

HUNTING

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R E T A I L E R

March/April 2019 | Cook & Camp

NEW 18i >>

FROM WEATHERBY

is sure to turn some heads. This premium Italian offering will be an impressive new addition to the Weatherby shotgun line.

See page 4 for more info

THE INS & OUTS OF SELLING SLEEPING BAGS

TIPS FOR CREATING AN AWESOME CAMPING DISPLAY

+ GEAR: TWO-BURNER CAMP STOVES THE PELLET GRILL MARKET TENTS FOR HUNTERS

FIND THE RIGHT PRICE POINT

THE MOLDED COOLER ROUNDUP

RETAILER PROFILE: OLD-SCHOOL SUCCESS



NEW WEATHERBY 18i
FROM ITALY IS INERTIA PERFECTION

See page 4 for more info

 GRAND VIEW
OUTDOORS

www.huntingretailer.com



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY	Firearms Industry Compliance Conference May 6-8, 2019 • Palm Beach Gardens, FL
JUNE	NSSF Industry Summit June 3-5, 2019 • Colorado Springs, CO
JULY/AUGUST	NSSF and Fair Trade Import/Export Conference July 30-August 1, 2019 • Washington, D.C. National Shooting Sports Month August 2019 • shootingsportsmoonth.org Range/Retail Business Expo August 19-21, 2019 • Denver, CO
SEPTEMBER	NSSF CMO Summit September 19-20, 2019 • St. Simons Island, GA
JANUARY	SHOT Show January 21-24, 2020 • Las Vegas, NV

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THIS ISSUE'S COVER BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

THE WEATHERBY 18i Series

The Weatherby 18i series of semi-automatic shotguns are built on the proven inertia system, which provides reliable cycling on an evenly weighted gun. Designed and built for shooters who require superior reliability with high-volume shooting, the single-piece receiver is precision machined from billet aluminum for strength and simplicity. The advanced polymer stock has been de-

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www.weatherby.com



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EOTech Launches Three Brands

A couple of years ago, EOTech began branching out from its well-known holographic sights and producing more traditional scopes under the Vudu line. This line quickly established a solid reputation in the optics market and has become so successful that EOTech is spinning it off into its own brand. In fact, the company is splitting into three distinct brands: Vudu, L3 Field Vision and EOTech.

Vudu makes products for precision shooters; its optics will be marketed more toward the tactical shooter rather than to

hunters.

L3 Field Vision will produce premium sporting optics for big-game hunters, especially Western hunters – everything from binoculars and scopes to, eventually, laser rangefinders. The L3 Field Vision products are scheduled for an official launch at the 2020 SHOT Show.

EOTech, as the third distinct brand, will continue to market holographic sights, night-vision equipment, and other items geared toward tactical, competitive, law enforcement and military use.

Kent Cartridge Launches New Website

The new Kent Cartridge website features a clean and modern look, and highlights the in-depth technical features of the products. The user-friendly design interface allows for clear navigation as customers browse the product lines. A rich media experience with integrated video features and high-resolution photography can be found throughout the site. The in-the-field hunting pics are especially good. You can visit the new site at www.kentcartridge.com.

As you'll see on the new website, Kent's newest product, Fasteel 2.0 Precision Plated Steel Waterfowl, is showcased, featuring high-quality visuals that demonstrate the high-tech features of this new load. Customers can also see the inner components of Fasteel 2.0 through the 'Anatomy of a Fasteel 2.0 Shotshell' feature.

Buck Knives Partners With Taylor Guitars

Buck Knives is partnering with Taylor Guitars, one of the world's leading manufacturers of premium acoustic guitars, with the goal of using a sustainable supply of genuine ebony wood handles on its key heritage products.

Ebony wood is offered on the following Buck models: 110 Folding Hunter (standard & finger-grooved); 110 Auto; 112 Ranger (standard & finger-grooved); 112 Auto; and 101 Hunter. Ebony wood

was originally introduced on the 110 and 112 models in the 1960s, but in the 1990s, federal regulations on endangered woods led Buck to utilize resin-treated woods. Harvested under Taylor's thriving conservation project, Buck will again employ the use of ebony, a natural material with beautiful grain patterns that provides customers with a nearly indestructible knife handle.

"We are excited for this opportunity

to work with Taylor Guitars," said Chris Brooks, director of brand management at Buck Knives. "Buck Knives was built on old-fashioned values with a commitment to quality, reliability and preservation of our resources for future generations. We are excited to help support Taylor's Ebony Project, one Buck at a time."

For more information on this unique partnership, visit Taylor Guitars online at www.taylorguitars.com/ebonyproject.

GSM Outdoors Adds Mainstream Holdings

GSM Outdoors continues to grow rapidly with the purchase of well-known brands Muddy Outdoors, Hawk and Big Game Treestands. This noteworthy agreement joins several of the largest and most respected names in the treestand and elevated hunting platform categories to the GSM family of brands.

"Mainstream's brand strengths and expansive product offerings pair seamlessly with GSM brands and allows GSM to offer our retail partners almost every major segment of hunting accessory products in the marketplace" said GSM CEO Eddie Castro. "Mainstream's

rich history certainly complements our beliefs and values at GSM, and we are extremely excited about this new chapter."

A manufacturer of hang-on, climber and ladder stands, Muddy Outdoors also offers portable tripod and quad-pod elevated platform stands, as well as feature-rich and rugged elevated box blinds. Muddy also makes pop-up-style ground blinds and bale blinds, as well as a broad range of game cameras and hunting accessories.

Known for its lightweight, yet robust platform sizes and comfortable, user-

friendly features, Hawk brand hang-on tree stands, ladder stands, accessories and game cameras enjoy a well-earned reputation in the hunting community for solid performance.

Big Game comes with solid credentials. From affordable, high-mobility hang-on stands and full-feature ladder stands to ground blinds and 360-degree rotation tripod stands, the Big Game line of hunting products brings reliable performance and leading-edge design at costs all hunters can appreciate.

For more information, please visit www.gsmoutdoors.com.



Showcase Skulls With Table Hooker

Many of your customers who pursue big game would love to show off their biggest bucks, bulls and bears, but they don't have the money for several head-and-shoulder mounts. Here's a simple and affordable solution.

The Table Hooker (\$59.99) is designed to showcase small- to medium-sized skulls, which includes North America's No. 1 game animal, the whitetail deer. As the name implies, the Table Hooker doesn't mount to the wall; you simply attach a skull to the Table Hooker (no drilling required) and then place the finished display on a desk, shelf or table.

Constructed of strong, powder-coated steel and offered in two fine finishes (Robust Brown and Graphite Black), the Table Hooker mounting plate easily adjusts up

and down to provide an ideal and natural presentation of your trophy.

If you're interested in stocking the Table Hooker in your store, visit www.skullhooker.com to learn more.



Federal Unveils New Logo and Ammo Packaging

Federal, the world's largest sporting ammunition manufacturer, has announced a new logo and complete refresh to its product packaging. The major initiative, which the company calls "The New Look of Authority," gives Federal a fresh, modern logo.

The simplified design features a stronger, bolder font that conveys motion and a sense of cutting-edge technology. It's derived from the original Federal logo, but has a contemporary feel with the iconic Shockwave logo. The new packaging designs use this new logo to give the entire product line a cohesive look.

"The font inspires strength, heritage and forward motion, both in the technology of our products and the attitude of our employees," Federal Ammunition President Jason Vanderbrink said. "We're always looking ahead, driving to be the best."

All Federal products will now have a new look on its packaging. The com-

pany believes that the bold, eye-catching design will make it easier for consumers and sales associates to quickly identify Federal products on the shelves. In addition, the Premium line of ammo is being reinvigorated with many exciting new products and a return to its iconic gold color.

"With so many ammunition options at retail, we made sure this packaging stands out and immediately communicates what we know consumers want to see," Vanderbrink said.

Federal products that have existed in its catalog will continue to do so within a revised structure and new overall package design. That includes proven favorites such as Federal Power-Shok, Top Gun, Speed-Shok, Fusion and American Eagle, and more recent additions such as Syntech, Train + Protect and Non-Typical.

For more information, please visit www.federalpremium.com.

Montana Rifle Company Sold to Montana Outdoor Group

Montana Outdoor Group, a private investor group, has purchased the Montana Rifle Company from its founder/owner Brian Sipe. According to industry veteran and new Montana Outdoor Group CEO Ron Petty, the sale was completed in July 2018, and new changes were immediately implemented to rejuvenate the facility and increase production capability.

"We are extremely excited to acquire this prestigious company and already we are seeing sales and production on the rise," Petty said.

New machinery, including several state-of-the-art CNC machines, and several new key personnel have made a positive impact on production of existing products, as well as introductions of new products.

"With the acquisition, machinery and key personnel in place, we have established the Montana Custom Barrel Division and are actively producing barrel blanks for key industry partners," Petty said.

Montana Rifle Company produces custom actions, such as the Model 1999, designed by noted gunsmith and founder Brian Sipe. The action combines features of both the M70 Winchester's three-position safety and fully adjustable trigger with the Mauser controlled feed extractor. The action is a preferred choice of many custom gunsmiths and is available as an "action-only" in short, long and PH configuration for calibers .222 through the 505 Gibbs. Barreled actions are also available in more than 70 calibers.

For more information, please visit www.montanarifleco.com.





LIGHT THE FIRE

Popular two-burner stoves are a must for hunting camps far and wide.

BY DARREN CHOATE

Camp Cooking

“Simply put, food is a necessity for survival. Though hunters we choose to skip a meal or two each day in favor of staying on stand or simply nibbling on snacks, meals are essential for fueling our bodies. At the same time, meals provide more than simply fuel for hungry hunters.

Hunting camp is an arena for sharing tall tales, building friendships and enjoying the heritage we call hunting. Mealtime plays an important role in that fellowship. In fact, for most, the combination of great food and camaraderie is probably as important as a successful hunt. If you haven’t watched *Escanaba In Da Moonlight* and enjoyed a camp pasty, please do so.

Although there are many options for camp cooking — grilling over the campfire or in the convenience of an RV — the longtime standard may just be a good ol’ camp stove. The following is a roundup of five popular camp stoves sure to keep the fire burning.



Camp Chef Explorer

“When adventure calls, are you prepared to answer? With the Explorer Two Burner Stove, you will be. The durable, versatile stove packs enough power in its 30,000 BTU burners to boil water and cook your food, whether you’re tailgating at the football stadium or camping with the family. Portability is no problem with the removable legs, and a three-sided windscreen makes outdoor cooking easy. You’ll be up for anything when you have the Explorer 2x Stove with you, so add it to your collection today. Being one of Camp Chef’s 14-inch cooking systems, the Explorer is very versatile and can be equipped with many different Camp Chef accessories, from the Professional Grill Box to the Italia Artisan Pizza Oven.”

Features

- Includes 3-foot hose and regulator
- Includes detachable legs and three-sided wind screen
- Compatible with most 14-inch Camp Chef accessories
- Two 30,000 BTUs/Hr. cast-aluminum burners
- Appliance-style temperature controls
- Propane tank not included

↑ The Camp Chef Explorer

SPECS

COOKING DIMENSIONS:
14 in. x 32 in.

STOVE COOKING AREA:
448 sq. in.

STOVE HEIGHT: 29 in.

STOVE WEIGHT: 30½ lbs.

TOTAL OUTPUT:
60,000 BTUs/Hr. Burner

CONTACT:
www.campchef.com

MSRP: \$139.99



PRO STAFF

Darren Choate is an outdoor writer and photographer who lives and breathes hunting. As a professional hunting guide in Arizona and New Mexico, he pursued big game with clients for three decades. Choate is now the editor of *Bowhunting World*, as well as two other Grand View Outdoors publications, *Archery Business* and *Whitetail Journal*.





Although the day turned out to be an exciting, and successful one, we were wiped out and extremely hungry!

That morning, in the dark, guided by just the light of our headlamps, we trudged through a thick, brushy mountain-side, bound for its highest peak – the best vantage point around. Shortly thereafter, the rising sun cast a brilliant shade of orange over the landscape we shared with our quarry. The wind chilled our faces. As the sun rose, the wind subsided. The hunt began.

The hunt ended with a quick harvest. A spot made, followed by a stalk, and then a shot. Our traverse to recover the downed buck was treacherous, taking us down 1,500 vertical feet and then back up the same number of delicately placed steps. The work began.

In short time, we field-dressed and quartered the buck. It was just shy of noon. Carefully, we divvied the harvest and loaded our packs. Anxious to be on our way, we each downed a water bottle. The pack out began.

