market with its high-quality bipods and scope rings, according to Childs. Custom barrels and rifles from Bartlein and PROOF Research are in high demand. High-quality chassis are available from XLR Industries and MDT for long-range rimfire. Armageddon Gear's shooting bags are in high demand. Cole-TAC is known for its run-and-gun tripods,



Accu-Tac offers an array of bipods for numerous shooting styles — including competition, long-range, extreme long-range, benchrest, F-Class and more — as well as other bipod and rifle accessories. (Image: Accu-Tac)

and also for its specialty holsters for suppressed .22 rimfire handguns.

"You can go down this rabbit hole as far as you want," Childs said. "All this gear we use is fairly specialized. If you're already shooting centerfire, a lot of gear transfers over, but if you go to one of these matches, you're going to see that there's a fair amount of gear that you're going to need if you want to play."

"Everybody shares," Childs continued. "Walk into one of these matches, and anybody will let you use their gear. Eventually, you're going to want to buy it."

RIMFIRE-SPECIFIC GUN CARE

Even the gun-cleaning segment has a seat in the rimfire arena.

Jesse Rambo, co-owner of Bore Tech Inc., maker of custom quality cleaning products in Quakerstown, Pa., says rimfire has a major presence in his product lineup.

"Man, oh man, bolt-action rimfire long range! Holy cow! That has picked up dramatically the past two years," Rambo stated.

Rambo said rising rimfire popularity derives partly from the cost of centerfire ammunition and shooters not having access to extreme long-range facilities. If you don't have access to a 1,000-yard range to shoot your Creedmoor, you probably do have access to a 300-yard range to shoot your rimfire.

"We're actually one of the only companies targeting that weapons system, the rimfire," Rambo said. "There are some specific things you need when it comes to rimfire. You really need to focus on the fouling type. The fouling type you see in rimfire is nothing compared to centerfire."

Rimfire fouling has different characteristics from centerfire fouling, Rambo explains.

"With centerfire, you're trying to clean copper fouling and carbon fouling," he said. "With rimfire you're cleaning lead fouling and some kind of wax. It's a completely different type of powder fouling. Lube over wax creates different fouling material-wise."

Bore Tech's Eliminator Bore Cleaner is an effective solution to clean rimfire

barrels. It's not a solvent, Rambo said. It's a dedicated cleaner.

Also, cleaning precision rimfires requires different hardware than what's available in generic box store cleaning kits, Rambo said.

"You've got these rimfire rifles that have big ejectors that hang out right into the bore line," Rambo said. "Other manufacturers say you just need .22-caliber rods. But it doesn't fit. That big ejector hits the rods, and some companies choke their barrels to create a more consistent seal. With those, .22-caliber rods don't even fit down a .22-caliber barrel. They say to use a .17 or .20, but then you have to drop down a thread size with jags and everything else. So then they say buy an adapter to go from a bigger to smaller thread, but that's the biggest weak point. They snap."

The obvious solution, according to Rambo, is to build rods that are small enough fit through slightly under-bore barrels but that still have the proper

threads for brushes, jags and mops.

"We have a rimfire cleaning rod that can pass those ejectors," he noted.

Bore guides are another stepchild



A LOT OF RETAILERS DON'T UNDERSTAND IT, AND WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING IT AND HAVING THE RIGHT PRODUCTS, THEY MIGHT STRUGGLE A LITTLE. RIMFIRE IS A HUGE TREND.

Aaron Michaud • Owner
A&J Sporting
Ponca City, Okla.



in the rimfire world. Rambo said Bore Tech offers a rimfire-correct bore guide to fit multiple rifle brands.

"Rimfire bore guides have to be make and model specific," he explained. "They all have specific action designs. You can't take one for a CZ and stick it in a Tikka, so of course we have rimfire bore guides for the top 10 most popular models. CZ, Tikka, Ruger, Voodoo. You name it. We're the only company with a rimfire rod, and we're one of only a few that make rimfire bore guides."

ENDLESS CUSTOMIZATION

Aaron Michaud, owner of A&J Sporting, said the rising popularity of precision rimfire has turbocharged his business. He offers a full line of precision rimfire products, including chassis from a host of manufacturers. A&J's catalog demonstrates the sheer number of rimfire specific and rimfire compatible products that are available.

"When I got into the rimfire side, that's when business really started taking off," Michaud said. "We rode that wave. Some guys have as much in rimfire as they do in centerfire."

Some equipment is compatible for centerfire and rimfire, but the firearms industry does not accentuate the crossover capabilities of scopes and other equipment. That's a mistake, Michaud contends.

"If you shoot a rimfire at 300 yards, you're still working with the same elevations, drops and dialing of scopes as you would with a centerfire at 1,000 yards and beyond," he informed. "That allows them to work on a discipline they can't do with centerfire because they don't have those ranges (1,000 yards and more) nearby."

Again, the rimfire product roster is extensive.

"Shooting bags!" Michaud said. "I sell a lot of magazines and magazine extensions. Magazines. Bolt handles. Upgrades. There's a ton of products that are just small upgrades."

"People are running out of money for luxuries, and what we sell is



The Ruger 10/22 has a 60-year legacy among rimfire shooters. This platform has spawned an entire subset of manufacturers that make products for customization and other enhancements. On Oct. 22, 2017, Ruger celebrated the inaugural National Ruger Day — which has since grown into a popular annual event for 10/22 enthusiasts.

luxury,” Michaud elaborates. “We’re getting a lot of small orders. A \$60 bolt handle, a \$40 bolt knob. They can get those accessories and feel like they’re doing a lot here and there to their rifle without spending a lot of money.”

DON'T LIMIT SALES POTENTIAL

While there is a lot of rimfire-specific gear, only a few manufacturers make it, John Childs said. Aggressive retailers can corner the market in their areas by simply grabbing it. This requires networking.

“Go to shoots,” Childs recommends. “Tell people at those shoots that you carry the stuff. Participate in the space. Give a gift certificate to a prize table. Carry inventory the accessories that support the game. They will come, but people have to know you’ve got the goods.”



I'VE TAKEN SOME OF THE KIDS BEHIND THE COUNTER TO SHOOT. THEY'RE ALL ABOUT IT. IT'S QUITE ADDICTIVE.

John Childs • Sales Rep

H&G Outdoors
Big Lake, Minn.



It's really helpful to have someone on staff who speaks the rimfire language, he said.

“Guys behind the counter don’t necessarily know how to talk to consumers about the game,” Childs observes, “and a lot of times there’s not somebody in the store who can help a consumer pick the right product. I’ve taken some of the kids behind the counter to shoots. They’re all about it. It’s quite addictive.”

Michaud agrees, and said retailers who don’t supply dedicated rimfire products are limiting their own sales potential.

“A lot of retailers don’t understand it, and without understanding it and having the right products, they might struggle a little,” Michaud said. “Rimfire is a huge trend. NRL22 (National Rimfire League) is bringing a lot of new shooters to the sport, and those shooters are not scared to spend money.” **\$1**

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MENTORING THE ANTI-HUNTER



Mentorship is vital for the future of our hunting community, but let me suggest the demographic we need to focus on the most isn't other hunters. No, the "choir" we need to preach to isn't singing our praises; they're trying to silence them.

How do you mentor an anti-hunter? The goal might be to get them to hunt, but that's not the first step. The initial victory is turning an anti-hunter apathetic. If they stop opposing hunting, that's a win — from there, more victories can follow.

According to Jeff Rawlinson, vice president of National Archery in Schools, this transformation is possible, especially when we frame hunting correctly.

"One thing everyone

should be able to understand is hunting should be seen through the context of our North American Model of Conservation," Rawlinson explains. "While some folks are 'anti' simply because they can't get past the idea of killing animals, fewer oppose hunting when it's referred to as 'regulated hunting.' This shows them it's a legal, regulated activity governed by state and national laws, with oversight by professionals trained in these fields."

This change in perspective won't happen overnight. It takes work. The first step in having an anti-hunter reconsider their opposition is to understand why they're against hunting in the first place.

"When anti-hunters learn about the immense success our nation has

had in conservation — thanks in large part to the funding structure created by sportsmen and women — the term 'hunting' becomes much more understandable," Rawlinson adds. "Once people understand something better, it's harder to be against it. Emphasizing the ecological, economic and social benefits hunting provides helps clarify that their opposition often stems from misunderstandings about what hunting really is. While it may not turn them into hunters overnight, it reframes the conversation around facts and encourages them to think more deeply."

UNDERSTANDING ANTI-HUNTING PERSPECTIVES

Anti-hunters generally oppose hunting for

various reasons, often involving ethical concerns, environmental worries, and philosophical beliefs. Understanding these viewpoints is important for mentoring effectively.

1. Animal Rights & Ethics

- **Moral Opposition to Killing:** Many anti-hunters believe it's morally wrong to kill animals for sport or recreation. They argue animals have an inherent right to live without human interference or harm.

- **Sentience and Suffering:** Anti-hunters often emphasize animals are sentient beings capable of feeling pain, and thus, they view it as unethical to cause suffering or death for human purposes.

2. Environmental & Conservation Concerns

- **Disruption of Ecosystems:** Anti-hunters argue hunting disrupts ecosystems and can unbalance species populations, leading to unintended consequences within the food chain.

- **Non-Natural Population Control:** While hunters often claim hunting helps manage wildlife populations, anti-hunters believe nature has its own population-control mechanisms. They worry human intervention may do more harm than good.

- **Trophy Hunting:** There's robust opposition to trophy hunting, which anti-hunters view as wasteful, disrespectful and solely for sport rather than necessity.

3. Alternatives To Hunting

• **Non-Lethal Methods:** Anti-hunters frequently advocate for non-lethal methods of managing wildlife populations, such as sterilization or relocation. They believe modern techniques allow for more humane coexistence with wildlife.

4. Cultural & Societal Norms

• **Changing Social Values:** Society's attitudes toward animals are shifting. As more people live in urban areas, the idea of animals as creatures to be protected is becoming more common, rather than viewing them as resources for food or sport.

