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## *A Moving Target* THE SPORTING SHOTGUN MARKET



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# PRECISE

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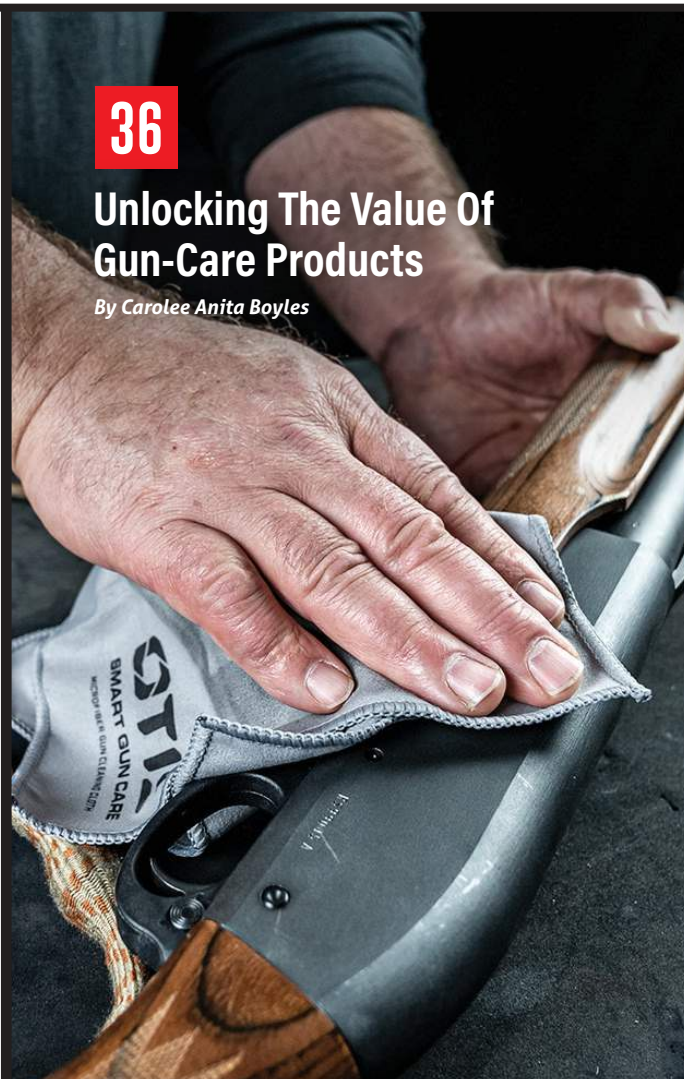
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## Finding Value In The Past

One of *Shooting Industry's* most popular stories is housed in this issue — the venerable “U.S. Firearms Industry Today” report. This eight-and-a-half-page story examines current trends (such as NICS background checks, the impact of tariffs and more), while expounding on the ATF’s most recent AFMER data, which is published with a one-year delay to comply with the Trade Secrets Act.

Looking back to 2023, the industry was still recovering from the whiplash of the previous few years — but firearms manufacturers still managed to produce above pre-pandemic levels. For the second year running, Ruger was the top U.S. firearms manufacturer, with 1,304,628 firearms. For insights into the rest of the leading U.S. firearms makers and international data, the report starts on p. 18.

### “SELL, SELL, SELL” TO SUCCESS

Dovetailing with this month’s lead feature, Hank Yacek looks at industry data provided by GearFire’s Retail BI (Business Intelligence) platform to zero in on the key sales pillars for FFL dealers: handguns, ammunition and rifles. Using Jim Cramer’s popular “Sell, sell, sell” concept to form the framework of this story, Yacek contends data will be key to identifying trends and “sell, sell, sell” our way to success in 2025.

“Market conditions will dictate how we make buying decisions, what inventory to increase stocking levels of and which items to get rid of, never to buy again,” he says. “By using data we can visualize trends and develop insights that help us make these critical decisions.”

See p. 30.

### GET “RANGE READY” WITH GUN CARE

Just like ammunition and targets, gun-care products are an essential part of the firearms-shooting experience — but too many customers don’t seem



JULY 2025

to recognize their importance. In this month’s feature on the gun-care segment, Sonny Seybold of Pantel Tactical shares an effective strategy on getting customers “range ready.”

“When the customer does their paperwork and when they pick up their firearm, I give him or her a little bit of a discount on cleaning products,” he said. “The margins are a little bit higher on cleaning products, so I give them a 5% discount right off the top, and make sure they are what we call ‘range ready.’”

“We actually ask customers, ‘Are you range ready? Do you have eyes? Do you have ears? Do you have all your necessary cleaning materials?’”

For more insights, see p. 36.

### NEXT MONTH: TECH FOR HUNTERS

In the forthcoming August issue of *SI*, one of the highlights comes from Bryan Hendricks’ feature “In With The New!” — which explores how dealers can stay abreast of new trends to appeal to hunters.

Hunter Simmons of Simmons Sporting Goods shares some sage wisdom: If a customer is asking for something, and you have it, sell it to him!

“Things change so fast,” Simmons said. “With the internet, a guy knows more than you about the particular item he’s come to buy. The gun or scope they want to buy, they’ve been studying it for a while. If a customer knows what he wants, sell it to him.”

The muzzleloading market, flashlight sales and range profits represent other high points of the August issue. **SI**

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## STAND OUT WITH A LITTLE CREATIVITY

We've seen a decline in hunting participation since the pandemic, similar to other outdoor activities, as people go back to all that kept them busy prior to 2020.

The NSSF indicates we have 22 million new firearm owners since the pandemic. No matter if they hunt or target shoot, we, as an industry, need to continue to welcome them and engage them with training and other resources. I think that is the opportunity we have ahead of us, which makes this time different than the "Trump Slump" prior to the pandemic.

In the past, we've seen hunting participation increase during recessions when people have more non-work time. Although many think we are headed for a recession, we aren't in one yet (or we have been and ignored it, depending on the source). There could be more interest in hunting ahead, as the MAHA (Make America Healthy Again) movement has highlighted a lot

of concerns with the basic food we eat. But, it's too early to tell if some of this will take hold and push people to hunt — especially with the barriers to entry in understanding how to hunt, where to hunt and the cost. Unfortunately, interest doesn't necessarily create activation.

I had conversations with many people at the recent NRA Annual Meeting in Atlanta — everyone is trying to figure out what the year is going to be like. I think we all agreed it is really up to the dealers to bring people into their stores. The shelves are stocked, and for consumers, there is no better time to find the product they might want, and have choices!

Manufacturers should ensure their reps are on site with dealers to help arrange/display merchandise, train staff on how to sell products and assist with promotions that will bring people in the door.

The dealers who are doing well are being creative in bringing people into their locations. Those who still think they can place an ad in the local paper

It is really up to the dealers to bring people into their stores. The shelves are stocked, and for consumers there is no better time to find the product they might want, and have choices!

and spark business might not be in that good of shape as the year progresses. The consumer has shifted, as have the methods of reaching them. **SI**

— **Nancy Bacon, Vice President**  
Southwick Associates

**Editor's Note:** The above observations from Nancy Bacon dovetail nicely with Michelle Scheuermann's feature "Shaping The Future Of Bowhunting" (p. 32). Opportunity exists for those endeavoring to try new ways to bring customers into their stores.

HAVE A THOUGHT WHILE READING THE ISSUE?

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## CBC GLOBAL AMMUNITION SELECTS OKLAHOMA FOR \$300 MILLION EXPANSION

CBC Global Ammunition is expanding its operations to Northeast Oklahoma with a planned \$300 million investment in a new facility at the MidAmerica Industrial Park in Pryor. The project is expected to create 350 jobs.

Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt's attendance at NSSF's Las Vegas SHOT Show earlier this year was instrumental in cementing this agreement. The governor and his staff have been actively seeking to attract ammunition

manufacturing to the Sooner State.

"SHOT Show proved to be a highly effective forum for the governor and his team to encourage CBC Magtech to locate their U.S. production facility in Oklahoma," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Brent Wright, chief policy advisor for Gov. Stitt.

"Because of our business-friendly policies, our support of law enforcement and the Second Amendment, and our unbeatable logistical advantage, it is a

◀ Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt (right of center, red-and-white striped tie) stands with members of CBC Global and his state staff after the announcement of CBC's \$300 million expansion in Northeast Oklahoma.

no-brainer for companies to choose our state. I'm thrilled to welcome the CBC team here, and I can't wait to watch them grow here in Oklahoma," said Gov. Stitt.

The holding company for an international group in the ammunition sector, CBC is one of the world's leading producers of military and civilian ammunition for portable weapons. In addition to being a key supplier to U.S. military and allied forces worldwide, CBC also serves law enforcement and commercial markets. Magtech Ammunition Inc. acts as the master distributor in the U.S. for all brands within the group.

"This facility will be a cornerstone for our future growth in the world's most important market for small-caliber ammunition. We believe that the region's supportive business environment makes Oklahoma an ideal location for CBC USA," said Fabio Mazzaro, president of CBC and board member of CBC Global Ammunition.

Globally, CBC has more than 4,000 employees and produces nearly 2 billion rounds of ammunition each year. The new Oklahoma facility will

Continued on p. 45

## MULTIPLE PDS IN CONNECTICUT CHOOSE HK VP9

Heckler & Koch USA announced four Connecticut police departments have selected the HK VP9 as their duty sidearm for the first time.

The State Capitol Police in Hartford, the Brookfield Police Department, the Clinton Police Department and the New Haven Police Department have altogether fielded nearly 200 HK VP9 pistols.

"These departments were looking for

a safe, reliable pistol at a level that our competitors simply do not offer," said HK L.E. Sales Manager Jason Whitten. "The NATO AC225 testing we subject all of our products to, along with NIJ certification, carried a lot of weight with each of them."

While safety and reliability were major factors for these departments, the VP9 also has a well-deserved reputation for being a handgun that helps officers shoot better. Whitten reports many departments across the U.S. have seen an improvement in qualifying scores shortly after adopting the VP9.



"I've seen it again and again. I wouldn't be surprised to see that happen in Connecticut with these departments as well," Whitten said.

/hk-usa.com





### CZ-USA Adds Senior Management

CZ-USA announced three new senior management leaders to complement the existing CZ-USA Team and better serve the U.S. market: Petr Pištělák will serve as president, Tom Taylor joined as chief marketing officer and John Dain was promoted to EVP of commercial sales.

As president, Pištělák will oversee all aspects of U.S. operations, sales and marketing. He joined the Colt-CZ Group in 2019 as global head of the commercial organization. Prior to Colt-CZ Group, he served in various roles at Proctor & Gamble, Czech Airlines and PFF Group.

Taylor is responsible for building the CZ brand in the U.S. as he leads marketing and product development. He will also support Colt marketing and further development of the CZ brand globally. He served 21 years in various roles throughout the firearm industry, with the past 10 years at SIG SAUER. Taylor also spent over 20 years at The Coca-Cola Company in various leadership roles.

Dain joined the Colt CZ Group one year ago and now oversees all aspects of U.S. sales. Before joining Colt CZ Group, he spent 12 years at SIG SAUER. Dain served in the U.S. Army and is a decorated combat veteran.



S. COLBERT

### Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc. Names VP, General Counsel & Corp. Secretary

Ruger announced the appointment of Sarah Colbert as the company's VP, general counsel and corporate secretary. She will oversee Ruger's legal strategy, corporate governance and compliance

while continuing to serve on the executive leadership team.

Ruger President and CEO Todd Seyfert said, "Her combination of legal expertise, strategic thinking and operational leadership uniquely positions her to serve in this expanded role."

Prior to this appointment, Colbert served as the VP of administration. She joined Ruger in 2011 as associate general counsel. She practiced law at Day Pitney LLP and Ryan Ryan Deluca LLP. She also served on the Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice's Civil Commission on Alternative Dispute Resolution and the Electronic Discovery Committee.

Colbert graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Law, Suffolk University and Wharton's General Management Program.



K. WALTON

### MKS Supply Exec. To Retire

After a 28-year career with MKS Supply, Kelly Walton retired on June 30, 2025.

Walton served with distinction in multiple roles, including sales manager, EVP of sales, company executive VP and as a valued member of the board of directors.

A statement released by MKS Supply noted, "Kelly's leadership and dedication have been instrumental in driving MKS Supply's growth and establishing our reputation in the industry. His commitment to excellence and ability to inspire those around him have left an indelible mark on our company and our industry."



A. WILKINS

### Women For Gun Rights Names Comm. Director

Alexis Wilkins joined forces with Women for Gun Rights

as the director of strategic communications. Wilkins will advise the group's messaging and advocacy efforts, helping shape public conversation around the right to self-defense and the cultural significance of the Second Amendment.

"Alexis has a powerful voice and a real understanding of what's at stake," said Dianna Muller, founder and president of Women for Gun Rights. "We're excited to have her help push this message even further."

As a country music artist, political commentator and writer, Wilkins consistently uses her platform to tell the truth about American freedom, media manipulation and Constitutional rights — particularly through storytelling and public engagement.



S. RUSSELL

### ASP Inc. Appoints Sales Director

ASP Inc. welcomed Shea Russell as the new director of sales for the mid-south U.S.

region. Russell will be responsible for law enforcement agency and distributor relationships in New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. His territory also includes Mexico and Latin America.

ASP VP of Sales Daryell Harmon said, "Shea has an exceptional background on both the military and civilian side and comes to us with the customer-facing experience and leadership skills that we value."

Russell has more than 30 years of leadership experience, having served in the Department of Defense as well as multinational corporations. After retiring from the Marine Corps as an infantry lieutenant colonel, he worked in various sales executive roles with government contractors and other private sector companies.





## Sports South Promotes & Hires VPs

Sports South announced Caleb Sutton's promotion to VP of merchandising, and also welcomed Brian Billiet as the VP of technology.

Tripper Dickson, Sports South president and CEO, shared, "[Sutton's] grasp of our market and his inventory management capabilities have set him up well for this position."

Sutton has played a principal role in inventory management and merchandising for the company for nearly six years. Prior to Sports South, he held positions at Cabela's and Worldwide Trophy Adventures.

"The application of technology is in our DNA at Sports South. It is a differentiator and a key driver of our business," said Dickson. "I am thrilled to have Brian join our leadership ranks and take the reins of this critical facet of our business."

Billiet previously spent 14 years at Topgolf, where he played a pivotal role in shaping the company's technology strategy and IT operations.



A. HAZEK

## Streamlight Inc. Appoints Sales Manager

Streamlight Inc. appointed Austin Hazek to the position of regional sales manager for the Industrial/

Fire division, focused on the Great Lakes/Eastern Canada region. As the regional sales manager, Hazek will work directly with distributors and manufacturers to drive sales and increase the market share of specialty lighting products.

Allen Lance, Streamlight VP of sales, shared, "[Hazek's] proven history in account management alongside his sales skills are certain to be an asset to Streamlight in the Great Lakes and Eastern Canada territory."

Hazek most recently served as the territory manager for Unilock.



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He earned a B.S. in criminology from Eastern Michigan University.



S. MONTEITH

## John Rigby & Co. Announces Promotions

London gunmaker John Rigby & Co. announced two key promotions within its team: Steven "Monty" Monteith was promoted to director of operations, and Maria Gil stepped into the role of sales director.



M. GIL

Marc Newton, managing director of John Rigby & Co., said, "Both Monty and Maria have demonstrated exceptional dedication and leadership, and I am incredibly proud to recognize their hard work with these well-earned promotions."

In his new role, Monteith will support the managing director in overseeing the safe and efficient management of the company, ensuring Rigby upholds its traditions while embracing opportunities for growth and innovation.

He joined Rigby in July 2023 as the head of compliance, bringing operational experience from his distinguished military career.

As sales director, Gil will lead Rigby's sales strategy, working closely with clients and partners to continue the company's success.

She joined Rigby's sales team in 2016, and most recently served as sales manager.



H. BURGE

## iRayUSA Names Marketing Dir.

As iRayUSA's new director of marketing, Henry Burge is leading marketing strategy, campaign development and digital growth initiatives across dealer and direct-to-consumer channels. He also oversees brand positioning and creative direction for all product lines.

"My goal is to help scale iRayUSA's presence in the outdoor, tactical and thermal-imaging markets," Burge shared.

His experience in brand development and marketing strategy stems from various roles within the firearms and hunting industries.



## Arcus Hunting Hires National Sales Manager

In his new role as Arcus Hunting's national sales manager for the Midwest and Western U.S. regions, Jim Heeren will be driving sales strategy, and strengthening relationships with key accounts, distributors and independent retailers. He will also work closely with the product development teams to bring innovative hunting solutions to market.

Most recently, Heeren played a key role in launching a gun-safe division for Dansons. **SI**





BY MASSAD AYOOB

## EXPLAINING THE NEED TO CARRY SPARE AMMO

**WE** all know accessory sales are an important part of retail sales, and this is as true of gun shops as anywhere else. In the personal-defense market, one too-often neglected accessory is spare ammunition and a way to carry it.