Our destination – my Toyota Tacoma – was parked just a little over a mile away. However, the path to get there was closer to 3 miles over steep, loose shale rock and boulder-and thorny, brush-lined drainages. Taking minimal breaks, we made our destination in just over three hours. Tired, hot and dehydrated, we threw our gear into the pick-up bed and headed for camp. The drive began.

As we made our way to our final destination – camp – the western sky, layered in reds and pinks, slowly faded to black as day turned to night. With camp in sight, I could make out two odd, orange lights, glowing in the now star-lit night. It took a minute for me to recognize the lights as the burners from the camp stove. Dinner – rejuvenating sustenance – would soon be served.

“Although there are many options for camp cooking — grilling over the campfire or in the convenience of an RV — the longtime standard may just be a good ol’ camp stove.”

SPECS

DIMENSIONS:
21 x 12.5 x 4.25 inches

DISTANCE BETWEEN BURNERS: 11 inches

WEIGHT: 11 pounds

AVG BOIL TIME: 3 minutes

BURN TIME (MAX FLAME): 1 hour

HEAT OUTPUT: 11,000 british thermal units (per burner)

FUEL: Propane

FUEL TYPE: Canister

CONTACT:
www.coleman.com

MSRP: \$84.99

↓ Coleman Triton

Coleman Triton

Take camp cooking to the next level with the Coleman Triton Propane Stove. Just light it up and dial in your heat with the two independently adjustable burners and you can be cooking over 22,000 BTUs of power in no time. The cooking surface offers plenty of room to fit a 12-inch and 10-inch pan simultaneously. Meanwhile, the PerfectFlow pressure control technology keeps the heat steady, even in extreme conditions. Wind-Block panels help shield your flame from wind, and they adjust if you need to fit a larger pan. When the meal is over, the chrome-plated grate removes for simple and quick cleanup, and the heavy-duty latch will keep the lid secure until you whip up your next family dinner.”

Features

- Wind Block panels help shield burners from wind and adjust for various pan sizes
- PerfectFlow technology provides consistent performance, even in extreme conditions
- PerfectHeat technology for more efficient cooking with less fuel
- 22,000 total BTUs
- Large enough for one 12-inch and one 10-inch pan plus room to stow the griddle
- Griddle sold separately





Eureka Spire LX

“Campsite gourmet. Take your camp cooking past the basics and let your inner gourmet chef go wild with the Spire LX stove! Gourmet cooking at your campsite is a reality with the Jetboil engineered simmer control valve that delivers the most precise and consistent cooking flame. Cook pancakes just right, or blast the BTUs for high heat and a quick boil. When it’s time to expand your kitchen, utilize the patent-pending Jet-Link accessory port to attach the Luna accessory burner, or another Eureka stove, and whip up a full feast for your family and friends — all from a single fuel source.”

Features

- Rotary ignition for easy and consistent lighting
- Jetboil engineered simmer control valve for ultimate precision and control
- Each high-output burner delivers 10,000 BTUs of cooking power to meet all the needs of campsite cooking.
- Burners are spaced so you can use 10-inch and 12-inch pots side-by-side and the Spire LX has a removable lid, which is handy if you have a really big pot.
- Removable top grate allows for easy cleaning of the stainless steel drip tray.
- A windscreen on each side protects your flame for consistent output.
- Rugged bumpers on each corner protect the stove against bumps.
- Non-slip rubber feet prevent the stove from sliding on slick surfaces, and these feet are adjustable, so you can level the stove on any surface.
- Stoves can be daisy chained from one to another for the ultimate camp kitchen.
- Chassis, lid and windscreens are durable steel; the cooking grate is nickel-plated steel.

↑ The Eureka Spire LX

SPECS

FUEL TYPE: Propane

IGNITION: Rotary

POWER PER BURNER:
10,000 BTU/h

DIMENSIONS:
21.5 X 13.1 X 4.2 inches

WEIGHT: 12 lbs. 6 oz.

BURNERS: Two

CONTACT:
www.eurekacamping.com

MSRP: \$149.95

BECOME A PROPANE DEALER

Make getting a 5-gallon propane bottle as easy as drop, swap and go by adding propane exchange to your list of customer services. Blue Rhino Propane makes it simple for conveniently located hunting retailers to turn their side-walk into a profit center.

The first step, contact a Blue Rhino associate at www.bluerhino.com or via phone at 1.800.258.7466. Blue Rhino works with each retailer to determine the best location for a propane display, secures any permits, coordinates installation and provides training for your staff. On top of that, they provide the display, locks, keys, scan sheets, and general liability insurance at no cost to the retailer.

Once selling begins, Blue Rhino delivers propane to stores using a sophisticated forecasting system based on sales histories, weather, store location, and more. Stores can also request a delivery by calling a toll-free number or by ordering propane online.

Additionally, Blue Rhino provides a national marketing campaign that drives customers to their retailers' stores. They also provide free, point-of-purchase materials to help stores promote their own program. Meanwhile, the Blue Rhino customer care team is standing by to help with any questions at a moment's notice.

CONTACT: www.bluerhino.com



Stansport | Outfitter

“Our outfitter series of stoves include features to increase performance and durability for those who feed groups outdoors. This two-burner model features two oversized, stainless steel burner heads with 25,000 B.T.U of cooking power. With the included piezo electronic ignition, you don’t need matches to start cooking! A steel frame and drip pan ensure this stove is durable and easy to clean.”

Features

- Two oversized 25,000 B.T.U. stainless steel burners with individual wind screens
- Extra heavy duty cooking grate
- Piezo electronic ignition requires no matches
- Oversized steel frame
- High altitude pressure regulator
- Stainless steel drip pan



← Stansport Outfitter



SPECS

FUEL TYPE: Propane
IGNITION: Piezo Electronic
POWER PER BURNER:
25,000 BTUs/h
DIMENSIONS:
23 X 12.5 X 5.7 inches
WEIGHT: 13½ lbs.
BURNERS: 2
CONTACT:
www.stansport.com
MSRP: \$186.99

Primus Kinjia →

SPECS

FUEL TYPE: Propane
IGNITION: Manual
POWER:
7,000 BTUs/h
DIMENSIONS:
18.7 x 11.6 x 3.1 inches
WEIGHT: 8.12 lbs.
BURNERS: Two
CONTACT:
www.primus.us
MSRP: \$179.95



Primus | Kinjia

“Designed to be carried along, this stove will deliver a real cooking experience for friends and family. Lighter, smaller and more compact than most two-burner stoves and without compromising performance or capacity, Kinjia will not let the outdoor chef down. The Kinjia is powered by one 16.4-oz. propane cylinder. The grids and the drip tray are easily removed and can be cleaned individually, making the stove easy to maintain. It's made from solid materials, and its robust design will ensure years of reliable service.” **HR**

Features

- Grids and drip tray removable for easy cleaning
- Lightweight and compact
- 2 x 7,000 BTU/h burners
- Powered by one 16.4-ounce propane cylinder (not included)
- Manual Ignition





Find the Right Price Point

A solid understanding of your local economy and spending habits of specific cohorts within it will help you determine the best price point for every customer.

BY PATRICK MEITIN

Economies are highly localized. For instance, during a recent economic downturn, while many regions of the country suffered financially, Texas businesses — as varied as retail sporting goods to auto-body repair shops — saw no noticeable hiccups in gross revenues. Even when robust national economies prevail, regional differences in overall wages and disposable income often dictate consumer spending habits. Natural-resource extraction industries (common in more rural areas) tend to concentrate wealth with fewer individuals and suppress regional wage rates and lower disposable income, just as an example. Big city spenders, with a wider array of job opportunities, tend to earn higher wages and spend more freely — the price of tolerating an urbane existence.

Being a freelance writer, living in rural areas and bringing income from outside my local economy, I tend to live in a bubble. But this wage disparity really hit home several years ago when my wife was laid off from a lucrative military-contract job (also outside the local economy) and I was forced to temporarily (two years) take a second job in outdoor retail to keep the wolves off the porch. For many decades I had lived in a world of flagship bows, top-grade arrows, broadheads, bow accessories and high-tech hunting togs. So, it was a bit of a shock when I formed the five-store chain's entire archery program from scratch only to discover consumers in our region wouldn't touch the wares I deemed necessary for basic bowhunting operations.

↑ Floor associates who listen to customers' needs and budget constraints are more apt to offer a product with the most relevant price point.



PRO STAFF

Patrick Meitin worked in various bow shops off and on while in high school and college. More recently he worked as a low-level manager in a regional sporting-goods chain as a salesman, employee scheduler and mechanize specialist. He has been heavily immersed in the archery and firearms trade for more than 30 years.

“Now, your task as a respected retailer is to separate good deals from junk, as budget-priced shouldn’t be translated to mean garbage product.”

Flagship bows sold only after collecting dust for nine months and being marked 50 to 70 percent off regular price. Yet, I couldn’t keep basic \$499 ready-to-hunt package outfits in stock. We had bowhunting customers who bought budget-priced arrows two to three at a time, often arriving in the middle of season to buy a couple more. I was regularly asked, just before the archery-season opener, to point out the cheapest broadheads we carried. Up until I started this job, I had believed cotton camouflage hunting attire was dead. I was wrong. Northern Idaho customers ate it up — based only on price. It might be added, too, that these weren’t beginning bowhunters who didn’t know any better, or bowhunters who were only tentatively dabbling in the sport. These were guys who generally killed their elk every year, who spent every spare moment in the woods or on stand. They were sure-enough dedicated bowhunters.

It was also a study in priorities, as most of these customers drove brand-new, four-door diesel pickups, invariably with brand-new 750cc ATVs squatted in the bed. It would be a safe bet to assume they hunted from state-of-the-art camp trailers with showers, toilets and slide-out dining areas.

This was odd to me, coming from New Mexico’s renowned Gila region, where citizens generally made less or equal amounts of money but somehow managed to shoot \$1,000 flagship bows, \$150-per-dozen arrows and titanium broadheads, owned German-made optics, and wore clothing marketed as gear — while also driving 20-year-old pickups, a well-used 300cc ATV and operating out of a backpacker’s tent.

My point: prevailing wages aren’t always an accurate indicator of spending habits, and there is just no way to predict priorities without getting out there and observing local customs at 3-D tournaments and hunting camps. The difference between northern Idaho and New Mexico might also be traced to the difficulty in obtaining tags — Idaho tags are largely provided over the counter, while New Mexico tags are won only sporadically, through competitive lottery drawings. I’ve also noticed that Idaho elk hunters, who essentially get to hunt every year without fail, are generally less skilled than New Mexico elk hunters, who draw tags every three to five years, if they are lucky. There must be a correlation somewhere.

If you have been in business awhile, you know



your customer base better than I do. If you are just starting up, you face the challenges touched on above. I know I read it all wrong all those years ago — based largely on what people all around me were driving, without taking into account most are not as adverse to balloon-interest financing as I am — when I was thrust into retail. I think it’s also safe to say that all of my archery-based analogies are easily transferred to firearms, optics, camping, footwear and so forth.

Now, I’d say without reservation that budget-priced merchandise is likely to always sell briskly. There are the beginners and dabblers I have already hinted at, but there are also the serious outdoors

↑ Like most firearms lines, handguns come in a wide array of price points.

↓ Hunting rifles such as Ruger’s American, Mossberg’s Patriot, Remington’s Model 783 or Savage’s Axis II XP packages are reliable firearms with price tags in the \$400 to \$500 range.





↑ The Vortex Crossfire II 3-9x40 is an entry-level rifle-scope with a consumer price tag of just under \$200.

↓ Vortex, as well as several other riflescope manufacturers, offer products that hit specific consumer price points.

folk with different priorities, or honestly without the funds to buy the best but looking for a solid tool for the job.

Now, your task as a respected retailer is to separate good deals from junk, as budget-priced shouldn't be translated to mean garbage product. Cheap gear that breaks or fails in the field will only come back — or at least make your customers think less of you, the merchandise you stock and your store. Modern manufacturing technologies have streamlined production and lowered costs in many areas.

I own rock-solid bow sights, for instance, that cost half the price of higher-end goods. I hunt with them confidently. Getting away from archery, I would point to rifles such as Ruger's American, Mossberg's Patriot, Remington's Model 783 or Savage's Axis II XP packages — just off the top of my head. These are wholly reliable rifles with price tags in the \$400 to \$500 range — opposed to the common \$1,000 to \$2,000 price for top-end rifles. These lower-cost rifles might not shoot sub-MOA groups out of the box (though many will surprise you, especially with minimal tweaking, like glass bedding and

especially handloading), but the average big-game hunter only needs a rifle capable of 3-inch groups to cleanly harvest even smaller deer.

