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THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

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 **SAFETY TIP:** Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users.

Consult and comply with any and all applicable federal, state, and local: laws, regulations, requirements, and/or restrictions, including but not limited to those regarding the purchase, ownership, use, transport, and carrying of a firearm. Not all products are available in all states or jurisdictions.

Cautious Optimism To Start New Year?

We're only weeks into the 2025 New Business Year, but there is mounting evidence the expected sales drop-off isn't quite as severe as it was feared a few months ago.

In "Concealed Carry Market: Boom Or Bust?" Tim Barker interviews a panel of dealers who have experienced varying levels of success since Donald Trump was re-elected president.

Henry Parro of Parro's Gun Shop in Waterbury, Vt., has attributed a recent sales surge to buyers who were *threatened* by President Trump's re-election.

"We had a record month in November," he said. "We're getting a ton of first-time shooters, which is typically unheard of after a Republican is elected. Gun sales are usually pretty stagnant."

While it's just one segment, one store and one month into 2025, there are signs of life in this latest iteration of the "new normal" for our industry.

To see what other retailers had to say on how their store is performing, see **pp. 22-25**.

THERE'S A MARKET FOR RETRO

In this month's *Personal Defense Market* column, Massad Ayoob contends while we're very much living in a "polymer, striker-fired 9mm semi-auto world," there's a growing subset of customers becoming interested in revolvers. Whether it's a Magnum caliber or plinking with a Ruger Wrangler, wheelguns offer a lot of different uses to defense-minded customers — and it's not just limited to two-legged threats.

"A lot of my female customers — and male customers, for that matter — are more worried about venomous snakes in their backyard than they are about rapists and muggers. .38 Special snake shot has pretty mild recoil," notes Jeff Boss, who runs Lundy's Guns in Live Oak, Fla.

See **p. 16** for more.



FEBRUARY 2025

CHANGING THE CULTURE OF ACCEPTANCE

Striking a similar tone to last month's article by Jay Pinsky on mentoring anti-hunters, Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation Executive Director Jim Curcuruto pens a feature on how our industry can improve cultural acceptance of gun ownership, hunting and target shooting among non-shooters.

According to Curcuruto, the industry needs to do a better job of telling its story by connecting with broader audiences.

"If your organization has anything to do with firearms, then promoting the positive contributions of the firearms industry, hunting and target shooting to the general population should become part of your media plan moving forward," he writes.

For more, see **p. 38**.

NEXT MONTH: MORE RETRO, SHOT '25 REVIEW

As noted above, there's a market for retro. We believe in this so much there will be two features devoted to retro firearms next month, with Peter Suci taking on wheelguns for plinking and self-defense and Tim Barker examining the burgeoning lever-gun segment.

Additionally, the March issue will include a review of the record-breaking 2025 SHOT Show, as well as tips for expanding your store's e-commerce footprint.

Have a comment on anything you see in this issue? Let us know: comments@shootingindustry.com. **\$1**

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EVEN FOR ONLINE-ONLY STORES, S/OFFERS "VALUE"

Editor's Note: The following note from online-only dealer James Sagstetter arrived as a response to the "Being A 'Pariah Dealer' Nearly Three Years On ..." letters published in the Dec. 2024 issue.

I have not seen any loosening of restrictions when it comes to wholesalers. Some very key distributors exclude me, which is very difficult because they have some of the best drop-shipping programs, and they have better inventory availability on some of the most popular firearms. Direct accounts with manufacturers are a mixed bag; about 50% will give me an account despite being home-based, and the other 50% will either ignore my application or flat-out reject me.

Sales business has been terrible this year [2024], but I've been made to understand that's true of our whole industry. I've been doing a lot of transfers the last two weeks or so thanks to the early Black Friday deals many retailers have been running. But prior to that, from August through early November, I was averaging three serial

numbers per week coming through my inventory. Not really sustainable.

For what it's worth, I have continued to find value in *Shooting Industry* magazine, even though your target audience is the brick-and-mortar store. Information about trends and new products, experiences of other FFLs and pretty much everything except for point-of-sale info is still relevant to me in one way or another. I get a lot of magazines sent to me, but yours is the only one I usually page through.

— **James Sagstetter, Owner**

Detroit Armament
St. Clair Shores, Mich.

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS

Editor's Note: If you missed it, in last month's issue not only did we mark the launch of the 2025 New Business Year, we also recognized this year being S/I's 70th anniversary. In my *Industry Link* column, I reaffirmed S/I's commitment to provide you, the dealer, with the information you need to stay in business and be profitable is as firm as it has ever been. Here are some responses we've received from around the industry. — Jade Moldae, Editor

Information about trends and new products, experiences of other FFLs and pretty much everything except for point-of-sale info is still relevant to me in one way or another.

The future of any industry is to support those that support you. Big thanks to *Shooting Industry* for helping dealers and range operators stay in business and be profitable for generations.

— **James Point, Sales Team Lead**

Davidson's Inc.
Via LinkedIn

Congrats to Jade Moldae and the FMG Publications team for 70 years of providing key insights on all things related to firearms.

I've been a reader of *Shooting Industry* since 2009 and look forward to each issue as they help me keep up with industry happenings, research and trends.

Keep up the terrific work! **SI**
— **Jim Curcuruto, Executive Director**
Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation
Via LinkedIn

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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

**THE ACOG® HAS OFTEN BEEN
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During a four-hour firefight in Fallujah, Sergeant Todd Bowers' ACOG® riflescope stopped a sniper round and saved his life. Bowers refused medical evac and stayed in the fight.

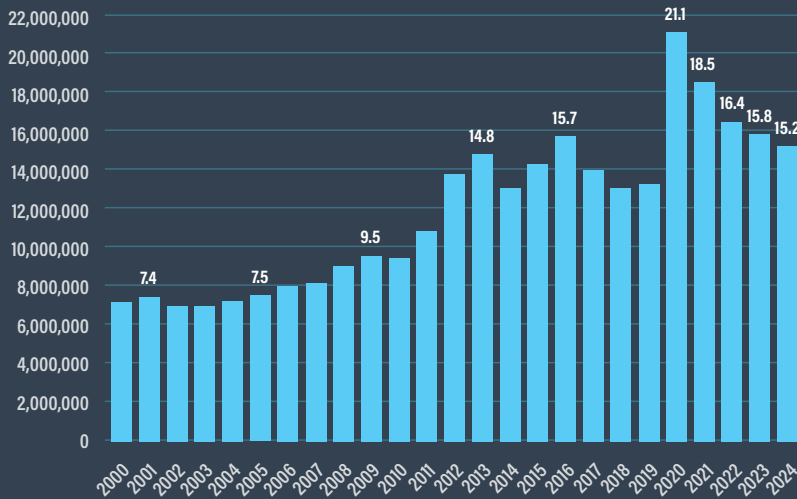
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ANNUAL NSSF-ADJUSTED NICS BACKGROUND CHECKS



2024 ADJUSTED NICS BACKGROUND CHECKS EXCEED 15 MILLION

NSSF released the final figures for NSSF-adjusted FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) verifications for December 2024 and the 2024 year-end totals.

December's totals topped 1.6 million background checks for the sale of a firearm at retail. That brought the 2024 annual total to over 15.2 million background checks for the sale of firearms at retail.

"We're proud NSSF member companies continue to serve the American public that chooses to exercise

their Second Amendment rights by the millions each month," said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO. "These background check figures show strong sales and today's firearm manufacturers are delivering high-quality products. We are proud our member companies continue to exceed the high standards law-abiding Americans demand when it comes to the products that allow them to exercise their Second Amendment rights."

The Dec. 2024 NSSF-adjusted NICS figure of 1,642,270 is a decrease of 7.5%

◀ Though 2024 was a challenging year for the industry, its NSSF-adjusted NICS background check annual total represents the sixth-highest figure on record.

compared to the Dec. 2023 (NSSF-adjusted) NICS figure of 1,775,834.

For comparison, the unadjusted Dec. 2024 FBI NICS figure of 2,647,933 reflects a 1.6% decrease from the unadjusted FBI NICS figure of 2,690,231 in Dec. 2023.

Dec. 2024 marked the 65th month in a row that has exceeded 1 million adjusted background checks in a single month.

The Q4 2024 NSSF-adjusted NICS figure of 4,459,900 reflects a decrease of 5.9% compared to the 4,742,029 figure for the corresponding quarter in 2023.

The annual 2024 NSSF-adjusted NICS figure of 15,239,011 reflects a decrease of 3.5% compared to the 15,848,055 figure for annual 2023.

Though not a direct correlation to firearms sales, the NSSF-adjusted NICS data provide an additional picture of current market conditions. In addition to other purposes, NICS is used to check transactions for sales or transfers of new or used firearms.

It should be noted these statistics represent the number of firearm background checks initiated through the NICS. They do not represent the number of firearms sold or sales dollars. Based on varying state laws, local market conditions and purchase scenarios, a one-to-one correlation cannot be made between a firearm background check and a firearm sale.

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

VORTEX OPTICS SUPPORTS U.S. WAR DOGS ASSOCIATION

Vortex Optics demonstrated its support of the military working dog community with its Collars for a Cause effort that helped raise \$1,000 for the U.S. War Dogs Association (USWDA).

"The generosity of Vortex customers will help us continue our vital mission of providing a lifetime of practical

support for military working dogs, their handlers and families. These dogs give the best years of their life in service to our nation, and we are here to repay their devotion as best we can," said Chris Willingham, president of USWDA.

Dedicated to supporting working dogs through their entire lives, and to promoting the distinguished history of their invaluable service, the USWDA has been working tirelessly since 2000. The organization has shipped over 30,000



care packages to dog handlers serving overseas, while supporting hundreds of retired working dogs through their free prescription drug program.

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

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

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NASGW SUPPORTS WALK THE TALK AMERICA

The NASGW donated \$25,000 to Walk the Talk America (WTTA), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to bridging the gap between mental health and responsible firearm ownership.

"Mental health is a greatly misunderstood arena, and the work that WTTA is doing to bring awareness empowers those who are struggling to get the help they need. It also demonstrates to our industry and the broader community that the shooting sports industry cares

as much or more than anyone about the health and well-being of American gun owners," said NASGW Chairman Bill Sumner.

"This generous donation from NASGW reflects a growing commitment within the shooting sports industry to address mental health with compassion and proactive solutions," said Michael Sodini, WTTA founder. "Their support amplifies our ability to reach more individuals with the resources and education needed to foster a culture where mental health is openly discussed and effectively supported within the firearms community. Together, we're making strides to reduce stigma and

promote safety for all."

The mission of WTTA is to enhance the perception of mental health among gun owners while elevating the standard of mental health care within this community. The organization is uniquely positioned to integrate the wisdom of gun-owning mental health professionals, offering innovative solutions derived from real-world experiences.

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

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



GUNBROKER UNVEILS SHIPPING SOLUTION FOR FFL ITEMS

GunBroker.com unveiled a new shipping solution to some of the problems associated with shipping FFL-restricted goods.

"This new shipping solution, along with the recent addition of Credova financing, is just the latest result from our never-ending process of improving GunBroker.com," said Jared Smith, CEO of GunBroker.com. "Our daily challenge is to find ways to make the marketplace an even stronger partner for sellers and dealers across the

nation, and this is a fantastic answer to one of the bigger headaches."

When sellers of firearms enter the FFL number of the destination shop, labels will automatically be created. This ensures all address and shipping information is accurate and verified.

The label is also automatically "sanitized" of any information that identifies the package as containing a firearm. For example, if the recipient is "John's Gun Warehouse" the label will display it as "JG Warehouse" or "JGW." In addition to meeting shipper requirements, this also prevents any information from advertising the contents of the package.



Shippers are guided through the shipping options, based on what type of firearm is being shipped. This ensures compliance with all shipping regulations.

The new FFL shipping system is live now for GunBroker sellers. Sellers simply select it on the shipping information page and follow the prompts through shipment creation all the way to label printing.

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

EOTECH MARKS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

EOTECH Inc., provider of electro-optic solutions to the firearms industry, is marking its 30th year in business.

For three decades, EOTECH has designed, developed and manufactured dependable, high-performing optics for military, law enforcement, competition, recreation and home or personal defense applications.

Established in 1995, EOTECH has continuously evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of the firearms and optics industry. The Holographic Weapon Sight (HWS), EOTECH's initial product offering, revolutionized the red-dot marketed by offering enhanced speed-to-target and greater situational awareness. EOTECH

also was the first manufacturer to successfully launch a fixed magnifier, further enhancing the HWS.

EOTECH has nurtured long-standing relationships with dealers and wholesalers across the globe, and with domestic and international military and law enforcement groups.

"We were really ahead of our time with the holographic technology, and in 1995, all the stars finally aligned. Components miniaturized making manufacturing possible, the AR-15 was becoming popular and more accessible and optics on firearms were beginning to be accepted and standardized," said Dean Loebig, EOTECH's chief technical officer.

Over 30 years, EOTECH manufactured and delivered over 3 million Holographic Weapon Sights. The company has diversified its product line by

developing the Vudu line of premium riflescopes, the EFLX Mini Reflex Sight and the OGL on-gun laser system to work in conjunction with its night-vision systems. This complete suite of products provides a one-stop shop for all professional-grade, optical solutions.

"As we look to the future, we are excited to bring more lifesaving, technology-driven products that help protect and defend home, community and country," said Joe Caradonna, CEO and owner of EOTECH.

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



JOHN RIGBY & CO. CELEBRATES 250 YEARS OF BRITISH GUNMAKING

John Rigby & Co., Britain's oldest gunmaker, is celebrating its 250th anniversary in 2025. The iconic company will mark this notable milestone with a series of special events and the launch of exclusive, special-edition rifles.

Rigby will host exclusive celebrations aboard *HMS Victory* and *HMS Warrior* at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, England, in May. These renowned British vessels will provide a fitting backdrop, as *HMS Victory* was ordered in 1758, the same year company founder John Rigby was born, along with British naval hero, Vice-Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson.

HMS Victory, Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, will be transformed into a Rigby workshop, allowing guests to experience the craftsmanship that has defined Rigby for centuries. The wooden structure of *HMS Victory* offers an immersive experience where guests can explore, see and smell 250 years of history within its timbers.

HMS Warrior, launched in 1860 as Britain's first iron-hulled battleship and the pride of Queen Victoria's fleet. It embodies the advancements of the Victorian era and mirrors Rigby's own history of pioneering design and innovation.



The celebrations will feature speeches detailing Rigby's storied past, live demonstrations by master craftsmen and exclusive tours of *HMS Victory's* gun deck. A cannon salute will signal the transition between ships. Guests will enjoy a gala dinner on *HMS Warrior's* upper gun deck, with notable speakers including the Earl of Yarmouth, who shares a familial connection to Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson.