We've come a long way. Half a century ago, there were seven states where there was no provision for a law-abiding private citizen to carry a loaded handgun concealed in public to protect their family. Today, thankfully, there are none like that.

Back then, only a few states were "shall issue" in terms of carry permits. Most were "may issue," which in many jurisdictions was a code term for "we'll give you the permit if you're white, rich and/or famous, male and politically connected." By 2022, the majority of states were "shall issue" — and "may issue" became extinct with the Supreme Court's *Bruen* decision.

Years ago, only one state trusted its law-abiding citizens and visitors to carry concealed without a permit required: Vermont. Today, the Vermont model of "constitutional carry" has spread to a majority of states.

Result: more Americans carry

concealed now than ever before.

And a great many of them, perhaps a majority, carry just the handgun with no spare ammunition. They haven't realized something I've told my students and readers for decades: A gun without spare ammunition is a temporary gun.

There is one glaring selling point for spare carry ammo we'll go into first, and there are a couple of other very good reasons for the defensive pistol to be backed up with another magazine or two.

### WISHFUL THINKING

"How much ammo should I carry?" is a common topic on online gun forums. On one such discussion thread recently, a commenter remarked he had been spooked by a carjacking involving five armed suspects and was thinking of switching to an auto from his usual revolver for higher capacity.

One supremely confident responder wrote something like, "Five bad guys? I have five shots in my J-Frame. No problem." Ah, the power of wishful thinking!

At about the same time on the very informative site [pistol-forum.com](http://pistol-forum.com), readers, heard from Dr. Gary K. Roberts, a protégé of the late wound-ballistics

◀ Speedloaders, SpeedStrips and 2X2X2 pouches are among the revolver fan's reloading options.

expert Dr. Martin Fackler. Since Fackler's passing, Roberts is generally considered today's leading expert on the topic. Dr. Roberts wrote, "Looked at in aggregate over a multi-year period, the data breaks down like this: Approximately 1/3 of the time only one shot was needed to stop the threat. In another 1/3 of cases, 2–9 shots were required. Unfortunately, 10+ shots were necessary to stop the criminal aggressor in the final 1/3 of violent encounters."

Dr. Roberts' authoritative voice should be heard by anyone who thinks five bullets are going to instantly stop five violent aggressors.

### TIME IN THE FIGHT

The quintet of carjackers cited by the fellow I mentioned earlier was not a black swan event. Over recent years, we've seen gangs of similar size doing home invasions not just the one, lone nutcase of years past. In Chicago and elsewhere, a carload of armed bad guys, often with some wielding long guns, will pull up and emerge simultaneously to steal a driver's car. If they decide to open fire, leaving the driver (your customer) alone with no choice but to return fire, the customer's odds are bad enough without him having a limited supply of ammunition.



**A gun without spare ammunition is a temporary gun.**

Take some advice from Tom Givens ([rangemaster.com](http://rangemaster.com)), one of the world's leading instructors in defensive handgun use. He doesn't speak of "firepower." After studying countless gunfights, Givens calls the concept "Time in the fight." He knows how fast a handgun can be emptied in a desperate situation and doesn't want to be caught with an empty gun while his opponent's weapon is still loaded.



Givens himself daily carries a full-size 18-round 9mm service pistol inside his waistband under an un-tucked sport shirt and two spare 17-round magazines.

Other criminal trends call for more ammunition than typical situations in years past. Consider:

**The Armored Felon:** More criminals are wearing bullet-resistant vests when they “go to work” than in the time of John Dillinger and Baby Face Nelson. That armor can soak up several bullets with no effect before the lawful defender realizes his or her first point of aim isn’t working and they have to shoot their homicidal attacker in some other, unprotected part of the body.

“

**Approximately 1/3 of the time only one shot was needed to stop the threat. In another 1/3 of cases, 2-9 shots were required. Unfortunately, 10+ shots were necessary to stop the criminal aggressor in the final 1/3 of violent encounters.”**

Dr. Martin Fackler

**The Doped-Up Attacker:** Today’s panoply of drugs of abuse sometimes give superhuman strength and endurance to the user, and/or extreme resistance to pain. It means the lawful defender may need several more shots to solve the problem.

**The Skillful Attacker:** Don’t assume your opponent doesn’t know

enough to move and take cover — two things that will each require more shots from the lawful defender to solve the problem.

#### SOME POINTED REMINDERS

Suppose your customer is one of the many who will reply, “I carry a fully loaded double-stack 9mm! I won’t need any more rounds than that unless there’s a zombie apocalypse!”

You and your staff might want to remind the customer other situations might demand spare ammunition. Ask the customer if his pistol has ever experienced a stoppage. If it did, when it happened did the barrel peel back like a banana in the manner of Elmer Fudd’s shotgun when Bugs Bunny stuffed a carrot down the barrel? Or did the “jam” have something to do with the magazine or the cartridges therein?

If, say, a round nosedived in the cartridge stack, the best way to get the gun back up and running in a life-saving emergency is to get the bad mag out, another good one in and go back to returning life-saving gunfire.

If the revolver’s cylinder won’t turn, there’s no time to isolate which defective cartridge has a high primer. Dump the whole cylinder-full, slam in a fresh speedloader or moon clip and get back to shooting.

Finally, remind your customer in a struggle for the gun, the assailant’s hand may hit the mag-release button and send the full magazine off into the dark, the snow or the mud. When he gets the pistol back it’ll be a single shot, or utterly useless if it has a mag disconnecter safety — unless he has a spare mag he can slap in to make the gun work again.

#### LEARN FROM THE COPS

America’s armed citizens have historically modeled their defensive handguns on what the nation’s police carry. Back in the day when street cops carried .38 Special or .357 Magnum service revolvers and plainclothes officers wore snub-nose .38s of the “Detective Special” genre, those were also the most popular guns for home defense and licensed concealed carry, respectively.

Now, at the same time most “civilians” are packing (usually 9mm) autos, the cops have gone from a six-shooter with 12 spare cartridges to an 18-shot 9mm and two (or even three) spare mags. Remind the customer there are sound reasons for this.

The customer will ask how you expect them to carry spare ammo in discreet concealment, and with comfort. We’ll share some helpful tips in this column, next month. **SI**

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BY LISA PARSONS-WRAITH

# BARRIERS THAT KEEP WOMEN FROM SHOOTING

**Editor's Note:** Throughout this year, we're looking back on *Shooting Industry's* 70 years of coverage. In this month's *Arms & The Woman* installment, we thought it would be compelling to look at one of the first columns in this space — which became a regular part of *SI* in late 1993.

As you've heard often in recent years, our industry has grown by leaps and bounds in welcoming women to the self-defense and recreational shooting ranks. Just two months ago, in this very column, Bethany Beathard observed, "During my recent visit to SHOT Show 2025, I was pleasantly surprised to see a noticeable increase in female representation across marketing materials, including several large-scale banners featuring women in the field. This shift is more than just a visual change; it signals a broader industry movement."

On the contrary, former columnist Lisa Parsons-Wraith had a very different experience walking the halls of SHOT Show 1995 — sharing her impressions in the April 1995 issue). Have a comment to share? Email me anytime: [editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com). — **Jade Moldae, SI Editor**

**T**he 1995 SHOT Show in Las Vegas was notably lacking in products designed specifically for women. In fact, I learned to my dismay several companies that had once

designed products for women recently discontinued this practice because they felt the market wasn't large enough.

This turns into a classic "catch-22" situation. First, women don't buy the one or two products available to them because of the lack of selection and high price the manufacturers create in order to make a profit from the few items they target at women.

Second, if women feel they can't get the equipment and clothing they need, they're less likely to participate in the sport. This in turn affects the future of the shooting sports because studies show women have more influence over discretionary income and tend to make family recreation decisions.

If a woman doesn't feel comfortable or welcome to participate in a sport, chances are her children won't be involved either — especially with the increase in single-parent households.

## BARRIERS TO ENTRY

So, what are some barriers that keep women out of your store and what should you consider doing about them? A seminar held at the 1995 SHOT Show entitled, "Your Newest Customer Base — How To Sell To The Outdoorswoman," proved marketing to women merits discussion, and addressed some of the issues raised above.

◀ Today, SIG SAUER and several other major firearms manufacturers have lines dedicated entirely to women, such as the SIG M400 ROSE pictured here. (Image: SIG SAUER)

The seminar was conducted by Christine Thomas, creator of a program that teaches women outdoor skills called "Becoming An Outdoorswoman." She cited a study called "Breaking Down the Barriers to the Participation of Women in Angling and Hunting" that uncovered several factors, which boil down to five basic barriers to women enjoying outdoor activities:

1. Clothing
2. Equipment
3. Tradition
4. Childhood Conditioning
5. Media

There's little you, as a dealer, can do to change tradition and childhood conditioning, but you can break down the barriers of clothing, equipment and media.

## CLOTHING

There really aren't many companies that make hunting and fishing clothes specifically for women. Suzy Smith Outdoor Sportswear, Shoot the Moon, Zanika and Lady Hunter are some of the few companies designing for women only. Mail-order companies, like Gander Mountain and Cabela's, also feature a line of women's hunting and shooting clothes.

But these aren't the only options. Many sportswear companies design clothing for women and all you need to do as a dealer is select the right colors and styles.

They may not be labeled "hunting," but it doesn't mean a moss-colored parka from Columbia Sportswear or a khaki vest from Woolrich won't help your lady customers blend in on a hunting excursion.

All it takes is a little creativity and artful display to properly equip your customers.

## EQUIPMENT

Strides are being made in the area of equipment for ladies. Manufacturers such as Smith & Wesson, Rossi and Browning are designing firearms for women.

Again, these are not your only options. Let your female customers handle several guns and use your



expertise to help them determine what would be best for their needs. Not all women need 20-gauge shotguns or .22-caliber pistols. Many are perfectly capable of operating a .45-caliber pistol or a 12-gauge shotgun without difficulty. Explain the differences and give them a choice.

Dealers who sell archery equipment should have several bows on hand for women to try. Many women rule out archery as a sport because they believe they don't have the upper body strength to draw a bow. Prove them wrong with a light-draw bow and a target placed strategically close to the firing line.

During the seminar, Thomas said after women go through the archery portion of the "Becoming An Outdoorswoman" program, they often write down the model numbers of the bows they so easily mastered so they can purchase them when they get home. This could mean big sales to the lucky dealer who carries bows women can handle.

“

**Every barrier a woman has to break through to enjoy a shooting sports activity is one more reason for her to spend money on an 'easier' sport.**

Thomas also mentioned women are often overwhelmed by the number of equipment choices and the predominantly male staff in most stores. If you have knowledgeable female sales members on your staff, then you're way ahead of the game. If you don't, then do your best to make your store and staff as welcoming as possible.

## MEDIA

Handling the media is one of the trickiest tasks a dealer faces. If a reporter walks into your store, don't immediately become defensive. Put on your best professional manner and answer his questions courteously and completely. Don't give the media any colorful fodder for a 30-second sound bite. Your goal is to improve the image of your store, as well as the image of hunters and shooters.

If you are involved in an event that will draw a crowd, especially women, alert your local newspaper. Reporters are always looking for a good story, and 15 or 20 women attending a firearm safety class can turn into a great pro-shooting industry story.

Consider setting up a "Take Mom Hunting/Fishing Day" and invite the local media to attend. This will help send the message hunting and fishing are good, clean fun. Women will see other women enjoying themselves and will want to participate in the future. Your sales could really zoom.

If one of your customers excels in the shooting sports and is making a name for herself winning prizes and money, let the local media know about it. It can't hurt and could provide you, your store and the shooting sports with some good publicity.

## INTEGRAL FOR THE FUTURE

Changing society's preconceived notions and prejudices is never easy, but many experts agree unless we get women involved, the shooting sports will cease to exist as we know them today.

The "Barriers" study states, "Clothing and equipment manufacturers need to see women are interested and able to buy their products. Clubs and organizations need to see women are important to their futures. Dads and husbands need to realize daughters and wives are potential field companions."

These are all things dealers should keep in mind, as well. Remember, every barrier a woman has to break through to enjoy a shooting sports activity is one more reason for her to spend money on an "easier" sport. **SI**

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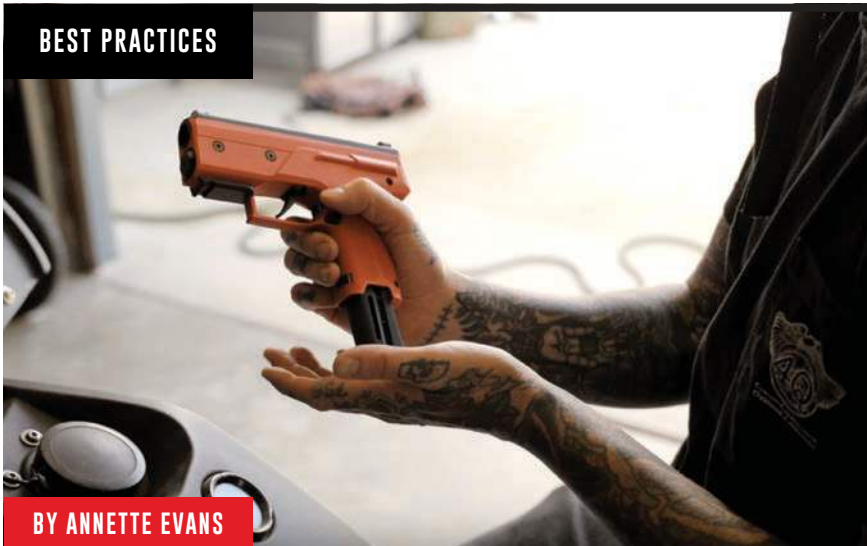
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BY ANNETTE EVANS

## THE LESS-LETHAL ALTERNATIVE

**L**ess-lethal products, like pepper spray, are unlikely to result in serious harm or death to the person they are used against. They aren't as sexy as guns, but they also have a place on gun store shelves. Why?

Think first of customers who are new to the firearms world. While they are still figuring out what to buy and how to shoot, they still deserve to be safe from the bad guys of the world. Making the decision to purchase is only the first step. It still takes time to save money for the gun, the accessories and the classes. In some states, there's also time spent waiting for the necessary permits.

Less-lethal products like high-quality pepper sprays are affordable and easy to use. If you'd like to show customers their safety is what matters, more than selling them an expensive gun, offering an affordable and simple means of protection is a good start.

Even after they've started down the path of gun ownership, a customer might not be ready to use their new gun to defend themselves. They may not yet be comfortable with their handling skills or their ability to shoot when the pressure is on. They may be hesitant to keep a loaded gun in their home or carried on their body. They may fear the harm that could result if their shot misses its intended target, or if their shot lands exactly where intended.

It can take time to come to peace with the idea that their chosen self-defense tool could seriously injure or even kill someone, even if that person

was intending to do the same to them. During that in-between time, or if a customer decides lethal force isn't for them, you can offer something else better than hope.

### CLEAR THE AIR

Most states have restrictions on where and when an individual is allowed to carry a gun. A person may also choose not to carry because of the consequences that could occur if they were to violate a workplace policy or family request. Sometimes, they just don't want to for their own reasons, whatever they might be.

They'll be looking for alternatives and a one-stop store where a customer can look for all their self-defense needs would be a tempting place to shop.

Make clear, though, the distinctions between lethal and less lethal. There are many misconceptions as to where different tools fit on that spectrum, and what may or may not be legal or permissible in a specific place.

The customer is ultimately responsible for knowing these rules, but you can help by being clear and correct about what you are selling.

### NOT EVERY THREAT IS ADDRESSED WITH A FIREARM

Less-lethal tools can also complement a carried firearm. As the saying goes, "When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." The same can happen with a gun, but not every threat can be addressed by

◀ Responding to extensive customer feedback, Byrna introduced a compact version of its popular SD Launcher — the CL Launcher. To illustrate its compact size, the CL is advertised as "one smartphone long, two smartphones wide." (Image: Byrna)

shooting it.

In some cases, drawing or shooting a gun may be unsafe because of the surrounding crowd. In others, lethal force may not be legally or morally warranted. Having something else that can be effective in stopping potentially violent situations can be a helpful option, especially something else that can be used before serious danger is imminent.

Chuck Haggard, a nationally recognized self-defense trainer, recommends pepper spray in particular because it is "between a harsh word and a gun," giving people who carry it a tangible way of defending themselves without having to shoot a threatening person.



**Chuck Haggard recommends pepper spray because it is 'between a harsh word and a gun,' giving people who carry it a tangible way of defending themselves without having to shoot a threatening person.**

### CLASSROOM OPPORTUNITY

Stocking less-lethal tools also creates opportunities to enhance existing classes or to offer additional education. Use-of-force considerations become more nuanced when adding the possibility of a less-lethal response, changing the lessons you give in defensive shooting or concealed carry classes.

Whether a student comes in looking to learn when they can use a gun against another person or a customer wonders what they can do if they don't want to shoot, less-lethal tools are an important discussion point and an important option to have available. In many cases, they can also be practiced without a



live-fire range, using training units or dummies.