• **Respect for Wildlife:** Some oppose hunting out of a broader philosophical respect for wildlife. They believe humans should adopt a non-interventionist approach to nature, allowing animals to live without the threat of being hunted.

COMMUNICATING WITH ANTI-HUNTERS

Changing an anti-hunter's views requires civil, patient communication. Cassie Gasaway — a fellow hunter and outdoor communicator with previous experience at the Archery Trade Association and NWTF — offers essential advice.

"People will judge you by how you look, talk and act. Since only 4% of the American population hunts, 96% are watching,

analyzing and critiquing what we do at home and in the field. You must always represent hunting positively," she said.

She advised hunters should avoid missteps in how they communicate.

"Phrases like, 'If it's brown, it's down!' might seem harmless among hunters but can sound ruthless to non-hunters," she warned. "Such comments might suggest you're killing just to kill, which can be off-putting. Additionally, sharing graphic images online without context can alienate people unfamiliar with hunting."

BUILDING BRIDGES: HOW TO MENTOR AN ANTI-HUNTER

According to Tom Ryle, a mentor with The First Hunt Foundation, listening is the key to opening a dialogue.

"In my experience, an approach centered on listening is crucial," he says. "By showing an

interest in the other party's views, you're more likely to have them listen to yours."

7 STEPS TO EFFECTIVE MENTORSHIP

1. Understand Their Perspective: Take the time to learn their views on hunting. Listening to their concerns about animal welfare or ethical issues can help you engage meaningfully.

2. Find Common Ground: Focus on shared interests, like a love for nature or conservation. Identifying common values is a powerful way to bridge the gap between differing opinions.

3. Be Respectful: Always approach discussions with respect and an open mind. Avoid confrontational language and be willing to listen without judgment.

4. Share Your Passion: If appropriate, explain why hunting is important to you —

whether it's about wildlife management, conservation or sourcing ethical food.

5. Engage In Neutral Activities: Invite them to join activities like habitat management or volunteering for conservation projects. This can offer a new perspective on the positive impacts of hunting without the pressure of the hunt itself.

6. Be Patient: Building understanding takes time. Let the relationship develop naturally without pushing your views too quickly.

7. Respect Boundaries: If certain topics are sensitive, avoid them. Instead, focus on enjoying mutual interests and cultivating respect.

"In the end, it's about education," Gasaway suggests. "Invite anti-hunters on hunting-related adventures, like managing habitat or cleaning up trash in the woods, so they can see firsthand how hunters work to improve the environment for wildlife."

Mentoring anti-hunters into a more neutral or understanding stance requires patience, respect and a willingness to have open, honest conversations. It's about more than just changing minds — fostering mutual understanding, breaking down misconceptions and showing hunters are stewards of the land, working to preserve wildlife for generations. **SI**

"IN MY EXPERIENCE, AN APPROACH CENTERED ON LISTENING IS CRUCIAL. BY SHOWING AN INTEREST IN THE OTHER PARTY'S VIEWS, YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE THEM LISTEN TO YOURS."

Tom Ryle • Mentor
The First Hunt Foundation



So, You Want To Add A Range?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TAKING A (BIG) NEXT STEP

BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

You're selling firearms and ammunition, and a fair share of accessories. Business is good. But you don't have a shooting range, and when customers purchase guns they have to go across town to shoot them.

Is it time to up your game and add a range? Adding a range is a big undertaking. The preparation to open a range is an order of magnitude larger than the paperwork to get your FFL and open your store was.

We spoke with two experienced sources to answer the big questions for those businesses looking to expand into range ownership: Miles Hall, senior consultant for Hall-N-Hall, and Jeff Swanson, managing member at NexGen Range Consulting.

GIVE CUSTOMERS WHAT THEY WANT

According to Hall, dealers are the front line of the shooting sports world.

"Serving the needs of their guests is always on the minds of the more successful dealers," he noted. "The first thing is to see if there is a need for a range in the area they serve. If so, having a range attached to the store is best, as it helps with easier access. Ranges can add significantly to draw and appeal and to the bottom

line."

One way to find out if there's a need for a range, according to Hall, is simply to ask your customers.

"They will always tell you the needs they have," he said. "Next, see what options in the range arena are available, along with their condition. And talk with a consultant. A good consultant can bring their years of experience and help guide the dealer going forward."

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS — QUICKLY

Before you even start to think seriously about adding a range, you need to have your finances in order.

"You must plan out the cost of the building along with the equipment, supplies, classrooms, storage, added

overhead and staffing,” Hall advised. “The current operation must be on solid ground with a reserve to help with the cost of preparing for this addition.”

Don’t let owing money on your current store in itself be the reason you don’t move forward.

“How much you owe is not as critical, as that figure often varies,” Hall said. “But being current with everything you have, and holding a good reserve of cash, is essential.”

According to Swanson, adding a range means being able to provide what he terms the “big three” profit centers for customers: the range itself, training and membership.

“The retail profit center is the most volatile,” Swanson observed. “Retail will always be cyclical. Once you add a range, you have the ability to start engaging a captive audience who comes into your facility. It allows you to expand beyond just retail and add far more profitable profit centers of shooting range and rentals, training and classes and memberships. Each of those profit centers carries a much higher net profit.”

To be financially sound enough to expand your business, Swanson shared you should take stock of your access to cash or other liquidity.

“It may be through your own efforts of savings and current retail cash flow, investors or bankers or a combination of all three,” he noted. “To add a range to an existing brick-and-mortar, you’re looking at two big costs. One is the cost of the building itself, which is usually either concrete filled block or tilt-up concrete. The average cost per square foot across the country for just the building is about \$250 per square foot right now.”

The other significant cost is the range equipment.

“The range equipment and the lead filtration equipment generally starts at about \$85,000 per 25-yard lane, installed,” Swanson said. “This includes the stalls, the retrieval equipment, the bullet traps, the baffles and all of the comfort air and lead filtration for each lane.”

Depending on what enhancements

you add, the cost per lane can go up significantly.

HAVING THE RIGHT SETUP IS CRUCIAL

Once you’re confident you can manage this addition financially, the next step is to think about a building. This isn’t a small piece of the undertaking; having the right building is crucial.

“The number of lanes you’re considering will impact this,” Hall stated. “With today’s advancement in range technology, you can build what’s known as a ‘Box within a Box.’ That said, the floor must be strong enough to hold the added weight of equipment, including the lead and the traps. The walls must be able to handle the unique heating, cooling and exhausting of air. The engineering that goes into building the optimal range is stunning.”



The best predictor of success is to have a strong business plan and *pro forma* before you start down this path.”

Miles Hall • Senior Consultant
Hall-N-Hall

Also think about where you’re going to put the building. Obviously, expanding your existing store is ideal. If you’re not able to, however, you need to take into consideration easy access from main highways, parking and local demand for what you have to offer.

“Use experts, trust them and follow their guidance,” Hall said. “Keep things simple overall. We provide our

clients with a project evaluation guide that helps the dealer decide if they are ready for something like this. Defining the goal and determining if there is a market are crucial steps.”

Swanson recommends choosing a location that’s feasible.

“If you’re close to a school or a commercial area, where permitting and zoning are going to be difficult, you may have to get a special use permit or variances,” Swanson noted. “It’s better to consider a different location where you can add the range easily and more efficiently and economically.”

Swanson points out, in general, about half the space in a new range building is dedicated to the range itself, and the other half to other uses such as the retail floor, offices, storage, classrooms, restrooms, food and beverage and other non-range uses.

“If you’re planning to add 10 lanes of 25 yards, it’s in the ballpark of 5,000 square feet of space,” he said. “You’ll need 5,000 feet more for all the other uses, so you’ll need about a 10,000 square-foot building.”

DON’T SKIMP ON THIS

Swanson said the HVAC and lead removal systems are the number-one thing range owners should not skimp on.

“Many range owners say they’re not worried about that part because they have a brother-in-law who has an HVAC business,” he shared. “But if he doesn’t have experience specifically in this industry — and in the highly technical design that goes into the appropriate lead filtration systems to capture lead — this is where OSHA can come knocking. Go to one of the large range lead filtration providers and have them design and install a system, and then follow all of their maintenance guidelines.”

BIG INVESTMENT, BIG OPPORTUNITY

Adding it all together, the starting price for a 10-lane range is going to be well over \$3 million. It’s a substantial investment, but it also will give you significant return on that investment.

“Once you add a range, you’re in much more control of your own destiny,” said Swanson. “Because there’s a high cost of entry, the three profit centers of range, training and membership aren’t on every corner, and you don’t have to compare yourself to the big boxes or to those online, because you have people coming in to use your facility.”

Getting customers into your facility is one challenge, keeping them becomes the next.

“Once they’re in, keeping them in there longer increases the per-person ticket average, which makes your overall business model stronger and more insulated from the cyclical forces that apply to the retail profit center,” Swanson stated.

MAKE YOUR FACILITY A DESTINATION

According to Swanson, two of the most important design factors to make a range a destination are adding food/beverage and classroom space.

“When you add the range, if your brick-and-mortar retail doesn’t already have space for a classroom, membership lounge and the like, be sure to include those things,” he said. “Also try to include a small area for

food and beverage. It can be as simple as a reach-in kiosk and a small lounge area, or as large as a full café you lease out to a local catering company or restaurateur.”

When you have classroom space for training, you can also use it as event space.

“This can be the most important marketing tool owner-operators



Once you add a range, you have the ability to start engaging a captive audience who comes into your facility.”

Jeff Swanson • Managing Member
NexGen Range Consulting

have,” Swanson added. “In addition to hosting public events, you can also rent out your classroom space when it’s not being used for training for birthday parties, bachelor parties, corporate team building events and Christmas parties. This gets people coming in your door for an event who may have never stepped into a range before.”

Once they’re in the door, it’s up to you to get them interested in the shooting sports.

KEEP GUESTS AT THE CENTER

Expanding your business in any way carries risk, but there are things you can do to minimize the risk and increase the likelihood you will succeed.