Affordable optics have really come around through modern manufacturing. As an example, let's look at Vortex Optics' entry-level riflescopes. A 3-9x40 or 4-12x44 Crossfire II will set a customer back only \$200 to \$220. Yet those scopes carry the same no-fault lifetime warranty as the company's higher-end models costing double or triple that. I have a 4-12x44 Crossfire on my .22 Hornet that gets used pretty hard on spring ground-squirrel shoots and have had no complaints. These are just examples. Do your research, shop around, stock reliable, budget-priced product and you may actually find profit margins increase.

Mid-priced product is another solid price point. There are customers on tight budgets who hate the notion of buying entry-level product, but simply cannot afford the best. Mid-priced merchandise becomes the "up-sale" for such consumers. I'll use Vortex Optics again, because they make an easy and fitting example. Selling up from the Crossfire II would mean pushing a Diamondback HP optic, the company's mid-priced lineup: same warranty, better glass and expanded features for \$150 to \$200 more.

In the archery world, in particular, I see this mid-priced area as nearly standard. Serious or "class-conscious" bowhunters who simply can't afford the best often steer clear of entry-level gear and opt for mid-priced gear. A mid-priced bow



might, for example, generate the same speeds as the flagship bow, but weigh just a bit more in the hand. Or, this mid-priced bow might sacrifice 25 fps arrow speed by using last year's cam technology, but otherwise come with the bells and whistles that make the flagship sing.

In archery accessories such as sights, arrow rests, stabilizers or quivers, mid-priced wares normally mean forgoing toolless, micro-adjustable features for dovetail, bolt-down models or those with less adjustability or snazzy color options, but all with lower price tags. Interestingly, while I consider myself a serious bowhunter (essentially something I do for a living), I prefer the simplicity found in such products — less weight, fewer moving parts to loosen or snag on passing brush. Sight or tune it, lock it down and forget about it — while saving a few bucks. Customers get all the core technologies that make the accessory great, without the small conveniences which can actually prove problematic in the long haul.

Of course, no matter what region your storefront is located in or the economy it operates under, there will always be customers who can afford, and will demand, the absolute best. This might be one of Hoyt's carbon bows or Mathews' latest flagships, a purpose-built long-range chassis rifle like the Ruger Precision Rifle or Savage 10 BA Stealth Evolution, Nightforce, Vortex Viper PST Gen II or Leupold Mark 6HD riflescope, German- or Austrian-made binoculars or spotting scope or First Lite or Sitka Gear hunting attire, as quick examples.

Surveying retailers across the country has also

revealed that some independent retailers sell mostly high-end product, while others sell limited top-drawer wares. In the case of shops that sell mostly budget- to mid-priced product, the easy answer is special order. It might



be financially feasible to keep a limited stock of high-end product on display as eye candy or for serious high-end buyers to handle, but it's also safe to say that if well-heeled buyers are a low percentage of your customer base, they will understand the necessity of special order. It can even work to make them feel even more special, ordering something others are not immediately privy to.

Successful retailing means catering to your specific — and often unique — customer base. Providing products your customers want is obviously part of this, and as much as any other factor, price point is an important part of the equation. Customers can only buy what they can afford, and some want and can afford the best. Local economies and resulting wages, general priorities and regional needs all dictate consumer spending habits. It can be a tough code to break, but the success of your business depends on it, and you can ill afford to live in the kind of bubble I once did before entering retail sales. Listen to your customers, pay attention to what they are carrying at target shoots and in the field, and you are well on your way to more accurate shop stocking. **HR**

← With an MSRP under \$500, the mid-priced Vortex Diamondback HP 4-16x42 is a step up from the Crossfire II.



← Keeping a breadth and depth of stock will ensure you have the item your customers are looking for.



Playing It Cool: Cooler Roundup

The molded cooler market is full of cool products for your store.

BY KEVIN REESE

Of all the outdoor industry consumer tug-of-wars, coolers, especially with regard to performance and price point, seem to ice nearly all other hot products. Perhaps it's the technology or lack thereof. Maybe it's the simpler reason that virtually every outdoor enthusiast uses a cooler. Regardless of whatever off-the-grid niche they call their own, anglers, hunters, hikers, campers and beach-goers all employ coolers for a laundry list of reasons. Moreover, their demands have largely served to continue polarizing cooler products to opposite ends of the cost-to-performance spectrum.

Of course, division has created healthy opportunities for cooler companies offering premium performance to rise to the innovation occasion and ice each other in back-and-forth product offerings that, in the end, heat up consumer interest. To that end, here are four cooler companies sure to get hard looks from your customers.

Canyon Coolers

Canyon Coolers owner Jason Costello founded the company in 2010, focused intently on product development that incorporated everything he wanted in a cooler, including roto-molded, low-density polyethylene construction and environmentally friendly pressure-injected HUNTX foam insulation — and did away with anything he didn't want.

The most mature Canyon Co





ter, launched in 2013, with clean-looking features: most notably, a unique, squared, easy-to-pack-and-stack design, complete with UV-resistant

recessed solid-metal hinge; air tight seal comprising a user-replaceable, soft-foam gasket, tie-down strap slots and latch

points to keep honest people honest. Heck, it's even-bear resistant and includes a "No-Hassle" lifetime warranty. The Outfitter is available in 22-, 35-, 55-, 75- and 125-quart models.

The most notable Canyon Coolers product line is the Adventure Series. Unveiled in 2016, the Adventure Series boasts thick 2.5-inch walls, multiple recessed tie-down points, basket systems, an integrated bottle opener and more. The first Adventure model, the Prospector, was a 103-quart ice chest with six tie-down points, two drain plugs and adjustable basket system. In 2017, Canyon introduced the Adventure Series Mule 30-quart and 22-quart Scout coolers. While the Mule features wheels for easy lift-free transport, the Scout includes a comfortable, adjustable, no-slip shoulder strap, as well as an integrated jungle strap. Both models integrate bungee systems attached to their lids.

Costello and company haven't stopped there. This year — shipping began on Nov. 30, 2018 — Canyon introduced its new flagship cooler, the Navigator 150. The company promises its longest ice retention yet, as long as a week, with an airtight seal. The Navigator 150 is manufactured entirely in Arizona and boasts a molded-in aluminum hinge, EZ-Pull family-friendly latches, Lizard Skin handles, 10 tie-down points and four interior baskets on two levels. Of course, Canyon Coolers backs all coolers with an unlimited, no-questions-asked, lifetime warranty. Seriously, your customers are bound to think Canyon Coolers are pretty darn cool, especially the new Navigator 150.

Yeti Coolers

While necessity is the mother of invention, it's also the life's blood of innovation. I would say outdoor enthusiasts and Yeti founders Roy and Ryan Seiders understood this exceptionally well, but while most folks get it, only a few actually take action, and exponentially fewer turn their solutions into big business. When it comes to coolers, the Seider brothers did just that — they recognized a problem. They learned quickly that there was a need



Cooler Upsell

Master Lock | Python Adjustable Locking Cable

Let's face it: A molded cooler is a lifetime investment. Considering the majority of hunters drive a pick-up truck and store gear in the bed, offering the added security of a lock with a price point of around \$20 just makes sense. The Python lock has a braided steel cable with a protective vinyl coating that provides maximum strength and flexibility, while at the same time protecting against scratches. Its integrated pin tumbler keyed locking mechanism provides superior pick resistance. It's the perfect cooler accessory. Stock up, and make sure to display several Python locks near your cooler display.

FEATURES

- Patented adjustable locking mechanism holds cable tight at any position for perfect fit
- Braided steel for strength and flexibility
- Cable end threads through places other cables cannot
- Integrated pin tumbler keyed locking mechanism for superior pick resistance
- Rust-resistant lock and vinyl-coated cable for superior weather and scratch resistance
- Strap holds excess cable for compact storage

for longer ice retention and increased protection in wild places teeming with wild creatures, and plenty of room for peripheral insulated products to enhance both daily living and outdoor experiences. The result, at least in the cooler industry, was game changing. Sure, the term seems cliché, and more often than not, it is. However, the impact Yeti has had on insulated cooler products is undeniable. Game changing is likely the perfect descriptor for Yeti products and innovations.

Yeti has been a household name for quite some time now and continues to walk the leading edge of cooler innovation. Perhaps most important for Yeti and retailers alike is brand loyalty and, of course, brand equity as a result. Let's be honest. American outdoor enthusiasts who are not familiar with the Yeti brand are few and far between. Also worthy of note is Yeti's product development. Yeti has maintained solid footing on the industry's leading edge. Cases in point: tumblers, the Flip cooler and now the BackFlip, a personal soft-sided ice chest with integrated shoulder straps. The BackFlip, and backpackable coolers like it, seem to be hot items with outdoor adventure-seeking consumers.

Yeti's Tundra Series coolers are said to have made the Yeti brand what it is today. From the Roadie 20 to the wheeled Tundra Haul to the monstrous Tundra 350, the series' popularity, and that of the Yeti brand itself, is second to none with discriminating consumers. Of course, it's worth noting that Yeti did not rise to the top by chance. At a time when cooler technology seemed to begin and end with thin-walled ice chests barely capable of keeping ice for a day, Yeti introduced revolutionary features that not only kept ice for days, but also improved durability and overall peace-of-mind food and drink storage. Some notable Tundra features include a 2-inch FatWall design filled with pressure-injected PermaFrost insulation, BearFoot non-slip feet, rugged, roto-molded construction and easy-to-secure T-Rex lid latches.

While the Tundra Series may have made the brand what it is today, Yeti's accessories have generated a veritable boom in the cooler industry. As an example, Yeti Tumblers apply the company's long-lasting insulating properties with affordability and the



↓ Yeti's Tundra Series coolers are said to have made the Yeti brand what it is today.



↓ Yeti changed the game again with soft-sided coolers like the Hopper, Hopper II, Flip and, most recently, the BackFlip, a cooler complete with shoulder straps and Yeti's famed ice retention capability.

↓ One of Yeti's innovative soft-sided coolers, the Flip.

result has been ever-increasing brand presence in camp, at sporting events and yes, even on desks, virtually everywhere. Accessories gained such popularity so quickly that competing brands followed suit. Now several cooler companies offer similar accessories.

Of course, Yeti changed the game again with soft-sided coolers like the Hopper, Hopper II, Flip and most recently, the BackFlip, a cooler complete with shoulder straps and Yeti's famed ice retention capability. Now, like Yeti accessories, a number of other brands have followed again by offering their own versions of soft-sided coolers, including backpackable models. They say imitation is the best form of flattery, right? Yeti continues to drive changes in cooler technology and innovation, and customers continue to pay attention.

Orion Coolers

Aptly named after one of the most distinct constellations in the night sky, representative of a mythical hunter with supernatural strength, Orion Coolers are set apart from all others. American-made Orion



↑ Yeti touts its Rambler family as "tough as hell, and will keep your drinks as cold or hot as science allows."





↑ While Orion's product lineup isn't as diverse as others are, the company has gained significant popularity with consumers via distinctive standard features like multi-color finish combinations and dual-layer EVA foam top pad.

Coolers are crafted by the same folks who bring outdoor adventurers world-class Jackson Kayaks. While Orion's product lineup isn't as diverse as others are, offering 25-, 35-, 45-, 55-, 65- and 85-quart coolers only, the company has gained significant popularity with consumers via distinctive standard features like roto-molded construction, multi-color finish combinations and dual-layer EVA foam top pad.

Like Canyon and Yeti, Orion Coolers

boast 2+ inches of insulation for optimum ice retention, but Orion has been busy attracting customers with additional standard features such as Yakattack Tracks, lock points and low-profile cam latches, both certified by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC). Each Orion Cooler also features six tie-downs, perfect for securing to trucks, trailers, ATVs and boats.

While Orion Coolers hasn't jumped into the frenzied tumbler and soft-side cooler arena, the company produces buzz-



→ RTIC is transparent about Chinese manufacturing. Why not? Their product features are certainly on par with all other premium cooler manufacturers. In fact, RTIC boasts ice retention up to 10 days.

“If you’re looking for a great way to grow your own retail store branding, Orion Coolers may be the perfect solution.”

worthy accessories you’re not likely to find anywhere else like the HandiBak and the Utilitop. Moreover, Orion is one of the most popular cooler companies for customizations. If you’re looking for a great way to grow your own store branding, Orion Coolers may be the perfect solution.


RTIC Coolers

One of the biggest threats to premium coolers is RTIC Coolers. Based in Houston, Texas, RTIC has bolstered consumer interest with premium coolers offered at lower price points, some considerably lower. RTIC accomplishes this by running a one-stop-shop, from importer to distribution, going lean on marketing — focusing on social media and word of mouth. Manufacturing costs are reduced via overseas production. RTIC is transparent about Chinese manufacturing; how-

ever, product features are certainly on par with all other premium cooler manufacturers. In fact, RTIC boasts ice retention up to 10 days with up to 3 inches of insulation.