This allows classes to be taught in more limited facilities, with less equipment, and a higher instructor-to-student ratio. As we know, these opportunities are good for both the store and the students.

#### **AVOID SELLING FALSE HOPE**

Simply stocking your store with a catalog of gadgets advertised as “less lethal” might not be the best idea, though. The customer is ultimately responsible for making sure what they buy is allowed in the places they want to bring it, and that it will be effective in the way they are expecting.

However, you can help set them up for success by doing a little bit of research before ordering inventory. Some items, like various types of



**If you'd like to show your customers their safety is what matters, offering an affordable and simple means of protection is a good start.**

knives, are sometimes lumped together with other less-lethal tools, but they are not and should be labeled accordingly. Other items may not be legal in your state or city, even if you can purchase them from your distributor — so you'll want to check.

And of course, many items aren't reasonably effective in stopping potential bad guys. Digging into the

products you're choosing among can help avoid selling false hope or confidence.

#### **OFFER SOLUTIONS**

Guns aren't the appropriate tool for everyone all the time. Why not serve customers who aren't ready for defensive gun use or who spend time in places where they can't or don't want to bring a gun? We can argue about whether any of them should buy or carry a gun anyway, but we can also offer quality alternatives for people in all stages and places of their self-defense journey.

It's true being responsive to customer demand will increase sales, but you can still balance profit against offering products that will serve your customers the best and keep them the safest they can be in their individual circumstances. **\$1**



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BY JADE MOLDAE

# U.S. FIREARMS INDUSTRY TODAY

2025

## Innovation, Responsiveness Vital To Success

Once again, the U.S. firearms industry finds itself at a crossroads. We survived the pandemic and two contentious presidential election cycles over the past five-plus years. But what now?

Here in 2025, fear-based buying isn't going to be a factor for today's consumer. In fact, with inventory largely replenished, consumers have an abundance of options on where they can choose to spend their money. It's going to be fine margins that determine whether or not a customer makes a purchase in today's market.

A focus on product innovation, developing new ways to reach customers, using data to stay engaged with market conditions and expanding the joy of the shooting sports and hunting to customers represent sound investments.

One way to look at where we're going is to look at where we've been — which brings us to this year's "U.S. Firearms Industry Today" report, featuring a comprehensive look back to ATF's annual firearms production data and other international insights. Let's dig in.

### CURRENT NICS TRENDS

Though not a direct correlation to firearms sales, NSSF-adjusted NICS data provides an additional picture of current

market conditions.

From Jan. 1 to May 31, 2025, NSSF-adjusted NICS background checks totaled 6,063,240 — the eighth-highest tally in the system's history through the first five months of a year. With the exception of January, each month in 2025 has trailed its 2024 counterpart. The year-over-year (YOY) decrease in NSSF-adjusted NICS checks stands at 3.6% (from 6,288,066 to 6,063,240).



**It's going to be fine margins that determine whether or not a customer makes a purchase in today's market.**

There are positives to take away from the current market conditions, especially when placing it in a historical context. For example, the total observed through the first five months of this year isn't too far away from 2016 (6,179,528). At the time, this was the second-highest total

recorded through the first five months of the year. In 2019, the year before the world changed, the first five months of the year represented the nadir of NICS checks during Trump's first term in office (5,317,913).

Incredibly, the streak of 1 million NSSF-adjusted NICS checks per month that began Aug. 2019 has continued through May 2025 — a span of 70 consecutive months. From Jan. 2000 to July 2019, this figure was eclipsed only 67 times. Not to mitigate current challenges, but this provides another frame of reference to where our industry stands today.

### RUGER TO FOCUS ON "INNOVATION"

Two of the three largest U.S. firearms manufacturers in 2023, Ruger and Smith & Wesson, are publicly traded. The companies' quarterly earnings releases provide additional context to understand current market conditions.

In January, Ruger announced President and CEO Chris Killoy would be retiring from his role on March 1, 2025, transitioning to a short-term special advisor to incoming President and CEO Todd Seyfert. Killoy will remain on the Ruger board.

Seyfert's industry experience includes serving as CEO of FeraDyne Outdoors and holding key leadership roles at ATK/Vista

## NICS BACKGROUND CHECKS: NSSF-ADJUSTED

Jan. 2021-May 2025

YEAR	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	TOTAL
2021	2,052,130	1,387,076	2,044,136	1,694,1180	1,324,419	1,279,300	1,291,298	1,328,518	1,350,754	1,427,264	1,543,378	1,792,797	18,515,188
2022	1,190,856	1,352,105	1,669,578	1,359,908	1,174,791	1,382,287	1,233,115	1,286,816	1,243,687	1,265,311	1,519,524	1,747,506	16,425,484
2023	1,268,236	1,343,593	1,556,492	1,369,296	1,174,142	1,110,696	1,023,903	1,117,821	1,141,847	1,370,719	1,595,476	1,775,834	15,848,055
2024	1,197,294	1,343,478	1,442,061	1,216,116	1,089,117	1,059,037	1,064,790	1,210,995	1,156,223	1,302,857	1,514,773	1,642,270	15,239,011
2025	1,207,557	1,222,980	1,386,724	1,174,294	1,071,685	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6,063,240

NSSF removes NICS purpose codes used by several states for CCW application checks and other purposes. The removal of this data provides a more accurate report of background checks conducted for the purchase of firearms. Visit [nssf.org/research](https://nssf.org/research).



#	MANUFACTURER	PISTOLS	REVOLVERS	RIFLES	SHOTGUNS	TOTAL
1	Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc.	505,735	177,366	621,521	6	1,304,628
2	SIG SAUER Inc.	944,562		57,354		1,001,916
3	Smith & Wesson	604,696	196,279	188,453	2,137	991,565
4	Savage Arms Inc.	4,330		639,591	81,723	725,644
5	Henry Repeating Arms	8,626	5,223	377,743	13,257	404,849
6	GLOCK Inc.	345,119				345,119
7	O.F. Mossberg/Maverick Arms	961		77,085	253,633	331,679
8	Springfield Armory	177,331		91,438		268,769
9	Heritage Mfg. Inc.		178,743	20,757		199,500
10	Colt's Mfg. Co.	56,807	112,858	22,504	888	193,057
11	KelTec	83,504		65,006	37,439	185,949
12	Kimber Mfg. Inc.	126,919	14,109	2,695	3	143,726
13	FN America	116,010		24,942		140,952
14	Beretta USA	91,282			48,428	139,710
15	Palmetto State Armory	25,675		103,124		128,799
16	RemArms	1,293		47,040	77,523	125,856
17	Diamondback Firearms	15,003	12,799	64,856		92,658
18	DC Machine	88,859				88,859
19	Radical Firearms	4,689		82,069		86,758
20	Legacy Sports Int'l Inc.	2,428		35,207	46,172	83,807
21	SCCY Firearms	76,308				76,308
22	Taurus USA	75,941	15			75,956
23	North American Arms	128	60,215			60,343
24	Shadow Systems	53,244				53,244
25	American Tactical Inc.	11,880		38,945	996	51,821
26	Axon Enterprise Inc.	50,880				50,880
27	Browning Arms Co.	49,456			3	49,459
28	Daniel Defense	3		48,765		48,768
29	Staccato 2011	39,435				39,435
30	Bond Arms Inc.	35,506				35,506
31	Christensen Arms	670		34,445		35,115
32	Walther Mfg. Inc.	32,344				32,344
33	IWI US Inc.	9,820		18,373	4,066	32,259
34	Del-Ton Inc.	3,911		27,416		31,327
35	Wilson Combat	14,148		15,895	380	30,423
36	Anderson Mfg.	1,084		28,008		29,092
37	Armstrong USA	12	28,086			28,098
38	Strassell's Machine Inc. (Hi-Point)	19,400		7,303		26,703
39	Outdoor Colors	2,206		4,012	18,671	24,889
40	Keystone Sporting Arms	601		20,194	974	21,769
<b>Top 40 Total</b>		<b>3,680,806</b>	<b>785,693</b>	<b>2,764,741</b>	<b>586,299</b>	<b>7,817,539</b>
<b>% Of All Manufacturers</b>		<b>93.4%</b>	<b>97.6%</b>	<b>88.6%</b>	<b>97.3%</b>	<b>92.3%</b>

“  
Although the  
firearms industry  
may be cyclical,  
Ruger does not  
have to be, and our  
performance this  
quarter supports  
that.”

Todd Seyfert, President & CEO  
Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc.

Outdoor, Magnum Research, Bushnell, Michaels of Oregon and Birchwood Laboratories.

April 30, Ruger announced its Q1 2025 net sales totaled \$135.7 million — a fractional decrease (-0.8%) from the corresponding period in 2024, when net sales were \$136.8 million.

Sales of new products — including the RXM pistol, Super Wrangler revolver, Marlin lever-action rifles and American Centerfire Rifle Generation II — represented \$40.7 million (31.6%) of firearm sales for Q1 2025.

As of March 29, Ruger's cash and short-term investments totaled \$108.3 million and the company has no debt. Seyfert shared how Ruger is fighting to address current market headwinds.

“The challenges in the firearms market are clear and well-documented across the

industry. According to RetailBI's Q1 2025 report, retail firearm unit sales declined 9.6% year-over-year, with revenue down 11.5%. Handguns, rifles and shotguns were all under pressure, and even adjusted NICS checks declined by 4.2%,” he noted. “Despite these two headwinds, I'm proud to report that Ruger remained flat in sales, while staying profitable. My mindset as CEO is although the firearms industry may be cyclical, Ruger does not have to be, and our performance this quarter supports that.”

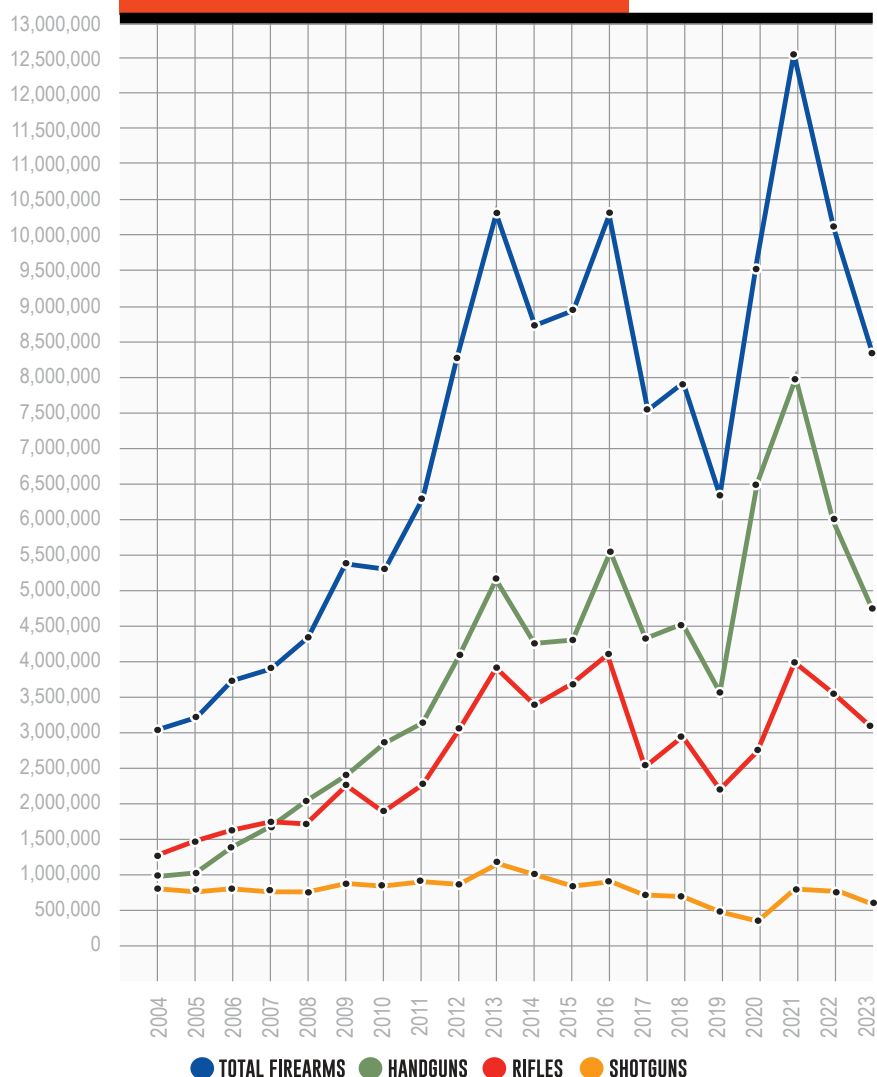
To this end, Ruger is focusing on innovation to drive consumer interest. Recent partnerships with Magpul (RXM) and Dead Air Silencers (RXD Series of suppressors) are representative of the company's intent.

June 13, Seyfert marked his 100th day at Ruger by disseminating an internal memo to Ruger employees to update them on



## U.S. FIREARMS PRODUCTION

2004–2023



short- and long-term plans for the company. (The memo was made public via an 8-K filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.)

In the memo, Seyfert detailed several key initiatives — such as product repositioning (bringing in products at lower price points, in line with market conditions), leadership transition costs (evolving Ruger’s leadership structure and right-sizing its Connecticut operations), organizational realignment and inventory rationalization — would incur \$15–20 million in expenses for the remainder of the year, but would set the company up for stability and profitable growth in the long term.

“None of this will slow our momentum when it comes to investing in what matters most, including aggressive new product development and expansion of capacity in areas where market demand exceeds our current ability to supply,” he wrote. “We remain fully committed to profitable expansion, product innovation, agile responsiveness and ensuring we meet the expectations of our customers and the marketplace.”

### SMITH & WESSON Q4 2025 RESULTS

June 18, Smith & Wesson reported its Q4 and full fiscal 2025 financial results. Net sales for the quarter totaled \$140.8 million, a decrease of \$18.4 million (-11.6%) from the comparable 2024 quarter. Full year fiscal 2025 net sales totaled \$474.7 million, down \$61.2 million (-11.4%) from the prior fiscal year.

Mark Smith, S&W president and CEO, cited “macroeconomic and industry trends” as sources behind diminished returns during the quarter.

“While the combination of lower sales and production volumes, along with mix factors, pressured margins, we were able to partially offset the bottom-line impact through disciplined cost management and by leveraging our flexible manufacturing model,” he said. “Looking at the overall firearms market, we continue to see consumers generally being cautious due to macroeconomic factors pressuring discretionary spending.”

Smith anticipates continued constraints in the near term.

“While new products and lower price point offerings are still performing well,

## TOTAL U.S. FIREARMS PRODUCTION

2004–2023

YEAR	HANDGUNS	RIFLES	SHOTGUNS	TOTAL
2004	1,022,610	1,325,138	731,769	3,079,517
2005	1,077,630	1,431,372	709,313	3,218,315
2006	1,406,329	1,496,505	714,618	3,617,452
2007	1,610,998	1,610,923	645,231	3,867,152
2008	2,041,134	1,734,536	630,710	4,406,380
2009	2,415,453	2,248,851	752,699	5,417,003
2010	2,817,377	1,830,556	743,378	5,391,311
2011	3,170,990	2,318,088	862,401	6,351,479
2012	4,155,240	3,168,206	949,010	8,272,456
2013	5,167,008	3,979,570	1,203,072	10,349,650
2014	4,377,501	3,379,549	935,411	8,692,461
2015	4,442,458	3,691,799	777,273	8,911,530
2016	5,576,366	4,239,335	848,617	10,664,318
2017	4,411,927	2,504,092	653,139	7,569,158
2018	4,545,993	2,880,536	536,126	7,962,655
2019	3,626,614	2,226,625	499,885	6,353,124
2020	6,502,261	2,760,392	476,682	9,739,335
2021	7,911,837	3,934,374	675,426	12,521,637
2022 *	5,843,030	3,508,355	662,510	10,013,895
2023	4,744,571	3,119,376	602,782	8,466,729
<b>Total</b>	<b>76,867,327</b>	<b>53,388,178</b>	<b>14,610,052</b>	<b>144,865,557</b>

◀ \*Editor’s Note: ATF published a revision of its 2022 AFMER data mid-June 2024. SI used the original 2022 AFMER data set, published in Jan. 2024, in its reporting for the July 2024 issue. The updated report included an additional 191 FFLs, explaining the slight variance in the totals published in last year’s issue. This chart has been updated to reflect the revised 2022 figures from ATF.



overall conditions suggest headwinds will likely persist in the near term. Despite these challenges, we remain well-positioned to succeed in this environment,” he said.

Deana McPherson, S&W executive VP and CFO, noted while market conditions have been challenging, new products have stabilized the company’s performance.

“We believe that firearm market conditions have been negatively impacted by persistent inflation, high interest rates and uncertainty caused by tariff concerns. That being said, the success of our new products has enabled us to maintain a leadership position in the categories of the firearm market in which we compete,” she noted.

Looking ahead, McPherson expects demand to remain steady but constrained by ongoing economic pressures.

“We currently expect demand for firearms in fiscal 2026 to be similar to what we saw in fiscal 2025, remaining subject to economic headwinds such as inflation and the impact of tariff-related cost increases,” she concluded.