“The best predictor of success is to have a strong business plan and *pro forma* before you start down this path,” Hall advised. “The ranges I know of that have gotten into trouble are those that have overbuilt for their markets, or have been under-capitalized or mismanaged after they were open.”

He continued, “Know how you’re doing at retail. If you realize you’re leaving money on the table from customers who buy firearms in your place and go elsewhere to shoot them or take a class, put it all down on paper and get the help of people who have owned and operated shooting ranges. When coupled with a strong and conservative *pro forma* and business plan, this gives you the best chance for success. It gives you a path to profitability.”

At the end of the day, dealers must make everything they do about serving their guests and their community.

“Spirit of the operation is number one,” Hall said. “The team who loves their guests and understands they are about growing the shooting sports will show in everyday ways their store is *the place* to be. This spirit will encourage folks to want to be there, to grow their knowledge, to be the best and be happy doing it all. Spirit will carry a business further, faster and longer than anything else.” **SI**



While no easy task to see to completion, adding a range gives customers yet another reason to visit your facility over another.



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6 Marketing Trends Set To Define 2025

BY ASHLEY MCGEE

AS the firearms industry enters 2025, rapidly evolving consumer expectations, regulatory pressures and digital disruptions are reshaping marketing strategies. From diversifying messaging to leveraging advanced technologies, staying competitive means adapting to these trends.

Here's an in-depth look at the forces shaping the future of firearms marketing and how businesses can pivot for success.

1. EXPAND BEYOND SELF-DEFENSE MESSAGING

For years, the firearms industry has leaned heavily on self-defense as the primary motivator for first-time gun buyers. While effective, this singular focus risks limiting the broader appeal of firearm ownership. In 2025, expect a concerted effort to reposition firearms as tools for recreation, sport and family-friendly activities.

Shooting sports, for example, offer a unique opportunity to engage younger audiences, families and communities. Programs promoting competitions, hunting and range days can introduce newcomers to the enjoyment of shooting while reinforcing positive aspects of firearm ownership. Beyond attracting new participants, this shift also helps normalize the use of firearms in non-threatening, mainstream contexts.

Retailers can take advantage of this trend by hosting events such as beginner-friendly range days, sponsoring local shooting competitions or promoting gear tailored for recreational shooting. Highlighting these activities in marketing materials can help shift perceptions and expand the industry's audience.

2. THE FALL OF TRADITIONAL INFLUENCERS

Influencer marketing seemed like the future of outreach just a few

years ago. However, in the firearms space, brands are reevaluating its value. Many companies have invested significant resources into influencer partnerships, only to find the return on investment falling short of expectations. In response, some are scaling back or eliminating influencer budgets entirely.

Why the change? Much of it boils down to authenticity and engagement. Large influencers with millions of followers often lack the niche credibility needed to resonate with firearm enthusiasts. Their audiences are broad but less likely to include deeply engaged shooters. For this reason, the trend is shifting toward micro- and nano-influencers — creators with smaller but highly engaged audiences. These influencers often have closer relationships with their followers, making their endorsements more impactful.

Retailers and manufacturers should focus on building partnerships with influencers who are authentic,

knowledgeable and genuinely passionate about firearms. These creators may not have the biggest followings, but their influence within the community is far more meaningful.

3. TREAD LIGHTLY WITH “DE-INFLUENCING”

The rise of “de-influencing” presents a double-edged sword for the firearms industry. Originally intended to counter the overconsumption culture promoted by social media, de-influencing has evolved into a broader trend where creators discourage purchases or critique products. For firearm-related content, this trend requires careful navigation.

When done responsibly, de-influencing can provide honest, thoughtful reviews that help consumers make informed decisions. However, overly critical or sensational content risks damaging the reputation of not just individual brands but the entire industry. Negative portrayals can amplify existing stigmas around firearms, making it harder for the industry to build trust with broader audiences.

Content creators should focus on balanced reviews that highlight both strengths and areas for improvement. Retailers and manufacturers can also play a role by providing detailed product information and engaging with creators to ensure accurate representation of their offerings.

4. DECREASED RELIANCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The firearms industry’s relationship with mainstream social media platforms continues to deteriorate. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube have tightened restrictions on firearm-related content, leaving many brands feeling sidelined.

Meta’s “Recommendation Guidelines,” for instance, ensure that even compliant posts won’t reach users beyond an account’s existing followers, severely limiting growth potential. Similarly, YouTube’s updated firearm policies have made it increasingly difficult for creators

to maintain their channels without facing strikes or demonetization.

These restrictions are driving brands to explore alternative platforms like Rumble and X (formerly Twitter). Guns.com’s decision to shift its video content away from YouTube is a prime example of this trend. In a press release, Scott Gara, managing editor of Guns.com, cited YouTube’s restrictive policies as unsustainable for firearm brands.

For retailers and manufacturers, this pivot underscores the importance of diversifying their digital presence. Building email lists, investing in owned media like websites and blogs and exploring niche platforms can help maintain visibility in an increasingly restrictive digital environment.

“The rise of ‘de-influencing’ presents a double-edged sword for the firearms industry.”

5. VIDEO CONTENT REMAINS KING

Despite challenges with social media, video content continues to be one of the most effective ways to engage audiences. Platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts are driving the trend toward short-form video, which captures attention quickly and effectively.

Product demos, behind-the-scenes factory tours and quick tips for improving shooting skills are just a few examples of content that performs well in video format. Short videos are particularly well suited for mobile viewing, which is how most consumers access content today.

Retailers should also consider incorporating user-generated video

content. Encouraging customers to share their experiences — whether through testimonials or range day footage — can build trust and community engagement. Just ensure all content adheres to platform guidelines to avoid penalties.

6. AI REVOLUTIONIZES CUSTOMER PERSONALIZATION

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept — it’s here, and it’s reshaping marketing strategies across industries. For the firearms industry, AI offers powerful tools to deliver personalized experiences that drive engagement and loyalty. By analyzing browsing habits, purchase histories, and preferences, AI can recommend products, tailor email campaigns, and even predict future needs.

Voice and visual search technologies are also gaining traction, making it easier for consumers to find exactly what they’re looking for. For example, a customer could upload an image of a firearm part they need, and AI could match it with the exact product in the retailer’s inventory.

However, the effective use of AI requires transparency and balance. Over-personalization that feels intrusive or predictive can alienate customers. Retailers and manufacturers must be clear about how they collect and use data to build trust with their audience. When implemented thoughtfully, AI has the potential to revolutionize how the industry connects with its customers.

ADAPTING TO FIND SUCCESS IN 2025

The firearms industry stands at a pivotal moment. With new opportunities to engage consumers and build brand loyalty, the strategies of the past will no longer suffice. By embracing these trends — whether it’s shifting away from fear-based messaging, navigating the complexities of social media or leveraging the power of AI — firearm retailers and manufacturers can position themselves for success in a rapidly changing market.

Adaptability, authenticity and innovation will be the keys to thriving in 2025 and beyond. **SI**



TURN LIKES INTO LOYALTY

ENGAGE WITH CUSTOMERS DEEPER ON INSTAGRAM

BY MICHELLE SCHEUERMANN

Can you have meaningful conversations and build deeper experiences with customers just by using social media? Yes! Specifically, with Instagram. By utilizing a few tools available to Instagram Business accounts, you can create new avenues for your most enthusiastic customers and engage them to buy

even *more* from you.

WORK WITH THE SCIENCE

We've heard social media is addicting. Just review the screentime reports on your phone. If you have Apple, open "Settings," then "Screen Time." The numbers may shock you. (On that same screen, scroll down to the "pickup" number, which tells you how many times you picked up your phone so far today. Yikes.)

Because so many of us are addicted to our phones, mainly due to the dopamine hit we get from it, our brain is constantly seeking new rewards. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that makes you feel good, and our brain naturally seeks it out. Research has told us one of other reasons

we can't stop picking up our phones is because it delivers one of our most basic needs — human connection.¹

Knowing people are looking at Instagram to seek out dopamine and/or a human connection, is it any wonder the following tools will help you connect with your customers on a deeper lever?

LINK IN BIO IS OUT, OR NOT?

Some marketers will tell you verbalizing or typing the words "Link in Bio" will prompt Instagram to "degrade" your post. It's simply not true. This rumor may have started as there is research to support Facebook dislikes links and will suppress any post with a link in it. But not so for Instagram.

However, this rumor hasn't

stopped marketers from pushing the use of chatbots, such as ManyChat, to engage on a deeper level with followers. Here's how it works:

1. In your Instagram post or Reel, tell customers to type in the comments with "Guide" or "Story" or "Sale" — literally any single word — to get what you are selling/promoting/sharing.

2. The bot will reply to their comment with a version of "Thanks! Check your DMs."

3. The bot sends the user who commented a DM (Direct Message) with the guide or link you were promoting.

Most chatbots aren't free. However, you can do this for yourself for free. Still tell followers to comment with a single word, and then physically go through the comments and DM them the link. It's more time consuming, yes, but free.

The best part about using a chatbot is the extra "boost" your post will get from all the comments on it. The Instagram algorithm is seeing all the extra activity on the post and may push it out to more users.

Additionally, you have permission and a direct link to the customer for future conversations.

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

In 2023, Instagram started allowing Broadcast Channels, which gives accounts a direct line to engage with followers and build community at scale. Currently, Broadcast Channels are allegedly available to Professional (Business) accounts with 10,000 followers or more. How to know if you have a Professional account?

Open Instagram and choose Settings and Privacy. Scroll down a bit and there you'll see an option "For professionals." If you see the words "Business tools and controls" it means you have a Business account, and if you see "Creator tools and insights" you have a Creator account. Allegedly, Broadcast Channels is available

to both types of Professional accounts, but some accounts with more than 10,000 followers still don't have access to it yet.

Why start a Broadcast Channel? It is a quick, casual way to connect directly with your followers. However, it's a one-way conversation. Meaning, only you, as the account and channel owner, can comment and share links. Followers in the channel can use a limited set of emojis to give a reaction to your broadcast channel posts.