While RTIC’s coolers might not have the brand recognition and status-symbol factor of their competitors’ offerings, their features are on par with virtually any other cooler producer in the industry. RTIC’s hard-sided coolers are available in 20-, 45-, 65-, 110- and 145-quart sizes and six colors: gray, pink, white, blue, tan and seafoam green. Additional features standard on RTIC coolers are molded-in side handles, rubber T-latches, non-slip feet, cool lift design and a traction lid. Like Canyon, Yeti and Orion, RTIC coolers are bar resistant, and the roto-molded construction is as rugged as any cooler in the industry.

RTIC also draws consumers in droves with soft-sided coolers (including a backpackable model) and tumbler-style products. In fact, most tumbler and thermos-style drinkware offered by premium cooler companies is also available from RTIC at lower price points. To that end, RTIC does well to satisfy the whims of demanding consumers who are not married to brand names, without breaking the bank. **HR**



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Vermont Field Sports: The Little Shop That Can

This old-school retailer is thriving in today's complex marketplace.

BY MATT CRAWFORD

Remember the traditional sporting goods stores of yesteryear? A place where the gun counter was at the back of the shop, and there were always a couple of old-timers hanging out, drinking strong coffee. If your memories are like mine, you might conjure up an image of a worn path etched in the wood floor from years of foot traffic or black-and-red checked wool coats hung on make-do coat racks, just under the dusty

mount of a decent 8-point whitetail buck.

For a whole host of reasons — some of them economic, some of the societal — few multi-purpose, independent sporting goods stores that cater to a core group of hunters and anglers still exist in the U.S. Across the nation, they've been replaced by big box stores or highly specialized retailers who target specific consumers with carefully selected product lines. Obviously, the internet has

↑ Walking through this retailer's doors may conjure up images of hunters decked in black-and-red checked wool attire.

Vermont Field Sports

WHERE: Middlebury, Vermont

FOUNDED: 1983

SPECIALTIES: Guns, bows and rods.

PHONE: (802) 388-3572

WEBSITE: www.vtfieldsports.com



PRO STAFF

Matt Crawford lives, writes, fishes and hunts from his home base in northern Vermont. He is the former editor of *The Burlington Free Press* and *Upland Almanac*. Currently, he works in a communications firm where he represents a number of brands in the outdoor industry.

↓ One reason Vermont Field Sports continues to thrive is the staff's ability to embrace and contribute to their small community.

altered the landscape, too, transforming brick-and-mortar shoppers into click-and-order customers, their buying habits measured in algorithms.

However, in northern New England, in the small town of Middlebury, Vermont, there exists a throwback to the old sporting goods stores of long ago. And despite the big box stores about 30 minutes north, despite being in a college town

“We’ve stuck to the model of the old local gun shop and done well with it, but I know it’s really not how you’re supposed to do it here in the 21st century.”

laughed Greg Boglioli, who’s been the manager of Vermont Field Sports since 1997. “We’ve stuck to the model of the old local gun shop and done well with it, but I know it’s really not how you’re supposed to do it here in the 21st century,” he added.

Vermont Field Sports started in 1983 when Dick Phillips, a local police officer in Middlebury, opened up the store as a part-time pursuit. Originally situated next to an auto dealership on the southern outskirts of town, it’s moved location by a few hundred yards. Today, the store fills nearly 4,500 square feet of retail space and is staffed by two full-time employees (including Boglioli) and three part-timers.

“It’s one of those stores that remains super



→ This Vermont retailer is a throwback to a time when there were always a couple of old-timers hanging out at the gun counter, shooting the breeze and drinking coffee.

that’s distinctly flavored by socially liberal politics, despite having a store front that was completely destroyed by an accidental fire a few years ago and despite declining numbers of hunters, Vermont Field Sports is keeping its doors open — in fact, they’re thriving.

“This is not the blueprint I would follow if I was starting a business in this field today,”

important to local hunters,” said Patrick Berry, a Middlebury resident who served as commissioner of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department from 2011 to 2014. “It’s the kind of place you run into to get a box of shells or a new pair of gloves, and you end up spending a couple of hours in there swapping stories or getting intel on a new spot to try.”





Should You OR Shouldn't You?

While Vermont Field Sports in Middlebury, Vermont, still considers itself an old-style, local hook-and-bullet shop, manager Greg Boglioli ventures to the annual Outdoor Retailer Summer Market trade show each summer in search of a few new products he thinks hold value for his store's customers.

Now held in Denver, Colorado, Outdoor Retailer – more commonly referred to simply as OR – is primarily thought of as the trade show for non-consumptive outdoor activities like camping, climbing and hiking. And while it certainly does not have the pro-gun feel as, say, the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show, held each winter in Las Vegas, there are always plenty

of new products that debut at OR that hold considerable interest to hunters.

"I find it's a good show for me to discover things like ultra-light cook stoves, sleeping bags or other camping accessories our hunters often need," said Boglioli. "We like to carry a little bit of everything. At OR, I always find a couple of products that really appeal to our customers."

The 2019 OR Summer Market Show will be held June 17-20 in Denver, which is an ideal time for retail employees like Boglioli to get away from the shop, well in advance of the busy months at the end of the year where a majority of sales are made.

Outdoor Retailer puts a high value on the spe-

cialty retailers that attend the show, and holds a number of seminars and training programs that apply to all sporting goods shops. Additionally, some of the brands displaying their new products at OR offer incentives to stores that attend the show, including some initiatives that can help offset the cost of attending the show.

Shops that cater to hunters may want to consider attending OR, both for insight on emerging business practices and as a place to see the latest and greatest products.

"I find some real value in attending OR," Boglioli said.

For more information, see: www.outdoorretailer.com.

In the autumn of 2007, lightning struck the building, sparking a fire that burned the store nearly to the ground. Phillips was properly insured, and he kept his federal firearms license active until the rebuild was finished and the doors reopened. Not long after the fire, the store was again filled with local shoppers.

"We're a general hunting store with some fishing products," said Boglioli. "The majority of our customers are hunting or shooting locally. If you walk in here in the fall, you're more than likely to hear people swapping hunting stories and bantering about either their failures or their successes. The atmosphere of the old traditional store is still very much alive, and I think it's part of the reason people still want to come in here," he added.

Another reason Vermont Field Sports continues to thrive is the staff's ability to embrace and be reflective of the community they are a part of. The store gives back to the surrounding community by handling required FFL paperwork for gun giveaways and sales at local fundraisers for organizations like the National Wild Turkey Federation and Whitetails Unlimited, as well as sponsoring a few local bass fishing clubs. Additionally, the store holds hunting seminars on topics like turkey calling or waterfowl hunting, though the number of seminars the store hosts is dwindling. "You can't overstate how important

local gun shops that walk the walk about hunting are to the future of the sport," said Berry. "We take for granted what we can learn and the products we can buy with a computer in our lap, but it's places like Vermont Field Sports supporting the hunters they sell to that still provide real value to the hunting culture."

Boglioli said Vermont Field Sports, with some 500 to 600 guns in their inventory, sells only a few AR-style firearms. The majority of guns sold are shotguns and rifles used for hunting, and handguns used primarily for target practice or hunting.

Understanding your customers' needs is key to operational practices, especially in a rural setting. "We're in a college town and a place that has a decent core of dedicated hunters," Boglioli said. "It's not like we made a decision to not carry

"In the autumn of 2007, lightning struck the building, sparking a fire that burned the store nearly to the ground."

AR-style rifles or to say away from the so-called 'black guns,' it's just we found that's not what our customers are all that interested in."

Boglioli also notes that being in a col-

lege town has presented a number of opportunities in the gun business. The vast majority of Middlebury College students are from out of town, and many like to target shoot but don't want to bring their equipment from home. Creating niche-specific opportunities such as this helps the retailer increase revenues.

"It's not unusual for us to sell five or six cases of clay pigeons on a Friday, plus four or five boxes of shotgun shells to college students who want to spend part of their weekends enjoying some target shooting," Boglioli said. "And there was a movement at the college a few years back that really emphasized the locavore movement and using wild game as a sustainable food source. We sold a bunch of guns and hunting equipment that year to college kids who wanted to hunt for their food. I'm always amazed at some of the trends we see with the college crowd. It's proven to be a nice little bonus."

Boglioli is well aware of the shifting culture of retail and said he knows that Vermont Field Sports may someday have to adjust their business plan. Already, he said, the shop sells some guns on *gunbroker.com* and puts some of its fishing inventory on eBay.

"I can see clearly that our customer base is aging some," Boglioli said. "It's probable at some point that we may have to change, but we're going to keep going about it the old-fashioned way for as long as we can." **HR**



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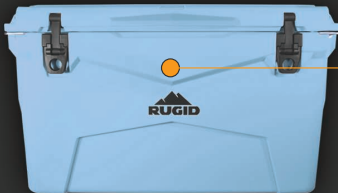


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BASE CAMP TENTS

This roundup highlights the range of features, specifications and options found in base camp tents designed for use on any hunting excursion.

BY ZACH BOWHAY





T

rents, and provides insight into common features, specifications and options of base camp tents.

“Additionally, there are many tents — from these manufacturers and others — similar to these designs that also make great base camps for specific hunting scenarios.”





Tents

A tent provides shelter from environmental conditions — a must on most hunts. However, it's also a hunter's home away from home for the duration of the hunt. Here, a hunter will dream about the coming days and reminisce about the ones that have already passed. It will be more than a sleeping quarters; it will double as a storage facility, at a minimum. The right tent will be a reflection of the hunter's individual personality. Here are a few to consider.

Core | 11 Person Cabin Tent →

For a base camp, many hunters prefer to have a living/sleeping area along with a separate area to store gear or to use as a cooking/kitchen area. The Core Cabin tent provides that separation. The vestibule area on this tent is an attached screen room that comes in handy for cooking or storing extra gear, while staying dry from the elements or away from nuisance bugs. If extra sleeping area is required, the screened room is large enough to sleep a few adults.

The large main sleeping area accommodates up to eight adults, and with a center height of 86 inches, there is plenty of room to stand up and move around. There is no divider in the main living area.

The tent body is constructed of a 68D polyester and the floor is made of a durable 115 gsm polyester fabric. Like all Core tents, this model has a fully water-resistant PU-coated fabric and fully taped seams to help keep out unwanted moisture.

Hunters looking at buying a tent at this price point have to recognize its limitations. For most situations, less expensive tents are adequate, if they are set up and staked down properly. However, if your consumer is planning a hunting adventure that may include high winds, extreme weather or large snow loads, they need to be mindful of these limitations.

SPECS

CAPACITY: 11

SEASONS: 3

DOORS: 1

VESTIBULES: 1

PACKED WEIGHT: 36.24 pounds

PACKED SIZE: 29.2x14.2x14.2

FLOOR AREA: 17x12

HEAD HEIGHT: 86 inches

CONTACT: www.coreequipment.com

MSRP: \$229.99



FEATURES

- 86-inch center height gives plenty of room to comfortably move around the main cabin area
- Spacious front screen porch with fully closeable window panels and full coverage tent floor
- Windows and doors feature zippered privacy panels
- Fully taped rainfly is removable in warmer weather to expose the mesh ceiling
- Gear loft with lantern hook and organizer pockets
- Electric Port provides a water-resistant way to insert electrical cords from the outside to the interior of the tent
- Traditional fiberglass poles

Mr. Heater | Big Buddy Portable Heater

With three output levels, the Big Buddy portable radiant heater is capable of keeping cabin-sized tents warm and comfortable. It's the perfect tent accessory.

"The Most Popular Portable Propane Heater in North America. This patented radiant 4,000-18,000 BTU Liquid Propane heater connects directly to two 1-pound cylinders and is the perfect solution for heating enclosed spaces like cabins up to 450 square feet. An integrated fan increases the heating capacity of this unit, blending radiant and convection style heat to give you the best of both worlds. Two swivel regulators give you the ability to adapt usage from disposable cylinders to a remote gas supply with the purchase of a single hose and filter. To light the unit, simply push and rotate the knob. The built-in Piezo sparking mechanism will take care of the rest. With the Oxygen Depletion Sensor (ODS) and accidental tip-over safety shut-off, you can be sure that you will enjoy years of comfortable indoor safe heat."