Rigby will unveil commemorative London Best rifles incorporating wood from *HMS Victory*, linking the two British icons. Additionally, Rigby will release 250 limited editions of its award-winning Big Game and Highland Stalker rifles, each specially engraved to celebrate this significant moment in Rigby's heritage.

"As we celebrate Rigby's 250th anniversary, we're not just honoring our

past, but fueling the spirit of adventure for generations to come. Here's to the next 250 years of Rigby. May they be filled with as many thrilling adventures and remarkable stories as the last," said Marc Newton, managing director of Rigby.

Founded in Dublin in 1775, Rigby opened its first London shop in 1865. The company operated out of both offices until it closed its Dublin shop in 1897. Rigby moved to the U.S. in 1997, but returned to London in 2013 when L&O Group of Germany purchased the company. The historic company is known for its Rising Bite bolt action, double rifles and shotguns, its fully bespoke London Bests and its award-winning Big Game bolt-action rifles, among others.

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

CROW SHOOTING SUPPLY REBRANDS, LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

Crow Shooting Supply has officially rebranded to Crow Wholesale, marking a significant milestone in its 41-year history. This transformation reflects the company's continued growth and commitment to delivering exceptional value and service to its customers.

Alongside this rebrand, Crow Wholesale has launched a new website designed to provide a seamless and efficient shopping experience tailored to

the needs of its partners.

According to Shawn McGuire, VP of sales, "This isn't just a new name — it's a new era for us. We've listened to customer feedback and built a modern online platform to make running their businesses simpler and more efficient."

The new website offers several improved features, including a mobile-friendly design ensuring a seamless shopping experience on any device.

- **Better Account Tools:** Users can quickly access account summaries and order history and manage invoices all in one place.

- **Easier Shopping Features:** The platform includes wish list capabilities



and an intuitive browsing experience.

- **Comprehensive Support:** A quick-start video is available to guide users through logging in and exploring the platform's new features.

Customers can log in today to explore the new website and its upgraded features. For additional support, dedicated sales representatives are available to assist with any questions. [/crowwholesale.com](http://crowwholesale.com)

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



L. COTTON

Legacy1846 Outdoor Group Welcomes VP

Luke Cotton has stepped into the role of VP of brand and customer relations for Legacy1846

Outdoor Group. He will drive collaboration across multiple divisions within the Legacy1846 family, including Outtech and The Sports Products Group.

Andrew Sibble, CEO of Legacy1846 said, "[Cotton's] vast experience, proven track record in the industry and deep understanding of the outdoor market make him a perfect fit for our organization."

Cotton has over 10 years of experience from his tenure with organizations such as NBS and Mid-States Distributing.



W. VERNON

Powder Valley Outdoors Names Marketing VP

Powder Valley Outdoors announced the appointment of Willie Vernon as

its VP of marketing. Vernon will spearhead all marketing efforts to drive growth, enhance brand awareness, and deepen customer engagement.

Powder Valley Outdoors' CEO Bill Clinton expressed, "[Vernon's] extensive industry experience, innovative approach and deep passion for the outdoor community make her the perfect leader to guide our marketing efforts."

Vernon brings a wealth of experience to the company. She has held prominent roles at brands including SilencerCo, Vista Outdoor, BOTE and Christensen Arms.



C. POWELL

Victory Archery Welcomes Manager

Cody Powell joined Victory Archery to serve as the regional sales manager. In his

new role, Powell will collaborate with Victory Archery's in-house team to further elevate the brand's presence and unlock new business opportunities.

Steve Greenwood, Victory Archery GM stated, "Knowing Cody and watching his success and dedication to his customers, I could not be more excited to have him join us."

Powell's ample career experience stems from roles at Gart Sports, Sportsman's Warehouse, Gold Tip, Bushnell and Primos.



S. SCHLEICHER

Leica Sport Optics Taps Sales VP

Leica appointed Sebastian Schleicher as the VP of sales for Sport Optics as the brand continues

to expand its footprint in the U.S. premium sport optics market. In this role, he oversees Leica USA's sales efforts for the sports optics division and will focus on building long-term strategic partnerships with retailers and enhancing brand awareness.

Before joining Leica last May, Schleicher spent over nine years at Traeger Grills. He also served as sales director for North America at Soundboks, a Danish Bluetooth speaker company.



D. DUNN

Hydra Weaponry Hires Plant Manager

Dave Dunn has joined Hydra Weaponry as the company's plant manager of its new

20,000-sq.-ft. facility.

"Dave brings with him extensive experience in back-of-the-house production and facilities management, plus front-of-the-house skills like sales and new business development," Mack Gwinn III, CEO of Hydra Weaponry, said. "He keeps the corporate machine well-oiled and running smoothly."

Dunn brings 47 years of

experience as a sales manager and the director of operations/plant manager with Silvex, a full-service company, specializing in electroplating and surface finishing, to the role.



M. CLAREY

IHEA-USA Announces Director

The International Hunter Education Association-USA (IHEA-USA) hired Matt Clarey as

its first director of business development and sales. Clarey will oversee the development, strengthening and maintenance of key relationships with industry partners, state agencies and program stakeholders. He will also be instrumental in managing revenue-generating programs, advancing annual marketing initiatives and managing partnerships with organizations.

IHEA-USA Executive Director Alex Baer stated, "[Clarey's] leadership will be pivotal as we continue to expand our support of hunter education teams and create opportunities for the industry to partner with conservation efforts across the country."

Clarey joins IHEA-USA following a 25-year tenure with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) where he most recently served as assistant chief and R3 coordinator.



J. SHIN

Safari Club International Taps Mar/Comm Director

Safari Club International (SCI)

welcomed James Shin as its director of marketing and communications.

"SCI is thrilled to welcome James Shin to our team," said SCI EVP of International Government and Public Affairs Ben Cassidy. "He is joining SCI at an exciting time and his experience and reputation will ensure we continue to be First

for Hunters.”

Shin joins SCI from Scitor Veritas, where he served as principal consultant. His extensive experience in strategic B2B marketing includes leadership roles at organizations such as Essilor of America, Aegon and Verizon.

Shin earned a bachelor's degree in international finance from The George Washington University.



C. VLASEK

Lancer Systems Welcomes Sales Manager

Lancer Systems announced the return of Charles “Chuck” Vlashek as the L.E./military sales manager. In his position,

Vlashek will drive business growth

by focusing on law enforcement and military partnerships.

Vlashek has worked for Lancer Systems, SureFire, B.E. Meyers and XGO to grow each company's sales and market presence.




Colt CZ Group SE Announces Management Changes

Colt CZ Group SE announced changes to the company's management structure. The roles of group CEO and chairman of the board of directors are now separate.

Jan Drahota will continue to serve as chairman of the board of directors of Colt CZ and focus on strategic

development, identifying growth opportunities for the group and achieving the company's long-term goals and visions.

Radek Musil, the current CEO of Sellier & Bellot, is now serving as CEO of Colt CZ. He will oversee the executive management of the group, drive the implementation of the business plan and focus on production and sales development.

Radek Musil joined Sellier & Bellot as CEO and chairman of the board in 1999. Previously, he worked for the Czech company TON. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Nuclear and Physical Engineering at the Czech Technical University in Prague and the Thunderbird School of Global Management in Phoenix. 



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BY MASSAD AYOOB

EXPLAIN REVOLVER ADVANTAGES TO GAIN MARKET POTENTIAL

There's no question: It's a polymer, striker-fired, 9mm semi-auto world. Ain't gonna lie to ya. But, it doesn't mean revolvers don't have a place in your showcase. We now have generations of shooters who've never even shot a wheelgun and consider them a tool for times past.

People complain about dealers who sell petite females Airweight .38 snub-nose revolvers and a box of +P ammo, as if they didn't realize the sharp recoil would make the gun hateful for them to use.

Let me introduce you to Jeff Boss who runs Lundy's Guns in Live Oak, Fla. He's very gun-savvy, and he recommends just those guns to a lot of his female customers. Hear him out.

"In the Florida heat, everyone wants

something small and light to carry," he shared. "A lot of my female customers — and male customers, for that matter — are more worried about venomous snakes in their backyard than they are about rapists and muggers. .38 Special snake shot has pretty mild recoil. If they want to carry for self-defense against human criminals, .38 Special mid-range target wadcutters are recommended today by a lot of the leading self-defense instructors, and their recoil is manageable."

For many years, the double-action revolver was the standard recommendation for a new handgun owner. The reasons that were valid then remain valid now. Let's review them, bearing in mind each attribute is a selling point.

◀ Gun shop owner Jeff Boss has found a light .38 snub-nosed revolver like this S&W 642 works for many of his customers.

DOUBLE-ACTION REVOLVER ATTRIBUTES

Simplicity favors the swing-out cylinder revolver, the loading and unloading of which exemplifies simplicity itself. First-time gun owners in particular worry about safety. If they don't have strong hands, they have difficulty operating an auto pistol's slide, a fact that has given rise to "Rack Assist" accessories and particularly easy autos to rack: The Smith & Wesson Shield EZ series, Ruger's LC380 and so on.

The saying during the great swap from service revolver to duty semi-auto in police work was you had to be really, *really* stupid to have an unintentional discharge with a double-action-only revolver, and only a little bit stupid for just one second to have one with an "automatic."

A revolver's simplicity sells to new buyers or those with weak hands.

The press-contact shot is sometimes the customer's last chance to stop a rapist or mugger who has them in a bear hug. Most auto pistols will go out of battery and fail to fire when pressed against a body. A revolver won't.

Another advantage of the press-contact shot for self-defense is, in addition to the bullet, violently expanding gases are directed into the attacker's body — magnifying the "stopping effect" of the wound.

Revolvers aren't ammo sensitive. I've seen too many snake-shot rounds jam autos to carry that ammo in anything but a revolver. Too light a load may fail to cycle the auto. In a slim subcompact 9mm, a +P+ load can run the slide so fast it occasionally closes on an empty chamber before it can pick up the next round. The revolver will run everything from blank cartridges to Elmer Keith Memorial Magnum rounds.

Autos can jam from limp-wristing, which is surprisingly common in real fights due to the awkward positions combatants often find themselves in. Revolvers won't.

A shrouded-hammer revolver won't jam when fired through a coat pocket. A semi-auto sometimes will: both the slide and ejection port can be blocked by the fabric of the pocket.

Revolvers are more forgiving of lack of maintenance. All auto pistols

need at least some lubricant for the long bearing surfaces between the slide and frame to work properly. Lubricant evaporates, and it drains from the gun when carried muzzle down in a holster. Any firearms instructor can tell you dry semi-auto pistols are a major cause of stoppages. A revolver doesn't really need lubrication.

Revolvers are more amenable to dry-fire practice. The shooter doesn't have to break their hold to rack the slide and reset the trigger, as they must on most auto pistols. I assume you're going to recommend the customer dry-fire a lot to become accustomed to the gun. They can dry-fire the double-action revolver until the cows come home or their finger gets tired, whichever comes first.

LET'S NOT FORGET SINGLE ACTIONS

I can't in good conscience recommend a gate-loading single-action revolver for self-defense. But,

“

I assume you're going to recommend the customer dry-fire a lot to become accustomed to the gun. They can dry-fire the double-action revolver until the cows come home or their finger gets tired, whichever comes first.

remember, your customer is allowed to have guns for target-shooting fun.

Something like the Ruger Wrangler .22 is ridiculously cheap but surprisingly functional for the price. We've been emphasizing

first-time buyers up to now, but I'd suggest the single action more for the experienced shooter looking for recreation.

With any revolver — but particularly the frontier-style single action — there's "more for the shooter to do." It's somewhat like a car enthusiast preferring a manual transmission to an automatic: The user gets more of a satisfying sense of running the machine instead of the machine running itself.

Suppose someone said to me, "You shoot a *revolver*? Isn't that a little like riding a horse? Don't you know we have horseless carriages now?" My answer would likely be, "Yeah, but riding a horse is more fun than driving a car, isn't it?"

If you can explain these advantages — whether it's to a first-time self-defense buyer or a seasoned enthusiast — you'll see your share of revolver sales rise in the new year. Every bit helps, right? **SI**



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BY ASHLEY MCGEE

A TAILORED APPROACH: HOME VS. SELF-DEFENSE

When you Google “home defense for women,” only one listing on the first page of organic search results is actually about home defense. The rest are centered on self-defense or personal defense. While sure, there is some overlap, most of these articles and the products recommended within are focused on tools and tactics for when a woman is out of the house in public spaces. I wish I could say I’m surprised, but it mirrors the experiences of women throughout the country when they walk into a gun store.

Think about it. When a woman walks into your store and is interested in purchasing a gun for personal defense, how often do you or your staff ask the right clarifying questions to determine her primary motivations? Does your brain automatically jump to everyday carry solutions like compact pistols and pepper spray, or do you pause to inquire about her unique circumstances, like what percentage of her day is spent in the home versus out?

The reality is preparing and training for self-defense versus home defense requires different approaches, as each involves unique scenarios, environments and tools. Addressing this

distinction in your sales and educational strategies not only helps customers make informed choices, but also positions your business as an expert in understanding nuanced needs.

DEFINING HOME DEFENSE

Unlike self-defense, which often centers on mobility and adaptability in public spaces, home defense focuses on protecting a fixed location and its occupants. This distinction impacts training, strategy and gear selection.

Firearms for home defense — like shotguns, rifles or full-size pistols — prioritize stopping power and accuracy over concealability and portability. Furthermore, layered security measures such as reinforced locks, alarm systems and surveillance cameras complement a robust home-defense plan.

Home defense also requires customers to consider the tactical use of the home environment. This includes strategies such as:

- **Barricading:** Securing doors and entryways to delay intruders.
- **Positioning:** Using cover and choke points to their advantage.
- **Coordination:** Rehearsing family drills for reaching safe rooms and communicating effectively.

◀ Earlier this year, Mossberg expanded its popular 590 line to include the 590R and 590RM — which will catch the attention of home-defense customers. These tactical shotguns combine pump-action performance with groundbreaking new features — such as a rotary safety selector, ergonomically designed forend and an integrated barrel/single piece heat shield combination. The 590RM features a 10-round detachable magazine. (Image: O.F. Mossberg & Sons)

It’s essential to educate customers about legal considerations like the castle doctrine or stand-your-ground laws, which vary by state and play a critical role in their decision-making and preparedness.