BY UTILIZING A FEW TOOLS AVAILABLE TO INSTAGRAM BUSINESS ACCOUNTS, YOU CAN CREATE NEW AVENUES FOR YOUR MOST ENTHUSIASTIC CUSTOMERS AND ENGAGE THEM TO BUY EVEN *MORE* FROM YOU.



Ways to use Broadcast Channels:

- Share authentic content and behind-the-scenes moments via text or video and voice. Example posts: Today's sale item (can link off Instagram), reminder of upcoming events, share moments in your business, giveaways.
- Engage your fans through polls and question prompts to crowdsource feedback or ideas.

I've seen this tactic work especially well. People enjoy giving their opinion.

STARTING A BROADCAST CHANNEL

It only takes three steps to get your broadcast channel up and running:

1. From your Instagram inbox, click on the little pencil in the upper right corner.

2. "Create a broadcast channel" should be listed.

3. Your followers will receive a one-time notification to join the channel. Only followers who join will receive subsequent notifications for new updates. You can also encourage followers to join by using the "join channel" sticker in Stories or by pinning the channel link to your profile.

A key feature to Broadcast Channels is once followers join, any notification from the channel shows up in their inbox, right next to their other messages. Personal experience has told me I must click on the Broadcast Channel to read the notification or else my inbox will always show there's a message. With that said, you don't want to be annoying, so limit posting on this channel to around once or twice a week.

INSTAGRAM SUBSCRIPTIONS

Instagram Subscriptions uses more marketing tricks to encourage followers to interact and stay on the platform longer and engage with you — so use this to your advantage.

With Subscriptions, subscribers pay a monthly fee to see exclusive content highlighted with a unique purple ring on your account. They are "in the club" so to speak, even though the user must pay for this special access. They also get a subscriber badge next to their name so they can stand out in the comments and DMs. Another way to show how they are special!

How much you charge for Subscriptions is up to you. You could see it as a way to generate cash flow, but my recommendation

is to use it to find those die-hard customers and reward them.

Subscriptions offers exclusive lives, stories and even an exclusive chat — all for subscribers (or, “subbies,” as they’re called).

Most creators use Subscriptions to cultivate their most engaged fans into one area. These fans feed off one another in the Subscriber chats — mostly because it is a “safe space” with “like-minded” people. Typically, these Subscription chats go over very well. In Subscription chats I’ve been a part of, I’ve seen fellow subbies buy coffee gift cards for others in the chat or send flowers to another subbie who lost a loved one. The groups tend to connect with one another on a deeper level.

The chats also send out push notifications to all in the chat space. Subscribers can opt out of the notifications, but it’s just one more way for people to pick up their phone and see what’s going on in the chats.

As the content creator, use Subscriptions to:

- **Host Subscriber Lives:** These are live streams that drive more engagement with audiences.
- **Post Subscriber Stories:** Produce stories just for your subscribers. Additionally, you can use interactive story stickers with top followers.
- **Use Subscriber Badges:** These appear next to subscribers’ comments and messages so creators can quickly identify these people. It makes it easy to engage with them personally with thanks, shoutouts or other recognition.
- **Use Subscriber Posts & Reels:** These are posts and Reels only subscribers can access.
- **Engage in Subscriber Chats:** You can establish multiple exclusive channels for subscribers with a limit of 250 participants.

HOW DO SUBSCRIPTIONS WORK?

Make sure you provide value: Decide what you can offer to your subscribers so it’s clear why they want to pay for it.

This could be early access to new content or products, behind-the-scenes clips, extended video cuts,

interacting with you more regularly through exclusive chats or something else that showcases your brand/product/talent.

I’ve seen channels offer direct phone numbers to text the creators, another exclusive option.

Some Subscriptions have offered free two-day shipping or free upgraded shipping on orders. They don’t have to buy through Instagram to get this, they just note on the order they are a subbie. Or you can give subbies special codes to use at checkout.



ENGAGE YOUR FANS THROUGH POLLS AND QUESTION PROMPTS TO CROWDSOURCE FEEDBACK OR IDEAS. PEOPLE ENJOY GIVING THEIR OPINION.



Maintain a successful Subscription by feeding the beast — and this is the perfect avenue to go deeper with your most engaged, most influential followers. If the chats are quiet, create a poll or ask a question of the community.

A CUSTOMER INPUT GOLDMINE

Review the chats to source material for new Reels or posts — there’s a goldmine of information by your best customers in there. If you see a pain point, address it. If you see an opportunity for a new product,

stock it.

People enjoy being recognized (again, dopamine hit) — so do something special for subbies by giving shoutouts and making them feel like VIPs when you respond in comments or chats.

The craziest things I’ve seen in Subscriber chats is when a person asks if they should buy something from the creator. (Of course, you should buy the thing from the creator!)

Subconsciously, we know asking a group dedicated to a page if they should buy from the page, is a silly thing. And yet we do it anyway because we love the recognition and cheers from the group chat. It’s dopamine feeding other dopamine hits.

I get a dopamine hit just from telling you to buy something. It’s a conspiracy we are all aware of happening. The point is — it all benefits *you*, the creator and owner of the Subscription.

Again, Instagram Subscriptions is not available to all accounts, even those with more than 10,000 followers. You still have to meet Instagram’s Partner Monetization Policies and Content Monetization Policies.

To know if you can access it, go to your “Professional Dashboard” and tap “Your Tools” then hit “Subscriptions” and “Get Started.”

Instagram offers a rich tapestry of tools such as chatbots, Broadcast Channels and Subscriptions that can significantly deepen your engagement with customers. By understanding and leveraging the role of the innate desire for human connection, you can transform social interactions into meaningful relationships that not only captivate but also convert. These tools provide a dynamic platform for personalized communication and community building, making it easier than ever to nurture loyalty and encourage active participation. **SI**

Footnotes

1. lemonade.com/blog/psychology-behind-phone-addiction



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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)

MORE 2025 NEW PRODUCTS!

Here in Part 2 of the three-part 2025 New Product Showcase, you'll get to see the latest and greatest from more than 50 manufacturers, importers and distributors. Handguns, rifles, shotguns, knives, apparel and more are featured across the next 13 pages.

Dealers, if you see any must-have products, contact your sales rep — or, even better — map out a time to stop by and see the products in person at SHOT Show or other early-year trade events.

Next month will conclude the 2025 New Product Showcase — which will feature numerous products that debuted at SHOT Show 2025. We're proud to present these one-of-a-kind showcases to help give subscribers an early-year boost.

Have feedback for us? Let us know, anytime: editor@shootingindustry.com.



KIMBER MFG. INC.

(888) 243-4522
kimberamerica.com

The **2K11** from Kimber debuts with standard and target configuration models, and each is chambered in 9mm as well as .45 ACP. The 2K11 features an external extractor for increased reliability and durability and a Type III hard-anodized aluminum grip module. The 2K11's improved internal geometry enhances the reliability of feeding the high-capacity magazines. The Kimber signature GT Trigger breaks at a consistent 3.5 lbs. Both models come with three magazines and one C&H optic mounting plate. Target models have a ported slide, adjustable rear target sight and Kimber exclusive Stan Chen Customs competition magwell.



HENRY REPEATING ARMS

(866) 200-2354
henryusa.com

Henry Repeating Arms introduces a **NON-THREADED VARIANT OF THE HOMESTEADER 9MM**. The Homesteader 9mm uses direct blowback semi-automatic operation and accepts interchangeable magazine wells for Henry, GLOCK, SIG, or S&W M&P magazines. The H027N-H9G is pre-fitted with a Henry magazine well and includes a five-round and 10-round magazine in the box, along with a magazine well for OEM GLOCK G17 or G19 magazines.



SIDEWINDER X

STREAMLIGHT INC.

(800) 523-7488
streamlight.com

The **SIDEWINDER X** from Streamlight is a high-output, multi-fuel military flashlight with four LED color options and intensity levels, up to 275 lumens and a 185-degree articulating head. It is powered by either disposable alkaline or lithium batteries and is available in three different versions (Military, Aviation and User Configurable). The compound On-Off mode selector switch ergonomically separates the On-Off, dimming, strobe and LED color selection functions. It comes with a durable belt/gear clip to securely fasten it to a helmet, belt or MOLLE, and it fits existing Sidewinder helmet mounts and adapters. A cord attachment hole in the body supports up to 50 lbs.

Measuring 2.2" long and just over 0.5" wide, the **NANO LIGHT II** weighs 0.6 oz., and is double the brightness of its predecessor. The extremely sturdy light is constructed of machined aircraft-grade aluminum with an anodized black finish. Its white LED is impervious to shock with a 50,000-hour lifetime. The waterproof Nano Light II has a non-rotating snap hook for one-handed operation with an easy twist of the rotating on/off head switch. Its LED provides 20 lumens and a beam distance of 22 meters. Powered by a single AAAA alkaline battery (included), the light provides one hour of run time.

The **TLR-7 HL-X SUB USB** weapon-mounted tactical light has four different models to fit popular rail subcompact handguns. It delivers up to 1,000 lumens and 30 minutes of run time when using a Streamlight SL-B9 USB-C rechargeable battery pack. Users also can program the light to provide 60 minutes of run time and 500 lumens with the same USB rechargeable battery, or with a single disposable CR123A lithium battery. Its specialized clamp system enables mounting the light on a variety of subcompact handguns using the provided key kit, and also has rear switches on the left and right of the trigger guard.



MR556 A4

HECKLER & KOCH USA

(706) 568-1906
hk-usa.com

Heckler & Koch launches its **MR A4 SERIES** with the MR556 A4 and MR762 A4 rifles. Modeled after the select-fire HK416 and HK417, the MR556 A4 and MR762 A4 include a two-position adjustable gas block for shooting suppressed or un-suppressed, a fully ambidextrous lower receiver (bolt catch/release, magazine release and 45-degree selector levers) and a slimline handguard and buttstock. At launch, the MR556 A4 will come in two barrel lengths: a 11.5" pistol configuration and a 16.5" rifle. The MR762 A4 will ship with a 16.5" barrel.