**Looking at the overall firearms market, we continue to see consumers generally being cautious due to macroeconomic factors pressuring discretionary spending.”**

**Mark Smith, President & CEO**  
Smith & Wesson

#### 7 INSIGHTS FROM 2023 FIREARMS PRODUCTION, 2023–2024 IMPORT DATA

Earlier this year, ATF released its 2023 Annual Firearms Manufacturing & Export Report (AFMER) — the most recent data available. (There’s a one-year delay in reporting to comply with the Trade Secrets Act, so 2025 production data will not be publicized until 2027.)

To avoid confusion, these figures comprise the number and types of firearms produced and sold, distributed or exported into commerce. (Military contracts are excluded.) This data is not a 1:1 representation of market share at the counter, but there is a correlation, of course.

**Continued on p. 23**

## U.S. HANDGUN PRODUCTION

**2023**

#	COMPANY	PISTOLS	REVOLVERS	TOTAL
1	SIG SAUER Inc.	944,562		944,562
2	Smith & Wesson	604,696	196,279	800,975
3	Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc.	505,735	177,366	683,101
4	GLOCK Inc.	345,119		345,119
5	Heritage Mfg. Inc.		178,743	178,743
6	Springfield Armory	177,331		177,331
7	Colt’s Mfg. Co.	56,807	112,858	169,665
8	Kimber Mfg. Inc.	126,919	14,109	141,028
9	FN America	116,010		116,010
10	Beretta USA	91,282		91,282
11	DC Machine	88,859		88,859
12	KelTec	83,504		83,504
13	SCCY Firearms	76,308		76,308
14	Taurus USA	75,941	15	75,956
15	North American Arms	128	60,215	60,343
16	Shadow Systems	53,244		53,244
17	Axon Enterprise Inc.	50,880		50,880
18	Browning Arms Co.	49,456		49,456
19	Staccato 2011	39,435		39,435
20	Bond Arms Inc.	35,506		35,506
21	Walther Mfg. Inc.	32,344		32,344
22	Armscor USA	12	28,086	28,098
23	Diamondback Firearms	15,003	12,799	27,802
24	Palmetto State Armory	25,675		25,675
25	Strassell’s Machine Inc. (Hi-Point)	19,400		19,400
26	Magnum Research Inc.	15,684	2,254	17,938
27	Empire Precision Plastics	17,317		17,317
28	Phoenix Arms	15,850		15,850
29	Wilson Combat	14,148		14,148
30	Automated Finishing Co.	8,755	5,250	14,005
31	Henry Repeating Arms	8,626	5,223	13,849
32	American Tactical Inc.	11,880		11,880
33	IWI US Inc.	9,820		9,820
34	Dan Wesson	9,480		9,480
35	Saeilo Inc.	9,393		9,393
36	Masterpiece Arms	9,355		9,355
37	Heckler & Koch Inc.	6,934		6,934
38	FMK Firearms Inc.	6,377		6,377
39	Trailblazer Firearms	6,285		6,285
40	High Mountain Defense	6,271		6,271
41	The Outpost Armory 2	5,112	656	5,768
42	CZ-USA	5,688		5,688
43	CMMG Inc.	5,250		5,250
44	Standard Mfg. Co.	807	4,439	5,246
45	Nighthawk Custom	3,912	1,178	5,090
46	Franklin Armory	4,947		4,947
47	Radical Firearms	4,689		4,689
48	Savage Arms Inc.	4,330		4,330
49	Steyr Arms Inc.	4,285		4,285
50	Del-Ton Inc.	3,911		3,911
51	Century Arms Inc.	3,562		3,562
52	Volquartsen Firearms Inc.	3,256		3,256
53	Haskell Mfg. Inc.	3,200		3,200
54	VLH Inc.	3,179		3,179
55	Shark Coast Customs Inc.	2,910	1	2,911
56	Second Amendment Sports	2,301	514	2,815
57	Pantel Tactical	2,342	277	2,619
58	Zenith Firearms Inc.	2,524	3	2,527
59	PTR Industries Inc.	2,511		2,511
60	Legacy Sports Int’l Inc.	2,428		2,428
61	Rainier Arms	2,294	104	2,398
62	Currey Consulting	1,997	247	2,244
63	Extar	2,208		2,208
64	Outdoor Colors	2,206		2,206
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,939,517</b>	<b>805,054</b>	<b>4,744,571</b>

Total includes all U.S. handgun manufacturers.



## U.S. PISTOL PRODUCTION

2023

	MANUFACTURER	TO .22	TO .25	TO .32	TO .380	TO 9MM	TO .50	TOTAL
1	SIG SAUER Inc.	49,485	5,269	3,067	40,583	797,001	49,157	944,562
2	Smith & Wesson	42,538	50,982	6,970	80,494	349,143	74,569	604,696
3	Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc.	124,714	13,023	2	209,373	135,471	23,152	505,735
4	GLOCK Inc.	17,780			46,289	266,976	14,074	345,119
5	Springfield Armory					177,331		177,331
6	Kimber Mfg. Inc.				2,911	57,242	66,766	126,919
7	FN America					67,147	48,863	116,010
8	Beretta USA	11,142		15,229	8	64,903		91,282
9	DC Machine	21,195				67,664		88,859
10	KelTec	78,196		794	1	4,513		83,504
11	SCCY Firearms				5,036	71,272		76,308
12	Taurus USA	71,459			234	4,248		75,941
13	Colt's Mfg. Co.				12	14,933	41,862	56,807
14	Shadow Systems					53,244		53,244
15	Axon Enterprise Inc.		50,880					50,880
16	Browning Arms Co.	39,466			9,990			49,456
17	Staccato 2011					39,426	9	39,435
18	Bond Arms Inc.	2,923			7,103	7,072	18,408	35,506
19	Walther Mfg. Inc.				15,981	16,363		32,344
20	Palmetto State Armory	9,456		6,610	41	9,567	1	25,675
21	Strassell's Machine Inc. (Hi-Point)				3,801	12,000	3,599	19,400
22	Empire Precision Plastics				4,966	12,351		17,317
23	Phoenix Arms	12,787	3,063					15,850
24	Magnum Research Inc.				1,232		14,452	15,684
25	Diamondback Firearms	1,755		1,984	2,748	8,132	384	15,003
26	Wilson Combat		24	60		9,450	4,614	14,148
27	American Tactical Inc.						11,880	11,880
28	IWI US Inc.		375	47		9,393	5	9,820
29	Dan Wesson					5,027	4,453	9,480
30	Saeilo Inc.				1,617	2,779	4,997	9,393
31	Masterpiece Arms					9,341	14	9,355
32	Automated Finishing Co. Inc.				12	7,783	960	8,755
33	Henry Repeating Arms	2,705			2,114		3,807	8,626
34	Heckler & Koch Inc.						6,934	6,934
35	FMK Firearms Inc.					6,377		6,377
36	Trailblazer Firearms	6,285						6,285
37	High Mountain Defense				3,641	2,630		6,271
38	CZ-USA					5,688		5,688
39	CMMG Inc.	1,255	3	1,604		1,702	686	5,250
40	The Outpost Armory	401	3	25	271	3,563	849	5,112
<b>Total</b>		<b>517,262</b>	<b>133,643</b>	<b>46,189</b>	<b>441,824</b>	<b>2,375,628</b>	<b>424,971</b>	<b>3,939,517</b>

Total includes all U.S. manufacturers.

## U.S. REVOLVER PRODUCTION

2023

	MANUFACTURER	TO .22	TO .32	TO .38 SPL	TO .357 MAG	TO .44 MAG	TO .50	TOTAL
1	Smith & Wesson	17,575	1,019	58,716	67,888	38,017	13,064	196,279
2	Heritage Mfg. Inc.	178,592			151			178,743
3	Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc.	92,538	321	6,581	52,311	13,218	12,397	177,366
4	Colt's Mfg. Co.	6,758	1	354	82,194	23,114	437	112,858
5	North American Arms	60,215						60,215
6	Armscor USA			26,790	1,296			28,086
7	Kimber Mfg. Inc.				14,109			14,109
8	Diamondback Firearms	12,798			1			12,799
9	Automated Finishing Co. Inc.	1,411			3,180	659		5,250
10	Henry Repeating Arms				5,223			5,223
11	Standard Mfg. Co.	3,992					447	4,439
12	Magnum Research Inc.		339		128	64	1,723	2,254
<b>Total</b>		<b>375,749</b>	<b>1,840</b>	<b>93,385</b>	<b>228,977</b>	<b>75,902</b>	<b>29,201</b>	<b>805,054</b>

Total includes all U.S. revolver manufacturers.



**Continued from p. 21**

Additionally, AFMER data does not record firearms imported into the U.S. — which has grown into a significant segment of the U.S. firearms landscape. A second data set used in this *SI* report comes from the U.S. Census Bureau (see pp. 28–29), which identifies the countries of origin and types of firearms imported into the U.S., rather than specific brands.

## **1. 15.5% DROP-OFF, IN CONTEXT**

Looking back to 2023, the industry's cyclical nature was on full display once again. After producing 10,013,895 firearms in 2022 (only the fourth time the industry has passed the 10 million plateau), there were 8,466,729 manufactured in 2023. Year-over-year, this drop was “only” 15.5%.

The industry is no stranger to wild annual swings, both positive and negative. Since 2013, U.S. firearms production YOY comparisons have oscillated quite a bit: 25.1%, -16%, 2.5%, 19.7%, -29%, 5.2%, -20.2%, 53.3%, 28.6%, -20% and 15.4%. In that span, single-digit percentage changes occurred only twice.

Widening the span a further 10 years (2004–2023), single-digit changes took place five times. It's little wonder why both Ruger and Smith & Wesson have highlighted their “flexible manufacturing” models in recent public filings.

## **2. THE TOP 5**

Speaking of Ruger and Smith & Wesson, they were the first and third most prolific U.S. firearms manufacturers in 2023.

With 1,304,628 firearms in 2023, Ruger was the top U.S. manufacturer for the second year in a row. It has held this title for seven of the past 10 years. Ruger wasn't the top producer in any single category in 2023, but was the second-largest rifle maker and third in pistol and revolver manufacturing. While its overall YOY figures were down 16.5% (from 1,562,014 to 1,304,628), Ruger did record a slight increase in its revolver production (from 174,947 to 177,366).

After soaring into the top two U.S. firearms manufacturers in 2022, SIG SAUER retained its ranking in 2023. It was the only other U.S. gunmaker to cross the 1 million mark (1,001,916) in 2023 — buoyed by its impressive pistol production (944,562), which accounted for 94.2% of its overall firearms production. No surprise, SIG was the top 9mm pistol producer — a rank it has held each year since 2018.

Smith & Wesson was the third-largest

U.S. firearms manufacturer in 2023, totaling 991,565 firearms. With 196,279 revolvers, S&W was the top maker in that category.

Savage Arms was the fourth-largest firearms maker, a ranking it also achieved in 2023. Its long-gun production (721,314) topped the charts for the second year running. In rifles, Savage achieved 5.1% YOY growth (from 608,579 to 639,591).



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Rounding out the top five U.S. firearms manufacturers, Henry Repeating Arms jumped two spots from number seven in 2022 to number five in 2023. Henry has been a steady presence in the top 10 U.S. firearms manufacturers over the past decade. According to our records, this is the first time Henry has broken into the top five. Notably, Henry entered the wheelgun market in 2023, launching the Big Boy Revolver, chambered in .357 Mag./ .38 Spl. Producing 5,223 revolvers, Henry ranked as the 10th largest revolver maker.

## **3. THE TOP 40'S PERFORMANCE**

As noted in previous reports, there is a significant amount of consolidation at the top of the U.S. firearms manufacturing pyramid. Together, the 40 largest U.S. manufacturers produced 7,817,539 firearms in 2023 — 92.3% of all firearms produced in the U.S. that year. In 2022, the top 40 producers accounted for 92.9% of all firearms.

Manufacturers that did not rank in the top 40 in 2022 but did in 2023 were: Anderson Mfg., Armscor USA, Axon Enterprise, DC Machine, North American Arms and Wilson Combat.

DC Machine, which is owned by JJE

Capital (owners of Palmetto State Armory), did not report any firearms production in 2022, but has been a prominent gun barrel and barrel extension producer since it was established in 2004.

North American Arms has been a mainstay in the top 40 U.S. manufacturers over the years and rebounded nicely in 2023. The company produced 60,343 firearms in 2023, more than five-and-a-half times its 2022 total (10,768). Its 2023 total surpasses what it achieved in 2020 (51,192) and 2021 (57,836).

Armscor USA's domestic production is kicking into high gear. The company produced 28,086 revolvers and 12 pistols in 2023 (its Cedar City, Utah, facility opened in 2022).

Wilson Combat's annual growth nearly doubled, from 16,932 in 2022 to 30,423 in 2023.

## **4. U.S. HANDGUN PRODUCTION**

U.S. firearms manufacturers produced 4,744,571 handguns in 2023, down 18.8% from its 2022 total (5,843,030). Examining longer-term trends, however, paints a rosier picture. For example: Compared to the pre-pandemic era, the 2023 handgun tally trails only 2013 and 2016.

For the pistol category, there were declines in each of the major calibers — with the exception of the “.25” category, which posted an 8.9% increase over 2022's total (from 122,679 to 133,643).

9mm continued its recent dominance of the pistol segment — accounting for 60.3% of all pistols produced in 2023. That equates to three out of every five pistols produced in 2023 were in 9mm. This proportion is higher than what was observed in 2022, when 9mm pistols constituted 56.5% of total pistol production.

YOY revolver production posted a small percentage drop (-3.1%) — from 830,786 in 2022 to 805,054 in 2023. Despite the overall decline, three of the six caliber categories posted increases over 2022: .32, .357 and .44.

To see a caliber-by-caliber breakdown of U.S. pistol and revolver production, see the charts on p. 22.

## **5. U.S. LONG-GUN & MISC. FIREARMS PRODUCTION**

Like handguns, overall U.S. long-gun production contracted in 2023 — falling from 4,168,169 in 2022 to 3,722,158 (-10.7%). Of the 15 top U.S. long-gun

**Continued on p. 35**





# KINSEY'S

## Brings A Tailored Approach As Your Business Partner

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**F**or more than 70 years, Kinsey's has been dedicated to helping sporting goods retailers and other specialty outdoors businesses thrive with a host of programs and services that save money, enhance profits and build relationships. The distributor's customer-centric approach and four-season inventory stand out to dealers.

"The Kinsey's sales team is incredibly responsive, knowledgeable and always goes the extra mile to ensure a smooth and efficient process," shared Ray Reeves, president of Lock-N-Load Sporting Goods in Owego, N.Y. "Working with them feels effortless and genuinely collaborative!"

"Kinsey's is our one-stop shop for all archery-related items. With quick shipping and fair pricing, it keeps us in the game," noted the team at Jane Lew Home Center in Jane Lew, W. Va.

"Our experience with Kinsey's has been nothing short of great. As a dealer, they go above and beyond making you feel like family and proving to you that you matter," added Butch's Gun World in Vineland, N.J.

But Kinsey's isn't resting on its reputation alone to win and retain business in 2025. It has launched a dynamic loyalty program, competitive pricing levels, new product categories and an aggressive recruitment drive to better serve its retail partners.

### KINSEY'S LOYALTY PROGRAM

Last year, Kinsey's soft-launched a tiered loyalty program to reward dealers based on their annual sales volume.

Today, the Kinsey's Loyalty Program is in full swing,

which features four tiers and dynamic benefits for dealers:

- **Level 1:** At the base tier, Level 1 dealers receive a dedicated sales representative to provide individualized service while products are being fulfilled. Dealers spending more than \$15,000 in a calendar year receive this advantage.

- **Level 2:** Dealers with more than \$100,000 in total account sales retain Level 1 benefits and will gain elevated backorder fulfillment (Priority 3) and upgraded payment terms (from net 30 to net 45).

- **Level 3:** In addition to the perks available at Level 1 and Level 2, Level 3 dealers (\$150,000+ in total annual account sales) can count on a backorder allowance on guns and ammunition (with a 90-day cancellation), elevated backorder reservation (Priority 2) and a free one-night stay at the renowned Kinsey's Dealer Show (KDS), which is scheduled for Feb. 19–21, 2026.

- **Level 4:** At the top, Level 4, Kinsey's most committed partners (\$200,000+ in total annual account sales) retain the assets of the lower tiers, while also receiving exceptional benefits like same-day order processing (for all orders submitted before 12 p.m. Eastern), the highest backorder fulfillment (Priority 1 — skip to the front of the line!) and a second free night stay at KDS.

According to Kinsey's CEO Justin Gorman, dealer feedback was vital in determining how each level was structured.

"In any market condition, price matters — but what dealers have told us consistently is what matters more is when they order a product and it gets to their store within a day or two," he

said. "For Level 4 dealers, this is an incredible advantage. With the layered benefits, the Kinsey's Loyalty Program goes beyond price. You get pricing advantages but also operational advantages that keep you in stock and refilled quickly, which is just as important".