ADDRESSING CUSTOMER NEEDS

When engaging with female customers — or any customer — interested in home defense, avoid assumptions. Instead, focus on asking clarifying questions to guide them toward appropriate solutions. Examples include:

- Do you have children in the home?
- What areas of the home are you most concerned about securing?
- Would you like to discuss additional security measures, like door reinforcement or alarm systems?

These questions not only help identify the right firearm but also open the door to conversations about training, safe storage and rapid accessibility — particularly important if children are present in the home. Safes with biometric access or quick-action locking mechanisms provide an excellent balance between security and readiness.

TRAINING & EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Home defense isn’t just about products; it’s about preparation. Dealers can expand their offerings by hosting training sessions and educational workshops that cover key topics regarding:

- **Legal Considerations:** Host seminars on state-specific home-defense laws, such as the castle doctrine and self-defense statutes.
- **Layered Security Plans:** Teach customers how to integrate locks, cameras and alarms with tactical strategies for a cohesive defense.
- **Family Coordination:** Offer courses on safe room drills and communication protocols, emphasizing collaboration

among household members.

These value-added services not only generate additional revenue streams but also foster trust and loyalty by demonstrating your commitment to customers' safety. Consider partnering with subject matter experts such as local law enforcement, a safe manufacturer or a locally owned home security company.

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH EXPERTISE

Small- to medium-sized firearm dealers have a unique opportunity to differentiate themselves by becoming hubs for home-defense education. In doing so, you're not just selling a firearm — you're empowering customers with the knowledge and confidence to effectively protect themselves and their loved ones.

Consider creating in-store displays highlighting home-defense options, such as shotguns with

“

Preparing and training for self-defense versus home defense requires different approaches, as each involves unique scenarios, environments and tools.

reduced recoil, carbines with compact frames and full-size pistols with user-friendly features. Pair these displays with educational signage explaining their advantages in home-defense scenarios. Complement this with brochures or QR codes linking to resources on topics like door reinforcement and alarm system selection.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

By taking a comprehensive approach to home defense — one that goes beyond firearms to include training, strategy and legal education — you can meet the nuanced needs of female customers and establish your store as a trusted authority. Recognizing the distinction between self-defense and home defense ensures your customers receive tailored recommendations, leading to better outcomes for them and a stronger reputation for your business. **SI**



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BY NANCY KEATON

CAN AI TRAIN FOR AND PREDICT FUTURE SHOOTING SKILLS?

Everyone knows AI is increasingly involved in many aspects of our lives, for better or for worse. So, when I heard about AccuShoot, a real-time scoring system with dynamic targets that can learn and predict how a shooter's scores could change and improve over time, it piqued my interest. I spoke with Co-founder Poul Petersen and Head of Marketing Atakan "Kan" Cetinsoy to find out more.

THE BEGINNING

Francisco "Cisco" Martin and Poul Petersen co-founded the company BigML, which offers a machine learning software platform for clients to build predictive models. Customers have included toll roads in Texas, North Carolina and Virginia; Mercedes-Benz in Germany; as well as the U.S. Air Force.

"BigML been around since 2011 and we have a pretty experienced team when it comes to machine learning," noted Petersen. "The nomenclature always changes — machine learning, deep learning, AI, etc. — but we have deep experience in that field."

Now this is where necessity being the mother of invention comes into play. Much like Prohibition bootlegging was the beginning of what would become NASCAR racing, the COVID pandemic was the impetus for AccuShoot.

Petersen and Martin were going to outdoor shooting ranges and, being

engineers themselves and experts in AI/machine learning, they started thinking they could create a better and more engaging experience.

"By digitizing marksmanship, we thought we could do better than shooting at paper targets, going and fetching them, bringing them back and trying to score with pens and paper and notebooks," explained Petersen.

THE APP

Their first foray into the space was building AccuShoot iPhone and Android apps. Utilizing a tripod holding a phone, the camera is focused on the target. Each shot is automatically scored and tallied in real time. It keeps a log of all past performance and uses this data to try to predict how future performance will evolve.

Cetinsoy added, "As you train more and have more sessions, the predictions are expected to get more accurate."

Currently, the app costs \$15 a month and can be used by an individual wherever they shoot.

THE WEBSITE

The team then created the accompanying website, which is the repository of all the statistical data.

"One of the things differentiating us from a lot of shooting apps is we push all that data into a central repository, and we're doing some advanced statistical

analysis of a user's data to predict performance over time," said Petersen.

As the model continues to collect data, it will evolve over time to produce more information.

THE LFX

In late 2023, the team decided having a direct-to-consumer app is nice, but they wanted to have a B2B product and service for shooting ranges. So, they picked up an old project that they had an idea from back when the company was created — the LFX system (Live Fire eXperience).

This is a hardware plus software system, with a thermal camera and a minicomputer built in. A projector is utilized to display imagery for different types of drills. An iPad or any other kind of tablet is used to control the system.

The system is easily portable, fitting inside of a Pelican case, though the screen and the stands are bigger and transported separately.



We've had it for a couple of months at this point and it has honestly grown exponentially since we started. They are constantly developing everything that happens with the system."

Jared Millhouse • Sales Associate/Trainer
Oregon's Indoor Shooting Range • Lebanon, Ore.

Cetinsoy shared, "Recently in Las Vegas, we went from range to range in a day and just set it up and shot it and then tore it down and went to the next range. It does work outside as well. If we're in full daylight we just put a canopy over the screen so it doesn't have direct sunlight on it."

The "self-healing screen" is another piece of the system the group created, where the bullets pass through the screen.

"It's our own little piece of technology, which is still evolving," noted Petersen.

This is a consumable system; it does

eventually wear out after around 3,000–5,000 rounds. The cost for a new screen is about \$200, and the AccuShot team is working on getting the price down.

SOCIAL COMPETITION COMPONENT

The most fascinating aspect of the system is the ability to accumulate and compare data across multiple users and facilities.

Petersen conveyed, “We have all these tools where you can say, ‘Okay, this session was this weapon with that ammo,’ and then we also have leaderboards where you can see who’s the best. So, we have this accumulation of individual user data on the website. You can have multiple ranges, you can have leaderboards across the ranges, you could have a leaderboard for the state, you can have a leaderboard for the country, the whole world. You could have leagues. We can share and socialize this data in ways no one has tried before,” he said.

“To be clear, this is all permission-based; we’re not going to take people’s data and present it without their consent,” Cetinsoy emphasized.

A shooter’s data is aggregated and then can have a performance prediction. For instance, if a shooter shot a session and then wanted to see what that group would look like if they were shooting under stress, they can adjust it to see how their groups would change.

BUILT FOR L.E. APPLICATIONS

Petersen says LFX doesn’t have to be machine learning or even AI to provide interesting data. They conducted a test with a police department that was switching from a .40-caliber pistol with iron sights to a 9mm pistol with a red dot. They were able to gather the data and show the exact comparisons side-by-side to see the specific outcomes of each gun.

“It’s actually quite easy to do a session comparator where you can take sessions and can group them together. If I wanted to compare all of the pistol sessions in my account, I could compare them with all of the public pistol sessions. You get a summary of exactly how accurate

these comparisons are,” said Petersen. “You can also replay video and see the actual session you did, and you can see groups evolving over time in the video as well.”

Shooters don’t have to just stand and shoot at plain targets. Many scenarios are also available on the system. Currently, there are over 100 drills and counting.

“Some are on the lighthearted side, like for Halloween we came up with shooting ghosts or pumpkins to get people engaged,” Petersen said, “but the system also has drills like the FBI challenge and the Mozambique drill.”



The idea is making the whole experience as authentic as possible because you’re using real guns and real ammo, and it’s more engaging because there’s a digital component to it.”

Poul Petersen • Co-Founder
AccuShoot

One of the many differences of LFX is they can make any video a shootable scenario. For example, police body-cam footage can be turned directly into live-fire scenarios.

Petersen added, “We’ve also turned it into a process to add more drills, so in the future, it doesn’t have to be us adding drills. Eventually, people who are active users or admins of the system and their location will be able to add new drills — it’s going to be a growing catalog of drills the entire community can benefit from.”

He continued, “The idea is making the whole experience as authentic as possible because you’re using real guns and real ammo, and it’s more engaging because there’s a digital component to it.”

ADJECTIVE FEEDBACK

Here in Feb. 2025, the AccuShoot LFX system is celebrating its one-year anniversary. Petersen believes the system is primed for expansive

growth.

“When we had the first demo of the LFX system running back in February 2024, we realized this was the thing we needed to focus on,” he said. “So, we’ve been 100% on this for the whole year to get it to market. We realized we couldn’t stop playing with it and everyone we showed it to couldn’t stop playing with it either — so it was one of those market indicator moments that says this is something we should be looking at.”

The AccuShoot LFX system is being tested at Oregon’s Indoor Shooting Range in Lebanon, Ore. Jared Millhouse, a sales associate and trainer with the range, was the person who let me know about AccuShoot because he was so excited about it.


“We’ve had it for a couple of months at this point and it has honestly grown exponentially since we started,” he said. “They are constantly developing everything that happens with the system.”

The gun range utilizes the fun shoots such as the Halloween shoot, as well as the body-cam footage for training.

Cetinsoy also says the other feedback they are receiving has been very positive.

“So far we’re getting great feedback starting with the Lebanon location, and then when we did demos in Finland, Germany, Las Vegas and Spain we also received great feedback — with participants saying they haven’t had that much fun shooting in a long while.”

The cost of the system is \$12,500 list price and for the first 100 ranges, AccuShoot is offering a promotional price of \$9,999.

“The type of capability and the feature set you get with LFX — one that’s constantly evolving and the fact you can use real firearms and real ammo while you’re practicing — and with a figure as low as \$9,999, we figure it’s a good starting point for us to make more noise about this in the shooting community,” concluded Cetinsoy. 

For more info, visit [AccuShoot.com](https://www.accushoot.com).



KelTec PR57

BY TIM BARKER

CONCEALED CARRY MARKET:

Boom Or Bust?

A big part of owning a gun store is selling. But to thrive, you need to do much more than just stock the latest and greatest rifles, shotguns and pistols.

One of your most important profit centers is the wide range of extras that go with those guns. Whether it's spare magazines, optics, cleaning kits, holsters or storage devices, these accessories offer a chance to make up for the tight margins on guns.

"We've got to keep our prices low enough to compete with Cabela's and Bass Pro and everybody else," noted Jacquelyn Clark, owner of Bristlecone Shooting, Training & Retail Center in Lakewood, Colo. "If we only sold firearms, we wouldn't be in business for very long."

Naturally, some guns lend themselves to accessory sales better than others. This brings us to the concealed carry segment, which, for many stores is one of the strongest drivers of customer traffic.

Heading into a new year with a new U.S. president and a Republican-controlled Congress, there's considerable uncertainty in the overall firearms market. There's even talk of a potential "Trump slump" — with no external pressures sending customers into stores.

But is there room for some optimism, particularly in concealed carry sales? This snapshot was taken in late December, allowing some time for election results to settle in the minds of customers.

So far, so good, according to Henry Parro, owner of Parro's Gun Shop in Waterbury, Vt.

"We had a record month in November," Parro explained. "Looking at the reports, there's a high number of concealed carry firearms rolling out of here. And we had a high number of coaching and training sessions to go along with it."

It's often difficult to pinpoint exactly what's bringing in customers during a given month. But he sees some surprising connections to the November election, with new faces walking showing up in the store.

"For whatever reason, they felt a little threatened about the outcome of the election," Parro stated. "We're getting a ton of

first-time shooters, which is typically unheard of when a Republican is elected. Gun sales are usually pretty stagnant.”

There’s similar strength in sales at Ace Sporting Goods in Washington, Pa., noted owner Ben Romanoff.

“The concealed carry market has picked up,” he said. “It’s been kind of a pleasant surprise from what we were seeing.”

As has been the case for some time, 9mm handguns remain the top sellers for all three of these stores. The most popular models include the GLOCK 43X, Springfield Armory Hellcat and SIG SAUER’s P365 line.

The favored caliber’s smaller cousin, however, is also showing a bit of life. Romanoff’s shop has witnessed an uptick in .380 over the past couple of years, thanks to the newer pocketable guns like the Ruger LCP MAX and, more recently, the Smith & Wesson BODYGUARD 2.0 — the current best-selling gun in the store.

“You get 12 rounds of .380 in your pocket, without stretching your pocket and leaving a print,” Romanoff said.

Those features — size and capacity — are among the most important for concealed carry shoppers, noted Clark in Colorado. But so too is ease of use: “Especially for older customers, they want to make sure they can operate the firearm and rack the slide.”

EXTRAS: RED DOTS HERE TO STAY

Every gun in your shop

has some accessory able to be sold with it. But CCW guns have an advantage over most of them.

Consider someone shopping for a range gun. They may plan to shoot it soon, but there’s no particular rush to buy things they can easily add on later. There’s a different dynamic at play for CCW shoppers, suggests Romanoff, in Pennsylvania.

“When someone makes the decision to upgrade or buy a new concealed carry pistol, they’re going to get the whole thing ‘right now,’” he said. “They want to take the thing home, clean it, load it and put it on their belt or in their pocket.”

This means more opportunities to sell holsters, magazines, cleaning kits, storage safes, self-defense ammo and, of course, red dots.

Long gone are the days when dots and optic cuts were more of a trending curiosity aimed at older shooters with declining vision. Today, even if customers aren’t buying dots right away, they still want guns designed to accept one.

“Everything now is optic ready,” Romanoff noted. “It’s not a trend anymore. It’s here to stay.”

At Parro’s in Vermont, the subject often comes up during discussions to evaluate customer needs. The shop has demonstration guns set up with dots to help customers better understand the potential advantages.

“Once that red dot pops into play, they just get a smile on their face,” Parro

exclaimed.

Like the other shops, Parro’s does particularly well with the less-expensive offerings from Vortex and Holosun. On the pricier side, popular makers are Trijicon and Aimpoint.



ONCE THAT RED DOT POPS INTO PLAY, THEY JUST GET A SMILE ON THEIR FACE.”

Henry Parro • Owner
Parro’s Gun Shop
Waterbury, Vt.

Not every customer is going to buy an optic right away. They’re more likely to add a holster, spare magazine and self-defense ammo. To help with the latter, staffers explain the advantages of buying range ammo for practice and a break-in period, but also the need for self-defense ammo — including some to test in the gun.

“You should pop off some rounds to see the difference in the recoil and to see if there’s a difference

in the point of impact,” Parro stated.

Holster popularity varies widely by store, with brands including Safariland (particularly for specialty items), Bravo Concealment and Tagua Gunleather. And while more holsters are being made to accommodate optics, it’s more of a challenge when someone wants to add a weapon light.