BEAR CREEK ARSENAL

(919) 439-8133
bearcreekarsenal.com

The **BC-15 BOLT ACTION STYLE COMPLETE UPPER AND RIFLE** in .350 Legend and .450 Bushmaster from Bear Creek Arsenal combines the classic appeal and precision of bolt action with the modularity of the AR platform. It utilizes a rugged steel handle with an ultra-short 23-degree throw. Plus the absence of cycling noise makes it ideal for precision shooters focused on their next shot. The BC-15 Bolt Action Style Upper is designed to fit seamlessly with any standard AR-15 lower, and the bolt-action-style bolt carrier group utilizes the same T25 Torx bit for disassembly as BCA's Gen-2 side charging handle.



POF-USA

(623) 561-9572
pof-usa.com

The **LMR BASE RIFLE** from POF-USA features a Rogue receiver set and E2 16.5" match-grade .308 Win. barrel. The Keylock BCG boasts a patented roller cam pin to ensure smooth operation. The anti-tilt six-position buffer tube comes standard with a Mission First Tactical Minimalist Retractable Stock. The Rogue receiver has a hard-anodized black finish and a 15" M-LOK handguard. The rifle weighs 6.1 lbs., and OAL is 34" when collapsed.



COLUMBIA RIVER KNIFE & TOOL

(800) 891-3100
crkt.com

Named after the Aztec god of fire and lightning, the CRKT **XOLOTL FIXED BLADE** combines mythical inspiration and modern materials for a durable, high-performance fixed-blade knife. Part of the Forged By War Program, the Xolotl features a 4.53" SK-5 steel spear-point blade with a dagger grind that's sharp on both sides, Veff Serrations for increased cutting performance, a textured G10 handle and a durable thermoplastic sheath that offers multiple mounting options. The Xolotl weighs 5.7 oz., and is 9.88" long overall.



KELTEC

(800) 515-9983
keltecweapons.com

The KelTec **5.7X28MM SUB2000 GEN3** offers a flat trajectory and low recoil, making it an ideal choice for accurate and controlled shooting. Its simple and reliable blowback design ensures ease of maintenance and consistent performance. The firearm features a 20-round magazine, 16" barrel, foldable design for compact storage and a lightweight polymer frame. Integrated M-LOK and Picatinny rails provide full customization options. OAL is 30.45"; 29.2" long when collapsed and 16.15" long when folded.



RCBS

(800) 533-5000
rcbs.com

RCBS expands its line of MatchMaster bullet seating dies with **12 ADDITIONAL CARTRIDGE OFFERINGS**. The micrometer-adjustable MatchMaster die makes dialing in the perfect bullet depth quick and easy, with precision and consistency. The 12 new cartridges are: 6mm Rem., .257 Roberts, 6.5mm Grendel, 8mm Western, 7x57 Mauser, .280 Rem., .280 Ackley Improved, .28 Nosler, 300 AAC Blackout, 7.62mmx39 and .338 Win.



RESPONSE XR1P

5.11 TACTICAL

(866) 451-1726
511tactical.com

From 5.11, the **DEPLOY TL-USB** delivers 1,000 lumens of brightness. The **DEPLOY PL-USB** offers a slimmer profile with 300 lumens. The smallest, the **DEPLOY K-USB**, is a keychain-sized flashlight offering 150 lumens. All three models feature rechargeable USB-C functionality, durable weather-resistant construction and multiple lighting modes. All Deploy lights are offered in black, and the Deploy PL-USB and K-USB are also available in Ranger Green.

Made for high-end, professional performance, the **RESPONSE XR1T** offers enhanced grip and durability, while the **RESPONSE XR1C** is more compact and suitable for everyday use. The **RESPONSE XR1P** strikes a balance between size and power, offering high performance in a portable form. All models feature multiple lighting modes, are constructed from rugged, impact- and weather-resistant materials and are dual-fuel 18650 rechargeable compatible. All Response XR1 lights are offered in black, and the Response XR1P is also offered in orange.

The **ENDO.K INSERT** is designed for optimal knee comfort without sacrificing mobility. Lightweight and durable, the ENDO.K Insert offers superior breathability and cushioning, making it ideal for prolonged wear in demanding environments. Its anatomical shape with silicon grip print ensures a secure fit within 5.11 pants and functional gear, while the flexible construction allows unrestricted movement during dynamic activities.



S&W MODEL 20 - 6" BARREL

DAVIDSON'S INC.

(800) 367-4867
davidsoninc.com

Davidson's introduces the **SMITH & WESSON MODEL 20 IN A 6" BARREL VARIANT** limited to 500 units. Features of the exclusive Model 20 revolver include single/double action, .357 Mag./38 Special +P, premium rosewood grips, six-round capacity, a deep blued steel frame and fluted cylinder and serrated trigger face and wide, knurled hammer.

The exclusive **RUGER MINI-14 TACTICAL** is chambered in 300 AAC Blackout and features the Samson side-folding stock. The flash suppressor is removable, and the 16.5" cold hammer forged barrel is threaded with a 1/2x28 pitch. Other standard features include a heat shield, protected blade front sight, ghost ring rear aperture sight, an included section of Picatinny rail and sling swivels installed front and rear. Integral scope mounts, machined directly on the solid steel receiver, provide a stable mounting surface for the included set of 1" scope rings. Two 20-round nickel teflon steel magazines are included.

STURM, RUGER & CO. INC.

(336) 949-5200
ruger.com

From Ruger and Magpul, the **RXM** 9mm has a removable stainless steel Fire Control Insert (FCI) set inside an interchangeable Magpul Enhanced Handgun Grip (EHG). The slide has a black FNC nitride finish and allows for direct optic mounting of RMR, DeltaPoint Pro (DPP) and RMSc pattern optics. It is equipped with a flat-faced trigger, easily actuated magazine release, slide release and takedown lever, tritium front night sight and designed to use 9mm magazines compatible with compact or larger double-stack GLOCK pistols, including Magpul GL9 magazines. The RXM is available in two models; each ships with two Magpul GL9 magazines, with either 15- or 10-round capacity.



WILSON COMBAT

(800) 955-4856
wilsoncombat.com

Wilson Combat's **PROJECT 1** is the first release in the Division 77 series. Offered in 9mm, the compact-size aluminum X-Frame sports Reliability Enhanced frame rails and TRAK treatment on the front strap/backstrap. It sports a 5" barrel, a Concealment Bullet Proof trigger (3.5–4.5-lb. pull) and is pre-cut for direct mounting of a variety of popular carry optics. The ported slide paired with an integrated compensator minimizes recoil, and the cover plate features a dovetail rear sight and an integrated firing pin stop for a movement-free iron sight platform. Project 1 has a black Armor-Tuff finish, copper PVD finish on small parts and arrives with three 18-round magazines. OAL is 8.7", and it weighs 33.8 oz. (empty).

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EASTON TECHNICAL PRODUCTS INC.

(801) 539-1400
eastonarchery.com

Built on a micro-diameter 5mm Acu-Carbon platform, the **EASTON 5.0** reduces friction for enhanced penetration and decreases wind resistance for greater accuracy and higher velocity downrange. Its lighter overall mass weight allows for a versatile range of arrow setup options, from lightweight speed builds to high-FOC configurations. Available in six spine sizes (200, 250, 300, 340, 400 and 500), it accommodates virtually all bowhunting setups. The 5.0 features Easton's new 5MM Microlite Nock System, which includes a more compact nock body and a redesigned throat for better string fit and enhanced tunability. It is available in standard and Match Grade versions.



ASCENT TUMBLER

MAMMOTH

(816) 295-6321
mammothcooler.com

Constructed of high-density nylon with thick TPU laminated material, Mammoth's lightweight **GO CUBE** is both puncture- and tear-resistant. It's equipped with a water-resistant zipper to lock out moisture and an antimicrobial liner to prevent mold or mildew. Inch-thick foam insulation allows for 1+ days of ice retention inside the soft cooler. Measuring 13" x 8.5" x 11.5", the 12-quart GoCube is finished with a long adjustable shoulder strap for easy transport.

The 40 oz. **ASCENT TUMBLER** is made from kitchen-grade steel with double-wall vacuum insulation to resist dents and keep contents cold for 36+ hours or hot for 12+ hours. The screw-on lid stays securely in place and provides a watertight seal. It features a large drinking hole as well as an internal straw. The sweat-free design sports an easy-grip handle and fits most cup holders. Available in a variety of colorways, the Ascent Tumbler is finished with a durable powder coat.



BOND ARMS

(817) 573-4445
bondarms.com

Bond Arms' limited edition **DT47** honors the victory of Donald J. Trump, the 47th commander in chief. Chambered in .45 Colt/.410, the DT47 features a 4.25" flat-sided barrel, engraving on both sides and an ergonomic B6 grip. It has a stainless steel single-barrel and frame, patented rebounding hammer, retracting firing pin, cross bolt safety and spring-loaded locking lever.



DRYSHOD

(866) 663-6825
dryshodusa.com

The **EVALUSION MAX GUSSET** boot from Dryshod provides room for extra clothing layers during cold-weather and outdoor enthusiasts with more sizeable calves with its rear gusset and buckle system. Layered beneath the 5mm DENSOPRENE foam bootie is a breathable Airmesh lining that promotes airflow to maximize insulation during cold weather while minimizing moisture build up during warm, high-activity conditions. The integrated polar fleece lining offers a broad comfort range from -50°F to 65°F. The Hydrokote camo upper ensures water rolls off the calf pipe, eliminating the soggy uppers. Additional features include a natural rubber shell, roll-down calf pipe, steel shank and a sturdy tuck board sub-sole.



ARMAGEDDON GEAR

(229) 373-2036
armageddongear.com

The Armageddon Gear **TURKEY CHEST RIG** offers a compact solution for turkey hunters. This vest is equipped with a magnet top closure, providing quick access to mouth calls, a slot for a box call, pockets for pot calls, strikers and binoculars. An exterior mesh pocket and shotgun shell loops keeps gear handy. A Thermo Cell pocket and an extra zip pocket offer additional storage. The Turkey Chest Rig is offered in Oak (pictured) or Camo colors.