FEATURES

- 4,000, 9,000 or 18,000 BTU per hour
- For use with propane gas
- Heats up to 450 square feet
- Single control start knob
- Hi-Med-Low heat settings
- Swivel regulators
- Automatic low oxygen shut-off system (ODS)
- Accidental tip-over safety shut-off
- Connects to two 1-pound cylinders
- Connects to a 20-pound cylinder with optional hose
- Fan operates on 4-D batteries or AC adapter, both sold separately
- The distinctive RED Mr. Heater Buddy that has delivered comfort and safety for decades

CONTACT: www.mrheater.com • **MSRP:** \$201.29

Slumberjack Outdoors | Outlander 8 →

The Outlander 8 is a tunnel-style tent with three large rooms. Sewn-in walls with zippered doors divide the individual rooms. Entry to the tent is to the middle room, which serves as a vestibule-type area to the other rooms on either side of the entry room. The rooms on each side are large enough to sleep three people each. The center room provides enough room for two more individuals, for a total of eight people – hence the name of the tent.

The Outlander is a single-layer design, which allows for easy setup. However, it also makes it necessary to ventilate it well to combat condensation. This is where Slumberjack's "high-low" venting system comes in handy, with each side room having vents both high and low. Opening these vents as well as any of the many zippered mesh windows will create enough airflow to ventilate the tent appropriately. Proper ventilation may be difficult to achieve in inclement weather when opening windows is not an option.

Following setup instructions makes setup extremely quick and easy. The tent is not freestanding, so it must be properly staked down with the provided stakes. Also included are nine guy-lines with tension adjusters for use in windy conditions.

For the overall size of this tent and its sleeping capacity, the Overland is lightweight. At 19 pounds, it's a great tent for vehicle camping and is a solid option for the horse-packing hunter. With a central area for keeping gear out of the elements and sleeping quarters on each side, there is plenty of room for a large hunting party and their gear. The overland is large enough for cot use, too, but that might lower the overall sleeping capacity.

The tent walls are crafted from 66D polyester with a 1200mm waterproof rating, and the sewn-in floor is a heavier 68D polyester with a 1500mm waterproof rating. All seams are taped for extra waterproofing. The poles are a sturdy fiberglass/aluminum combination, and they are pre-bent for easy setup.

FEATURES

- Tunnel tent architecture provides huge living space
- Lightweight and compact single-wall construction
- Five large windows
- High-low venting system provides constant airflow
- Two extra large interior mesh pockets for organization
- Hybrid steel and aluminum poles
- Interior door divides living space into two rooms
- Nine reflective guy lines with tension adjusters
- Includes 20 steel stakes
- Quick and easy assembly
- Fully taped seams provide additional protection from the elements
- Large duffel style carry bag included
- Footprint sold separately

SPECS

CAPACITY: 8	DIMENSIONS: 145x107x75i inches
SEASONS: 3	PACKED SIZE: 9x26½ inches
POLES: 3	WALL MATERIAL: 66D Polyester 1200mm
DOORS: 2	FLOOR MATERIAL: 68D Polyester 1500mm
PACKED WEIGHT: 19 pounds	POLE TYPE: Hybrid, steel and aluminum poles
MINIMUM WEIGHT: 17 pounds 5 ounces	CONTACT: www.slumberjack.com
FLOOR AREA: 108½ square feet	MSRP: \$299.95





Tents

A tent provides shelter from environmental conditions — a must on most hunts. However, it's also a hunter's home away from home for the duration of the hunt. Here, a hunter will dream about the coming days and reminisce about the ones that have already passed. It will be more than a sleeping quarters; it will double as a storage facility, at a minimum. The right tent will be a reflection of the hunter's individual personality. Here are a few to consider.

Kodiak Canvas | Flex Bow Canvas →

The Flex Bow is a single-room, cabin-style tent with high, steep walls. Its 6-foot 6-inch ceiling height makes it a great choice for a base camp hunting tent. With plenty of room to stand up and walk around, front and rear entry and a nice-sized awning, it offers plenty of room for several hunters and their gear.

Large doors with high quality #10 zippers create the front and rear entrances. Along with the doors, two large windows allow ample airflow to help cut down on condensation. Each window has no-see-em screen mesh to keep out bugs and pests.

The walls are held tight with the Flex Bow frame and its tempered spring steel rods and is held up by a sturdy 1-inch tube. The Hydra-Shield, 100-percent cotton Duck canvas on the Kodiak tents is a strong, durable material. When drawn taut and held down with the provided steel rod stakes, it creates a sturdy, reliable tent that will handle extreme wind and weather. However, this tent isn't designed to hold up to a large snow load.

Setup of the Kodiak Canvas Flex Bow tents is quite simple and can be accomplished by one person, following the provided instructions. This tent might be a little heavy for the horse-packing hunter, but it is a great option for the hunter setting up a comfortable roadside abode.

SPECS

SEASONS: All

DOORS: 2

POLES/FRAME: 1-inch galvanized steel tubing

FLEX BOW RODS: 3/4-inch, solid, spring steel

AWNING: 84x78

PACKED WEIGHT: 79 pounds (includes 6.5 pounds of stakes)

PACKED SIZE: Tent 30x16; Poles 48x5.5

DIMENSIONS: 10x14

WALL MATERIAL: 8.5 ounce Hydra-Shield canvas

FLOOR MATERIAL: 16 ounce vinyl. Polyester-reinforced, seamless

CONTACT: www.kodiakcanvas.com

MSRP: \$599.99

FEATURES

- Flex Bow Frame makes for quick and easy setup of an exceptionally sturdy tent
- Hydra-Shield- 100-percent Cotton Duck Canvas is not only durable, but also watertight and breathable
- 6-foot 6-inch ceiling height
- Large awning for storing extra gear and keeping the entrance to the tent dry
- Two large D-shaped doors, one on each side of the tent
- Two large windows with no-see-um mesh
- Heavy-duty 12-inch, steel rod stakes



Big Agnes | Flying Diamond 8 →

The Flying Diamond 8 from Big Agnes is a serious base camp tent that is both spacious and built to withstand heavy wind and inclement weather. The center of the tent has a head height of 6 feet, which is enough room for most hunters to stand and move around, but it is lower than others on the market.

The tent body is constructed from a breathable polyester and polyester mesh. The fly and floor are made from a rip-stop polyester with a 1500mm waterproof polyurethane coating. All of the seams are fully taped with a waterproof, solvent-free polyurethane tape to ensure water resistance.

As with all Big Agnes tents, the Flying Diamond 8 is a snap to set up. All of the buckles and webbing are color coded to make sure the attachment points are always right. Attached, pre-cut guy lines and tensioners ensure the fly and tent remain taut. The guy lines also help with airflow by allowing proper ventilation through the six fly vents they expose.

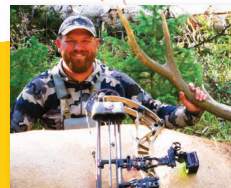
With a vestibule on each side as well as the ability to separate the living area into two rooms with the stowed room divider, this tent should provide a great base camp with plenty of room for several hunters and their gear.

SPECS

CAPACITY: 8
SEASONS: 3
DOORS: 2
VESTIBULES: 2
PACKED WEIGHT: 23 pounds 13 ounces
PACKED SIZE: 9x16x24
FLOOR AREA: 123 square feet
HEAD HEIGHT: 72 inches
VESTIBULE AREA: 6 square feet
CONTACT: www.bigagnes.com
MSRP: \$799.99

FEATURES

- Two doors and two vestibules
- Doors have two closure options: mesh only for ventilation or zip up the full polyester layer for full protection
- Capable of being separated into two rooms using fabric wall that can be stowed when not in use
- Reflective guy lines and webbing
- 16 interior mesh pockets and 20 lightweight aluminum hook stakes
- Velcro tabs connect fly to pole structure, providing perfect pitch and extra stability
- Vestibule may be staked out with trekking poles for shade
- Gear loft loops included
- Six fly vents
- All seams taped with waterproof, solvent free polyurethane tape



PRO STAFF
 Hunt DIY entrepreneur Zach Bowhay is highly regarded in the

Western hunting community. His expertise is equipping hunters with the perfect gear for hunting big game in the mountains of the West. A well-published outdoor writer, Bowhay disseminates his expertise and shares his experiences through a variety of mediums, including articles, social media and video.

Final Thoughts

The tent market is vast. In it, you'll find everything from the ultralight, overnight bivy tent for a single person, to the massive canvas tent designed to accommodate several people, as well as protect them from inclement weather. For the sake of the article, I will focus on the later, large tents made for a base camp hunting scenario.

For consumers, choosing the right base camp tent can be a daunting task. The aforementioned roundup highlights a few popular base camp tents, as well as provides insight into common features, specifications and options of base camp tents. **HR**





CREATE AN AWESOME CAMPING DISPLAY IN YOUR STORE

Show customers as much of the hunt-camp experience as possible to increase interest in key products.

BY CHUCK SMOCK







If you've been fortunate enough to share a hunting camp with family and good friends, you know how memorable the experience can be. The weather might not always be great, and the animals don't always cooperate, but if you planned and put together a great camp with all the right gear, you can be comfortable at night, eat great food and enjoy the camaraderie that comes with being around people who share your passion for the outdoors.

Hunting Retailer talked with several people who work in the camping industry for thoughts on what makes a great hunting camp and what makes an effective camping display inside a hunting store. The responses varied a little in exact details, but there was one central theme from almost everyone: If you want to sell your customers on the idea of executing a successful hunting camp, you have to show them the hunt-camp experience.

Of course, this is much easier for retailers with precious floor-space available. Perhaps only a few of the largest big-box outdoors stores have the luxury of setting up a big wall-tent display inside, complete with all the accessories, but there are tactics that stores of any size can implement to show their customers how various hunt-camp products work, and work together, in hunt camp.

Blank Canvas

Curt Dinges, who worked at Cabela's headquarters in Sidney, Nebraska, for 15 years as a camping buyer, purchased Montana Canvas, the wall-tent company in Belgrade, Montana, in January 2016. He knows the challenges smaller stores face but recognizes the results an efficient display can produce.

"Setting up a tent inside a store takes up a lot of floor space, but it's not wasted space — it's useable space," Dinges said. "It gives you the chance to display cots, sleeping pads, sleeping bags, a wood stove and a fully outfitted kitchen. That way the customer gets the feeling that this truly is hunt camp and gets to see how all the different products complement each other."

He said smaller retailers typically buy Montana Canvas tents one or two at a time because of the amount of shelf space needed for the big, bulky tent boxes and frame boxes. Many retailers, he said, carry them in the fall only, from about July to October, and expect to be out of inventory after the peak hunting seasons.

Dinges also said setting up a wall tent outside a store, where possible, is a great way to draw attention to the product, but he admits there can be issues with this decision.

↓ Marketing experts agree that showcasing hunt-camp products in real-world settings increases interest and sales.



“They have to be maintained,” Dinges said. “The doors can be left open, allowing strong winds to cause the guy lines to sag. Lawn sprinklers can be a problem.”

He said most stores sell down to the last one, then offer the display model at a discounted price. He recommends displaying a canvas wall tent outside for only about three or four months, and said there are benefits to this method.

“It’s an absolutely great way to tease the product,” Dinges said. “And it gets a little character from being out in the weather.”

Get Cooking

For many people, cooking and sharing good food is an essential element in a memorable hunting camp. After all, eating meat, and putting meat in the freezer, should be among the top agenda items in any hunt camp. The food doesn’t have to be fancy, but a hot dog and a can of cold pork and beans can be depressing, while a hearty meal can take some of the sting out of an otherwise miserable day.

Ryan Neeley is a marketing manager for Camp Chef, which produces a host of outdoor-cooking products, including everything from propane-powered stoves, smokers, ovens and pellet grills to cast-iron cookware, fire pits and lots of cooking accessories.

Neeley’s first suggestion for displaying hunting-camp gear is a simple one.

“Get the product out of the box!” he said. “It does take more space, but your profit per square foot will increase with a display sample on the floor.”

Many Camp Chef grills and stoves require assembly, sometimes extensive assembly. If possible, have employees work together to assemble all display items so they can answer customer questions about the process, let them know how long it takes, and discuss any available accessories.

“Camp Chef’s product line can be challenging because some accessories are sold separately,” Neeley said. “Keeping those accessories next to those main items is very important.”

One last tip from Neeley is to set up a cooking station and give away free food samples. This can be particularly effective in an outdoor setting on the weekend when the wind might carry the scent of the cooking food to passersby who might not have been planning to visit your store. At the very least, customers will appreciate the efforts when they get a bite or two of good food before walking through your doors.

“Store demos or cooking classes are almost always a success for us,” Neeley said. “But the success isn’t always the demo itself. How the demo is promoted is equally important.”



Neeley recommends keeping the food simple, ample and easy to serve if a large crowd is expected. Items including chili, smoked pork loin and Dutch-oven desserts, such as fruit cobblers, all can be crowd-pleasers.