“It’s really difficult to find a holster that’s going to fit your light,” Romanoff said. “There are a lot of guns and a lot of lights. It’s hard to stock all of those.”

Another area seeing some growth is secure storage. It’s particularly true in Colorado, where state law requires guns kept in cars to be locked up.

Bristlecone Shooting carries a wide range of these, but the most popular are made by Vaultek, with features including biometric and Bluetooth technologies.

“They have ones that fit in your car. They have ones able to fit in your bookcase,” Clark shared. “They have ones with the look of an alarm clock, but that store a firearm.”

TRAINING

Not all offered accessories need shelf space. (At least, not if you think of personal training and classes as an extra you can sell.) Unfortunately, too many gun stores aren’t offering any type of training for customers.

As detailed in a recent *Shooting Industry* issue, nearly half of the respondents surveyed in



Jacquelyn Clark behind one of Bristlecone's pistol showcases. Her team makes a concerted effort to equip customers after the sale through training classes and events at the range.

the 2024 NSSF First-Time Gun Buyers report weren't offered training when they purchased guns.

Of course, it's much easier for shops with a range and classroom space to provide this type of service. Even if you don't have these things, there may be opportunities to be creative, including partnerships with local gun clubs or, at least, vetting local trainers you can recommend to customers.

Tapping into this demand can provide a solid boost to your bottom line, while also helping to foster better educated and more proficient gun owners.

In Colorado, Bristlecone Shooting offers a wide range of courses, focusing on handguns, shotguns and rifles. Along with tactical classes, they offer a couple of different versions of

concealed carry training — one geared toward beginners and another for more experienced shooters. Demand has been strong, with class attendance up 20% in 2024 compared to the previous year.

For Clark, this educational component is a key part of the business.

"If somebody's buying a gun for personal or home defense, it's a tool. It doesn't do them any good if they don't understand how to use it," she asserted.

Parro, in Vermont, has a similar take. His store has a separate training division and recently partnered with a training group dominated by instructors with law enforcement and military backgrounds. Among the broad range of offerings are concealed carry classes — including an option for women only.

Courses are promoted

through in-store marketing. And they're developing a website that will allow customers to sign up and pay online. But the key to connecting with customers is the sales staff.

Through conversations and interactions (including watching customers' gun-handling skills) staffers evaluate which customers might benefit the most from training. In addition to the established classes, the store offers one-hour coaching sessions (\$99) covering things like firearm basics and how to choose a gun.

"When we see someone in the store who is maybe struggling trying to find their 'right' first firearm, we talk about training and coaching," Parro reasoned. "We're fortunate we have enough employees on the range who are instructors. Sometimes we can do it right on the spot."

"OPPORTUNITY" IN THE FORECAST

Guessing what's going to happen next in any business is always difficult. It's even more challenging for an industry that has experienced severe and unexpected demand shifts.



**WHEN SOMEONE
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THEIR BELT OR IN
THEIR POCKET."**

Ben Romanoff • Owner
Ace Sporting Goods
Washington, Pa.

Even now, there are some elements of fear — though nothing like the COVID-era panic — filtering into stores. Many gun enthusiasts may be happy with recent political events, but it's hard to deny the nation is feeling stressed.

"I think after this most recent election, for me personally, some tension was lifted," said Romanoff, in Pennsylvania. "But on the other side, probably people don't feel the same."

This is pushing some new gun buyers into stores — a dynamic similar, although to a much lesser degree, to what we saw around the COVID pandemic. Again, it brings



**IF SOMEBODY'S
BUYING A GUN FOR
PERSONAL OR HOME
DEFENSE, IT'S A
TOOL. IT DOESN'T
DO THEM ANY GOOD
IF THEY DON'T
UNDERSTAND HOW
TO USE IT."**

Jacquelyn Clark • Owner
Bristlecone Shooting, Training
& Retail Center
Lakewood, Colo.

the opportunity to convert first-timers into second- and third-timers.

"My hope is we get a certain percentage of these new buyers on our side," Parro declared. "Maybe we can get them to see our point of view — guns themselves are not bad."

But if fear and anxiety don't drive the market, is there anything else that can? We already have optic cuts and pocketable guns with substantial increases in capacity. Is there some other innovation capable of pushing more customers to seek out new carry guns?

"It's a good question, and I don't really have an answer," observed

Clark, in Colorado. "I don't feel like the market is saturated. We continue to grow, with the number of students we're putting through those classes, and the number of firearms in this category we sell, as well as the accessories. I don't know what the next big thing is going to be." **SI**

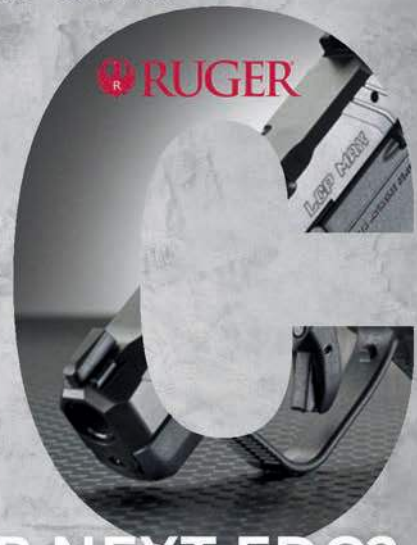
It's anyone's guess at this point, but there are signs a second "Trump Slump" may not be as pronounced as previously feared. Agreed/disagree? We invite you to weigh in anytime: editor@shootingindustry.com.

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Optics Crystal Ball

Red Dots To Continue Market Domination

By Bryan Hendricks

AS quality improves in mid-tier price points, red dots will continue their red-hot domination of the optics industry, according to what sources say.

Chris Riffe, optics counter manager for H&H Shooting Sports in Oklahoma City, claimed red dots for handguns represent the biggest innovation in the optics industry. He sees the trend accelerating as handgunners and long-gun owners continue transitioning to electronic sights.

“Red dots and things of that nature are making it easier for folks to be more accurate at farther distances, as well as simply making it easier to shoot,” Riffe stated.

More than gadget chic is driving this trend, Riffe said. Electronic sights have staying power because they simplify the shooting process.

“A red dot basically helps simplify the geometry,” Riffe reasoned. “Instead of having to line up four points in space — the target, front sight, rear sight, the eye — with a red dot you just have to line up three. [The target, dot and the eye.] Add to that, the fact red dots are a parallax-free option, I don’t have to be directly in line with my iron sights as long as I have the dot pretty close to where I want the bullet to go.”

He continued, “Shooters can run their

standard factory iron sights and still be able to co-witness through their glass if they should have some sort of failure with their dot.”

ONE MANUFACTURER STANDS OUT

Holosun dominates the consumer electronic optics market. It is very high quality despite its competitive price point, according to Riffe.

“Thankfully, I have not had a lot of contact with Holosun’s customer service,” Riffe said. “They’re making a pretty good product right now, and so far they’ve been pretty popular.”

Zack Smith, manager of World Wide Weapons in Bryant, Ark., echoed Riffe’s observations. Smith shared Holosun is an affordable, high-quality option that delivers high customer satisfaction. If shooters are happy with the product, Smith said, they’re also going to be happy with the seller.



Josh Hunter, handgun optics manager at Fort Thompson Sporting Goods in Sherwood, Ark., took it a step further. He said the quality of Chinese-made optics is improving, especially Holosun and Vortex — and the rest of the optics industry should take note.

“The only real big change in optics I have seen over the course of the past two years is Chinese optics have gotten significantly better,” Hunter observed. “Holosun is now playing with the big dogs, and to be frank, there are some big dogs I don’t recommend as much anymore as I recommend Holosun. Some of the Chinese companies are really stepping their game up to the point where it’s really kind of hard to try to talk somebody into an American-made or at least an American-owned optic anymore.”

Hunter shared elite stalwarts like Trijicon are still strong, but Trijicon’s price creates a huge opening for Holosun and Vortex.

“I do like Trijicon a lot,” Hunter stated. “The one thing I’ll say about them, though, is they are very, very expensive. You’re talking about a price point that’s generally between two and three times what it would cost for a Holosun. Holosun, however, is going to give 98% of the people pulling the triggers, at least in this part of the country, everything they need and more.”

RED DOTS & LONG GUNS: “GET MORE FOR YOUR MONEY”

In a recent article titled, “Are Lever Guns the New AR-15?” *Shooting Industry* examined the growing popularity of the lever-action rifle in the tactical community. Red dots are a natural union for tactical levers. Hunters are also transitioning to red dots on their levers because it’s easier to acquire a target quickly in low light with a dot than with iron sights.

Red dots for long guns are a different genre than those for pistols, according to Riffe. Also, many AR enthusiasts prefer low-power variable optics (LPVO). Manufacturers



Holosun’s innovative approach has made it a vibrant brand for dealers and consumers alike. Just released at SHOT Show 2025, the AEMS PRO X2 features a 1.1” x 0.87” sight window, providing exceptional clarity and target acquisition across a wide field of view. Users can depend on 50,000-hour battery life powered by a CR2032 battery — thanks to Holosun’s Shake Awake Technology and last setting recall.

//
Holosun is now playing with the big dogs, and to be frank, there are some big dogs I don’t recommend as much anymore as I recommend Holosun.”

Josh Hunter • Handgun Optics Manager
Fort Thompson Sporting Goods
Sherwood, Ark.

are increasing the selection and improving the quality of those designs, as well.

“You primarily see handgun optics as kind of their own thing,” Riffe noted. “You see more tube-style red dots for your long guns, and the low-

variable power optics you’re going to see on ARs and even lever actions.”

Robert Pohl, director of inventory and operations for Calibers in Albuquerque, N.M., said the biggest change in electronic sights for rifles is quality and price. You get more for your money as the price of the technology comes down.

“When I first got into firearms, when you talked about red dots for rifles, you were stuck with EOTECH, Aimpoint and Trijicon, the main workhorses,” Pohl recalled. “That was it. Or it was the stuff you could get from Walmart. You know, the \$40 optics that break after 50 shots. Now you just have more of a broad selection. If you want a quality optic, you have much more cost-effective options.”

Pohl noted his customers prefer Holosun, too.

“They’ve got a pretty good grasp on everything,” Pohl said. “What Holosun has done with solar technology and battery technology is phenomenal. The only thing I see getting better is glass quality.”

Josh Hunter agrees. He said some

dot makers are already distinguishing themselves by improving their glass.

"Some companies are running high-end glass, which is a really nice change to see," he observed. "Previously, if you bought an Asian-made product, it was going to have Asian-made glass. As long as you were getting Japanese glass, it was not a bad thing, but anymore, I've got stuff coming from Japan, but it has Austrian glass in it! That's pretty salty for the price point they occupy."

END OF THE "LINE?"

The popularity of red dots is driving laser sights to extinction. Battery life is a major factor, according to Hunter.

"We're selling a lot less lasers and way more red dots," Hunter shared. "Most of those red dots are going to have a 10,000-, 20,000-, 30,000-, 50,000-hour battery life. The laser is going to have a battery life of, like, two hours. So, right about the time you're accustomed to it is right about the time it's time to change the battery. Hopefully you remembered to do it."

Also, Hunter said, a laser eliminates the aiming process. Shooters were never comfortable being removed from the most elemental shooting process.

"With a laser, you're specifically training yourself to not use your



Red dots and things of that nature are making it easier for folks to be more accurate at farther distances, as well as simply making it easier to shoot."

Chris Riffe • Optics Counter Manager
H&H Shooting Sports
Oklahoma City

irons. It's the whole way it works," he said. "You have stopped using anything that's a tangible, relatable part of the pistol in order to aim. And you're dependent on a two-hour battery charge. Lasers are just kind of becoming a thing of the past."

HEAT OF THE NIGHT

Night vision and thermal optics are increasingly popular. As technological boundaries expand, existing technology is becoming more

affordable for more customers.

"Pulsar, iRay, AGM, Fusion, Trijicon — they all keep getting better and better," Riffe noted. "The leading edge is \$4,000 to \$6,000 retail, but we also see some utilizing older technology and be able to come in at lower price point, like AGM's Rattler TS19-256."

Night vision and thermal technology are essential for hunting hogs and predators at night, and it's a growing market, Josh Hunter shared.

"Night vision and thermal are becoming more and more commonplace, but the price is coming down further on them," he elaborated. "And as it does, more and more people are buying it as hobby consumers as opposed to industrial consumers. As more hobby consumers purchase it, the prices go down again."

GLASS HALF-FULL

Telescopic glass optics are the lowest tech segment of the optics spectrum, but our sources say scope makers are improving brightness and clarity by treating their lenses with more and better coatings.

"They are shaping the glass and polishing it to make sure they bring as great an image to the glass as possible," Riffe said.

Greater magnification is also a trend. The standard magnification for scopes 20 years ago was 3-9x40; 4-12X is the minimum standard now. Much higher magnification is available and affordable.

"Our eyes are aging, and people just want to stretch out a little bit further," Riffe added. "From Oklahoma City-west, there's a lot more open territory where a lot of 600-, 700-, and 800-yard shots are not uncommon."

Scope makers are also devoting significant attention to extra-long-range shooting, which is increasingly popular in some areas. There is, for example, a one-mile range within 15 minutes of H&H Shooting Sports. Long-range rifle shooting is possible throughout the West.

"We're seeing some of the Vortex



Image: Pulsar (Thermion 2 LRF XL50)

PSTs, the new Vortex Viper HDs, along with the Leupold Mark 4 and Mark 5,” Riffe informed.

Low-power variable optics are the most popular glass at Calibers. “We’re not really moving a lot

of units of traditional glass,” Pohl confirmed. “The LPVO style seems to be dominating it. We do sell a good chunk of benchrest guns and hunting rifles, but when we do, people get the combo packs with a Vortex 3-9 or 4-12 already mounted. Scopes alone, it seems like LPVO is what’s selling best for us.”

Hunters appear to be budget-conscious when buying scopes, Pohl observed. Vortex and Leupold remain popular among a large segment of this demographic.

“It seems like a lot of the big brands have gone by the wayside over here,” Pohl said. “Unless it’s super high end like Nightforce or that middle ground where Leupold tends to live, I haven’t seen anybody buy ZEISS or Leica in 10 years. Nobody’s coming in here and asking for those over LPVO, like, ever.” **SI**



Josh Hunter of Fort Thompson Sporting Goods in Sherwood, Ark., says Holosun has been increasing market share in the red dot segment.

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Joining A Buying Group

What's In It For Me?

BY DOUG VANDERWOUDE

If you're in the firearms retail segment of the industry, joining a buying group has probably been a consideration at some point. (And if you haven't explored this option yet, do so soon.)