TROY INDUSTRIES

(866) 788-6412
worldoftroy.com

The over-the-barrel **KRYPTOS 5.56 SUPPRESSOR** is full-auto-rated and constructed from aerospace-welded, rugged 17-4 and 304 stainless steel. Its patented baffle system ensures superior cross-sectional structural integrity to withstand harsh environments, and the intense concussion caused by grueling round counts. Its unique design adds only 4" to the end of a rifle's muzzle. The durable suppressor is built to endure a lifetime of long-range shooting, demanding firing schedules and tough treks over rough terrain. The Kryptos quickly attaches to the TROY Muzzle Device and is Cerakote finished.



T8 ATHENA LE BOOTS

GARMONT TACTICAL

(844) 427-6668
garmonttactical.com

Expanding its T8 collection, Garmont Tactical's **T8 ATHENA LE BOOTS** for women are breathable, lightweight and flexible. The narrow heel, shorter Achilles area and increased arch support accommodate a woman's higher instep. A dual-density EVA provides shock absorption and differentiates support zones. The 8" weather-resistant textile upper provides a polishable surface, while offering durability and protection. Garmont's proprietary GTF Diamante outsole with multi directional lugs delivers stability and traction, as well as a targeted climbing zone with a grippy toe and rear lugs. T8 Athena LE boots are available in women's sizes 4–11, in regular and wide widths, in black or Coyote Tan.

The **T8 DEFENSE** boot is well suited for long duration activities, on all types of terrain. The boot features a polishable, breathable and durable 8" textile upper, combined with a protective membrane incorporated into the insoles, tongue and ankle area to reduce impacts. The Vibram Atlas outsole with multi directional lugs as well as grippy Vortex toe and rear lugs ensure stability and traction across a variety of surfaces. T8 Defense boots are offered in men's sizes 4–14, in both regular and wide widths, in black or Coyote Tan.



HAWKE OPTICS

(877) 429-5347
us.hawkeoptics.com

Hawke Optics' **VANTAGE IR 1-4X20 TURKEY DOT** riflescope is now available in a Mossy Oak Greenleaf camouflage finish. It uses a 2 MOA illuminated center dot aimpoint surrounded by an illuminated horseshoe measuring 10" at 25 yards when on 4X magnification. The reticle also has floating posts at 3, 6, and 9 o'clock to aid in rapid target acquisition. It has 4" of eye relief, capped low-profile 1/2 MOA turrets and a precision glass-etched reticle with multi-stage illumination in both red and green.



GO MED KITS

gomedkits.com

Go Med Kits' **FIRST AID & CARE ESSENTIALS FOR HUNTERS** medical kit includes a CAT-7 (CoTCCC-approved) tourniquet, 4" pressure bandage, vented chest seals, assorted fabric bandages, non-adherent pads, vet wrap and cloth tape, insect repellent and sunscreen, hand sanitizer, 36" aluminum splint, pain relief and digestive medications and antihistamines and sinus decongestants. All items are packed in a compact, durable pouch for easy portability and access.



PRIME RVX+

G5 OUTDOORS

(810) 392-8431
g5prime.com

Prime Archery, by G5 Outdoors, introduces the **PRIME FORM** bow, available in a 34" axle-to-axle configuration. Its Core Cam System allows for draw length specific mods to deliver maximum efficiency at every draw length and give the shooter a smooth draw. Other features include a Picatinny sight mount and a QAD dovetail machined directly into the RVX for additional rest mounting options. The Prime FORM delivers an IBO speed of 336 fps, has a brace height of 6.25" and weighs 4.1 lbs. It is available in the following solid riser colors: black, Morel, Ridge Rock, Recon Gray, Midnight Blue, Deep Red, Prism and Luminous.

The updated **PRIME RVX+** features new low-profile limb pockets, and a sleek riser design provides a narrower platform for the user, while reducing weight. It is offered in 32" and 34" axle-to-axle configurations. Features include Prime's Core Cam System, a Picatinny sight mount and a QAD dovetail. The Prime RVX+ is available in all solid, camo and G-Fade colors, along with any color limbs.

TRUE

(800) 255-6061
true.acgbrands.com

TRUE introduces the **NEKKID SKINNER** with a traditional skinner-blade design crafted from 3Cr13 stainless steel and finished with a black oxide stonewash. The full-tang skeletonized construction transitions smoothly into the handle, featuring removable TraxGrip scales. The handle provides superior grip retention, while the thermoplastic rubber (TPR) adds extra comfort and impact resistance. A lanyard attachment point at the base allows users to customize with a material of their choice. With its 2.92" blade, the NEKKID SKINNER is ideal for outdoor tasks. It includes a molded ABS sheath compatible with all NEKKID series blades. A 360-degree rotatable belt clip supports multiple carrying styles and can fit belts up to 2" wide or MOLLE systems. Open rivets allow for additional lashing or cord storage, enabling users to adapt the sheath to their needs.



MATHEWS ARCHERY INC.

(608) 269-2728
mathewsinc.com

Designed for competition archery, Mathews' **TITLE** is available in 34" and 40" axle-to-axle lengths. It is equipped with all-new Limb Shift Technology, allowing the user to micro-adjust the limb channel width without the need for a bow press. Mathews' BOND™ GripSystem features a textured rubber grip surface to enhance traction. The TITLE has a 6.5" brace height, IBO rate of up to 332 fps, 24.5"-30" draw length, let-off of 70, 75 or 80% and weighs 4.38 lbs.



KUIU

(800) 648-9717
kuiu.com

Built to withstand the most extreme waterfowl hunting conditions, KUIU's **PRO HD FLEX ZIP WADER** is a breathable wader designed with functional stretch from chest to boot. The wader features a waterproof TIZIP front zipper and 7mm EVA foam knee pads that extend to the boot. Inside, premium grid-fleece lining boosts warmth, air circulation and dry time. The optimized boot tread design sheds mud to prevent the wader from getting bogged down.



SAVAGE ARMS

(800) 370-0708
savagearms.com

Savage Arms is now offering its Model 334 bolt-action rifle in a **MOSSY OAK TERRA GILA** camo stock and two new calibers: .30-06 Springfield and .270 Win. The Model 334 has a range of features including a three-position safety, a 60-degree bolt lift with three locking lugs and an ergonomic stock and recoil pad. The Terra Gila camouflage Model 334 also has a steel mil-std 1913 Picatinny rail and two sling swivel studs.

TELUM TACTICAL

(844) 471-4868
telumtactical.com

Featuring a unique design for quick and easy operation, the **GLAIVE** from Telum Tactical can be fully opened with the push of a button to release its coil spring. The bottom also works as the locking mechanism when open to hold the blade securely in the open position. A slide safety lock on the side can be used to lock the button in the open or closed position. The Glaive features a 4" D2 satin stonewashed clip blade with a hollow grind and contoured G10 handle. An extra-long pocket clip sports a tip-up design for added security. It measures 5" closed.





BUSHMASTER FIREARMS

(800) 883-6229
bushmaster.com

Bushmaster Firearms' **MUTA II** suppressor effectively reduces the sound signature on 5.56 NATO and .223 Remington rounds (14.0% reduction at the left ear, a 15.4% reduction at the muzzle and a 15.9% reduction at the right ear). At 5.65" long and with a rugged Cerakote finish, the MUTA II is compact, tough and built to dissipate heat more efficiently while shooting suppressed. The threaded front cap and removable baffles allow for easy opening and cleaning of the interior of the suppressor as well. The MUTA II is full-auto-rated and weighs 12.25 oz.



TETRA GUN

(704) 380-2887
tetraguncare.com

Tetra Gun's **OBEX PRIME LUBRICANT PROTECTANT** is a non-aerosol pressurized spray can version of the Obex Prime extreme performance light grease. Designed to deliver the highest cyclic rate of fire, this material will perform under extreme conditions on the most demanding firearms platforms, including large-caliber, belt-fed medium-caliber weapons. Obex Prime delivers wide operating temperature range; saltwater corrosion protection; extreme pressure and load bearing; and ensures the maximum number of rounds fired before relubrication. The non-aerosol can spray at any angle including upside down, and it features isopropyl alcohol as the carrier along with non-flammable gas. Obex Prime Lube Spray is available in a 7-oz. can.



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ED BROWN PRODUCTS

(573) 565-3261
edbrown.com

Ed Brown Products introduces the **KOBRA CARRY 25TH ANNIVERSARY** custom 1911 in .45 ACP. Features include a 4.25" Commander model slide; single-stack Commander Bobtail frame; exclusive snakeskin treatment on forestrap and Bobtail housing and slide; fixed black rear sight, orange HDXR front sight; "25th Anniversary" engraving on the frame; and exotic Cocobolo wood double diamond checkered grips with the Ed Brown logo; recessed slide stop; flush barrel with recessed crown; and heavy chamfer. The Kobra Carry 25th Anniversary is offered in all stainless steel or black Gen4. The 25th anniversary edition is available to order for one year only, and no more orders will be taken for this limited edition after December 31, 2025.



SMITH & WESSON BRANDS INC.

(800) 331-0852
smith-wesson.com

Smith & Wesson's **M&P15 SBR** rifle series provides users several customization options. Key features across the three models include a forged, integral trigger guard, an Armornite- finished 11.5" barrel, a chromed firing pin and a forward-assist for positive chambering. Models 13622 and 13623 are equipped with a B5 Systems grip and SOPMOD stock, while model 13493 has a Magpul MOE grip and adjustable stock. Depending on the model, additional available features include M&P, Radian or Troy charging handles, as well as the option of a free-float or fixed handguard with M-LOK capabilities.

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

(800) 680-6866
springfield-armory.com

Engineered for carry, the Springfield Armory **ECHELON 4.0C** retains the key features of the full-size model, with a shorter 4" barrel and compact frame. Its Variable Interface System provides direct-mount compatibility with popular red dot sights. Tritium U-dot irons deliver fast target acquisition. The serialized Central Operating Group is housed in a compact frame, offering a 15-round capacity with the flush magazine and 18 rounds with the extended magazine. Standard features in the 4.0C series vary by model.