An added perk of this program: a dealer's 2025 performance will lock in the same loyalty tier for all of 2026. If a dealer achieves Level 3 in 2025 (spending between \$150,000–\$199,999), his or her business has the benefits locked in for all of 2026, even if their spending level drops under the Level 3 threshold next year.

Kinsey's understands the industry has swings. By setting the program up this way, this encourages dealers to funnel sales through Kinsey's during times of high buying — while allowing the benefits to be realized over the following year to support dealers when sales slow back down again.

### DEALER PRICING LEVELS

Endeavoring to further promote its business partnership with high-performing dealers — whether they're a guns and ammo dealer or an archery/accessory/general sporting goods store — Kinsey's has established a tiered pricing structure to serve each group.

This is a separate initiative from the loyalty program.

Gorman explains: "Think of the loyalty tiers as functional, non-price-related benefits, while the pricing tier is, of course, pricing."

Because Kinsey's serves two unique dealer bases — those who sell firearms and those who do not — the pricing structure is dynamic within those tiers a dealer spends money on. For



example, a firearms dealer in the Premier level will receive a discounted price on firearms and ammunition purchases only, not on accessories.

The four pricing levels are as follows:

- Standard Pricing: Up to \$5,000 (for both firearms/ ammo dealers and archery/ accessory stores)
- Select Pricing: \$5,000+ (for both firearms/ ammo dealers and archery/ accessory stores)
- Premier Pricing: \$200,000–\$349,999 (firearms/ ammo dealer); \$75,000–\$129,999 (archery/ accessory dealer).
- VIP Pricing: \$350,000+ (firearms/ ammo dealer); \$130,000+ (archery/ accessory dealer)

Like the Loyalty Program, dealers who achieve a certain level in the pricing tier in 2025 will receive the same pricing discount through all of 2026, regardless of their sales volume.

“In our industry, the market goes up and down a lot, so the benefit of funneling certain sales toward Kinsey’s is you’re locking in that price benefit for all of next year,”

Gorman stated. “So, if the market changes, we’re not going to penalize dealers who aren’t maintaining their sales, because it is always based on the previous year.”

### A NEW BURGEONING CATEGORY

Earlier this year, Kinsey’s announced a partnership with Dead Air Silencers and Maxim Defense and began shipping suppressors for the first time in March.

“Adding a suppressor category to our ever-evolving product assortment is an exciting and new way for us to service our dealers,” said Alex Cameron, Kinsey’s director of purchasing.

**“We have something unique with these programs — they speak to small and large dealers in different categories, which is important to us as an archery and firearms distributor.”**

**JUSTIN GORMAN** • CEO  
Kinsey’s

This new category enables Kinsey’s dealers to better serve their rifle-hunting customers (pistol suppressors are offered, as well, but Kinsey’s is focused on expanding the hunting side of its product assortment).

To further bolster growth, Kinsey’s has a bold promo offer that will be in place through at least through the end of 2025. If a store buys five suppressors, they’ll be available at net 60 terms. A 10-suppressor purchase yields net 90 terms.

“We’re seeing a lot of short-term promos around suppressors, but we know — going into the summer months especially — a lot of dealers utilize distributors as a banking arm. This promo will have a lot of value to them, regardless of any special pricing,” Gorman said.

### AGGRESSIVE RECRUITMENT

While focusing on meeting the needs of its core business partners, Kinsey’s is also taking an aggressive approach to customer recruitment. Dealers who sign up with Kinsey’s in 2025 will automatically be placed in the Premier pricing tier

and receive net 60 terms for the remainder of the year.

“This is our way of giving a new Kinsey’s dealer a head start, and another reason to come sign up as a new dealer,” Gorman said. “We’re not leaving any of our dealers behind because both new and current customers have the ability to take advantage of these same loyalty and pricing programs.”

The program has been very effective, resulting in a number of new Kinsey’s dealers over the past year.

“We attribute this success to the quality of the programs we offer our retail partners,” Gorman noted.

### YOUR “FOUR-SEASON” RETAIL PARTNER

With a diverse product assortment from more than 560 brands, Kinsey’s is a true four-season distributor. These new initiatives outlined above further exemplify its commitment to your success as a retail partner.

“We feel we have something unique with these programs — they speak to small and large dealers in different categories, which is important to us as an archery and firearms distributor,” Gorman concluded. “We’re a distributor for the outdoorsman, that’s our niche. We service tactical users, but our focus is on hunters, recreational shooters and crossover guys. From an assortment standpoint, we offer as good an assortment as you can get for that outdoor/crossover/hunt retailer.” **SI**



Kinsey’s offers a responsive, dedicated team committed to helping your business succeed in any environment. Benefits like the Kinsey’s Loyalty Program, tiered pricing and recruitment initiatives give businesses of all sizes the tools they need to grow and thrive with Kinsey’s.

The Kinsey’s team stands ready to serve you. For more information on Kinsey’s loyalty, pricing or recruitment programs, contact Kinsey’s at (800) 366-4269 or visit [KinseysInc.com](http://KinseysInc.com).



## U.S. LONG-GUN PRODUCTION

2023

#	MANUFACTURER	RIFLES	SHOTGUNS	TOTAL
1	Savage Arms Inc.	639,591	81,723	721,314
2	Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc.	621,521	6	621,527
3	Henry Repeating Arms	377,743	13,257	391,000
4	O.F. Mossberg/Maverick Arms	77,085	253,633	330,718
5	Smith & Wesson	188,453	2,137	190,590
6	RemArms	47,040	77,523	124,563
7	Palmetto State Armory	103,124		103,124
8	KelTec	65,006	37,439	102,445
9	Springfield Armory	91,438		91,438
10	Radical Firearms	82,069		82,069
11	Legacy Sports Int'l Inc.	35,207	46,172	81,379
12	Diamondback Firearms	64,856		64,856
13	SIG SAUER Inc.	57,354		57,354
14	Daniel Defense	48,765		48,765
15	Beretta USA		48,428	48,428
16	American Tactical Inc.	38,945	996	39,941
17	Christensen Arms	34,445		34,445
18	Anderson Mfg.	28,008		28,008
19	Del-Ton Inc.	27,416		27,416
20	FN America	24,942		24,942
21	Colt's Mfg. Co.	22,504	888	23,392
22	Outdoor Colors	4,012	18,671	22,683
23	IWI US Inc.	18,373	4,066	22,439
24	Keystone Sporting Arms	20,194	974	21,168
25	Heritage Mfg. Inc.	20,757		20,757
26	Wilson Combat	15,895	380	16,275
27	Black Rain Ordnance Inc.	15,316		15,316
28	Great Lakes Firearms & Ammunition	13,754		13,754
29	Bear Creek Arsenal	11,385		11,385
30	Seekins Precision Inc.	10,084		10,084
31	Stag Arms	9,459		9,459
32	LWRC International	8,892		8,892
33	Century Arms Inc.	8,634		8,634
34	BP Firearms Co.	8,206		8,206
35	CMMG Inc.	8,143		8,143
36	Fierce Products	7,973		7,973
37	Riley Defense Inc.	7,731		7,731
38	Weatherby Inc.	7,322		7,322
39	Strassell's Machine Inc. (Hi-Point)	7,303		7,303
40	Tippmann Arms Co.	7,209		7,209
41	Pioneer Arms Corp	7,126		7,126
42	Saeilo Inc.	6,873		6,873
43	Steyr Arms Inc.	6,763	4	6,767
44	Andro Corp Industries	6,479		6,479
45	RWC Group	5,248	920	6,168
46	ET Arms Inc.	5,972		5,972
47	Barrett Firearms Mfg. Inc.	5,903		5,903
48	KRISS USA Inc.	5,536		5,536
49	Q	5,440		5,440
50	Heckler & Koch Inc.	5,153		5,153
51	Alex Pro Firearms	5,110		5,110
52	ZRO Delta	4,944		4,944
53	Aero Precision	4,599		4,599
54	Patriot Ordnance Factory Inc.	4,405		4,405
55	Loyal 9 Mfg.	4,296		4,296
56	Bravo Co. Mfg. Inc.	3,693		3,693
57	Rock River Arms Inc.	3,027		3,027
58	Lewis Machine & Tool	3,016		3,016
59	CZ-USA	2,900		2,900
60	Kimber Mfg. Inc.	2,695	3	2,698
61	The Outpost Armory 2	1,792	662	2,454
62	Wise Arms	2,453		2,453
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,119,376</b>	<b>602,782</b>	<b>3,722,158</b>

Total includes all U.S. manufacturers.

## U.S. MISC. FIREARMS PRODUCTION

2023

#	MANUFACTURER	TOTAL
1	Anderson Mfg.	308,566
2	Palmetto State Armory	262,961
3	Aero Precision	224,335
4	DC Machine	101,133
5	O.F. Mossberg/Maverick Arms	66,243
6	Dr. Guns	25,543
7	Tegra Arms Inc.	24,940
8	SIG SAUER Inc.	18,839
9	SCT Mfg.	17,960
10	Senga Engineering Inc.	14,567
11	Combat Armory	14,222
12	Century Arms Inc.	12,643
13	Franklin Armory	11,180
14	Wilson Combat	10,774
15	Lewis Machine & Tool Co.	9,761
16	F-1 Firearms	7,724
17	Radian Weapons	7,235
18	Henry Repeating Arms	6,937
19	Zermatt Arms Inc.	6,669
20	Harrington & Richardson (JJE)	6,295
21	Stag Arms	5,941
22	Defiance Machine Inc.	5,118
23	Andro Corp Industries	4,601
24	Geissele Automatics	4,431
25	Rainier Arms	4,351
26	Chiappa Firearms USA Ltd.	4,269
27	Brownells Inc.	4,228
28	Noveske Rifleworks	3,808
29	Arrowhead Machining Inc.	3,806
30	Gwynedd Manufacturing Inc.	3,435
31	American Tactical Inc.	3,205
32	Centurion Arms	3,159
33	Austin Precision Products Inc.	3,041
34	Childers Guns	3,011
35	Unbranded AR	2,918
36	Celcura	2,728
37	Evolved Gear	2,687
38	Tape Matics Inc.	2,660
39	Omni Holding Co.	2,636
40	ZEV Technologies Inc.	2,598
41	Bravo Co. Mfg. Inc.	2,565
42	Grey Ghost Precision	2,512
43	ET Arms Inc.	1,969
44	Pantel Tactical	1,940
45	Kelby's Rifle	1,846
46	Leading Edge Machine	1,827
47	Warwick Tactical	1,771
48	CMMG Inc.	1,752
49	KE Arms	1,439
50	Dark Storm Industries	1,438
51	Bushmaster Firearms	1,313
52	Diamondback Firearms	1,287
53	Tactical Solutions Inc.	1,278
54	Dignitary Arms	1,257
55	New Frontier Armory	1,211
56	Griffin Armament	1,190
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,305,530</b>

Total includes all U.S. misc. firearm manufacturers.

\*Per ATF, miscellaneous firearms are defined as: "Any firearms not included in the other categories, such as frames or receivers, etc. that are not identified as particular firearms."

(Editor's Note: Misc. firearm production total not factored in the "Top 40 U.S. Firearm Manufacturers" and "Top Exporter" charts on pages 19 and 27, respectively.)



# TOP U.S. FIREARM EXPORTERS

2023

#	MANUFACTURER	PISTOLS	REVOLVERS	RIFLES	SHOTGUNS	TOTAL
1	SIG SAUER Inc.	74,220		4,027		78,247
2	Sturm, Ruger & Co. Inc.	7,529	1,995	57,377		66,901
3	GLOCK Inc.	64,832				64,832
4	Savage Arms Inc.	182		51,641	4,895	56,718
5	O.F. Mossberg/Maverick Arms	3,593		8,950	29,379	41,922
6	Smith & Wesson	23,485	8,550	9,272	95	41,402
7	Springfield Armory	13,869		17,555		31,424
8	Henry Repeating Arms	225		13,257	458	13,940
9	KelTec	3,503		5,958	1,059	10,520
10	Beretta USA Corp.	7,530			2,184	9,714
11	RemArms			3,573	5,733	9,306
12	Taurus USA	4,970				4,970
13	Amchar Wholesale Inc.	67		3,698	905	4,670
14	Tippmann Arms Co.			4,080		4,080
15	Legacy Sports Int'l Inc.	13		2,019	111	2,143
16	Daniel Defense			2,134		2,134
17	Kimber Mfg. Inc.	1,761	84	54		1,899
18	Colt's Mfg. Co.	1,237	235	373		1,845
19	FN America	1,620				1,620
20	KRISS USA Inc.	121		1,455		1,576
21	Axon Enterprise Inc.	1,546				1,546
22	Christensen Arms			1,510		1,510
23	American Tactical Inc.			1,413		1,413
<b>Total</b>		<b>217,691</b>	<b>12,112</b>	<b>198,768</b>	<b>45,067</b>	<b>473,638</b>

Total includes all U.S. firearm exporters. Editor's Note: Misc. firearm exports are not included in totals. The top 2023 misc. firearms exporters were O.F. Mossberg Maverick Arms (2,757), Aero Precision (577), UB Exports (547), BP Firearms Co. (300), Kelbly's Inc. (206) and Southern Ballistic Research (200).



AMERICAN RANCH CAMO RIFLE  
in 300 Blackout



#36962  
300 Blackout • 10+1  
Scope Not Included



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Ruger's custom camo catches the eye when it's not in the field. Weighing only 5.9 lbs, it's a light carry for maneuvering around the homestead. This 10+1 rifle is chambered in 300 Blackout with a threaded 16.12" barrel and a 1-piece three-lug bolt. Combined with a picatinny rail, power bedding and Marksman adjustable trigger, its built for rugged conditions with solid accuracy in mind.

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# U.S. FIREARM IMPORTS 2023 & 2024

## HANDGUNS

Import data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Indicators Division

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN			2023	2024	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN			2023	2024
Argentina			19,852	13,989	Japan				4
Australia				14	Norway			55	34
Austria			1,214,973	919,951	Pakistan			30	
Belgium			58,094	41,422	Philippines			105,199	119,531
Brazil			766,110	557,611	Poland			5,464	7,499
Bulgaria			2,818	1,464	Portugal			1,502	
Canada			17	171	Romania			24,560	17,585
Croatia			328,864	426,733	Serbia			5,057	7,758
Czech Republic			91,728	117,864	Slovakia			1,607	7,148
Denmark				2	Slovenia			6,545	336
Finland			84	494	South Africa			19	31
France			3,646	5,178	South Korea			21	
Germany			482,066	312,070	Spain			697	828
Hungary			120	173	Sweden			32	
India			441		Turkey			433,621	538,606
Israel			32,900	22,590	United Kingdom			9,876	10,240
Italy			139,774	139,068	World Total			3,744,947	3,272,744

## RIFLES

\*NESOI: "Not Elsewhere Specified Or Included" — Economic Indicators Division, U.S. Bureau of Census

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	SEMI-AUTO <small>Centerfire, W/O Tel. Sights HTS Code: 9303308010</small>		BOLT <small>Centerfire, W/O Tel. Sights HTS Code: 9303308017</small>		NESOI* <small>Centerfire, W/O Tel. Sights HTS Code: 9303308025</small>		RIMFIRE <small>Rimfire, W/O Tel. Sights HTS Code: 9303308030</small>		TOTAL	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Australia	256		5	921	3	2		1	264	924
Austria	1,345	1,706	3,790	8,160	174	508	159	75	5,468	10,449
Belgium	12,679	3,422	16	185	226	27	8	9	12,929	3,643
Brazil		8	8,430		151,920	147,012	31,212	3,808	191,562	150,828
Bulgaria	9,616	12,919							9,616	12,919
Canada			151	271	3	296	156,815	135,035	156,969	135,602
Croatia	17,570	3,653							17,570	3,653
Czech Republic	1,312	38	22,669	4,595	30	69	39,005	10,279	63,016	14,981
Djibouti				439						439
Egypt	265	50							265	50
Ethiopia				200						200
Finland		158	76,036	64,458	7	30	12	129	76,055	64,775
France		390	48	2,306	1,127	92		1	1,175	2,789
Germany	5,051	189	2,812	4,030	1,467	803	50,660	57,197	59,990	62,219
Hungary	1,226	995	88						1,314	995
India					71					71
Indonesia							12			12
Israel	9,574	6,600			400	4			9,974	6,604
Italy	1,027	1,713	15,751	22,761	11,452	13,351	4,947	5,394	33,177	43,219
Japan	1	9	64,630	71,000	11,877	12,870	7,510	7,345	84,018	91,224
Mexico					600		525		600	525
New Zealand				2	4	3			4	5
Philippines							980	880	980	880
Poland	10,456	4,750		50	1,225	200	700	1,000	12,381	6,000
Portugal	12,653	16,975	49,310	55,227	5				61,968	72,202
Romania	8,001	1,296							8,001	1,296
Serbia	22,098	21,048							22,098	21,048
Slovakia			4						4	
Slovenia			1						1	
South Africa			2			8			2	8
Spain				442	139,490	110,199	500	79	139,990	110,720
Sweden		11	1,187	1,654			72		1,259	1,665
Switzerland		116	1,482	2,116	45	35	129	85	1,656	2,352
Turkey	907	250	11,060	31,473	80	11,423	125,874	137,952	137,921	181,098
U.A.E.			6						6	
United Kingdom	3	32	7,255	15,821	2,202	2,855	455	77	9,915	18,785
World Total	114,040	76,328	264,733	286,111	322,408	299,787	419,038	359,883	1,120,219	1,022,109



## SHOTGUNS

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	SEMI-AUTO HTS Code: 9303200020		PUMP-ACTION HTS Code: 9303200030		OVER/UNDER HTS Code: 9303200040		NESOI* HTS Code: 9303200065		TOTAL	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Australia							15		15	
Austria		2			1	6	13	72	14	80
Belgium	80	47			528	209	46	84	654	340
Brazil					13,536	15,965	45,262	23,316	58,798	39,281
Canada	4			2				13	4	15
China			3,600	12,025		248	21,161	37,449	24,761	49,722
Croatia							56		56	
Finland						115				115
France					12	13	124	43	136	56
Germany		1			1,037	1,349	398	279	1,435	1,629
Ireland							2		2	
Italy	154,324	141,441	17,991	29,845	45,389	41,337	3,116	3,638	220,820	216,261
Japan	6	93			1,255	1,531	78	88	1,339	1,712
Mexico					32				32	
Poland							1		1	
Portugal	2,033	144							2,033	144
Spain	123	22			516	153	1,499	1,069	2,138	1,244
Sweden							3	4	3	4
Switzerland					9		29		38	
Turkey	237,997	326,212	159,262	193,710	89,704	106,158	175,798	171,281	662,761	797,361
Ukraine								2		2
United Kingdom		215		40	2,547	6,890	2,266	2,545	4,813	9,690
<b>World Total</b>	<b>394,567</b>	<b>468,177</b>	<b>180,853</b>	<b>235,622</b>	<b>154,566</b>	<b>173,974</b>	<b>249,867</b>	<b>239,883</b>	<b>979,853</b>	<b>1,117,656</b>

\*NESOI: "Not Elsewhere Specified Or Included" — U.S. Census Bureau, Economic Indicators Division

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# “SELL, SELL, SELL” *Our Way To Success!*

By Hank Yacek

**F**or those of you who are familiar with Jim Cramer — former hedge fund manager and host of CNBC’s Money” show, “Sell, sell, sell!” is a very common exclamation of his regarding stocks and whether to hold, buy or sell them.