As its name suggests, a buying group is a group of stores that pool their buying power together in order to get better pricing for its members by purchasing directly from the manufacturer. There are three

major buying groups in the firearms space: Nation's Best Sports (NBS) headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas; Sports Inc. based out of Lewistown, Mont.; and Worldwide Buying Group with headquarters in Kent, Wash.

SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES

In my career in the industry as a retailer, director-level employee at a top distributor and as a vendor currently displaying at all three buying group shows, I've seen the acquisition of products from all sides. There are many advantages to being in a buying group.

One significant advantage is each group has a buying committee dedicated to the shooting sports. These committees are comprised

of member-retailers with expertise in the categories, along with staff from the group headquarters. These committees negotiate the best deals on behalf of the members. Some of the committee members are from very large-volume retailers and know about the best deals offered in the industry, far beyond what is known from just being in your store every day.

For example, you may have negotiated a good price when purchasing a pallet of 9mm range ammo — figuring because buying a full pallet would equate to getting the best deal. However, unknown to you, there was a *much* lower price on a 100-pallet program. One of the committee members knows the program is out there and negotiates it for the group. Now, they're getting the 100-pallet price even though they bought only one pallet.

Another advantage of these committees is they see up-and-coming products you may not know about. This is a huge benefit at SHOT Show; all these committee members are on the show floor looking for new opportunities for business with those new manufacturers (think of “the

basement” 10' x 10' booths) you didn't get to. A committee member may get you onboard before other retailers in your market even hear about the innovative new manufacturer.

One small example is GoatGuns, which produces 1:3 scale realistic miniature diecast metal firearm copies of the Greatest Guns of All Time (GOAT). The AR-15 version has a detachable/loadable magazine, adjustable-length stock and is 11" long. I wouldn't have given this product line a second look, probably not even a first, but NBS had them at the August market and it was one of the busiest booths at the show. Is selling miniature guns going to fund your retirement? Of course not, but it puts a little money in the till at a good margin and, more importantly, sets your store up to be known for having new products — which draws in customers.

Remember you're operating a store, not a museum — people want to see new items.

FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS MOST

Anthony Keefer is president of The Sportsman's Shop in East Earl, Pa., and a Sports Inc. shareholder (Sports Inc. is a 100% member-owned group). Keefer shared some of the business-altering benefits of becoming a member.

“The networking opportunities at Sports Inc. are second to none. You'll have the chance to connect with leading dealers from across the country, share insights, exchange business strategies and form valuable partnerships.

Whether you're looking to expand your product offering or learn from others in the industry, the connections made here are priceless,” he said.

The Sportsman's Shop benefits of belonging to Sports Inc. go beyond the product deals, according to Keefer.

“Sports Inc. also offers valuable member benefits that help run my business more efficiently,” he said. “I have access to healthcare programs, shipping discounts with UPS and other business services that provide savings and make my operation run smoother. These benefits save time, money and stress — letting me focus on what matters most, growing the business.”



Since 1956, Nation's Best Sports has offered independent retailers a diverse portfolio of buying opportunities in all categories of the outdoor sports. Its Semi-Annual Markets are staged in Fort Worth, Texas, in January and August. (Image: Nation's Best Sports)

**I can't
imagine
running a
successful
independent
retail store
without
being in a buy
group.”**

Keith Collier • Owner
Cypress Creek Indoor Range
Florence, Ala.

ATTENDING A BUYING GROUP SHOW

Each of these three buying groups holds two shows a year, one being shortly after SHOT and another before the fall season, typically around August. Attending both is a must to get maximum value from your membership.

Glenn Duncan, owner of Duncan's Outdoor Shop in Bay City, Mich., is a longtime NBS member who follows NBS' slogan “We Support Those Who Support Us” with his buying habits. Duncan shared there have been years where he has gotten more value out of attending the August show compared to the busier February show.

“The slower pace of the August show gives me time to do a deeper dive into products I may have just glanced at during the show earlier in the year,” he said. “Besides ordering products closer to the actual selling season, the slower pace gives me more time to network and attend the NBS educational opportunities offered at the summer show.”

These shows or markets are like a distributor show (some of you may attend/remember these) or a micro-SHOT Show. Attending member-stores can see “Hot Show” special pricing, place orders for at-once shipments and, in most cases, schedule shipments out.

The groups put a lot of effort into making these shows beneficial for the members.

Besides the buying opportunities, the groups use them as platforms to get information to the members. Usually, some sort of a large meeting is held — giving members a type of “State of the Union” presentation on where the industry is, what is occurring with sales and trends and if there are any new threats to retailers/ranges they need to be aware of.

At these meetings, the buying committee for each major category will point out what are the best-of-show items, and which manufacturers are really supporting the group.

Keith Collier, owner of Cypress Creek Indoor Range in Florence, Ala., and part of Worldwide (a member-owned co-op), shared how the relationships he’s developed with other Worldwide stores have elevated his business.

“As a Worldwide member, I have learned so much about retail — what works and what doesn’t, new trends in the industry, purchasing strategy and so much more,” he said. “Being friends with retailers across the U.S. who you can call for advice, help with inventory and just to talk about current trends is huge!”

Similar to Keefer’s experiences, Collier’s benefits as a Worldwide member are also gleaned at an administrative level.

“Being a member/owner of

“Whether you’re looking to expand your product offering or learn from others in the industry, the connections made here are priceless.”

Anthony Keefer • President
The Sportsman’s Shop • East Earl, Pa.
Sports Inc. Shareholder

Worldwide helps administratively by giving us access to consolidated billing, vendor support, our employee retirement plan, discounted freight and multiple service vendors,” he noted.

According to Collier, Worldwide’s two annual shows are must-attend events: “Hosting two great shows a year is awesome! If you’re able to get into a buy group, make sure to attend the shows. That is where you find exclusive deals, form long-term relationships and learn the newest industry trends and expectations.”

Being in a buy group will also put you on the map, so to speak, with sales representatives. Upon joining, the vendors are alerted a new member

has signed on and your inbox will be flooded with representatives wanting to talk about their brand.

WHAT ABOUT DISTRIBUTION?

Does all of this mean distributors aren’t needed? The answer is a resounding *no*; you definitely still need distributors. Getting shipments from manufacturers is often choppy at best, as most are experts in manufacturing — not so much at shipping on time. Distributors, however, excel at shipping quickly with a huge selection of products that can be delivered in days rather than weeks or months.

In addition, distributors also don’t require purchases in bulk quantities. Don’t underestimate the importance of this; many times you’re better off paying more to buy less at a time and keep your turns up. If you figure the carry cost for an item is at 2% a month, it doesn’t take long to wipe out the buy-group savings if the product doesn’t turn quickly.

THE BIGGEST BENEFIT MAY SURPRISE YOU

To sum it all up, Collier had these parting words for us: “I can’t imagine running a successful independent retail store without being in a buy group. While the access to exclusive deals and items, direct communication with manufacturers, better pricing and better availability are great, the biggest benefit may be the networking with other successful store owners and others in our industry.”

Buy groups have requirements to join including length of time in business, minimum sales volumes and other qualifications that need to be met. Below is the contact information to find out if one is a fit for you. **SI**



Worldwide is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. Its 2025 Spring and Fall shows will be hosted at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center — giving members unique opportunities to meet with vendors in a relaxed environment. (Image: Worldwide)

Nation’s Best Sports: Contact Julie Cerza, Executive Director of Membership & Member Services (jcerza@nbs.com).

Sports Inc.: For inquiries, visit sportsinc.us/prospective-dealers.

Worldwide Buying Group: Contact Tanya Stenerson, Director of Member Recruitment, Services & Events (tanyas@worldwidebuygroup.com).



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New for 2025, Blocker Outdoors' Finisher Chest Pack boasts an abundance of space to fit a variety of calls. In addition, it can also house full-size binoculars.

TURKEY TECH

BY JAY PINSKY

How Modern Technology Is Revolutionizing Turkey Hunting — For Better And Worse

Turkey hunting has undergone a dramatic transformation thanks to technological advancements. Hunters now have an array of tools to enhance their experience and success — while giving you, the dealer, ample opportunity to procure additional sales to complement a turkey gun purchase.

These innovations, from

electronic game calls to GPS mapping apps, have made scouting, calling and strategizing more effective. They have also made Tom Kelly's 1973-era turkey textbook, *Tenth Legion*, more relevant than ever.

Technology is far more pervasive than we might think in the turkey-hunting community. After pondering what it has done and how it has made a difference, I've broken it down into 10 areas and provided examples of related products designed to support turkey hunters. Let's look:

1. Advanced Game Calls

Electronic turkey calls (where legal) now mimic a wide range of turkey vocalizations with precise accuracy. Some models come with preloaded sounds or Bluetooth

connectivity, allowing hunters to use their smartphones to remotely control the calls. This helps draw turkeys in closer and adapt to different scenarios.

The Primos Hook Up Magnetic Turkey Call features a unique magnetic hinge design for realistic, easy-to-use turkey sounds.

2. High-Tech Decoys

Modern decoys are designed with realistic movement and lifelike details. Motorized decoys simulate turkey behavior, such as strutting or feeding, making them highly effective at fooling even wary birds.

The Avian-X LCD Strutter Decoy mimics a strutting tom with lifelike detail and realistic posture. For movement, the Mojo Scoot-N-Shoot MAX Decoy adds subtle

tail-fan motion to attract dominant gobblers.

3. GPS & Mapping Apps

Mapping apps like OnX Hunt or HuntStand provide detailed topographical maps, property boundaries and waypoints. These tools help hunters scout locations, mark roosting or feeding areas and easily navigate the terrain. GPS functionality ensures hunters know where they are, even in remote areas.

The OnX Hunt app provides property boundaries, public land access, topographical maps and waypoints for marking turkey roosts. HuntStand allows hunters to plan routes and share location data with hunting partners.

4. Trail Cameras

Cellular trail cameras allow hunters to monitor turkey activity in real time by sending photos and videos directly to their phones. This technology helps identify patterns in turkey movement, roosting spots and feeding times, enabling more strategic hunting.

The Tactacam REVEAL X-Pro



TACTACAM REVEAL X-PRO CAMERA

cellular trail camera captures high-resolution images and sends them directly to a phone. It also has night vision and customizable detection zones for monitoring turkey activity around the clock.

5. Shotgun Innovations

Modern shotguns and ammunition, such as tungsten super shot (TSS), deliver tighter patterns, increased range and improved lethality. Adjustable turkey chokes enhance accuracy and enable hunters to adapt their firearms to various hunting conditions.

“Technology has undeniably enhanced turkey hunting, making it more efficient and enjoyable for hunters, and created more opportunities for you to sell to them.”

The Benelli Super Black Eagle 3 (SBE3) in 28 gauge is significantly lighter than its 12-gauge counterpart, making it easier to carry during long hunts or in rugged terrain. This is particularly advantageous for hunters who prioritize mobility or hunt in areas requiring lots of walking or climbing. The smaller gauge produces less recoil, making it more comfortable for extended shooting sessions and allowing hunters to

stay on target for follow-up shots, if necessary. This is ideal for youth or hunters sensitive to heavy recoil. The SBE3's inertia-driven system ensures reliable cycling even in tough field conditions.

Look for commercially available TSS loads specifically designed for 28-gauge turkey hunting:

- Federal Premium Heavyweight TSS (28-gauge, #9)
- Apex Ammunition Small Town Blend (28-gauge, #9 or #9.5)
- Browning TSS Tungsten Turkey (28-gauge, #9)

6. Camouflage & Concealment Gear

Advances in camouflage technology, such as 3D leafy suits and breathable fabrics, help hunters blend seamlessly into their surroundings while staying comfortable during long waits.

The SITKA Gear Equinox Turkey Vest integrates cutting-edge camouflage with practical features like storage for calls and decoys. The ASAT Vanish Pro Leafy Suit provides unmatched concealment for blending into natural surroundings.

7. Hearing Enhancement & Protection Devices

Hearing aids and electronic earmuffs amplify subtle turkey calls while protecting hunters' ears from the sound of a shotgun blast. This is particularly helpful for locating distant birds.

Walker's Razor XV 3.0 Headset amplifies subtle turkey calls while protecting hearing from loud shotgun blasts. Another option is the AXIL GS Extreme earbuds, which combine hearing enhancement and noise protection.

8. Drones (Where Legal)

Drones equipped with cameras can scout large areas to locate turkeys. However, their use in hunting is regulated in many areas, so hunters should always check local laws.

The DJI Mini 3 Pro drone is compact and has a high-quality camera for scouting terrain. In states where drones are permitted for scouting, they help hunters locate potential turkey activity in hard-to-reach areas.

9. Weather & Activity Apps

Apps that track weather patterns, barometric pressure and moon phases can help predict turkey activity. Many hunters use these tools to plan hunts during peak activity times.

The HuntWise app provides detailed weather forecasts, barometric pressure changes, and optimal turkey activity times predictions. The ScoutLook Hunting app offers wind direction and solunar calendars to plan hunts effectively.

10. Portable Blinds

Lightweight, pop-up blinds with advanced materials provide superior concealment while being easy to carry and set up. These blinds allow for more flexibility when setting up in prime locations.

The Rhino 180 See-Through Hunting Blind uses see-through fabric to provide excellent visibility while keeping hunters concealed. The Primos Double Bull SurroundView Blind offers 360-degree visibility for an immersive hunting experience.

THE DARK SIDE OF TECHNOLOGY

Technology can sometimes work against turkey hunters as well. How? Here are 10 considerations.

1. Over-Reliance On Technology

Hunters who lean too heavily on GPS apps or electronic calls might neglect the skills to read the terrain, interpret turkey behavior or produce natural-sounding calls.

2. Disturbing Natural Behavior

Overusing drones or electronic calls can disrupt turkey

populations by causing unnatural pressure or habituating turkeys to these technologies, making them more wary and more challenging to hunt.

3. Ethical & Legal Concerns

Some states restrict electronic calls or drones for scouting. Hunters unfamiliar with these regulations may inadvertently violate these laws, leading to fines or license revocation. Some hunters may also simply cheat, but that's not new to hunting with or without technological advantages.

4. Decreased Hunting Skills

Trail cameras and decoys with lifelike movement may reduce hunters' need to rely on woodsmanship (e.g., tracking or stealthy calling).

5. Cost Barrier

Advanced technologies like GPS mapping apps, premium decoys and cellular trail cameras are



AVIAN X LCD STRUTTER



HAWKE OPTICS 1 4X20 VANTAGE
IR MOSSY OAK



Wearing NOMAD Outdoor gear, Jay used a Benelli SBE 3 in 20 GA loaded with Apex TSS loads to take his first gobbler, an Eastern, in Maryland. TSS loads have been a revelation to turkey hunters.

expensive. New hunters or those on tight budgets may feel excluded or disadvantaged. (Speaking of expensive, TSS shotgun ammo often comes with interest-free financing.)