MUCK BOOT COMPANY

(855) 377-2668
muckbootcompany.com

Muck Boots introduces the **CHORE WESTERN** collection, specifically designed for ranchers and riders and offered in Tall or Mid heights. The classic Muck Boot neoprene adjusts to the unique contours of the foot, making these reliable boots flexible and 100% waterproof. The rubber overlay is easy to clean while the XPRESSCOOL lining keeps feet cool and dry. The molded heel kick off and lower outsole lug protect feet from getting caught in stirrups. The boots feature a new square toe and pull-on side straps reminiscent of Western boots, as well as Muck's quick cleaning rubber sole, offering more security and durability for every job.



SNOWTREKKER TENTS

(715) 378-4216
snowtrekkertents.com

From Snowtrekker Tents, the **HIGH COUNTRY HYBRID TENT** integrates strategically placed panels of 7-oz. cotton canvas with 1.9-oz. waterproof rip-stop nylon for superior breathability and moisture minimization. The marine-grade finish provides water repellency and mold and mildew resistance, and all nylon seams are seam-sealed during construction to enhance durability and water resistance. Features include an internal free-standing frame, dual zippered doors, stove jack and dual ventilation points. It can accommodate three to six people and is available in 9.5x9.5', 11x11' and 13x13' options. Each tent package includes the tent body, lightweight collapsible shock corded aluminum tent poles and guy out ropes.



SCOTT ARCHERY

(877) 503-5483
scottarchery.com

The **LONGHORN EXPERT** back tension hinge release from Scott Archery features a refined double moon design with adjustable click and fire for a fully customized shot, thumb peg and convenient lanyard hole. Its open hook jaw and updated yoke with a spring auto-return hook offer a smoother, more reliable feel. It is available in standard or small handheld versions.

The **ASPEN** is a padded wrist strap release crafted for archers prioritizing precision and comfort. Equipped with both travel and length adjustments, the Aspen seamlessly adapts to unique shooting styles. Its roller sear trigger and single closed jaw guarantee a crisp, consistent release, while the rotating release head ensures smooth, reliable action.



WINCHESTER SAFES

(817) 561-9095
winchestersafes.com

The **GRAND AMERICAN** from Winchester Safes is engineered with a 60-minute fire rating at 1400° F. Built with 10-gauge steel, Palusol Heat expanding door seal and UL Listed SecurAm electronic lock with backlit keypad, the Grand American ensures optimal security against threats. Its interior accommodates up to 60 long guns and boasts LED lighting, adjustable shelving, a deluxe door organizer and GunStiXX storage solution. It is also customizable for other valuables including jewelry, documents and electronics. The Grand American is available in black or tan (pictured).

TAURUS USA

(800) 327-3776
taurususa.com

The **TAURUS 650** is a true shrouded hammer, five-shot revolver chambered in .357 Magnum. The steel or stainless steel frame provides the durability needed for both daily carry and extended shooting sessions. The DAO trigger offers a smooth and consistent pull. It is chambered to handle up to .357 Magnum, and can also fire .38 Spl. and .38 Spl. +P loads. The serrated blade front sight reduces glare and allows for quick accuracy in all lighting conditions. The front sight is also removable, allowing it to be swapped out to meet personal preference.



HYDRA WEAPONRY

(855) 493-7221
hydraweaponry.com

Hydra Weaponry introduces the **HYDRA MARCK-15 H21** rifle built to use GLOCK-style 10mm magazines. The rifle sports a H21 mag well, Hydra Quick Change Barrel Upper Receiver (QCB-D), Hydra 16" 10mm blowback barrel, 10mm blowback bolt and a durable B5 Systems stock and pistol grip. The Hydra MARCK-15 H21 weighs 10 lbs. and measures 21"x3"x7" in a black finish. Inserts for the handguard include M-LOK, KeyMOD and Picatinny.



DICKINSON ARMS

(805) 978-8565
dickinsonarms.com

Designed for turkey hunting, Dickinson Arm's introduces two shotguns in 12 GA. The **212C24-05** semi-automatic and **COMMANDO XX3T-C-2** pump action have a contoured, pistol-grip stock and a 24" barrel with ventilated rib. They come with hi-vis fiber optic front, rear sights, an extended extra-full choke and a Picatinny rail. The Commando also has a short rail on the bottom of the forestock to mount additional accessories. Both shotguns are finished in Mossy Oak Obsession camouflage and have a 3" chamber.



COMMANDO XX3T-C-2



AR500 NEXT GEN COMPLETE UPPER ASSEMBLY

BIG HORN ARMORY

(307) 586-3700
bighornarmory.com

The **AR500 NEXT GEN COMPLETE UPPER ASSEMBLY** from Big Horn Armory allows users to transform an existing AR-10 lower into an AR500 rifle using a non-proprietary DPMS-style upper. Using modified SR25 magazines, the assembly is both compatible and highly customizable. The kit features a complete assembled upper, an 18" barrel, adjustable gas block, muzzle brake, M-LOK handguard, bolt carrier group, buffer and buffer spring and a five-round magazine.

The **AR500 NEXT GEN PISTOL** is a large-frame AR chambered in 500 Auto Max. Features include a 10" threaded barrel with a 1:24" twist rate, recessed crown, Match Grade Rise Rave 140 single-stage trigger (3.5-lb. pull), M-LOK forearm brace with Picatinny rails and sling swivels, Hunter Black Nitride on stainless steel parts and five-round magazine capacity (nine-round magazines available separately). The AR500 NEXT GEN Pistol weighs 8.1 lbs.



CIMARRON FIREARMS

(877) 749-4861
cimarron-firearms.com

Cimarron's **1873 JOHN RUSSELL** Winchester lever-action rifle pays tribute to the lead character in the 1967 movie, *Hombre*. The rifle features a 20" heavy barrel made from forged steel with a hand-rubbed oil walnut stock and forend and a classic old metal finish. It is available in either .357 Mag. or .45 LC.



80X CHEETAH
TACTICAL URBAN

BERETTA USA

(800) 237-3882
beretta.com

The **80X CHEETAH TACTICAL URBAN** .380 ACP from Beretta boasts a Vertec-style grip profile, the X-treme S Double/Single trigger, skeletonized hammer, easier-to-rack slide and meticulously tuned recoil management. It arrives suppressor-ready with a threaded 4.4" barrel, as well as three white dot sights, black polymer grip panels and an optic-ready slide. The pistol is 4.9" tall, 1.4" wide, 7.3" long and it weighs 25 oz. (unloaded). It ships with two 15-round magazines.

Crafted for competition, the **92XI SAO GARA** and **92XI SAO CORSA** in 9mm sport a DLC-coated X-treme S Trigger in single action-only mode, lightweight skeletonized hammer and the 92X Performance hammer spring. Additional features include a frame-mounted safety and extended mag release. The competition self-locking disassembly lever and a Toni System Magwell facilitate maintenance and customization. It's further equipped with three 18+4 magazines and a single-port Toni System Compensator to reduce recoil and muzzle rise. The Gara is adorned with LOK Grips in red and black G10 grip panels and a vibrant red Beretta 92 series match aluminum trigger, while the CORSA has gold-colored accents, LOK Grips marbled carbon fiber grip panels and striking yellow outline.

The **92XI SAO SABBIA**'s X-treme S Trigger offers a crisp and precise single-action trigger pull while DLC-coated components ensure smooth action. The lightweight skeletonized hammer and the 92X Performance hammer spring enhance performance. Added features include a fiber optic front sight with MRDS mounting capability, a 5.1" black threaded barrel, Toni System flared magwell installed for increased reloading speed and three Mec-Gar 18+4 magazines.



FALCO HOLSTERS

(800) 490-7147
falcoholsters.com

Available in three models, FALCO's **TALONGUARD HYBRID IWB** holsters combine premium Italian leather with a customized Kydex insert that fully covers the trigger guard on both sides. The A910 holster features a Kydex TalonGuard and is fully enclosed by leather, while the A911 and the A911 L combine a Kydex TalonGuard with an exterior comprised of half leather and half Kydex. The holsters' open bottom allows for threaded barrels and easy maintenance. Exterior leather delivers a more comfortable carrying experience and the double-thickness leather sweat guard shields the gun from body moisture. The proprietary FALCO stainless steel belt clip with matte black finish offers a secure fit for belt widths of 1.5" and 2".



GIRSAN REGARD MC X

EAA CORP

(321) 639-4842
eaacorp.com

The 9mm **GIRSAN REGARD MC X** from EAA Corp has a spiral-fluted, threaded barrel and two-tone Cerakote finish. The trigger is tuned to provide a smooth double- and single-action shooting experience. Attributes include an accessory rail, black finish on slide, tungsten finish frame and barrel, ambidextrous safety and 19-round capacity.

The **GIRSAN INFLUENCER X 1911** full-size, single-stack handgun is chambered in 9mm, 10mm, .45 ACP or .38 Super. A full-length accessory rail, flared magazine well, extended beavertail, ambidextrous thumb safety, aggressive grip texturing, two-tone Cerakote finish and lightening-cut slide all come standard.



RISE ARMAMENT

(844) 747-3308
risearmament.com

Reliant triggers from RISE offer an upgrade for Remington 700 and Remington 700 clone bolt-action rifles and enable shooters to achieve greater accuracy by reducing the delay between pulling the trigger and the firing pin's action. The **RELIANT HUNTER TRIGGER**, ideal for rifle hunters, has a preset pull weight of 3.5 lbs. For precision shooters, the **RELIANT PRO TRIGGER** offers a lighter preset pull weight of 2 lbs., external overtravel adjustment and pull-weight adjustment ranging from less than 1 lb. to more than 3 lbs. The Reliant Hunter is available in a curved blade only, while the Reliant Pro has flat and curved blade options. Additional features include unibody cassette-style installation, NoWay take-up for a clean break and NiB-coated steel key components for long-lasting performance.

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SAFARILAND

(800) 347-1200
safariland.com

Safariland releases Incog X Inside-the-Waistband (IWB) **HOLSTER FITS FOR THE SPRINGFIELD ARMORY ECHELON**. 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. The Incog X's clip strut design combines functionality with customizable concealment shims in three sizes: 1/8", 1/4" and 3/8".