And as with other cooking accessories, be sure to display and have available for people to pick up as they head into the store any items used in the demo that you sell, such as spice mixes, dehydrated foods, boxed cobbler mixes, etc.

“Smaller accessories can be as important a component as the big-ticket items in telling the hunt-camp story.”

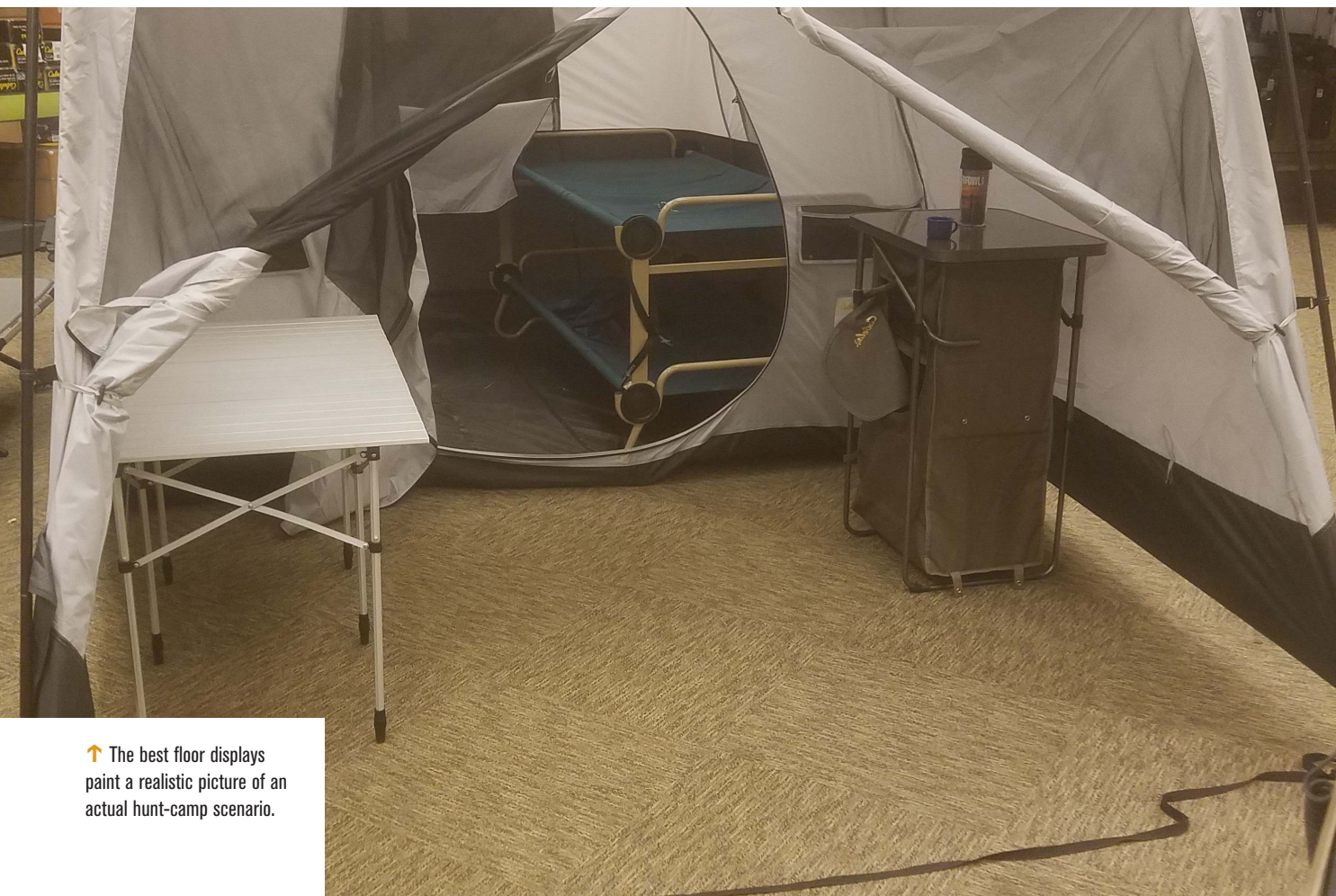
Putting It All Together

Several industry people agreed to talk to us if we didn’t use their names or mention their company affiliation. Again, the common thoughts here were the importance of putting together an authentic display that inspires and educates customers.

“The biggest constraint is space,” one buyer said. “Not only how much space you dedicate to the display, but how much it has to generate in

↑ Showcasing items out of the box and assembled provides customers a better understanding of the product’s size and operation.





↑ The best floor displays paint a realistic picture of an actual hunt-camp scenario.

↓ Store demos and cooking classes are a great way to pique customer interest in camp cooking products.

terms of sales per square foot. With a good display, you are painting a picture of how everything works together. With a wall of boxes on shelves, you cannot always tell what the product does or how it works. You get value from a quality display far beyond square-footage dollars.”

He also mentioned the importance of having as

many of the items used in the display as close to the display as possible, so customers can load them into a cart, rather than have to wander around the store looking for particular items they want.

Moreover, smaller accessories can be as important a component as the big-ticket items in telling the hunt-camp story.

“Build out multiple uses for cots, chairs, tables and anything else,” another buyer said. “Use different sleeping bags and sleeping pads to show options. And accessorize your accessories. If you sell a clothes hanger for use inside a tent, put clothes on it and hang it near the wood-burning stove, as a hunter would do to dry things out after a wet day. Be seasonally relevant and build the overall setting. If you are using shed antlers, go with elk sheds in September and switch to whitetail sheds in mid-October.”

Even if you don’t have room to display a canvas tent inside, or you don’t even sell them, you can still put together an engaging hunt-camp display that will appeal to more budget-minded hunters, or those or who don’t want to deal with the bulk





← The tent is key to a successful hunt-camp display.

↓ Other camping necessities like chairs and canopies should be included in your display, too.





Key Items for a Hunt-Camp Display

One thing to think about when setting a hunt-camp display in your store is how to display the products you want your customers to buy. It's best to showcase products in a way that lets customers figure out why they need them and how they could use them. Below is a list of several key items that can make a big impact in a camping display.

COOLER

A big, sturdy cooler is an important component in any extended hunting camp where the goals are to cook and eat good food during the hunt and to take home lots of quality game meat after it. The Yeti Tundra 160 is a big cooler that will make a big impression. It will hold up to 100 12-ounce cans and enough ice to keep them cold for a long time. Hunters can easily imagine it filled with venison.

TABLE AND CHAIR

Put out a couple of camp chairs on your sales floor and people will sit in them. Comfortable and versatile, the Browning Camp Chair is great in hunt camp, when tailgating before a big game and at a backyard barbecue. It is constructed with a powder-coated aluminum frame, has a weight capacity of 425 pounds and folds flat for transport.

As is often the case at home, a kitchen table can be the centerpiece for camaraderie at a hunt camp. The ALPS Mountaineering XL Dining Table is lightweight and sturdy – great for preparing meals, eating off of at mealtime and just keeping stuff off the ground or easily accessible. The folding aluminum top and anodized-aluminum frame make it ideal for outdoor use. It is 55 inches long, 28 inches wide and 28 inches high and packs down conveniently in the included carry bag. It weighs just 14 pounds.

CANOPY

Not every camp is going to have a dedicated cook tent – but that's not a problem when you have a ShelterLogic Slant-Leg Pop-Up Canopy. It measures 10 feet by 10 feet, offering appreciated shade and protection from the rain for your cook station, kitchen table or other gathering area. And you easily can add protection from prevailing winds by attaching a tarp or two to the sides. It has a powder-coated, beam-welded, collapsible steel frame and includes a wheeled storage bag.

COT

Here is another versatile item that can stop traffic in a hunt-camp display. Disc-O-Bed's XL Cot Bunk Beds can be used as a bunk bed for two people, as bunk beds for one person with storage space for his or her personal gear, as two separate single beds or as benches. A

clever design makes it easy to set up without the need for bolts and screws, so you can quickly change the configuration to freshen your display. Each bed has a 500-pound weight capacity and packs down into its included zippered storage bag.

SLEEPING BAG

The Coleman Dexter Point 30-Degree Big and Tall Sleeping Bag is designed to be a good fit for people who are well over 6 feet tall. Seeing the size of this bag on display on a cot might seal the deal with larger customers who aren't comfortable in average-size sleeping bags. (The same thought process might be in play for people shopping for youth sleeping bags.)

STOVE

Camp Chef does a good job with its packaging, including using large, colorful photos showing the cooking products in action and written details about the products inside, but even with all that, the box the Camp Chef Expedition 3X Triple Burner Stove is packed in does not do it justice. This beast of a stove includes a griddle that covers two of the three 30,000-BTU burners. It is freestanding, so it doesn't take up any table space. Anyone who likes to cook in camp will start daydreaming while using this stove setup.

and weight of a wall tent. It's pretty easy to use a smaller, two- or three-person nylon dome-style tent and the appropriate accessories that work for backcountry hunters who hunt wilderness areas, or just prefer to walk to their hunting spots. A larger family-style tent might appeal to hunters who are looking to use it in the spring and summer, too.

A key with that option is being able to offer a decent selection of sizes and styles and having knowledgeable employees who know how to set them up and are willing to show customers how to do it, if asked. Even if they aren't asked to demonstrate setting up a particular tent model, employees who know how to do it can talk customers through the process and let them know about any potential issues or share tricks about how to make the process easier that they won't find in the instruction manual.

Another popular idea from industry insiders about setting up a hunt-camp display was taking what you and your employees have learned in the field and using that knowledge to put together a display that will work in your area, or for locals who might be planning to travel to hunt out of state.

"Some people might buy exactly what you set up, or might see something in the display that gives them an idea of something else they need," another buyer said. "There is a lot going on with the products in the hunt-camp category, on many different levels. Much of it can be intimidating, and the average customer might not understand exactly what he needs and why he needs it. The idea is to bring the whole experience together so customers can figure out how to make the camp experience better for their particular wants, needs and expectations.

"Experience is king in retail, and it can't be matched online or in other sales channels," he concluded. "And how well everything works together in a memorable hunt-camp is a reflection on the retailer who put it all together. That's your brand right there." **HR**



HUNTING RETAILER

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Revolutionizing the B2B market, *Hunting Retailer* is the leading source of critical hunting information with a primary focus of providing hunting-industry retailers an authentic, competitive edge. Notably gear-centric, *Hunting Retailer* covers every gear niche within the hunting market comprehensively and without boundaries.

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INCREASE SLEEPING BAG SALES

Use this four-step process to help customers select the correct sleeping bag — while increasing your bottom line.

BY CLAY DELCOURE





Have you noticed your customers staring at the sleeping bag display in bewilderment? With the wide array of bag types available, self-selecting the correct bag can be confusing — but it doesn't need to be. In fact, it's a great opportunity to provide another service to your customers. Whether it's helping a tenured hunter upgrade a current setup or starting a newcomer off on the right foot, the process is the same.

Getting it right boils down to four primary selections: application, fill, temperature rating and shape. As you progress, each step trims available selections, narrowing the assortment down to just a handful of solid choices.

Identify the Application

The breadth of potential sleeping bag applications is vast. The range extends from deer camp in a woodstove-heated cabin to a backcountry elk-hunting expedition, and beyond. Regardless of application, it's important to know both the customer's environment and use. Together, these criteria will help define the insulation, temperature rating and shape required for selecting the right bag.

For example, car camping bags focus more on comfort and less on technical features. These bags likely have generic insulation materials, cozy liners and larger footprints. On the other hand, specialized bags will include technical features such as varying hood shape, draft collars and tubes, vent-

ing zippers, zipperless weight-saving design and shells aimed at protecting the insulation from moisture. Additionally, specialized bags are considerably smaller and weigh less.

It's important to note that technical features work well in non-technical environments, but it doesn't work the other way around. If your customer is looking for a single bag to cover multiple bases, select a bag with the more technical application in mind.

The key things to home in on are the moisture levels the customer will be dealing with, travel type (vehicles, horses, foot or all of the above) and the temperatures they expect to encounter.

Once you know the specific needs, you can start to narrow the options.

Find a Fill Type

The two primary options for insulation are synthetic and down. Each fill type brings specific characteristics to the table. In general, synthetics perform better in high-moisture — liquid and vapor form — environments. Examples of high-moisture environments include high humidity for prolonged periods, sleeping in damp or wet clothing and inability to air-out the bag. On the other hand, down is lightweight and compressible and performs well in extremely cold environments.

Down bags tend to weigh less than their synthetic-filled counterparts. For a good comparison, many down bags offer a 50 percent weight savings

↓ Gathering detailed information on how a bag will be used will help narrow the range of bag options.