6. Reduced Engagement With Nature

Constant reliance on gadgets like weather apps or hearing enhancement devices may distract hunters from the natural rhythms of the woods, taking away the immersive experience of being outdoors.

7. Risk Of Malfunction

Batteries running out on electronic calls or trail cameras malfunctioning can leave hunters unprepared. Relying on faulty equipment might compromise the hunt.

8. Increasing Pressure On Public Lands

Easy-to-use GPS apps and

mapping tools have made public hunting lands more accessible, increasing hunter density. This can lead to overhunting and more competition for resources.

9. Ethical Perception By Non-Hunters

Non-hunters may view certain technologies, like drones or electronic calls, as “unfair advantages” — potentially harming the public image of hunters and hunting as a fair chase sport. Other hunters have their opinions as well, and chances are they’ll voice them far more loudly than non-hunters, especially in the troll-safe haven of today’s social media communities.

10. Technology Addiction

Checking apps or cameras frequently might detract from the meditative and patient aspects of turkey hunting, turning a peaceful outdoor experience into a tech-driven

“

Even the best technology today still pales in comparison to the exceptionally brilliant and often frustrating wild turkey.


exercise. Then there’s smartphone addiction, which may have single-handedly saved more animals than PETA ever could.

FINDING THE BALANCE

Technology has undeniably enhanced turkey hunting, making it more efficient and enjoyable for hunters, and created more opportunities for you to sell to them. However, hunters must strike a balance by maintaining traditional skills, respecting wildlife and adhering to ethical and legal standards.

By combining modern tools with age-old woodsmanship, turkey hunters can preserve the essence of the sport while reaping the benefits of innovation.

Ironically, even the best technology today still pales in comparison to the exceptionally brilliant and often frustrating wild turkey. It continues to outsmart even the most experienced and best-equipped hunters today with the same bird brain it has had since God issued it thousands of years ago. **\$I**



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How To Improve Cultural Acceptance Of Gun Ownership, Hunting & Target Shooting Among The General Population

"Guilty by association!" was a standout statement made by one focus-group participant during a comprehensive nationwide study in 2024. The study was conducted to determine why hunting and target shooting have lost the support of more than 10 million adult Americans in just the past few years.

Expanding upon that statement, the research team — comprised of staff from Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) and Responsive Management — found clear evidence a significant portion of the general population associates guns with gun violence. Therefore, they assumed hunting and target shooting involving firearms must be bad as well.

"There really is a perception problem," stated Peter Churchbourne, OSCF board chair and managing director of NRA's Hunting Division. "This research builds upon past NRA findings and solidifies the need for a focus on communicating positive messages and truths about guns, hunting and target shooting to the general population."

The worrisome loss in cultural acceptance was first quantified and published by OSCF in

mid-2023 with the release of its “American Attitudes Towards Legal, Regulated Fishing, Target Shooting, Hunting and Trapping” research report. With the shocking loss in support by 10 million Americans in such a short period of time, it was imperative to determine how to combat the negative perception of firearms, hunting and target shooting.

WHAT RESONATES?

Work immediately began to identify specific messages that would resonate with the general population who had formed the opinion that guns, hunting and target shooting are bad.

“You really can’t blame the general population for having this opinion as the only messages they heard about guns and hunting come from groups not friendly to the outdoor market,” noted Churchbourne. “Hunting and target shooting offer many positive contributions to society; it’s time we communicate these positives to the general population.”

From improving habitat, cleaning up nature and donating extra harvests to feed the hungry, to being primary funders of land, fish and wildlife conservation in America, the outdoor industry along with hunters and target shooters have a lot to be proud of.

A key insight gained from the research was the general population’s positive response to hunters feeding the hungry with game meat donations. Realizing this, in Nov. 2023, the NRA Hunters’ Leadership Forum initiated a new effort to increase awareness of current donations, and the need for additional donations, with their National Wild Game Meat Donation Month (NWGMDM) campaign.

After recently completing its second year, the campaign has expanded to request hunters share a game meat meal with

a non-hunter and explain how hunters support conservation over dinner.

To complement NWGMDM, OSCF introduced its “Donate a Deer” messaging campaign Oct. 2024. The program asks current hunters, if an extra harvest is possible, to consider donating it to a local food bank. It also encourages hunters to spread the word about their game meat donations to their personal networks (social media and otherwise).

A KEY INSIGHT GAINED FROM THE RESEARCH WAS THE GENERAL POPULATION’S POSITIVE RESPONSE TO HUNTERS FEEDING THE HUNGRY WITH GAME MEAT DONATIONS.

Another message the research team found that appeals to the general population is how the firearms industry, hunters and target shooters fund wildlife conservation, as well as fund access to more than 36 million acres of public lands across the nation.

Using this knowledge, OSCF went to work developing its “Keepers of the Wild” public service announcement. Sept. 2024, the PSA went live with a

national campaign to 11,000 radio and television stations across the country. Within the first three months of the campaign, the PSA was picked up by stations from coast to coast and received more than \$1.5 million in donated value and 70 million impressions among the general public.

This first-of-its-kind PSA is expected to receive over \$5 million in donated value and more than 300 million impressions over the course of a year. It will make it the largest effort to promote such a positive message about the gun industry, hunters and target shooters to the general population.

(The PSA can be viewed — and shared — here: <https://youtu.be/WGTFwx6a5Mg?si=1LyGvh4uQ6SFYPCP>.)

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The time to start improving cultural acceptance among the general population toward gun ownership, hunting and target shooting is now.

If your organization has anything to do with firearms, then promoting the positive contributions of the firearms industry, hunting and target shooting to the general population should become part of the media plan moving forward.

The good news is the groundwork is already done. Comprehensive research has identified what messages resonate the best with the general population, and organizations like NRA and OSCF have developed programs and communications your organization can easily utilize. **■**

Learn more by visiting outdoorstewards.org and hfh.nra.org or contact OSCF Executive Director, Jim Curcuruto at jim@stewardsofconservation.org.

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)

(EVEN) MORE 2025 NEW PRODUCTS!

Over the next several pages, you'll get to see some of the new-for-2025 products launched at last month's SHOT Show for the first time in print.

Dozens of products from more than 35 brands make up the third and final installment of the exclusive 2025 New Product Showcase. Some of these product launches gathered quite a bit of attention during SHOT Show, and we hope this extended look will give you a leg up on the competition to bring these products into your display cases and on your shelves.

Have a new product you want to see featured? Let the *SI* team know: editor@shootingindustry.com. Here's to a successful New Business Year.



GLOCK INC.

(770) 432-1202
us.glock.com

In collaboration with Aimpoint, **SELECT 9MM GLOCK PISTOLS ARE AVAILABLE WITH THE AIMPOINT COA OPTIC** factory installed using the new Aimpoint A-CUT interface. Pistols with the Aimpoint COA optic and A-CUT interface include the G43X, G48, G19 Gen5, G45 and the G47 models. (The Aimpoint COA optic is sold exclusively within this package and is not being sold separately at present.) The Aimpoint A-CUT interface mounting system allows for the sight to be mounted deeper into the pistol slide for extreme stability and durability for long-lasting, rugged performance in any condition. Its innovative, low-profile design makes for easier unholstering, enhancing usability and concealment capabilities.



SBE 3 A.I.

BENELLI USA

(800) 264-4962
benelliusa.com

The Benelli **SBE 3 A.I.** (Advanced Impact) is available in 12 or 20 GA. It has a 28" barrel and 14.375" LOP. Models are offered in a Mossy Oak Bottomland and Patriot Brown Cerakote or Max-7 and Flat Dark Earth color scheme on the stock, forend, receiver, top cover and barrel. The bolt, bolt handle and bolt release sport a matte blue finish.

The **NOVA 3** sports an 18.5" barrel, multicam black stock, receiver and barrel and a matte blue bolt. Capacity is 7+1 rounds.



**92X PERFORMANCE CARRY
OPTIC DARK SERIES**

BERETTA

(800) 237-3882
beretta.com

Compliant with the USPSA Carry Optic division regulations, the **92X PERFORMANCE CARRY OPTIC DARK SERIES** from Beretta has a red dot optic-ready slide, optic plates, improved trigger performance, a match disassembly latch, beveled mag well, Graphite Gray Tinitec finish, matching trigger and grip color options and an 18-round capacity. The 4.77 oz. overall weight, higher beaver tail and front and rear strap texturing provide optimal grip position and recoil management for quick purchase, draw and release control to facilitate faster target acquisition and follow-up shots. It ships with two magazines with extended base plates, wraparound grip, speed loader and California-compliant gun lock.

Designed for concealment, the semi-auto **20X BOBCAT** in .22 LR boasts the Effortless Loading System with a push-button mechanism that eliminates the need to rack the slide, providing ease for users with limited hand strength. Standout features include increased magazine capacity (eight rounds), repositioned controls, skeletonized trigger, 35% lighter trigger pull, dovetail slide cuts and "Helica" textured grips. The 20X Bobcat is offered in two models with slight variations: DIY (Do It Yourself) with a 2.8" barrel and weight of 13.6 oz., and YOYO (You're On Your Own) with a 2.4" barrel and weight of 14.4 oz. OAL is 5".



KELTEC

(800) 515-9983
keltecweapons.com

Chambered in 5.7x28mm, the **PR57** pistol from KelTec boasts a unique top-loading design that replaces traditional magazines with stripper clips. Its compact dimensions are ideal for concealed carry: 4.64"-long barrel, 4.95" height, 0.937" width, OAL of 7.16" and it weighs 14 oz. The **PR57** is red dot sight compatible, has a 4.5-lb. trigger pull and 20-round capacity.

SMITH & WESSON BRANDS INC.

(800) 331-0852
smith-wesson.com

The **MODEL 1854 STEALTH HUNTER** from Smith & Wesson, available in .44 Rem. Mag., .45 Colt and .357 Mag. calibers, feature a flat trigger, large loop lever, removable magazine tube and a synthetic stock with textured grip panels. In addition to the all-black Armornite aesthetic, Stealth Hunter rifles are equipped with an extended 10.5" Picatinny rail, a T6 aluminum forend with 15 M-LOK compatible slots, a HIVIZ H3 fiber optic front sight and a shortened 16.3" 410 stainless-steel barrel.



O.F. MOSSBERG & SONS INC.

(203) 230-5300
mossberg.com

Mossberg's **590M MAG-FED SHOTGUNS PROFESSIONAL SERIES** now offers the option of black or orange synthetic furniture (compact and Magpul models are available). The 12-GA, 2.75" platform is fed from a double-stacked magazine made for pump actions. Key features include an 18.5" barrel; rear optimized ghost ring and front fiber optic sights equipped with protective low-profile wings; optic-ready receiver (RMSc footprint); Cerakote tungsten metal exterior finish; two stock options utilizing stock spacer systems for customization; Magpul MOE forend and M-LOK slots; and a drilled and tapped receiver. One 10-round detachable double-stack magazine is included.

590R and **590RM** 12-GA shotguns with an ambidextrous rotary safety selector and AR-style ergonomics boast a redesigned user-serviceable forend and an 18.5" integrated barrel/single heat shield. Shared features of the 590 platform and the 590R include non-binding twin action bars, positive steel-to-steel lock-up and anti-jam elevator, dual extractors, drilled and tapped receivers; and a clean-out magazine tube with cap. Noteworthy specs include a Magpul MOE+ pistol grip; front M-LOK adapter; flat profile trigger; top Picatinny rail; elongated bolt release; and an electroplated internal and external receiver.

SUPPRESSOR-READY PATRIOT CARBINE BOLT-ACTION RIFLES have threaded barrels; compact barrel lengths of 16.25", 18" and 20"; chamberings ranging from .22-250 Rem. to 7mm PRC; and a durable black synthetic stock with complementing matte blue metal finish. The free-floating, carbon steel barrel has an 11-degree match crown and includes a protective thread cap. The Patriot Carbine is equipped with a receiver-mounted Picatinny rail. The Lightning Bolt Action user-adjustable trigger has a 2 to 7-lb. range of adjustment for consistent shot placement. An oversized bolt handle, spiral-fluted bolt and sling swivel studs round out the features.

The optic-ready receiver on **940 PRO TACTICAL SPX** autoloading shotguns allows for direct mounting of micro dots (cut for RMSc footprint). A redesigned oversized safety, metal trigger guard, knurled charging handle and an ergonomic bolt release offer tactical functionality and durability. The 6-Shotshell Carrier by Vang Comp Systems has a removeable aluminum mounting plate and hook-and-loop card attachment system. The forend has an integrated heat shield, QD ports and M-LOK mounting slots. Its durable gas system enables fast, consistent cycling, and an enlarged and beveled loading port was specifically configured for ease of loading.



MILITARY ARMAMENT CORP.

(865) 604-6894
milarmamentcorp.com

Military Armament Corp. introduces the **MAC DUTY 9 DOUBLE STACK**, featuring a factory RMR pattern optic cut on the slide and universal light rail on the frame. Chambered in 9mm, the MAC Duty 9 Double Stack utilizes a 5" bull barrel that is QPQ Tenifer finished with an 11-degree target crown to keep recoil at a minimum and maximize accuracy. It also boasts a hammer-forged steel Tenifer QPQ coated slide, hammer-forged steel black Cerakote frame and barrel, skeleton hammer, skeleton trigger with overtravel adjustment, competition removable aluminum magwell, fiber optic front sight and black serrated rear sight. The MAC Duty 9 Double Stack ships with two checkmate 17-round magazines and an optics plate system.





LANGDON TACTICAL TECHNOLOGY

(571) 385-2979
langdontactical.com

Standout features of the LTT **A300 ULTIMA PATROL** shotgun include an LTT Trigger Job, a fiber optic front sight, Beretta Patrol forend and generously beveled loading port. A variety of packages are available and can include optic mounts, heat shields or a fully accessorized Blackout edition shotgun. The LTT A300 includes a Condition 1 hard-sided case, is threaded for Beretta's MobilChoke system and comes with a fixed seven-round magazine tube that cannot be modified for states requiring lower capacities.

RITON OPTICS

(855) 397-4866
ritonoptics.com

Riton Optics' **5 PRIMAL 3-18X50 CROSSOVER SCOPE** uses a rugged and durable 34mm chassis for its optical performance and light management. The 0.1 MIL turrets are capped so adjustments can be trusted and zero won't be lost due to an accidental bump. Using the popular Long-Range Hunter (LRH) first-focal plane reticle from Riton, a Christmas tree-style reticle, users have the flexibility of a simple duplex-looking reticle at lower magnifications, and a true long-range performance reticle on higher magnifications.