Oddly enough, there are a lot of parallels between this view of stocks and inventorying at the FFL dealer level. There are items we purchase (buy), inventory (hold) and, ultimately, sell. Market conditions will dictate how we make buying decisions, what inventory to increase stocking

levels of and which items to get rid of, never to buy again. Good data can help us visualize trends and develop insights to make these critical decisions.

For the body of this article, we will utilize industry data (provided by Gearfire’s RetailBI sales analytics platform) from 2017 to the present day. Looking at the market before the messiness COVID-era sales created will help us determine how best to strategize moving forward.

So let’s take a step out of our normal day-to-day and examine the state of the industry from a lens that might just help us pave the way for a successful last two quarters of the year. We’ll look at the “bullish” (value is improving) and “bearish” (value is decreasing) trends of the industry to help sell, sell, sell our way to success!

## HANDGUNS: THE GREAT CONSOLIDATION

Handguns are the mainstay of our industry. They sell well year-round, sell in volume and make up the largest percentage of sales our industry creates (roughly 36% of sales volume over the past eight years). Therefore, it makes sense to pay keen attention to this sector as part of your “investment portfolio.” Putting our “Jim Cramer hat” on, where does the industry sit on what to invest in, what to hold and what to sell?

If we look at the handgun calibers that represent the bulk of retail sales, we see an obvious and telling trend: 9mm continues its dominance of sales dollars in our industry. Most other popular calibers are either seeing flatline volumes or strong downward trends, and even in some cases “delisting” level events (sorry, .40 S&W, it’s been a nice ride).

If we listen to the market and let it dictate our inventory planning, it strongly suggests a “handgun portfolio” of 9mm could be up to 65% of your overall handgun



investment holdings with .45 ACP, .380 ACP and .22 LR rounding out the remainder.

To think the market has consolidated into four calibers is as interesting as it is making handgun assortment choices far simpler. Will there be a new breakout caliber in this category? History says no, but with roughly 20% of the market being represented by all the other minor players, it's always worth keeping an eye for the next hot caliber as it would have the opportunity to capture interest.

## NEXT: THE HEARTBEAT OF THE INDUSTRY (AMMUNITION)

Let's spread our wings a bit here and examine the second-largest contributor to sales volume in our industry (19% of industry dollars). Being that ammunition spans all three of our firearm categories — handguns, rifles and shotguns — it makes it a far more diverse sector to invest in and more complicated to design a successful investment portfolio around. Data and history can be our friends here, so let's dive in ...

Like with handguns, we see a rather short list of ammunition caliber/gauges that constitute 80% of the sales volume. The other 20% is largely represented by dozens of other caliber/gauges — none of which constitute more than 1% of the market.

However, in contrast to handguns with its bullish trend in anything 9mm,

we don't see a comparative tilt in the ammunition side of the market. The 9mm ammunition trend line is far flatter than the 9mm handgun line, which might be interpreted as the increase in 9mm handgun sales is through repeat purchases where one customer buys multiple 9mm handguns but because of compatibility doesn't see a need to buy equitably more ammunition.

As a result, you might suggest 9mm is in the "hold" category — where a retailer should maintain their current

“  
If we listen to the market and let it dictate our inventory planning, it strongly suggests a 'handgun portfolio' of 9mm could be up to 65% of your overall handgun investment holdings.

stocking levels even considering increased 9mm handgun sales. If we dive even deeper, we can see a bump in recent sales of .380 ACP ammunition, yet the trend line (the dashed line) still suggests a downward trend in this caliber.

What does this represent? It might be as simple as a new model of handgun that has proven popular (looking at you here, Smith & Wesson BODYGUARD 2.0) and created a temporary bump in market sales. .380 should still be watched closely, as sales volume could quickly return to prior decreasing trends should the model of handgun lose popularity or saturate the market.

## THIRD ON THE PODIUM

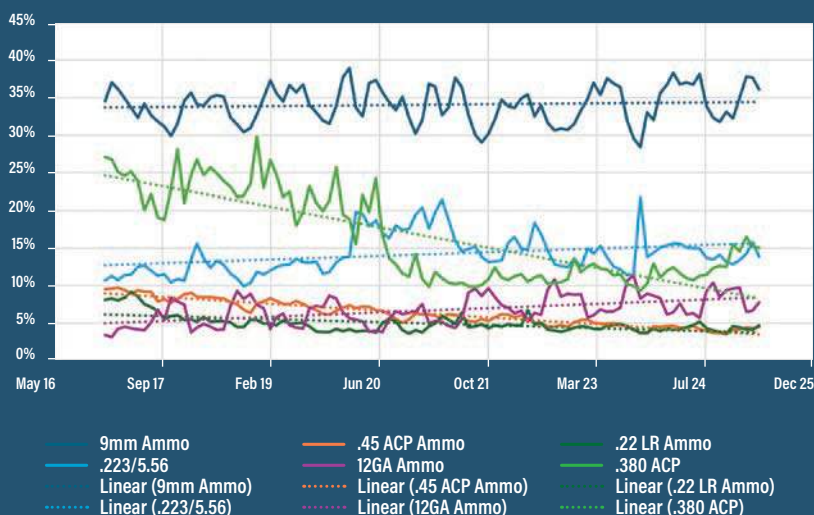
The third-largest category of sales in total dollar volume is rifles. Representing, on average, about 16% of dollars that move through our industry, it is another mainstay category we cannot ignore if we want a properly diversified inventory portfolio.

Here we see a rather flat market for all the secondary calibers in rifles with a very interesting downtrend in .223/5.56's share of the market. While .22 LR, .308, 9mm and 7.62x39mm all make their mark and solidly qualify as a "Hold" category investment, .223/5.56 suggests not only an alarm bell to "Sell, sell, sell!" down your investment position but hints sales are being conducted elsewhere.

These top five calibers historically represented 80% of the rifle sales volume but over the last year and a half have been losing ground to other calibers. Where does this upside opportunity sit? Where have the sales flowed to? No one caliber stands out from the crowd! Is this a situation of people buying ammo for dozens of legacy calibers that weren't readily available during COVID? Is there a new kid in town that is scooping up sales? There are opportunities out there for those who can figure it out.

All in all, 2025 is looking to be a pivotal year for the industry and those who can use the past to plan for the future will put themselves in an advantaged position to beat their competition to the punch, readjust their inventory portfolio and "Sell, sell, sell" their way into success for the rest of the year. **\$**

## AMMUNITION SALES DOLLAR PERCENT OF THE MARKET







By Michelle Scheuermann

# Shaping The Future Of Bowhunting

**Build Connections, Embrace Technology  
& Inspire Lifelong Hunters**

**T**he world of archery and bowhunting is evolving, buoyed by changes in technology, hunter demographics and societal trends.

Leading the charge is the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF), which has spent over 50 years working on hunter safety, ethics and conservation. At the helm

of NBEF is Executive Director Marilyn Bentz, who continues to push the industry forward by focusing on education and meaningful connections.

Since its inception in 1979, the NBEF has been a pillar of support for bowhunters, educating millions on principles that go beyond the basics of hunting. Reviews and accolades have shown NBEF courses resonate with both seasoned

hunters and newcomers.

“Bowhunter education doesn’t just improve safety,” Bentz noted, “it connects people to the outdoors and highlights the importance of living sustainably.”

## IT’S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

One of the key challenges and rewards facing the industry lately is managing the influx of people brought in by the pandemic. As Bentz

points out, those simple walks in the woods many took during lockdown introduced them to the joys of nature, and for some, to bowhunting itself.

“The pandemic gave us a huge opportunity,” she explained. “Now, it’s our responsibility to turn that interest into lasting engagement. What does your store offer? In what ways are they building the bowhunting community? Community



is a huge component and is something we continually work on at NBEF as well.”

To do this, NBEF has continued to adapt and innovate, incorporating technology to better serve today's hunters. From digital learning modules to 3D models, their resources are designed to offer accessible, factual education.

“Our tools and information haven't changed much over the years because they work. People can depend on them, especially as we reach out to youth,” Bentz said. “Online bowhunter ed classes allow participants to take a course anytime, anywhere and on any device for \$30. In-person field-day classes allow participants to learn how to use equipment safely and connect with other bowhunters.”

Bentz shares NBEF's goal is to level the playing field for all to be successful by providing reliable information that's easy to understand and, most importantly, keeps participants safe.

## TECHNOLOGY AMPLIFIES REACH

Another key factor in shaping the future of bowhunting lies in role models and influencers. Bentz acknowledges while the industry once leaned on legends like Jack Frost as teachers and leaders, today's influencers have an expanded reach that can deeply impact the sport.

However, Bentz stresses the importance of clear communication when collaborating with

influencers.

“You need to be clear with influencers about what you want from them and how you can best work together. That's the key to ensuring they reflect the values we strive to uphold,” she advised.

“

**When we talk to bowhunters, it's not just about the animal they're hunting, it's about the stories they are creating as they walk in the woods. Those moments become part of the experience, and that's what you're really selling as a dealer.”**

**Marilyn Bentz • Executive Director**  
*National Bowhunter Education Foundation*

The foundation continues to find resources to engage a younger, more tech-savvy audience. For instance, Bentz noted the increased focus on integrating digital tools to enhance education, from online modules to interactive simulations.

“Technology is enabling us to reach a broader audience and provide more comprehensive training,” she confirmed. “We want to create opportunities for hunters to hone their skills

wherever they are, whether it's on the ground or in an elevated stand.”

For store owners, connecting with customers on a deeper level (again, community) could be the key to rising above in a competitive market. According to Bentz, selling the story behind bowhunting is just as important as selling the equipment.

“When we talk to bowhunters, it's not just about the animal they're hunting, it's about the stories they are creating as they walk in the woods,” she said. “Those moments become part of the experience, and that's what you're really selling as a dealer. You're not just offering a bow or an arrow; you're selling the dream.”

## BUILDING CONNECTIONS

To strengthen these connections, Bentz suggests creating a welcoming environment that feels more like a community hub. Stores that offer simple comforts, like a coffee pot or popcorn stand, replicate the gathering spaces of hunting traditions of the past.

“It's like the old potbelly stove of olden days,” she noted. “It encourages gathering and conversation.”

Service ideas also play a role in keeping hunters coming back. For example, offering complimentary repairs so long as the customer bought it from you originally can cultivate loyalty.

“If you fletched an arrow for them originally fixing it for free gives them a

reason to return and ensures they'll buy their arrows and accessories from you going forward,” Bentz advised. “Something as simple as giving away branded stickers is another low-cost strategy to engage customers. Everyone loves stickers, from kids to adults, and they often end up on bow cases, spreading the store's name farther.”

## CROSSBOW APPEAL

Bentz also highlighted the shifts in bowhunting tools, particularly the rising popularity of crossbows.

“Crossbows fit the lifestyles of many new hunters,” she observed. “Some are drawn to their advanced or ‘techy’ appearance, while others appreciate how quickly they can become proficient with them. They also alleviate fears of wounding game, which can be a major barrier for beginners. Crossbow specific hunter ed classes are available in-person and online at [crossbow-ed.com](http://crossbow-ed.com).”

For retailers, crossbows provide a unique opportunity to appeal to individuals new to bowhunting. And when it comes to traditional bows, Bentz sees their allure rooted in history and skill.

“Traditional bows require a deeper level of practice and woodsmanship, which appeals to hunters who want a more ‘primal’ experience,” she suggested. “For some, the ability to ‘trick out’ their bow so that it's unique to them is important.”

Understanding what





▲ Treestand safety is paramount during hunting season — whether for bowhunters or rifle hunters. Consider hosting a workshop to help both newcomers and experienced hunters refresh their safety skills. (Image: NBEF)

customers value — and tailoring recommendations to their unique interests — remains critical for dealers.

“Ask about their goals, budget and plans for hunting,” Bentz counseled. “If they’re hoping to do an urban hunt, help them figure out if a bowhunter course is required in their area and guide them through the process. Set them up for success.”

Bentz also emphasized the importance of safety education, particularly regarding hunting from elevated positions, a practice with inherent risks.

“We’ve updated our

curriculum through the years to include the best knowledge available for practicing elevated stand safety,” Bentz said. “This curriculum has undoubtedly saved lives.”

#### TECHNOLOGY TO ELEVATE SAFETY, SUCCESS RATE

Looking ahead, Bentz sees technological advancements shaping the industry.

Not only are fall arrest devices becoming more effective and lightweight, but electronic tools for game tracking and practicing shot placement are also improving efficiencies. The

accessories and tools that complement a bow purchase are just as important as the bow itself.

For example, adding a full body harness system and safety fall line to promote safety when elevated. To a newcomer, these tools can be intimidating. They may see people on TV use them and their friends, but does the buyer know how to set it up properly?

Bentz emphasized the need for hands-on demonstrations by inviting manufacturer representatives to the store for special treestand safety days with “pro demos” to help both newcomers and experienced hunters refresh their safety skills.



### The best path forward lies in taking a proactive role in education, simplifying the buying process and creating those connections with hunters and archers at every level.

Retailers have a great opportunity to ensure customers have the latest and greatest gadgets to help them be more successful.

“Placing NBEF’s 3D shot placement models or NBEF shot placement charts on a retail counter is a great way to interact with and educate hunters. Demonstrating

shot placement can increase bowhunter success and reduce game recovery time and efforts. Inspecting and practicing with gear is also essential. Offering workshops or opportunities to practice with new equipment can make a significant difference,” she shared.

Bentz recommends dealers encourage new hunters to take bowhunter education courses.

“Success rates often determine retention,” she said. “If new hunters experience success early on, they’re likely to stay engaged with it long term. Everybody walks away with something from a class, or a tidbit that might just make a difference in their season.”

#### THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

The best part about the bowhunting and archery industries is they are constantly renewing, reviving and releasing new products to stay with evolving hunter preferences.

For dealers, the best path forward lies in taking a proactive role in education, simplifying the buying process and creating those connections with hunters and archers at every level. By doing so, they can not only expand sales but also contribute meaningfully to the sport’s enduring legacy.

“For over 50 years, NBEF has been about more than just safety,” Bentz concluded. “It’s about creating a community of hunters who are passionate about the outdoors, conservation and the joy of bowhunting. The future is bright, and we are right there with the industry, moving forward.” **SI**



# U.S. FIREARMS INDUSTRY TODAY

# 2025

Continued from p. 23

manufacturers, six posted increases in 2023: Savage Arms, Ruger, Henry, S&W, Palmetto State Armory and Legacy Sports.