→ Down bags are lightweight, weighing about half as much as a similar-sized, synthetic-filled bag.



↑ Down clusters determine the fill power of a given down product. The bigger the cluster, the more air trapped; thus, a higher fill power.

over a comparably rated synthetic bag. For a backcountry hunter looking to shave ounces, shaving pounds in a single item is a big deal. However, down is highly responsive to moisture — if traditional down gets wet, it loses a significant amount of its ability to insulate.

Digging deeper, you'll see that the two options aren't simply black and white. When I dug deeper, I spoke at length with the technical staff at Sea to Summit. Our last conversation revolved around how their Dry Down — a highly-rated, DWR-treated down — compared to synthetic insulation.

As a niche retailer, I cater to hardcore hunters looking for the most reliable, comfortable sleep systems possible. With the advent of hydrophobic down, hunters in my marketplace were curious if it had the weight and compactness of down, as well as the high moisture performance of synthetics.

In response, Sea to Summit staff provided this statement: "End users should be aware that hydrophobically treated down is not waterproof (despite

some misleading claims that have been made). Physical pressure (such as a sleeper laying on down) will force moisture into the down — this is a very different scenario than stirring down around in a beaker." Regarding synthetics, they added, "Not all synthetics are created equal, either. PrimaLoft is arguably the most hydrophobic synthetic insulation available (even though it has a relatively short lifespan), but actual branded insulation is becoming less common these days. Increasingly, sleeping bag manufacturers simply invent a "brand name" for generic polyester, which may not have anything like the lifespan (or water resistance) of a branded insulation."

The best synthetics have come a long way in reducing pack volume and weight — such as the Thermolite insulation Sea to Summit will be bringing to market in 2019. Similarly, the best downs have treatments that make them less effected by moisture these days. Insulation options are improving, and customers now have more options than at any time in the past. That said, knowing how the insulation options will perform in your customer's predicted environment will allow you to cut about half of the assortment out of the picture, quickly.

Understand Temperature Ratings

There is not a standardized temperature rating system in the U.S. as there is in Europe. In the U.S., temperature ratings used include scientific and experiential information. Furthermore, some manufacturers use ratings to infer rather than to guarantee warmth.





Allied Feather and Down | Down 101

We want to help you educate consumers and retailers about how to purchase their next down jacket or sleeping bag. The following are common misconceptions regarding down and down products.

- **Higher fill power is automatically better.** All things being equal, higher fill power down is warmer because it can trap more air (higher fill power corresponds to larger down clusters). However, heavier weight fabrics will compress a higher fill power down, removing the loft and, thereby, its ability to insulate. For these applications, a 700-fill-power down works better and costs less than a 900-fill-power down.
- **Baffle size also determines which down is best.** Using a higher fill power down in small baffles can be a waste of money. If the down cluster is too big, it will be compressed and not be able to do its job as it is put into the jacket. Again, a lower fill power will work better with smaller baffles and save money for all involved.
- **All down is pretty much the same.** Processing has a lot to do with the quality of the finished product. It's easiest and most cost effective to wash down with harsh detergents and dry it quickly with high heat. This processing method, however, will remove most of the natural oils found in down that keep it pliable and resilient. If the down loses too much of its natural oil, it becomes brittle and will break down quickly in a jacket or sleeping bag, reducing performance and useful lifespan. Some companies — ALLIED, for example — pride themselves on processing down in such a way as to maximize its longevity and performance and, therefore, its value.
- **Down is just a feather.** False; down clusters are three-dimensional spheres as opposed to a two-dimensional feather. Because the clusters are three-dimensional, down is able to create dead air space, which is effective at trapping heat. Feathers are unable to do this. They do provide protection for down the same way a waterproof shell will protect the down in your jacket, however.
- **Goose down is always better than duck down.** Both geese and ducks have down plumes, and the original wisdom was that goose down is a superior product. While geese, which are larger animals than ducks, create larger plumes, fill power is fill power, and 700-fill power duck insulates just as well as 700-fill power goose down. Duck down is generally less expensive, as duck is a more common food source.
- **All down is ethically sourced.** Down is a byproduct of the meat industry. No one is raising geese or ducks for their down; it's simply not economically feasible. As a byproduct,



it can come from animals that are humanely treated or from animals that may have been live plucked (rare) or force-fed for the foie gras industry. If this concerns you, look for down products that feature Responsible Down Standard (RDS) certification to make sure your down is ethically sourced.

- **Down is inferior to synthetic insulation in wet environments.** While this used to be true, hydrophobic down is now commonplace and will stay much drier, much longer than untreated down. You can now take advantage of down's superior weight, warmth and compressibility, even in damp and rainy environments, with confidence.
- **Down is a pain to care for and doesn't last.** With proper care, your down product can — and should — last a lifetime. One of the amazing benefits of down is its ability to retain loft and resiliency year after year, even with heavy use. When synthetic options start to degrade within a couple of seasons, your down jacket can last for many years. To wash your down product, simply follow these easy steps:

1. Start by running a rinse-only cycle without detergent to wet the product.
2. Wash in cold or warm water. If possible, add an extra rinse following the wash without detergent.
3. Dry thoroughly on low heat. This may take several cycles. Many times, the exterior shell will feel dry but the down inside is still slightly damp. It is critical to dry completely, and it is unlikely you would damage the down when using low heat. During drying, add three clean tennis balls to aid in breaking up the down and maximizing loft.

CONTACT: www.alliedfeather.com

Fortunately, many bag manufacturers adhere to the European EN13537 standard. To establish a rating within this standard, a heated mannequin is dressed in a standardized base layer and placed in the bag on an insulated sleeping pad, while the energy required to maintain standard skin temperature is measured. To date, this method is by far the most scientific.

Test results fall into one of three established bag ratings: Extreme, Lower Limit and Comfort. The extreme rating is a baseline for survival. The lower limit rating is that most often advertised for unisex bags. And the comfort rating is most often used for rating women's bags. With this system, customers have a baseline to compare bags at an apples-to-apples level. Once you know how to read the rating, you know what to expect out of a bag.

The EN13537 standard provides for some flexibility. A manufacturer can take the test data from one bag and extrapolate it to another — for example, using a similar bag with added insulation, creating a new bag option with a lower temperature rating without actually going through the testing process. Some brands test all their bags, while others simply extrapolate. It's a good

conversation to have with your technical representative. Moreover, if you're a buyer, it's a good tool to sort out which brands to stock.

At opposing ends of the technical spectrum, you will find bags with and without the EN standard markings on their bags. At one end are brands that build bags for serious mountaineering and backcountry travel. These stand out on the wall due to their high-quality construction and material selection. Their temperature ratings are extremely reliable. At the other end are the price-point-focused brands. These bags typically offer fewer technical components, and the advertised temperature range serves more as a baseline to compare similar bags. For these, use the 10-degree rule to get closer to their actual comfort rating. In other words, a 30-degree bag is probably more suited to 40-degree temperatures.

Pick a Shape

Many people struggle to sleep well at home, much less in a sleeping bag far away from a comfortable bed. Largely, sleeping issues relate to sleeping position. Putting your customer in a bag

that supports their preferred position will alleviate most issues. For back sleepers, the ever-efficient mummy bag may be sufficient for their sleep position. However, for the 70 percent of folks who are side sleepers, an alternate shape will yield a superior result. To select the right shape, ask about preferred sleep position, and then recommend a bag that suits it.

Options for sleeping bag shapes range from a simple rectangular to extremely skinny mummy shaped. The rectangular offerings provide ample room for movement but are typically bigger and bulkier. On the other hand, mummy bags are lightweight, slender and space efficient. In between are several options, including spoon, peanut and semi-rectangular; a few offer stretch capabilities, too. These “tweeners” provide customers options to balance out sleep quality, weight and packability.

With the last step in the process completed, the remaining assortment should be something palatable. Now, encourage your customer to get in the chosen bag(s), assuming their normal sleeping position. The objective is enough room to move around a little bit without compressing the insulation with their knees or hips. Freedom of movement in a sleeping bag is imperative for comfort in real-world conditions.

Conclusion

Selling the right sleeping bag boils down to serving individual customers and addressing their specific sleeping and comfort needs, while catering to their budget. Following the steps above will help you and your staff provide outstanding customer service, adding value to every sleeping bag transaction. Maintaining that level of customer service will likely increase customer satisfaction and the bottom line. **HR**



PRO STAFF Clay Delcours, owner of High Angle Hunter, has spent his career and life in the hunting and specialty outdoor retail businesses in traditional retail, mail order and e-commerce, as well as several years guiding hunters in the Southwest. He lives to hunt and help others maximize their own potential in the field.

Sea to Summit | Latitude Series

“The Latitude down sleeping bag is an excellent versatile option designed with a tapered rectangular shape that suits a broad range of temperatures and activities. It’s filled with 750+ loft RDS certified ULTRADRY Down and features a large hood, broad shoulders, large chest area and wider foot box, offering a luxuriously comfortable backcountry bed. With the addition of a full-length side zipper and foot zipper, this bag can be opened out to a camping blanket or camping quilt. When the mercury drops, the neck collar and draft tube will help retain the warmth of the bag, and the 2D NanoShell outer fabric will help mitigate moisture. The Latitude could be your perfect sleep refuge for traveling, hiking, cycle touring, ski touring, snow camping and more, depending on your selection of Ltl (25F), Ltll (15F) or Ltlll (1F).”



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Packed Size Comparison**
 - 25 degrees: 6.1 L ≈ Two halves of a rolled yoga mat side by side
 - 15 degrees: 7.7 L ≈ 6-pack of toilet paper
 - 1 degree: 9.6 L ≈ 6-pack of toilet paper
- **Weight**
 - 25 degrees: 1 pound 15 ounces ≈ Lighter than two paper towel rolls
 - 15 degrees: 2 pounds 6 ounces ≈ A quart of cookie dough ice cream
 - 1 degree: 2 pounds 13 ounces ≈ A water bottle filled with champagne
- **Performance**
 - 25 degrees: Three seasons. Take this bag out spring into fall, anywhere.
 - 15 degrees: Three and a half seasons. Comfort for fall, some of winter and all of spring. Perfect for summer when used as a quilt.
 - 1 degree: Four seasons. Use this fall through spring conditions or for summer as a quilt.
- **Fit**
 - Roomy – lots of room to roll, curl and adjust all night long.

FEATURES

- 2D NanoShell that gives this bag a high degree of breathability along with a high level of water repellency
- RDS certified ULTRA-DRY Down 750+ Loft 90-percent down cluster premium duck down
- Full-length YKK #5 side and foot zip
- Will zip to any Women’s Trek, Latitude or Talus sleeping bag to form a snug double sleeping bag
- Oversized neck collar, hood seal and oversized zipper draft tube
- Internal cell phone pocket
- Includes lightweight Ultra-Sil compression bag and a combined storage cell/laundry bag

CONTACT: www.seatosummitusa.com
MSRP: \$359 - \$449





HOP ON THE PELLET EXPRESS

Boost your bottom line with the most popular wave in grilling technology.

BY DARRON MCDOUGAL

Plumes of smoke billowed from the stack of my pellet grill, fruity hints tickling my senses. On the menu were elk loins coated with my favorite steak seasoning. After the loins had cooked 30 minutes in the grill chamber on the “smoke” setting, I removed them and cranked the temperature up to 450 degrees.

Once the grill temperature hiked above 400 degrees, I placed the loins back onto the grill rack, allowing grill marks to etch the surfaces of the meat, searing in the flavor and juices. When the sizzling loins reached an internal temperature that corresponded with medium-well, I removed them from the heat, placed a flake of butter on each of them, and let the meat rest for three minutes.

What followed was a remarkable steak dinner that rivaled any expensive restaurant steak dinner I’ve ever eaten.

The New Fad

Over the years, I’ve grilled extensively using gas grills, charcoal grills and smokers. While each style has merits, I just

cannot deny that pellet grills combine the best qualities of each style to create what I believe is the ultimate cooking medium. Pellet grills give you the convenience of a gas grill, wood-grilled flavor that rivals the flavor of charcoal-grilled meat, plus the ability to smoke. Most pellet grills can grill, smoke, sear, bake, roast, braise and BBQ. Some can even flame-broil. In other words, pellet grills are unfathomably versatile.

This is probably the most effective sales pitch you can use to sell more pellet grills. Rather than have a gas or charcoal grill and a smoker, the customer can purchase one pellet grill that conveniently grills steaks, bakes cookies and smokes salmon under one lid.

Some folks might believe the pellet-grill wave is merely a fad. Contrarily, I believe they are here to stay and that more folks will make the switch to a pellet grill as I did — heaven forbid a better mousetrap comes along in the future.