DAVIDSON'S INC.

(800) 367-4867
davidsoninc.com



In collaboration with Springfield Armory, Davidson's Inc. is offering an exclusive **ROBIN'S EGG BLUE HELLCAT PRO** pistol with 3.7" hammer forged steel barrel. It has a robin's egg blue polymer frame with adaptive grip texture and a stainless slide finish. As part of Springfield's GearUp program, it ships with five magazines: one 17-round, one flush-fit 15-round and three 15-round. The Hellcat Pro OSP's slide is milled to fit the Springfield Micro footprint and is designed to accept most popular micro red dots. Other accessories included in this GearUp package include a branded double-zippered pistol pouch, magazine loader, security lock and a range bag. OAL is 6.6".

ARMASIGHT

(888) 504-2762
armasight.com

From Armasight, the **OPERATOR 640 THERMAL CLIP-ON** mounts effortlessly in front of a 1-6X day scope with no need for re-zeroing. Equipped with a 35mm germanium lens and the ArmaCore 640x480 thermal sensor, it provides clear imagery and a detection range of up to 1,300 meters — even in complete darkness, fog, smoke and harsh weather. The Operator offers video/image capture, multiple color palettes and USB-C connectivity for easy viewing.

The **COMMANDER 640** delivers powerful thermal imaging in a compact, lightweight design for agility across platforms. Designed for medium- to short-range applications needing high-caliber stopping power, it's powered by Armasight's Iron Wolf technology and the ArmaCORE 640x480 thermal sensor with a 1,300-meter detection range. It's IP67 waterproof-rated for durability in any environment and features video and image capture, USB video streaming, USB-C interface, multiple color palettes, simple three-button controls and customizable reticle options.

The **WARDEN 640** has a wide 22° x 18° field of view and powered by Armasight's Iron Wolf platform and the ArmaCORE 640x480 thermal sensor. The 35mm germanium lens extends detection range up to 1,300 meters. Fully waterproof with an IP67 rating, it is built for harsh conditions. Additional features include video and image capture, USB video streaming, multiple color palettes and easy three-button controls.



OPERATOR 640 THERMAL CLIP-ON



CIMARRON FIREARMS

(877) 749-4861
cimarron-firearms.com

Cimarron Firearms continues to pay tribute to those who wore the iconic five-pointed star badge of the Texas Rangers with a reproduction Winchester 1873 lever-action Nueces rifle chambered in .45 LC in honor of Captain Leander H. McNeely. The **NUECES '73 RIFLE** features a specially designed 24.25" heavy round barrel and is stamped with "T * S" — the same stamp used on rifles issued to the Texas Rangers. The rifle is beautifully finished with a hand-rubbed oil walnut stock and forend, along with the classic old metal finish.



COMMANDER 640



TAURUS USA

(800) 327-3776
taurususa.com

The 9mm **TAURUS GX2** is designed to meet the needs of first-time shooters while redefining what an entry-level firearm can deliver. Key features include 13-round capacity, a Sharpshooter barrel, industry-standard steel dovetail sights, mil-std 1913 accessory rail, striker-fired action with hinged trigger safety, ergonomic polymer frame and a manual safety.



WOMEN'S
TRAILBREAKER GTX

LACROSSE FOOTWEAR

(800) 323-2668
lacrossefootwear.com

ALPHA EVOLUTION boots from LaCrosse offer durability, flexibility and complete waterproof protection and are now available in a Gray Sky color. The quick-drying and moisture-wicking Comfort Liner and 1600G PrimaLoft insulation keeps feet dry and comfortable. A durable neoprene gusset accommodates different calf sizes and makes boot removal easy, and the rubberized EVA midsole delivers superior cushioning and shock absorption. Vibram Alpha Traction increases surface area for superior grip in rugged environments and unpredictable terrain. Alpha Evolution boots are 17" tall and are available in men's sizes 6-15 (whole sizes only).

Features of **WOMEN'S TRAILBREAKER GTX** footwear include suede with a lightweight abrasion-resistant polyester upper for rugged durability and GORE-TEX 100% waterproof, breathable lining for protection from the elements. The Thinsulate Ultra insulation offers protection from the elements and a rubber mud guard provides superior abrasion resistance and added durability. The thick, cushioning EVA midsole delivers added insulation and shock absorption underfoot while multi-directional non-loading lugs provide increased surface area for stability on uneven terrain. Trailbreaker GTX is available in women's sizes 5-10 with half sizes, and 11M.

JOSEPH CHIARELLO & CO., INC.

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AFFINITY 3

FRANCHI USA

(800) 264-4962
franchiusa.com

The Franchi Affinity enters the market with the 3" **AFFINITY 3** and 3.5" **AFFINITY 3.5** in 12- and 20-GA chambering. Models are further designated by finish. These include Black Synthetic, Max-7 camo, MOBL camo and the Waterfowl Elite variants featuring Elite Marsh or Elite Timber camo with Bronze or Cobalt Cerakote barrels and receivers. Barrels are offered in 26" or 28" lengths. OAL is 47-50.5", and models weigh between 6-7 lbs.



10/22 CARBON FIBER

STURM, RUGER & CO.

(336) 949-5200
ruger.com

Weighing just 3.5 lbs., the **10/22 CARBON FIBER** rifle from Ruger sports a 16.1" cold hammer-forged tensioned barrel with a carbon fiber sleeve. The stainless steel tensioned barrel is more rigid, reducing vibration, and is threaded 1/2"-28. The Magpul MOE X-22 stock is painted black and features a textured splatter paint for an improved grip. It has M-LOK attachment slots at the 6 o'clock position and integral sling loops. The length of pull is 13.5". The rifle sports a Ruger BX-Trigger with an approximate pull weight of 2.75 lbs., and a crisp, clean break.

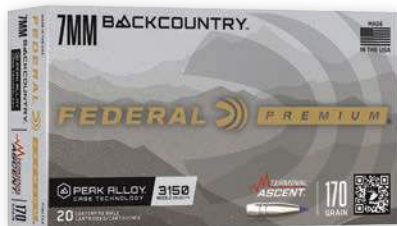
The latest edition of the **RUGER PRECISION RIFLE (RPR)** is offered in three popular competition calibers, 6mm Creedmoor, 6.5 Creedmoor and .308 Winchester, as well as three magnum calibers: .300 Win. Mag., .300 PRC and .338 Lapua Mag. This RPR has a heavy contour, cold hammer-forged barrel; an improved muzzle brake; a Magpul MOE-K2 vertical pistol grip; and a black DLC-coated bolt. The aluminum handguard is equipped with M-LOK slots and has an ARCA rail machined into the underside. The magwell, handguard and stock body sport a Smoked Bronze Cerakote finish.



5.11 TACTICAL

(866) 451-1726
511tactical.com

SIG SAUER and 5.11 have partnered together on a capsule collection of range bags, tees, patches and stickers. From the Range Ready Bag Collection, the **RANGE READY TRAINER BAG** is fully padded and spacious enough for a long day at the range. It features a PE board base to keep gear safe, removable dividers for interior customization and an internal quick-access elastic mag and accessory panel.



FEDERAL AMMUNITION

(800) 379-1732
federalpremium.com

Powered by Peak Alloy case technology, the **7MM BACKCOUNTRY** cartridge from Federal can be loaded to higher chamber pressures than brass case counterparts. It produces higher muzzle velocities than comparable cartridges, retaining the velocity downrange for less drop and wind drift. It provides Magnum performance in a standard bolt-face rifle. Through 20" barrels and with 170-grain bullets, it can achieve 3,000 fps.

CRKT

(800) 891-3100
crkt.com

Made in collaboration with Hogue Knives, the CRKT **TWIST TIGHE COMPACT** is a double action, out-the-front automatic knife. It boasts a 2.65" double-edged MagnaCut spear-point blade, lightweight carbon fiber handle and deep carry pocket clip. The Twist Tighe Compact will be available in three models, all of which have the distinct "Twist" camo pattern on one side of its handle. OAL is 6.63" (3.98" closed) and it weighs 1.6 oz.



BLASER

(210) 377-2527
blaser-group.com

Currently available exclusively through Silencer Central, the Blaser **R8 SILENCE BARREL** provides exceptional balance, noise dampening and reduced recoil. Its compact design saves 8–10" of overall length savings between the barrel and the R8 receiver construction. The titanium outer sleeve of the barrel and silencer jacket features a smooth bull barrel design, giving the barrel an attractive, compact and sleek appearance. Designed as a modular R8 option, Silence suppressed barrels will fit existing Blaser R8 rifles with properly relieved forearm or when used with the replacement Ultimate forend. Blaser R8 Silence barrels are currently offered in .308 Win., .30-06 and .300 Win. Mag.



ELITE TACTICAL SYSTEMS GROUP

(855) 887-5452
etsgroup.us

Elite Tactical Systems (ETS) Group released the **OMEGA 17-RD MAGAZINE FOR THE 9MM SIG SAUER P320**. It features hardened steel feed lips for long-lasting durability, a patent-pending Omega Joint ensuring structural strength and consistent operation, military-grade Teflon coating for enhanced corrosion resistance, a design 50% lighter than standard steel magazines and 100% drop-free reliability, ensuring quick and smooth reloads.



TISAS USA

(865) 604-6894
tisasusa.com

From Tisas USA, the **1911 DUTY 45 RAIDER SPECIAL FEATURE** handgun chambered in .45 caliber has a stainless steel barrel bushing and recoil spring plug with a sleek matte finish. The Picatinny rail allows for mounting of accessories, and it has a Novak front sight with a GLOCK dovetail rear sight (1/3 co-witness). Additional features include a skeletonized hammer, titanium firing pin, hammer-forged full-size frame, hard chromium coated barrel, 507k and RMSc optic mount, extended beavertail safety and flathead slotted grip screws. It arrives with two eight-round stainless steel magazines with black plastic base plates, a cleaning kit, bushing wrench and trigger lock.





MEGASTREAM USB



NANO LIGHT II

STREAMLIGHT INC.

(800) 523-7488
streamlight.com

The **MEGASTREAM USB** flashlight from Streamlight delivers ultra-bright, long-range illumination in a compact, rechargeable design. Measuring 5.3" long, it produces up to 1,800 lumens and a two-hour run time on high. Its rechargeable SL-B34 li-ion battery pack can be charged either inside or outside of the light. A sliding head cover protects its USB-C charging port, and a push-button tail cap allows for momentary or constant on operation. It is constructed from rugged machined aluminum with a Mil-Spec anodized finish.

The **NANO LIGHT II** keychain flashlight is powered by a single AAAA alkaline battery and delivers 20 lumens and a 22-meter beam distance with a one-hour run time, doubling the brightness of its predecessor. It weighs 0.6 oz., and easily attaches to a keychain or zipper pull via its non-rotating snap hook. Its simple, twist-operated head switch ensures quick access to light whenever needed. Crafted from machined aircraft-grade aluminum with a durable anodized finish, the Nano Light II is built to endure tough conditions. Its shock-resistant white LED boasts a 50,000-hour lifetime, and it is waterproof for added durability.



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firearmsins.com
877-451-0669

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insureds in the firearms industry.



TIKKA T3X ACE TARGET

TIKKA

(800) 237-3882
choose.tikka.fi/usa

Designed specifically for PRS Factory Division competitors and NRL competition, the **TIKKA T3X/T1X ACE** rifle series is offered in three models. The **TIKKA T3X ACE TARGET** is for long-range shooting and competitions, the **TIKKA T1X ACE TARGET** rimfire rifle, which has an identical chassis to T3x Ace Target and the **TIKKA T3X ACE GAME**, a slightly lighter rifle with a shorter barrel and multiple caliber options. Two unique features of the series are an interchangeable magwell allowing for the use of various magazine types in the rifle and the stock is compatible for all T3, T3x and T1x barreled actions. Features such as attachment points, barrel specifications and magazine capacity vary by model.

TRIJICON INC.

(800) 338-0563
trijicon.com



HURON 4-16X50

The Trijicon Huron lineup of riflescopes now includes **1-6X24** and **4-16X50** models. Huron riflescopes have fully multi-coated broadband anti-reflective glass and are engineered for extreme durability and precision. They range from 15.8 to 24.2 oz., and offer up to 100 MOA of adjustment from either a 30mm or 1" main tube. Low capped, easy-to-use adjusters with 1/4 MOA clicks are precision engineered to provide consistent tracking and maintain zero. Features include an easy-focus eyepiece and an extra-wide field of view, premium glass with outstanding light transmission, anti-scratch coating and easy-to-use reticles.



VERSACARRY

(979) 778-2000
versacarry.com

From Versacarry, the **CRUSADER DUAL CARRY IWB/OWB HOLSTER** adapts to the user's preferred carry style. Its raised leather protective backing ensures the firearm stays off the user, while the minimalist design provides excellent functionality without added bulk. For IWB configuration, two durable Versacarry metal belt clips securely hold the holster in place. For OWB carry, the clips are removed, and leather belt loops are utilized. Users can choose from two distinctive style options: the Arc Angel design and the Classic version. The Crusader is custom molded to fit an assortment of popular firearms including the GLOCK 19 and 43; SIG P320 and P365; Springfield Armory Hellcat; and S&W Shield (9mm and .40).

TENPOINT CROSSBOWS

(330) 628-9245
tenpointcrossbows.com



TenPoint Crossbows' lightest and narrowest reverse-draw crossbow, the **TRX 26**, is designed with a micro-footprint and low profile at 26.5" long and 5.75" wide. The TRX 26 shoots 460 fps and features Twin-Riser Technology, a custom TriggerTech Trigger, a ZERO-Trac Barrel and a RangeMaster 100 scope. Boasting a soft-touch finish in Vektra camo or Moss Green, the TRX 26 ships completely assembled and includes a Ready-To-Hunt package with the ACUslide MAXX cocking and de-cocking system, a three pack of TenPoint CenterPunch HPX premium carbon crossbow arrows, integrated string stop system, quiver, bow hook and bubble level.



WATCHTOWER FIREARMS

(832) 299-6100
watchtowerfirearms.com

WATCHTOWER Firearms' bolt-action **BRIDGER 7MM PRC RIFLE** pays homage to legendary frontiersman Jim Bridger. The LRA Precision Ti-Strike barrel promotes durability and lightens the overall weight (7.1 lbs., with magazine). The lightened 416R stainless steel magnum action offers strength, and the carbon fiber McMillan stock delivers both weight reduction and customizability through modular mounting options and QD cups. Reliable feeding is delivered by the Hawkins' precision bottom metal and magazine design. The rifle's Timney Elite Hunter single-stage trigger has a crisp pull at just 2.5 lbs.