In rifles, the YOY decrease was 11% (from 3,505,818 to 3,119,376). Over the past 20 years, this total ranks as the eighth-most prolific year for rifle manufacturing. (Rifle manufacturing peaked at 4,239,335 in 2016.)

Shotgun production dropped 8.9% (from 662,350 to 602,782). Over the past 20 years, shotgun production has gradually fallen — the 2023 total represents the fourth-lowest since 2004. (2018–2020 represent the bottom three.)

With 253,633 shotguns in 2023, O.F. Mossberg/Maverick Arms was the top U.S. shotgun manufacturer for the seventh year in a row. Its YOY shotgun production dipped slightly (-4.8%, from 266,382) but its rifle manufacturing jumped from 74,309 to 77,085 (3.7%).

Not included in the overall firearms production and export totals, *SI* began reporting on U.S. miscellaneous firearms production in 2017. In 2022, this category dramatically expanded by nearly 70% to 2,171,255. In 2023, misc. firearms production dropped to 1,305,530 — which ranks as the second-highest total since 2017. By some distance, the top three 2023 producers in the misc. firearms category were Anderson Mfg., Palmetto State Armory and Aero Precision.

Charts featuring the top long-gun and misc. firearms producers are on p. 26.

## 6. U.S. FIREARM EXPORTS

Year-over-year, U.S. firearm exports dropped in 2023 — from 548,196 to 473,638 (13.6%). The total observed in 2023 outpaced 2021 (450,342). Shotguns was the only category to record a YOY jump over 2022, rising from 43,312 to 45,067 (4%).

With 78,247 firearms exported, SIG SAUER reclaimed its status as the top U.S. exporter, a position it held in 2020 and 2021.

Ruger was the second-largest U.S. exporter (66,901), a ranking it has held every year since 2019.

After appearing as the top U.S. exporter for the first time since 2013 in 2022, GLOCK fell two places to the third-largest U.S. exporter with 64,832 firearms exported.

A chart with the top 23 U.S. exporters is on p. 27.

## 7. U.S. FIREARM IMPORTS

Reading through some of *SI* early issues, writers would often scoff at foreign-made guns entering the U.S. marketplace. My, how things have changed.



**The country with the most imports over the past two years was Turkey, with 2,751,368 firearms imported into the U.S. Austria (2,150,935) and Brazil (1,764,190) round out the top three importing countries.**

According to the data supplied by the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 5,845,019 firearms imported into the U.S. in 2023. Because the data is updated monthly, 2024's figures are also readily available — which revealed imports fell 7.4% to 5,412,509.

Unfortunately, the data doesn't show which manufacturers/importers brought these firearms to the U.S. It does, however, provide country-level analysis. The top

handgun-importing countries in 2023 were Austria, Brazil and Germany. In 2024, Turkey replaced Germany in the top three with significant annual growth (from 433,621 to 538,606).

Rifle imports fell slightly from 2023 to 2024 (from 1,120,219 to 1,022,109). Brazil, Canada and Spain made up the top three importing countries in 2023, while Turkey claimed the top spot in 2024, followed by Brazil and Canada.

Contrary to handgun and rifle imports, shotgun imports experienced an increase in 2024, rising from 979,853 to 1,117,656. This also is the only firearms category where the international totals exceed those produced in the U.S., which has been the case since 2020, according to our figures.

In each of the past two years, Turkey (662,761 and 797,361) and Italy (220,820 and 216,261) were the top two shotgun-importing countries by a substantial margin. The third-largest importing countries in 2023 and 2024, Brazil and China, imported 58,798 and 49,722 shotguns, respectively.

The country with the most imports over the past two years was Turkey, with 2,751,368 firearms imported into the U.S. across 2023 and 2024. Austria (2,150,935) and Brazil (1,764,190) round out the top three importing countries from 2023 and 2024.

## 2024 AFMER ON TAP NEXT

The ATF will release its interim 2024 AFMER figures later this year, which features totals per category only. The full report, including breakdowns by licensed manufacturer, will be published at the beginning of 2026.

It's certainly a "labor of love" putting this report together, but it's one we're proud to do in our efforts to better serve and educate you, our reader. **SI**

If you have a comment or observation from this year's report, we'd love to hear from you:  
[editor@shootingindustry.com](mailto:editor@shootingindustry.com).





# UNLOCKING THE VALUE OF GUN-CARE PRODUCTS

By Carolee Anita Boyles

**G**un-care products are as essential to shooting as ammo and targets; the trouble is many shooters don't seem to recognize how important they are. Delivering this message means a better shooting experience as well as an improved bottom line for retailers.

## NEW & ESTABLISHED BRANDS MAKE IMPACT

Over the past couple of years, Sonny Seybold,

sales manager at Pantel Tactical in Renton, Wash., has started selling the TRUE BLUE line of gun-care products.

"They're a local company to us, and I've been dealing with them a ton over the past couple years," he shared. "I first thought their products might have been a little bit of a joke for a minute, but after I used them, I was really surprised. I'd been stuck on my older-style cleaning stuff, but this is really new."

TRUE BLUE is part of a trend Seybold has seen toward non-toxic products that don't have the traditional "gun oil" sort of odor.

"Some of the TRUE BLUE products are phenomenal," he said. "They've made the cleanup of suppressors 10 times easier."

According to Seybold, sales of TRUE BLUE and Otis Technology products run pretty much neck-and-neck in the store. His number-one product, however, is probably the Otis Ripcord.

"The Ripcord is a very neat item that has done phenomenally well," he informed. "It's made cleaning the handguns we sell so much easier. I sell tons of Otis products. We probably go through 40 or so of those Ripcords a month, just in 9mm. This doesn't include the other products Otis has, such as

their lead cleaning wipes and their CLP wipes."

## GETTING "RANGE READY"

Every dollar counts and add-on sales are important, so Seybold looks for ways to encourage customers to purchase gun-care products.

"When the customer does their paperwork and when they pick up their firearm, I give him or her a little bit of a discount on cleaning products," he shared. "The margins are a little bit higher on cleaning products, so I give them a 5% discount right off the top, and make sure they are what we call 'range ready.'"

He continued, "We actually ask customers, 'Are you range ready? Do you have eyes? Do you have ears? Do you have all your necessary cleaning materials?'"

Those add-on sales help both the customer and the store, Seybold informed, especially since the margins on firearms are very low compared to those on accessory products.

"Customers can use that 5% off on anything in our store — non-serialized — on both the purchase day and the pick up day," he shared. "Those two days where they can save a little bit of coin has definitely translated into a big increase in sales for us, as we make sure customers are range ready to go out and shoot."

## BRILLIANT BRANDING

Seybold also does what he calls a "shop shirt day" in Pantel Tactical once a week, and he frequently uses cleaning products and maintenance supplies as the "shop shirt day deal."

"If someone comes in



wearing their Pantel Tactical shirt, we may say, 'Hey, you get 5 or 10% off this cleaning product over here,' he said. "It increases my shirt sales, and it also increases the sales of other products in the store."

All of this, of course, is contingent upon customers coming into the store, so Seybold tries to encourage face-to-face interactions as much as possible.

"Someone will call me on the phone to ask questions, and I'll say, 'This would be a lot easier in person; why don't you come on in?'" he explained. "I tell them we can show them a couple guns, put some in their hands and see if we can find something that works best for them."

Recently, Seybold has started another shop shirt promotion.

"We have a little wheel that spins and when someone comes in wearing their shirt, we spin the wheel to see what they've won," he shared. "They might get 10% off cleaning products, a free pocketknife, a free K-Bar bottle opener or something like that. It has improved our sales tremendously."

From time to time, Seybold has a supplier rep come in for an event.

"I'm getting ready to do one right now where a vendor will come in and have his products on display and give discounts across the board," he shared. "It's just to bring people down and show them the products. I like to do it because getting vendors in here gives us better product knowledge and helps us sell their products in the store. It also gives customers confidence

when they purchase those products."

Seybold thinks the next "big thing" in gun care will be related to optics.

"We're getting to the point where we put optics on almost everything," he said. "We need products that will let us clean our optics safely and not get scratches on them."

**"We're getting to the point where we put optics on almost everything. We need products that will let us clean our optics safely and not get scratches on them."**

**Sonny Seybold**  
*Sales Manager*  
Pantel Tactical  
Renton, Wash.

#### **THE "TRIED & TRUE" STILL SELL**

At Keith's Sporting Goods in Gresham, Ore., Owner Keith Ward continues to see sales of "tried and true" products.

"The old-timers still like to use Shooter's Choice and others that have been around forever," he observed. "However, the latest and greatest is Breakthrough. It seems to be what everybody wants these days. They have a lot of products that

work exceptionally well. Everybody loves them. There's no odor to them."

When it comes to add-on sales, Ward contends less is often more.

"We're not real pushy here," he lends. "We just ask them if they need a cleaning kit and then go from there. My guys are low key. We sell it to them if they need it, and don't try to sell it if they don't. If we have a newbie, we will steer them that direction because they don't have anything, but most customers buy replacement items for what they already have."

Ward sells about one-third cleaning kits to two-thirds individual replacement items.

Until recently, most of Ward's advertising was through Facebook. Not long ago, however, his son posted a photo of an AK-47 in gold for a customer. Facebook shut down the store's account and Ward can't get them to let him back in to it.

"We can't get anyone to respond to us and can't get them to do anything," he stated. "We don't know how to get it to go up the food chain and get back on. We weren't trying to sell the gun; we just wanted to show someone what we had and it opened up a firestorm."

Ward sells a lot of Otis products; he shared he gets terrific support from his Otis rep.

"Anything I need for my customers they can get for me," he said. "Their dealer support is great."

When you sell a gun, don't forget the cleaning and maintenance supplies. You'll help your customer and drive dollars to your bottom line. Everybody wins. **SI**



To get a gun buyer "range ready," Sonny Seybold of Pantel Tactical offers a 5% discount on gun-care products on each sale. It has translated into a "big increase" of sales at the store, he shared.



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# SHOTGUN MARKET: A MOVING TARGET

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By Bryan Hendricks

lay target shotgun sports offer year-round income to retailers as part of a larger marketing model. Many variables influence

the potential in the target segment of a retailer's business model. A local shooting club, for example, is an endemic source of customers who buy targets, ammunition, shotguns and accessories.

Some states underwrite youth shooting sports programs operated cooperatively through schools, wildlife management agencies and 4-H. In 2025, the Arkansas Youth Shooting Sports program, administered by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, supported 5,725 youths representing 333 schools.

Jose Jimenez, chief of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's education division, said the program is directly responsible for \$500,000 in sales. The program spends \$200,000 annually to provide ammunition, eye protection and ear protection for youth participants. An individual school allocation supplies enough ammunition for as many as five practice sessions. Coaches and parents buy additional ammo to facilitate more practice sessions.

"I'd say most coaches are trying to match what we provide them so they can do more practices than what we require," Jimenez shared. "They're paying more for ammunition straight off the shelf. We buy in bulk and have tax exemptions. The compilation of coaches buying ammo independently matches us or higher."

Newcomers often start with well-worn field guns and upgrade to elite-brand over/unders. These stories are not urban legends. Kayle Browning, an alumna of the Arkansas Youth Shooting



Image: Browning (Citori 825 Sporting)



Sports Program, won a silver medal for trap at the 2020 Olympic Games. Alumni of 4-H shooting sports programs in Texas, Georgia and other states have competed at the Olympic level, as well.

States like Ohio have high participation in American Trap Shooting Association events. Add skeet shooting, 5-stand and sporting clays participation to the mix, and the potential for shotgun-related sales is apparent.

### AN "ACTIVE" MARKET

Tom Denniston, owner of Fort Thompson Sporting Goods in Sherwood, Ark., is perfectly positioned to support shotgun sports in central Arkansas.

A few miles north in Jacksonville is a modern shooting facility owned by the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation. It is the hub of the state's youth shooting sports culture and site of the annual state championships. It also hosts an endless array of adult trap benefit shoots.

A few miles east at Remington's sporting ammunition plant in Lonoke is the Remington Gun Club. Its well-manicured trap and skeet fields and its modern sporting clays range host many benefit shoots.

Two miles south, near Little Rock National Airport, is Blue Rock Gun Club, a private facility that hosts many sanctioned trap and skeet shoots. Denniston sells a lot of product to all of these shotgun communities, but his customers are not all local.

"We mostly sell our

ammo to the young people," he said. "The biggest thing for us in the past 10 years is selling target loads. It's big-time. We have people come from all over the state. Corning [High School] buys a ton of stuff from us, and it's a good two hours away. We sell a lot in Northwest Arkansas, too."

Denniston said this portion of his business is based entirely on volume.

"I make \$8 per case of shells," he noted. "That ain't much, is it? But it's worth it to us because it builds good relationships. They can't buy it from Walmart as cheaply as they get it from me. I try to promote our name."

**"WE MOSTLY SELL OUR AMMO TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE. THE BIGGEST THING FOR US IN THE PAST 10 YEARS IS SELLING TARGET LOADS. IT'S BIG-TIME."**

**Tom Denniston • Owner**  
Fort Thompson Sporting Goods  
Sherwood, Ark.

Denniston also promotes Fort Thompson's name by sponsoring a youth shooting event. He said he provides about \$1,500 worth of merchandise to participants. The main advantage of supporting target shooting is that it's an active market when hunting seasons are closed.

"Summertime is just dead," he added.

TriStar is very popular with teenage shotgunners, Denniston informed. Browning, Beretta, Franchi and SKB are also popular. Avid competitive shooters usually buy high-end target shotguns directly from representatives at ATA shoots, but it is a small universe, Denniston reasoned. When a customer comes to Fort Thompson for such a gun, he said it is essential to have it or be able to get it promptly.

"Our basic Beretta trap gun is a little over \$4,000, but you can buy a TriStar for \$1,200, and there's nothing wrong with it," Denniston stated. "They're good guns. The Beretta gun we have right now is \$6,200. We probably sell two or three max. For sporting clays, we mostly sell automatics."

### TARGET TREASURE CHEST

When you enter the parking lot at Gene Sears Supply in El Reno, Okla., the prefabricated metal building looks like a place that sells HVAC equipment. When you go inside, however, it's like entering King Tut's Tomb (if Tut had been a shotgunner). It's not surprising because the late Gene Sears was a renowned trap and skeet shooter, and the business is tailored to an avid target-shooting clientele.

"We've got lower-end guns, but we also have a Purdey side-by-side sitting here," said Garland Sears, owner and general manager. "We have several Krieghoffs and a few Perazzis."

Local schools support successful youth shooting sports programs, but Sears says his biggest liability is being too far from Oklahoma City. Because of its location and its reputation, Gene Sears's clientele is highly specialized, but it is also very loyal. Their preferences span all economic strata.

Unlike Fort Thompson, Gene Sears has Krieghoff, Perazzi and Kolar on site. Sears contends being able to handle these guns makes his business unique.

"We're the only retail shop where folks can come in and handle guns," he said. "Most shops, all the guns are behind the counter. It's the way we've always done it, and it seems like it works for us."

Sears said Stoeger is the ubiquitous brand in Oklahoma's youth shooting sports program tournaments, but he sells a range of brands to youth tournament participants.

"We sell a few TriStars, but I'm not a dealer for them," he stated. "We sell a lot of Brownings and Beretta automatics, especially A300s. Those are really good guns. We sell quite a few Franchis, too, and Benelli Ethos and Montefeltro. We sell a lot of Stoegers. They don't cost much, but seem to be really a good gun."

Sears, also an accomplished clay shooter, said it is important to make it easy for a shooter to buy the gun they need.

"We try to get them fitted with a gun," he explained. "If have problems with it, if they



bring the gun back in the same condition, we basically give them the same thing back they paid to trade in for something else. If they feel a gun doesn't fit right, we'll get them in a gun they can shoot."

## AVID SHOOTERS

Sportsman's Den in Shelby, Ohio, is near the Cardinal Shooting Center in Marengo, which has 100 trap fields that host 3,500 participants annually for the Scholastic Clay Target Program. It also hosts the Ohio State Shoot and two other ATA registered shoots.

"We sell a semi (trailer) load of shells in one week," said Greg Griffith, owner of the Sportsman's Den.

That's a lot of shells obviously, but as Tom Denniston mentioned, it doesn't generate huge

profits. It does, however, give Sportsman's Den a prominent presence at highly prominent events among an avid clientele.

"The thing about clay shooting is you have to be willing to work on a little shorter margin," Griffith stated. "Trap shooters will drive 100 miles to save a dollar on a case of shells. I make \$7 or \$8 a case on shells, but we sell a lot. Sometimes it gets discouraging, but I've got to move product."

The Sportsman's Den's custom-wrapped trailer is a fixture at the Scholastic Clay Target Program. Because it provides such prominent exposure, Griffith said there's no need to do something as labor-intensive as hosting or sponsoring an independent shoot.

"The trailer has a 53'

deck," Griffith said. "We've been around 40 years this year. At the kids' shoot, we're the only ones selling ammo. They shoot a million rounds. We're really not promoting youth shooting enough in Ohio, Minnesota and Wisconsin, but all those schools have teams."