The **EXT CARRIER SYSTEM** (pictured) line of external carriers in a variety of styles is ideal for L.E. application. Features include an assortment of functional chest pockets and slots, customizable badge and ID shape options for the upper yoke and rear placard, front and rear plate pockets for ICW plates for male and female officers, integrated elastic side cummerbund with stretch, integrated front and rear wire channels, laser micro-cut mic tabs, new adjustable and replaceable ergonomic straps and a reinforced zipper cover with integrated laser micro-cuts for body-worn camera or other small accessories.

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2025 **NEW** PRODUCT SHOWCASE



GEN 2 OPERATOR BELT

HIGH SPEED GEAR

(877) 301-2116
highspeedgear.com

The **NVG POUCH** from High Speed Gear offers a purpose-built solution for protecting and transporting PVS-31 night vision devices and similarly sized optics. The pouch offers two-layer protection, featuring an outer thermoplastic shell for impact resistance and an inner foam padding layer to cushion valuable devices. A dedicated ECOTI storage area, separated by a padded partition, keeps devices secure. The lid pocket provides space for batteries or other small items. Mini MOLLE webbing two HSGI MOLLE clips allow attachment to PALS webbing or a belt. Elastic loops keep items stable, while a dummy cord loop and a grommet drain hole add extra utility and functionality.

The **GEN 2 OPERATOR BELT** is a purpose-built belt system engineered for tactical professionals, L.E. and competitive shooters. The two-belt system includes an inner and outer belt, secured by hook-and-loop fastener, and is compatible with almost any holster and pouch mounting system. The belt core is built with high-strength materials, including a 1" COBRA buckle and mil-spec 5625 tubular nylon webbing, ensuring exceptional load-bearing capacity and long-lasting durability. The belt's water-resistant materials make it ideal for challenging environments by reducing moisture absorption and ensuring quick drying.

NVG POUCH



ATN CORP.

(650) 989-5100
atncorp.com

The **BLAZE HUNTER** thermal monocular from ATN Corp. boasts a pro-grade image sensor to provide clear thermal images in any weather or lighting condition. Its multiple viewing modes have six distinct color palettes: White Hot, Black Hot, High Red, Iron Red, Green Hot and Sepia. The built-in Laser Range Finder provides quick and precise distance measurements up to 1,000 yards. Its large full-color OLED display delivers a sharp 1440x1080 resolution. It also has video recording and Wi-Fi connectivity capabilities. Compact and light weight (0.8 lbs.), the BlazeHunter's design ensures ease of use over extended periods and its replaceable battery offers up to 14 hours of continuous use.



Continued from p. 66

elementary education in business. Not putdown here, enthusiasm and a love for one's endeavor is important, but while this got dealers by in the good times, it won't in today's marketplace.

"Staying focused will."

Thurman continued, "Developing a business plan and setting intermediate goals is not difficult. What is your overall goal [this year]? Based on *your* market, how are you going to achieve this goal? What must be done each quarter? Then, as always, work hard — and stay focused."

Later in the column, Thurman recounted an experience with his 1964 Marine recruit platoon being filled with "expert" riflemen whose advice didn't help him get shots on target. A Marine rifle coach's deft instructions, did, however, which led to successful hits.

Thurman likened this situation to *Shooting Industry's* ability to provide good information to dealers.

"At best, we at *Shooting Industry* can only 'provide dealers with the information ...' and we work hard at making sure it will help you 'stay in business and be profitable.'"

"Putting that information into action — backed by a solid business plan and hard work — will put your business 'in the black' with, hopefully, a solid group in the x-ring."

"The key is focus."

Though published nearly 28 years ago, the truth there is undeniable today.

FOCUSED RUMINATIONS

Reading Thurman's Feb. 1997 column provided a moment of inspiration. We haven't used a "word of the year" since I've been involved with *SI*, but if we did, "focus" would be a smart one to start with.

Amidst all the uncertainty, chaos, market fluctuations, regulations and threats against our industry, let's *focus* on what we can control. For the independent store, stay focused on delivering standout customer service, reasonable prices and being welcoming. Identify new ways to grow your business and to move away from fear-induced marketing. Instead, focus on growing



Challenge your team to "extend the sale" this year. Whether it's offering ammo options to suit a customer's intended use, suggesting accessories for carry or personalization or even simply sharing a training class or seminar is coming up — all of these can incrementally impact your bottom line.

the shooting sports, which is likely to be more stable in the long run — we can't count on "once-in-a-generation" events to clear out old inventory every couple of years.



For the independent store, stay focused on delivering standout customer service, reasonable prices and being welcoming.

Also, look for ways to extend the sale. Without coming across as too pushy, find out what your customer's interest level and goals are. Are you providing better products, services, classes or recreational shooting access opportunities to meet their needs?

If you're talking with a new customer, offer them training. In the Nov. 2024 issue, we published findings from an NSSF report on first-time buyers that revealed nearly half of those surveyed were not offered training at the point of purchase from the retailer. This is the very definition of leaving

money on the table.

To succeed in the latest iteration of the "new normal" here in 2025, focus on sound business principles. Poll loyal customers on what they want from you this year. Get creative with events and marketing. Establish deeper ties with the local community.

How do you plan on standing out this year? I welcome your feedback, truly: editor@shootingindustry.com.

(And, if you're at SHOT Show: Stop by our booth on Radio Row, which is located on Venetian Level 2, just above the registration area. We'd love to shake your hand and hear your 2025 market forecasts.)

THANK YOU, READERS

Dealers, you're the backbone of this industry. Without you there's no firearms industry, no *Shooting Industry*. We're honored to have been on this journey for the past 70 years — but we're not going to rest on our laurels.

As we move forward into the next seven decades, we're excited for what's ahead in this platinum anniversary year. We'll revisit older "evergreen" stories from past decades in future issues and online. And with everything we do, we'll be focused on providing you, the dealer, with the information you need to stay in business and be profitable.

Here's to a successful New Business Year. **SI**

INDUSTRY LINK



BY JADE MOLDAE

70 YEARS LATER ... WHAT HASN'T CHANGED

The 2025 New Business Year is a special one for us at FMG Publications, publisher of *Shooting Industry*, *GUNS Magazine*, *American Handgunner*, *American COP* and Special Edition titles. This year marks the 70th anniversary for both *SI* and *GUNS*.

For the past 70 years, the American firearms enthusiast has been able to read a monthly newsstand publication devoted entirely to guns, while independent storefront dealers have had a trusted B2B partner to highlight better business practices and uncover market-altering products.

A JAUNT DOWN MEMORY LANE

Just 70 years ago, consumers could buy a Mossberg 140K for \$24.95 (an extra \$9.95 if they wanted it with a scope), a .22 LR Walther PPK for \$62.50 or a Ruger Single-Six revolver for \$63.25. How do I know this? Well, I was able to “thumb” through some of the classic *GUNS* issues scanned as PDFs, including the very first in Jan. 1955.

When *SI* was first published in 1955, it was then known as *Guns and Hunting Goods Merchandiser*. The title didn't last long and was changed to *Shooting Goods Retailer* in Sept. 1958.

With the launch of *Shooting Goods Retailer*, Bob Brownell came on as an advisory member of its editorial board, while Elmer Keith joined as a columnist for the *Pointers For Profit* column.

In his first *Shop Talk* column, Brownell's frankness and wit shined — as did his undeniable business savvy. Here's one example from this column:

“Have you ever looked for service? To impress upon you how important it might be to your own business, step outside your store and look up and down the street with the idea of buying a good watch, hi-fi outfit or home appliance.

“Which company do you go to first? You guessed it. You, as a buyer, will go where you can get service on what you buy.

“What makes you think your customers are any different? Could it be the reason you are not selling certain things is you have nothing to offer other than merchandise, and that can be bought cheaper elsewhere — namely at the discount houses? Could be!”

Brownell's sentiment reminded me of Paul Bastean's quote from earlier in this issue (“5 Forces Poised To Shape 2025”) on how knowledge adds value to an interaction with a customer — giving his store a decided edge.

“You have to have knowledge and experience to go with the tool,” Bastean said. “It just so happens the knowledge and experience are profit centers for us. It's the least amount of overhead with the most amount of return.”

Personalized service and knowledge is where your store can establish profit centers to complement a strong inventory assortment.

◀ *Shooting Industry* has proudly served independent dealers and their frontline teams for the past 70 years. And, we're just getting started!

SAME GOAL IN MIND

By the 1970s, *Shooting Goods Retailer* became *The Shooting Industry*. However, in the Sept. 1980 issue, the “*The*” was inconspicuously dropped, and has been simply *Shooting Industry* ever since.

A lot has changed since 1955, but one thing that hasn't — even if our name changed, more than once — is our commitment to the independent, storefront FFL dealer.

From the beginning, *Shooting Industry's* endeavor has been to help dealers and range operators stay in business and be profitable. It's been part of our Mission Statement for decades.

In my first six years with *SI* — Feb. 2025 will mark my 12th year with this fine publication — I worked closely with Publisher Emeritus Russ Thurman, who embodied this principle to a tee.

“

A lot has changed since 1955, but one thing that hasn't is our commitment to the independent, storefront FFL dealer.

While preparing this column and looking back over 70 years of content, I stumbled across one of Thurman's early *Industry Watch* columns from the Feb. 1997 issue. His words to dealers on staying focused during hard times — not to say 2025 is going to be a “hard time,” but there is likely to be some significant slowing in this new market — still resonate today.

“It's no mystery a majority of gun dealers got into the gun business with a master's degree in Guns but only an

Continued on p. 65



THE NEXT GENERATION OF AMERICA'S FAVORITE HUNTING RIFLE

The Ruger American® Rifle Generation II is an update to the American-made rifle that has been the benchmark for accuracy, durability, and performance in bolt-action rifles for over a decade. Designed with customer feedback in mind, the Ruger American Rifle Generation II is available in a variety of calibers and is sure to become the first choice for hunters and firearms enthusiasts.



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





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