GPO USA

(844) 692-4667
gpo-usa.com

Tailored for short ultralight and compact MSR rifles, the **CENTURI 3-12X44I RIFLESCOPE** from GPO USA is 9.9" long and weighs 18.9 oz. The double HD glass elements provide exceptional optical clarity. The G4i illuminated micro dot reticle provides precise targeting, while the fast-focus ocular allows for swift adjustments. Other features include a 30mm tube, 0.25" turret click adjustments, full 100" elevation and windage adjustment, third turret parallax adjustment knob, GPObright lens coating technology, PASSIONdrop hydrophobic lens coatings, SFP capped 1/4 MOA reset turrets and a magnification throw lever. A see-through bikini scope cover, objective and ocular, instruction manual, microfiber cleaning cloth and CR2032 battery are included.



STK 100 ULTRA

ARMSCOR/ROCK ISLAND ARMORY

(775) 537-1444
armscor.com

Armcor/Rock Island Armory releases its redesigned STK Series with three models: the **STK 100 ULTRA**, **STK150** and **STK 200**. The series boasts all-aluminum 7075 T6 frame construction, a refined 1911-style grip angle and an extended beavertail. Other features include a larger optic footprint and co-witness suppressor-height sights; ambidextrous magazine release (STK150 and STK200 models); compatibility with GLOCK G3 parts (except the magazine release), magazines and many holsters; PECVD finished barrel, slide and chassis; and a hard-anodized frame finish. The STK100 Ultra has more aggressive side grip panels, a checkered frame and a new magwell for faster, smoother reloads. Each STK model includes RMR and RMSc optic plates, detachable grip panels and a high-quality soft case with an integrated magazine pouch and Velcro holder.

OUTDOOR EDGE

(888) 249-6942
outdooredge.com



The **RAZOR APX** Advanced Performance Hunting Knife System from Outdoor Edge, available in 2.5" and 3" versions, stores two spare blades on each side, providing a maximum capacity of five blades for a hunt. Users can easily remove the silicone scales to transform their knife into a sleek, skeletonized design. The 2.5" version is 7" long and has five 2.5" drop-point blades. The 3" version is 8.5" long and arrives with three 3" drop-point blades, two 3" caping blades, one 3" gutting blade, one 3" bone saw and a polycarbonate blade storage pod.



STOGER INDUSTRIES

(800) 264-4962
stoegerindustries.com

From Stoeger, the mid-size 9mm **COMBAT SX** has a 4.13" threaded barrel. The optic-ready Combat SX has adjustable fiber optics sights, a Smoked Bronze Cerakote finish and magazine capacity of 20 rounds. It arrives with three backstraps and three magazines.



WEATHERBY

(307) 675-7840
weatherby.com

The **ELEMENT II** shotgun, available in 12 GA and 20 GA, is built on Weatherby's field-proven inertia reloading system and now features a tool-less disassembly of the inertia recoil spring. Oversized controls, including a larger slammer button, charging handle and safety ensure seamless operation in less-than-ideal conditions. The slight competition cut on the receiver facilitates faster and easier reloading, and shooters can fine-tune cast and fitment with the Element II adjustable stock shims. Three chokes (improved cylinder, modified and full), a choke wrench and a carrying case are included.



HENRY REPEATING ARMS

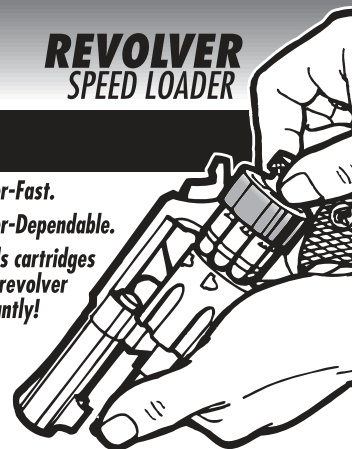
(866) 200-2354
henryusa.com

Henry Repeating Arms' **LEVER ACTION SUPREME RIFLE (LASR)** is available in .223 Rem./5.56 NATO and .300 Blackout. The free-floated blued steel barrel (18" for .223 Rem./5.56 NATO and 16.5" for .300 BLK) is fully capable of sub-MOA accuracy. A match-grade 4-lb. adjustable trigger, patent-pending windage and elevation adjustable trapezoidal rear sight and ambidextrous controls ensure maximum control and comfort. The quad-bar linkage and slider crank mechanism drive the bolt and cycle rounds from the detachable box magazine, and the six-lug rotating bolt face provides positive lockup. The LASR ships with a 10-round Magpul PMAG and a five-round capacity limiter for compliance with hunting regulations.



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loader and is held in by
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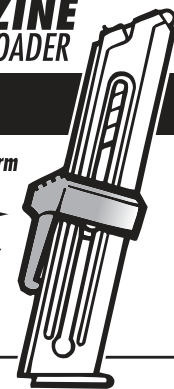
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CABOT GUNS

(724) 524-1002
cabotguns.com

Cabot Guns' **SERENITY MAX** combines hand-forged Damascus steel with cutting-edge Cabot stainless steel technology. It features a proprietary double-stack frame and grip engineered for supreme performance and comfort. The slide, etched with Damascus patterns, contrasts with the vapor-smooth grip panels, both machined from solid steel. The entire piece is cloaked in 416 stainless steel. Other specifications include a 3.5-lb. trigger, 5" Government or 4.25" Commander match-grade hand-fit stainless steel barrel, Cabot stainless steel ledge rear sight (red dot mount for Trijicon RMR footprint optional) and Cabot stainless steel front sight. It arrives with two 17-round magazines (capacity-restricted states will receive 10-round magazines) that are STI/2011 compatible.



HODGDON POWDER COMPANY

(913) 362-9455
hodgdonpowderco.com

Hodgdon Powder Company's **2025 HODGDON ANNUAL MANUAL** is now available. The manual features data for Hodgdon, Accurate Powder, IMR, Ramshot and Winchester Smokeless Propellants. In total, more than 11,000 loads are represented, with updates for more than 126 rifle and pistol cartridges and more than 1,000 shotshell loads.

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

(800) 680-6866
springfield-armory.com

Springfield Armory's **PRODIGY COMPACT** takes the 1911 platform and enhances it with double-stack capacity and a carry-driven feature set. Available with a 3.5" or 4.25" bull barrel, the handgun is built around a 15-round double-stack magazine and features a compact polymer grip module mounted to a lightweight billet aluminum frame. A shortened beavertail and recontoured hammer further reduce the overall footprint. The Prodigy Compact is optics-ready with a tritium front sight and Picatinny rail.



EOTECH

(888) 368-4656
eotechinc.com

The **VUDU 3-9X32** riflescope from EOTECH is crafted from aircraft-grade aluminum for lightweight durability. Measuring 6.8" long, it is fog-, water- and shock-resistant, with capped 1/4 MOA turrets and a second focal plane design. An illuminated reticle with 10 brightness settings runs up to 300 hours on a CR2032 battery. Its integrated base is compatible with mini-ACOG mounts. For added versatility, a version with a ring mount and EFLX sight allows non-magnified targeting, mountable at the top or 45-degree angles for dynamic use.



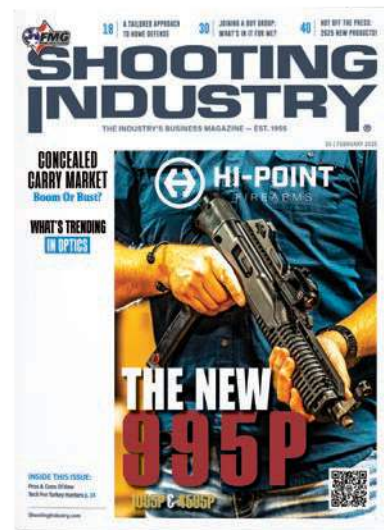
SK GUNS

(844) 475-4867
skguns.com

SK Guns releases the **FIRECREST** in three variations: Firecrest (non-ported), Firecrest-P (para-ported) and Firecrest-C (chunk ported). The company's collaboration with Agency Arms, BHC Color Casing by "Doug" and Stan Chen Customs delivers bull barrel 1911s in 9mm or .45 ACP. Each model is optic-ready with an Agency Arms Optic System (AOS), has an RMR footprint optic plate, an iron sight optic plate cover and three grip choices.

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INDUSTRY LINK

Continued from p. 50

continue to say it throughout this “newest normal” over the next four years (barring a tragic event or unprecedented disaster) — we need to get back to showcasing the joy of the shooting sports and competition shooting.

Emphasizing the benefit of regulated hunting seasons — such as harvesting organic game meat and the conservation

“

These less ‘chaotic’ periods represent an ideal time for businesses to sharpen their offerings by diversifying their product lineup and engaging with new groups of customers.



The opening day of the Supplier Showcase had wall-to-wall foot traffic — attendees and exhibitors alike were eager to do business at the start of SHOT week.

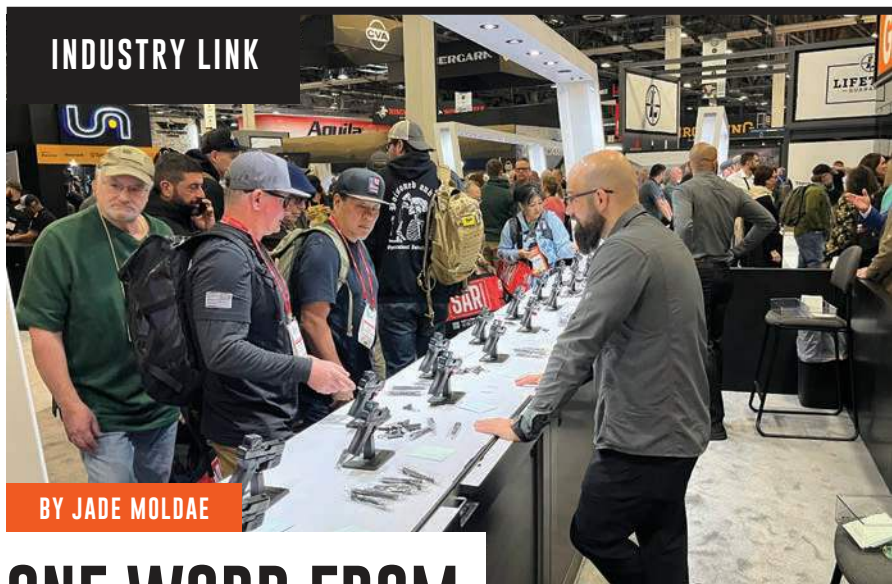
impact — is another opportunity for our industry to make inroads.

In “Sending A Clear & Strong Message,” Jim Curcuruto, executive director of the Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation, made this assessment: “From improving habitat, cleaning up nature and donating extra harvests to feed the hungry, to being

primary funders of land, fish and wildlife conservation in America, the outdoor industry along with hunters and target shooters have a lot to be proud of.”

Here at *Shooting Industry*, we’ll continue reporting on additional growth points for you, the dealer — just as we’ve done over the past 70 years. **SI**

INDUSTRY LINK



BY JADE MOLDAE

ONE WORD FROM SHOT SHOW: BOISTEROUS

Officially, SHOT Show 2025 commenced Tuesday, Jan. 21 — but don't tell that to those who exhibited or attended the Supplier Showcase.

The event ran Jan. 20–21 on the fifth level of The Venetian Expo, featuring a record 605 exhibitors capable of producing countless materials and solutions for manufacturers and dealers.

Whether attendees were looking for barrel improvements, updated packaging, machinery, custom point-of-sale displays, engraving enhancements, springs, textile manufacturing, leather sourcing or software to track productivity or compliance, it was all on display at the Supplier Showcase.

Monday morning, the Supplier Showcase was a flurry of activity — pervasive echoes of business chatter were taking place in packed booths and aisles throughout the exhibit hall. Even with President Trump's inauguration taking place inside the U.S. Capitol Rotunda some 2,000 miles away, thousands of buyers, gunsmiths and manufacturers were present, focused on getting business done.

In dozens of conversations I had with vendors, not one had a negative thing to say about their experiences in the first few hours of the two-day event and all noted an uptick of traffic over the first day of the showcase in 2024.

The 2025 Supplier Showcase, in a word, was boisterous.

CARRYING OVER

Writing this at the conclusion of the “official” Day One of SHOT Show 2025, it's safe to say the energy from the Supplier Showcase carried over to the rest of The Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum.

Eager buyers perused products throughout the show floor, looking to capitalize on early finds to bring in to their stores.

Major firearms launches from the likes of Ruger (RXM), Smith & Wesson (No Lock Classic Series Revolvers), KelTec (PR57), Mossberg (590R), Henry USA (Lever Action Supreme Rifle), FN (Reflex XL) and GLOCK (9mm pistols with Aimpoint COA Optic) commanded attention from attendees.

Other booths with a buzz on the opening day included Magpul, Holosun, Burris and Hornady. Suppressor booths were also a hub of activity, including at HUXWRX, SilencerCo, Silencer Central and Dead Air. (And SIG SAUER returned as an exhibitor at the Show, generating significant foot traffic.)

We'll provide a full review of the 47th annual SHOT Show in the March issue. Have a thought to share on what stood out to you during the industry's premier trade event? Send me an email anytime: editor@shootingindustry.com.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Yes, SHOT Show 2025's energy level was palpable — but the question hovering over this boisterous showing

◀ SHOT Show 2025 featured a record 2,800 exhibiting companies, occupying more than 830,000 net sq. ft. of booth space. Steady traffic was on hand at both The Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum.

for the industry is, where do we go from here? It's no secret the pandemic-fueled wave of demand has been sharply replaced by a soft market. However, these less “chaotic” periods represent an ideal time for businesses to sharpen their offerings by diversifying their product lineup and engaging with new groups of customers.

It's not all doom and gloom — growth points exist in today's market.

Earlier in this issue (“Concealed Carry Market: Boom Or Bust?”), Henry Parro of Parro's Gun Shop made a surprising assertion: November 2024 was a record month for the 42-year-old store.

“We're getting a ton of first-time shooters, which is typically unheard of when a Republican is elected. Gun sales are usually pretty stagnant,” he said.



The Supplier Showcase was a flurry of activity — pervasive echoes of business chatter were taking place in packed booths and aisles throughout the exhibit hall.

This won't be the case everywhere, of course, but there is still opportunity for more business in this market — which was echoed by Bristlecone Shooting's Jacquelyn Clark later in the same article.

“I don't feel like the market is saturated. We continue to grow, with the number of students we're putting through classes, and the number of firearms in this category we sell, as well as the accessories,” she shared.

I've said it before and will

Continued on p. 49



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