## "I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN WEAR ONE OUT."

According to Griffith, custom gun sellers are present at all of the major shoots. They dominate that market.

## ALL OF OUR SOURCES SAY THE OBJECTIVE FOR SERVICING THE CLAY TARGET COMMUNITY IS CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT AND BRAND PROMOTION.

"Our store is 52,000 sq. ft., but there's not a lot of consumers buying that level of gun," Griffith observed. "They don't sell fast. And a lot of the guys shooting those brands bought them in the '80s. That's why you spend that kind of money — when you're shooting them 10,000 to 20,000 times a year."

On the other hand, Griffith said there is a consistent demand for more conventional target models.

"It's across the board," he remarked. "We sell quite a few TriStars. We sell some Berettas. Winchester and

SKB have a good following. The old BT-99 Browning costs about \$1,500, and there are tons of them out there. There's one with an adjustable rib made exclusively for us. We sell quite a few of those. You can shoot a billion rounds. I don't know if you can wear one out."

Although sub-gauges are increasingly popular in hunting, 12-gauge is still the standard for shooting clay targets, even among youths.

"A 12-gauge target load is only 7/8 of an ounce," Griffith pointed out. "It's a really light load."

## BUY EARLY, STAY ENGAGED

All of our sources say the objective for servicing the clay target community is continuous engagement and brand promotion. The customer who comes to you to buy a shotgun, ammo and accessories for their youth shooting sports participant will probably come to you for their other shooting needs later.

"Don't expect to get rich in the target business," Griffith counseled. "You've got to buy everything in volume. If you run out of shells, you can't call the factory and say, 'Send me a skid tomorrow.' It might take two months. If you don't stock up early, you don't get them. You don't want to work on borrowed money in the target business, where your money is tied up for six months before you sell it. A lot of big stores stay out of it for that reason."

Even with margins increasingly lean these days, there's something to be said about staying active in your community to help grow the sport. **SI**



(Top) New-for-2025 loads available for clay target shooters from Federal Ammunition and Browning Ammo promise to deliver tight patterns and maximum target-breaking energy. (Bottom) Remington Gun Club Target loads represent a budget-friendly option for clay shooters. A portion of the proceeds from sales benefits children's hospitals and disease research.





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By Jenna Buckley



## AUTO-ORDNANCE

(508) 795-3919  
[auto-ordnance.com](http://auto-ordnance.com)

The Auto-Ordnance **THOMPSON T5P**, a .45-caliber semi-automatic rifle, echoes the iconic Tommy Gun. It boasts the same authentic look and feel, with cooling fins, top charging handle, vertical front grip and Cutts compensator. The polymer-furniture models come with a lightweight frame milled from durable aluminum and sport a wood grain finish, significantly reducing the overall weight (approx. 5 lbs.) compared to the steel and wood version. The fixed battle rear sight is standard. Models include versions with the 20-round stick, or drum magazines with 50- and 100-round capacities.

## SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

(800) 680-6866  
[springfield-armory.com](http://springfield-armory.com)

**KUNA** pistols from Springfield Armory house a roller-delayed operating system that dramatically reduces felt recoil. Fully ambidextrous, the platform is available in 9mm and comes with two 30-round magazines. Standout features include an integrated Picatinny rail on the end plate, M-LOK attachment points on the upper receiver, an AR-pattern grip, a flat-faced aluminum trigger and hybrid flip-up sights. The threaded 6" barrel is cold radial hammer forged and finished in Melonite for superior durability, and the reversible, non-reciprocating charging handle automatically folds down and out of the way. Its fully ambidextrous controls include the safety, magazine release and bolt release.



## TETRA GUN

(704) 380-2887  
[tetragun.com](http://tetragun.com)

Tetra Gun's **SUPPRESSOR CLEANER** spray and bath formulas dissolve hard carbon fouling found in suppressors. It is a non-hazardous, bio-based material with an oil consistency in a non-aerosol pressurized can. The cleaner is safe on steel, titanium and aluminum surfaces. The spray is available in 7-oz. cans. Suppressor Cleaner Bath is a different formula and is best suited for use in an ultrasonic cleaning machine. It is sold in 1-gallon jugs.



## REAL AVID

(800) 286-0567  
[realavid.com](http://realavid.com)

With the **SMART-TORQ ADJUSTABLE LIMITER** from Real Avid, users can adjust for any torque value between 15 and 65 in-lbs. This range covers nearly all scope mount, scope ring and action screw torque requirements. The Smart-Torq Adjustable Limiter is available separately or as part of the new Real Avid Smart-Torq Adjustable Limiter and X3 Driver Kit. This kit comes with the adjustable limiter, the new X3 Driver — a modular unit that incorporates three driver systems (ratchet, T-handle and screwdriver) — and an assortment of common driver bits, hex-to-square 0.25" adapter and a 0.5" socket. A compartmentalized hard plastic case keeps all tools organized and secure for the workbench or shooting bench.



## FEDERAL AMMUNITION

(800) 379-1732

federalpremium.com

Federal Ammunition added **.32 H&R** and **.45 LONG COLT TO ITS HYDRA-SHOK DEEP** product line. The personal defense loads feature the iconic center post bullet design, which has been improved for better, more consistent expansion. They also include specially formulated propellant, an extremely reliable, high-performance sealed primer and Federal Premium nickel-plated cases. Both are sold in 20-count boxes.



## SIERRA BULLETS

(888) 223-3006

sierrabullets.com

**MATCHKING-X (MKX)** is the next evolution of Sierra Bullets' MatchKing series, designed with hunters in mind. MatchKing-X offers long-range accuracy and shot-to-shot consistency with proven terminal performance for reliable results. Consistently tested on thin-skinned game out to 500 yards, MKX loads feature key design enhancements that allow the jacket to open and expand rapidly. A draw-and-trim method creates a significantly thinner jacket mouth, with light skives on the nose of the bullet for controlled expansion. It is offered in the following options: 6.5mm/.264, 142-grains; 6.5mm/.264, 142-grains; .270-cal./277, 135-grains; .270-cal./277, 135-grains; .30-cal./308, 175-grains; .30-cal./308, 175-grains; .30-cal./308, 200-grains; and .30-cal./308, 200-grains.



## WEATHERBY INC.

(307) 675-7840

weatherby.com

The latest addition to Weatherby's Vanguard line is the **VANGUARD BLACK HILLS**. With a SUB-MOA guarantee from the cold hammer-forged threaded barrel, the Black Hills edition offers consistent accuracy out of the box. Each rifle includes a match-grade two-stage trigger, three-position safety and an integral recoil lug. The ergonomically shaped Monte Carlo synthetic stock is hand-painted in Sheridan, Wyo. It is equipped with Peak 44's Picatinny JRAL mounted on the action for an optic, and a Peak 44 Arca/Pic Adapter on the forend for bipods, tripods or other attachments. It is available in 17 calibers and two barrel contours.



## FLAMBEAU OUTDOORS

(800) 232-3474

flambeauoutdoors.com

The Flambeau **WILD BITE ADVENTURE FISHING KIT** equips young anglers with the tackle to experience a true fishing adventure, less the rod, reel and water. Each kit comes equipped with a 25-piece assortment of fishing tackle, including fishhooks, bobbers, swivels and fishing weights; a plastic, easy-to-operate spade for digging and a plier multi-tool for removing hooks. It is available in three styles: largemouth bass (green), bluegill (blue) or rainbow trout (orange).



## O.F. MOSSBERG & SONS INC.

(203) 230-5300

mossberg.com

Mossberg's **990 AFTERSHOCK** is a 12-gauge, 3" semi-auto. It is available with 14.75"- or 18.5"-barrel options equipped with an LPA front fiber optic sight and a 14.75" version equipped with a Crimson Trace Lasersaddle (adjustable for windage and elevation). Features include a gas-operating system, nickel-boron coated internal parts, an enlarged and beveled loading port, top-mounted safety, knurled charging handle, paddle-style bolt release, strapped forend and an M-LOK accessory adaptor with mounting slots on the sides and bottom. The capacity of the Aftershock 990 is six rounds, OAL is 27.13" and it weighs 6 lbs. The 18.5" version has an OAL of 30.88" and it weighs 6.3 lbs.



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The **R95 TBP** (Triple Black Pistol) from Rossi USA delivers all the features of the R95 Triple Black rifle in a compact, maneuverable platform ideal for versatility in the field or at the range. The lever-action pistol includes a black Cerakote finish, paracord-wrapped medium loop lever, 13.25" threaded barrel, sling mounts and peep sight with Picatinny rail. Chamberings offered include .454 Casull, .45-70 Govt, .44 Mag. and .357 Mag.

### BIG HORN ARMORY

(307) 586-3700  
[bighornarmory.com](http://bighornarmory.com)

From Big Horn Armory, the **SPIKEDRIVER TACTICAL** lever-action rifle with 16" barrel is chambered in .500 S&W Magnum and shoots 200- to 700-grain bullets. Its stainless-steel construction, heat-treated and coated with a hunter black nitride finish, makes it nearly impervious to corrosion. It arrives with Skinner sights and a factory-installed scout rail for scout scopes, red dot or holographic sights. An M-LOK rail on the front of the forend accepts accessories. The SpikeDriver comes with a hunter-friendly curved lever for comfortable, positive cycling of the action, even with gloved hands.





Continued from p. 9

be capable of producing all centerfire cartridges, from 9mm up to 12.7mm, and will supply the law enforcement, U.S. military and U.S. sports and hunting markets.

The new CBC manufacturing facility will sit on more than 550 acres at MidAmerica Industrial Park, within the historic land originally used as a

munitions factory during World War II. The ground-breaking is expected to take place in the fourth quarter of 2025.

"This is an incredible win for Oklahoma citizens," stated Darren LaSorte, NSSF director of government relations – state affairs. "Governor Stitt has attended SHOT Show on several occasions and the state legislature made attracting firearm and

ammunition manufacturing a priority for the state. That work is paying off — literally. This investment by CBC will help to revitalize the MidAmerica Industrial Park area and bring good-paying jobs and a contributing tax base that will benefit all of Oklahoma. This is an exciting development in which we are all proud to share."

[/cbcglobal-ammunition.com](http://cbcglobal-ammunition.com)

## RUGER CONTINUES BLUE DIAMOND SUPPORT OF SSSF

Ruger announced it is continuing to support the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF) in 2025 as a Blue Diamond level sponsor, contributing over \$75,000 a year. Ruger was the first sponsor to reach that level of support in 2024.

"Ruger is honored to be the first sponsor to reach the Blue Diamond level in supporting such a worthy

cause that teaches safe, responsible handling of firearms," said Paul Pluff, Ruger's public relations manager.

Ruger's support of the SSSF is long-standing. A founding partner of SSSF's Scholastic Action Shooting Program (SASP) in 2012, the company's 2025 support includes both the SASP and Scholastic Clay Target youth development programs.

"Throughout the year, Ruger runs auctions on GunBroker.com to support charities. We are humbled that they would select us to be a beneficiary of



those funds," said Rick Leach, SSSF president and executive director, and SASP national director.

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

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

## MIDWAYUSA FOUNDATION RAISES \$1.2 MILLION FOR YOUTH SHOOTING TEAMS

MidwayUSA Foundation announced its April donation drive resulted in a total of \$1.2 million to support youth shooting teams, after matching funds doubled the initial amount of \$643,237. Larry and Brenda Potterfield fund the matching program.

These funds are crucial for youth shooting teams to cover essential expenses such as ammunition, targets, entry fees and safety equipment, ensuring the continued growth and development of young athletes in shooting sports.

The foundation also provided an additional \$80,000 in endowment awards. West Virginia University's (WVU) rifle team raised over \$120,000 to earn the top prize of \$15,000.

"The foundation provides an

amazing resource to junior and youth shooting programs, and this will be the first year we can take a meaningful draw (grant) that will really contribute to the success of our program," said Jon Hammond, head coach of the WVU rifle team.

The other teams rounding out the top five earning endowment awards were:

Kanabec County Clay Busters (Minn.): 2nd place (\$12,500)

Prescott Bird Busters (Ariz.): 3rd Place (\$10,000)

Battle Ground Academy (Tenn.): 4th Place (\$7,500)


Pillager Clay Target Team (Minn.): 5th Place (\$5,000)

Thirty additional participating teams that received a qualifying donation in April were each awarded an extra \$1,000. The MidwayUSA Foundation provides long-term funding to youth shooting teams through its endowment program.

"In the more than a decade I've been with the foundation, so many



things have given me satisfaction. Helping teams and organizations grow their accounts through participation in our incentive programs is top of the list. Where else can teams open an account, be provided multiple ways to grow that account and have all donations matched?" said MidwayUSA Foundation Southeast Program Manager, Jeff McClure.

The MidwayUSA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity working to sustain and grow youth shooting sports by providing long-term funding to youth shooting teams. The foundation supports all shooting disciplines. 

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



BY JADE MOLDAE

## HEADWINDS & TAILWINDS

**H**eadwinds facing the U.S. firearms industry are numerous — sluggish consumer demand, continued uncertainty surrounding tariffs and their impact on the economy, the challenge of re-engaging millions of lapsed participants and additional unpredictability surrounding global events in the Middle East and Ukraine.

However, amidst these headwinds, some recent events point to tailwinds that could have far-reaching implications for the future of the industry.

### CITIGROUP REVERSES FIREARMS POLICY

One example, firearms industry businesses once again have a “fair shot” at securing financing from one of the largest financial institutions around: Citigroup.

June 3, Citigroup announced in a statement titled “Reinforcing our Commitment to Fair Access to Financial Services” it would “no longer have a specific policy as it relates to firearms” — ending a practice of discriminating against firearms-related businesses that began in 2018 following the Parkland, Fla., tragic mass shooting.

“We are encouraged by the decision for Citigroup to resume providing financial services to members of our industry and the opportunity to work together to promote real solutions for safer communities, while respecting the rights of law-abiding citizens,” said Larry Keane, NSSF SVP and general counsel. “This has been a hard-fought battle to ensure the firearm industry has access to the financial services necessary to compete in today’s market.”

At past NSSF Congressional Fly-Ins on Capitol Hill, I’ve personally witnessed dozens of firearms industry executives raise their hands when asked if they’ve experienced financial discrimination. This about-face from Citigroup is encouraging, but hopefully more than just words — which Keane echoed in the continuation of his statement: “We are guardedly optimistic, yet adhere to the proverb of ‘trust, but verify.’”

### SCOTUS DECISIONS: MIXED RESULTS

Despite some recent pro-gun right rulings (*Bruen* in 2022), the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) hasn’t shown a ready willingness to take on cases involving America’s most popular rifle.

In early June, the high court elected not to hear the appeals in *Snope v. Brown* and the NSSF-funded *Ocean State Tactical v. Rhode Island* — challenging Maryland’s ban on semi-auto rifles like the AR-15 and Rhode Island’s ban on standard-sized magazines, respectively.

However, Justice Brett Kavanaugh signaled the court will address the “AR-15 issue soon, in the next term or two” in a three-page written statement respecting the denial of cert.

In opposition, Justice Clarence Thomas wrote “[he] would not wait to decide whether the government can ban the most popular rifle in America. That question is of critical importance to tens of millions of law-abiding AR-15 owners throughout the country. We have avoided deciding it for a full decade.”

In spite of its inaction on these two appeals, SCOTUS decisively ruled in the

case *Smith & Wesson Brands Inc., et al. v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos*. In 2021, Mexico filed a \$10 billion lawsuit against Smith & Wesson and other firearm manufacturers, alleging the companies’ business practices had fueled cartel violence. It was initially dismissed by the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts in 2022, but the First Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the dismissal last year.

Smith & Wesson petitioned the Supreme Court, which the Court granted cert Oct. 2024, and heard oral arguments on March 4, 2025. June 5, in a unanimous 9-0 decision, SCOTUS ruled the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) bars Mexico’s claims that firearm manufacturers “aided and abetted” illegal firearms trafficking to cartels.

While not a case centered on the Second Amendment, *Smith & Wesson* did include statements from SCOTUS acknowledging the AR-15 platform is “widely legal and purchased by ordinary customers” and “the most popular rifle in the country,” lending further weight to the “common use” test established in the *Heller* (2008) decision. And, crucially, this outcome further reinforces what PLCAA was intended for when it was enacted nearly 20 years ago.

Following the ruling, S&W President and CEO Mark Smith issued a strong statement, criticizing this attempt to blame the firearms industry for the misuse of its products.

“This suit, brought by Mexico in collaboration with U.S.-based anti-Second Amendment activist groups, was an affront to our nation’s sovereignty and a direct attack on the Constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans. It is also only the latest example of their strategy of attacking our company and our industry by bringing one frivolous lawsuit after another, in a blatant abuse of our legal system to advance their anti-Constitutional agenda,” he said.

### USE THE TIME WISELY

Firmly in the “dog days of summer,” we can take solace in some of the changing tides in how our industry is viewed and treated. Use this summer lull to sharpen your store’s offerings, get creative in customer engagement and keep fighting the good fight. It’s the spark that starts the fire. **SI**



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