BBQ WILD PORK BUTT

Ingredients

- 1 wild hog hindquarter
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons cumin
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon ground coffee

Pat the pork hindquarter dry with a paper towel. Set pellet grill temperature to 275 degrees.

Combine all dry-rub ingredients and mix thoroughly. Apply dry rub to pork, massaging it over all edges until liberally coated. Place pork on grill rack.

Once the pork's internal temperature reaches 170 degrees, wrap pork in heat-safe butcher paper, then continue barbecuing until the internal meat temperature reaches 200 degrees. Remove from heat and place in an empty cooler and let rest for 30 minutes. Shred and serve.

NOTE: Since wild hogs come in various sizes, you may need more or less dry rub than the amount the recipe yields.





The Difference

If you don't understand the fundamental differences between a pellet grill and gas and charcoal grills, we'll distinguish those differences now. Gas grills are convenient — turn the propane on, hit the ignitor and you're grilling. However, gas grills have no solid fuel (charcoal or wood) to flavor meat. Note: In my experience, it seems that ignitors quit sparking eventually.

Of course, charcoal adds great flavor to grilled meat, but a lot of trial and error is involved since everything is done manually, including temperature regulation. It takes longer to begin grilling, and you'll have to stick close by to monitor progress, or you could blacken a perfectly good steak.

With a pellet grill, you get the convenience of automatic temperature regulation — some are Wi-Fi-enabled for smartphone control and monitoring — plus the splendid flavors of woodsmoke, which, in my opinion, is the best

there is. And, you're not limited to grilling, as I mentioned earlier.

Basic Operations and Use

Pellet grills are outfitted with hoppers designed to hold roughly 20 pounds (give or take) of pellets. A rotating auger feeds pellets into the fire pot, where a hot rod ignites the pellets. A fan stokes the fire, which evenly distributes heat and smoke throughout the grill and keeps the flames from traveling into the pellet hopper.

To start the grill, simply fill the hopper with wood pellets, turn the temperature dial to the desired setting, and walk away. Within 15 minutes or less, the grill should reach that temperature, and it will hover near that temperature unless you change the temperature dial to a different setting. Of course, this means that when you make a phenomenal steak, you can consistently replicate that result.

As long as you understand temperatures at

↓ With pellet grills, the user gets both finely-tuned temperature regulation and a variety of woodsmoke flavors.





← The author frequently uses his pellet grill to cook wild-game meat. This makes pellet grills a perfect fit in sporting goods stores and similar outdoor-retail stores.

↓ Whether you're smoking pork or baking cookies, a pellet grill offers unparalleled cooking versatility.

which to grill different types of meat, and you use a meat thermometer to check the meat's doneness, there is little else to know, since pellet grills are incredibly user-friendly.

What's Available?

Pellet grills come in various shapes, sizes and prices. In the Traeger line, for example, you have the diminutive and portable Scout up to the Large Commercial Pellet Grill Trailer, and everything in between. As for prices, the Scout runs \$300 MSRP and the XL runs \$9,855 MSRP. This gives your customers a full spectrum of options designed to meet their needs and budgets.

In my travels, Traeger has been the most popular pellet grill folks are using, but there are certainly other great brands to choose from (see sidebar), too. In most cases, especially if your customers are mostly grilling for their families and entertaining guests on occasion, a moderately sized grill in the \$400 to \$700 range built by a reputable manufacturer will perform well.

Pellet Woods/Flavors

Lastly, let's discuss pellets. Each wood variety yields a slightly different flavor. I tend to like apple and cherry pellets for most of my grilling and smoking operations. Naturally, these will accentuate the sweet flavor of pork, though I use them for venison, chicken and wild turkey as well.

Oak, pecan, maple, hickory and mesquite are other viable pellet options. For a breakdown on what to expect from each wood variety, refer to www.chadsbbq.com/what-is-the-best-wood-for-smoking-meat/.

Since purchasing my Z Grill 700E, I've used several different wood pellets. My favorite so





→ Wood pellet varieties run the gamut. The author's favorite so far is Fruit by Pit Boss.

↓ Pellets are poured into the hopper, where a rotating auger feeds them into the fire pot.



of pellets, but you'll make reciprocating profits as customers return again and again for pellet stock-ups.

Satisfy Customers, Increase Your Bottom Line

The convenience and flavor aspects that set pellet grills apart from conventional gas and charcoal grills are great reasons to sell them in your store. Beyond that, pellet grills perfectly complement hunting and fishing merchandise. Why? Because they're the answer to making some of the greatest wild-game meals possible, and they complete the outdoor experience.

For your customers who grocery shop in the woods or water, a pellet grill perfectly rounds out their outdoor arsenal. If you take the time to understand the ins and outs of pellet grills, and how to translate that knowledge into a trustworthy sales pitch, you'll sell more grills and pellets, substantially increasing your bottom line. And to that end, everyone wins. **HR**

far is the Fruit by Pit Boss, a blend of cherry, apple and maple woods. Once I burn through those, I'll be trying Competition Blend hardwood pellets by Louisiana Grills. As a retailer, you'll find that dedicated pellet grillers prefer certain types of wood pellets, thus making it wise to stock a variety from several manufacturers.

Approximately 1 to 3 pounds of pellets burn per hour depending on the grill and temperature, which makes pellet grilling quite reasonable. Of course, customers will need to purchase pellets the entire time they own the grill, just like charcoal for a charcoal grill. You'll not only capitalize on immediate profits when you sell them a grill and a few initial bags



PRO STAFF - Darron McDougal has been part of the hunting industry for 17 years, first as a salesman and bow technician at a family-owned archery pro shop, then as an outdoor and trade writer/editor. McDougal is a passionate DIY hunter and travels extensively each year to hunt turkeys, hogs and big game across the states.

Popular Pellet Grills

Traeger | Renegade Pro

Traeger's sensational grill lineup enters a new era with the Renegade Pro. This ruggedly designed pellet grill offers the versatility to cook in various ways under one lid: smoke, bake, grill, roast, braise and BBQ. The pellet hopper has an 18-pound capacity, and the sawhorse chassis and all-terrain wheels provide stability and long-lasting durability. Additionally, steel construction and a durable powder-coat finish provide years of use. The Digital Pro Controller with AGL provides 60 readings per minute and allows you to monitor internal temperature without opening the grill lid. Dual Meat Temperature Probes and an electronic auto-start ignition complete the package.

CONTACT: www.traegergrills.com • **MSRP:** \$750



Camp Chef | Woodwind SG 24

With 40 percent more rack space and an extended barrel height, the Woodwind SG 24 brings a new dimension to pellet grilling. A clear hopper window allows you to monitor pellets remaining, and the hopper itself has a 22-pound capacity. The dual LED temperature display shows the inside grill temperature and internal food temperature, all made possible with two included meat probes. The Ash Cleanout System simplifies maintenance, and the racks are adjustable and provide a generous 4,850 cubic inches of cooking space. A cord management system and grease management system further improve the grilling experience. The Woodwind SG 24 features a high-temperature paint with a long-lasting matte finish, not to mention an integrated bottle opener. If that's not enough, it also features a unique sear box perfect for steaks.

Slide and Grill Technology moves the heat shield to expose the fire for flame broiling.

CONTACT: www.campchef.com • **MSRP:** \$999



Pit Boss | 700FB

For serious grillers on a budget, the 700FB by Pit Boss provides substantial value to the equation. The hopper holds 21 pounds of pellets, and the grill features a user-friendly digital control board. A generous 700-square-inch grilling surface is perfect for preparing food for four to six people. The 8-in-1 700FB provides eight cooking methods under its hood – grill, smoke, sear, bake, roast, braise, BBQ or char-grill. That sort of versatility is a welcome attribute. The heavy-duty pellet system and steel wheels are designed to withstand years of use. Whatever cooking method your outdoor-enthusiast customers prefer, they'll agree that the wood-fired flavor achieved by the Pit Boss 700 FB is unparalleled.

CONTACT: www.pitboss-grills.com • **MSRP:** \$499



Green Mountain Grills | Davy Crockett

Want the convenience of controlling and monitoring your grill temperature on your smart device? The Davy Crockett from Green Mountain Grills provides it via a Wi-Fi mode, mobile app and a GMG digital controller. Server mode lets you connect to the grill remotely so you can control and monitor it on the go. This enables you to knock out errands and prepare food simultaneously. It's perfect for on-the-move applications; you can wow your family or a few friends while camping or tailgating – among countless other applications – using this portable pellet grill, which weighs just 68 pounds. In fact, its folding legs make it so compact that it can fit in a car trunk! Also standard are a meat probe, peaked lid, Sense-Mate thermal sensor and convenience tray complete with utensil hooks. Your customers' search for a portable do-all pellet grill might end here.

CONTACT: www.greenmountaingrills.com • **MSRP:** \$329





HUNTING RETAILER

GEAR ROUNDUP:

COOK & CAMP

BY MIKE SCHOBLASKA

1 CANCOOKER |

Companion

The 1.5-gallon CanCooker Companion is the smallest, most portable CanCooker available. Weighing only 3 pounds, the Companion has enough room to feed up to six people. The Companion is constructed from 1060 FDA-grade aluminum and is double-anodized inside and out. Featuring riveted, heavy-duty handles, high-temperature silicone gasket and a wide mouth design for easy access, the Companion comes with a storage bag, recipes and instructions.



2 BADLANDS |

Artemis Tent Series

Designed with ease of use, durability and functionality in mind, the Artemis Series of backcountry tents from Badlands includes one- and two-person models. With exclusive one-piece 7001 aluminum pole design and welded bathtub floor, the Artemis tents also feature a front porch double-zip vestibule and include a footprint. An ultralight quick-pitch option utilizes just the footprint, poles and fly for fair-weather adventures. The one-person model weighs 3 pounds 5 ounces, while the two-person model weighs 4 pounds 1 ounce.



5 FIREDISC |

Portable Propane Cooker

The FireDisc portable propane cooker fires up fast, cooks virtually anything and seasons like a cast-iron skillet. The FireDisc features an adjustable stand, allowing for a level cooking surface on any terrain. Designed to separate into three pieces and fold flat, the FireDisc easily fits in the back of your trunk, truck or SUV. Clean it just like you would cast iron, with some hot water and a quick wipe with oil; no need for soap. The FireDisc comes in a variety of options, deep or shallow pan, tall or short, and black or red.



3 ADVENTURE MEDICAL KITS |

Sportsman Whitetail Medical Kit

Designed for recreational hunters and fisherman on trips up to four days long, the Whitetail from Adventure Medical Kits contains supplies to treat the most common injuries, including treating penetration wounds from bullets or arrows, removing fish hooks, stabilizing sprains and stopping severe bleeding. The Whitetail kit measures 7.5 inches by 5.5 inches by 3.5 inches and weighs 1 pound. The Whitetail kit comes with an informational guide with illustrations on how to use the components in the kit.



4 ALPS OUTDOORZ |

Crosshair Chair

Constructed of durable 600D polyester fabric and a powder-coated steel frame, the Crosshair chair from ALPS Outdoorz is great to use around the camp fire. Available in either Realtree Edge camo with blaze orange accents or Mossy Oak Obsession camo with bright lime accents, the Crosshair has an ergonomic design that provides a comfortable, relaxed sitting position with a weight capacity of 300 pounds. The Crosshair weighs 7 pounds 15 ounces and easily folds up and stores in the included shoulder carry bag.



6 RUGID |

45 Quart Cooler

The 45 Quart Cooler from Rugid is made with up to 3 inches of foam insulation where it counts, and when properly prepped, it should keep ice for a week or more. Standard features include oversized non-skid feet, cam-lock latches, heavy-duty handles, rapid drain relief, two bottle openers and a measuring tape molded into the lid. The 45 Quart Cooler is available in five colors with a variety of accessories and features 100 percent replaceable parts with a five-year warranty.



7 WORK SHARP |

Original Knife & Tool Sharpener
The Original Knife and Tool Sharpener from Work Sharp includes two interchangeable precision angle guides to sharpen everything from hunting knives and filet knives to scissors, kitchen knives and serrated knives. The sharpener can even be used without the guide to sharpen axes, hatchets, shovels and mower blades. The Original Knife and Tool Sharpener comes with two each of coarse, medium and fine flexible abrasive belts.



8 CAMP CHEF |

Pursuit 20 Portable Pellet Grill
With 501 square inches of cooking space and a 10-pound pellet hopper capacity, the Camp Chef Pursuit 20 portable pellet grill can fit up to 24 1/4-pound burgers and is capable of temperatures from 160 degrees up to 500 degrees for slow smoking and grilling. The Pursuit 20 switches easily between indirect and direct flame broil modes with Slide and Grill technology, while the Ash Cleanout system makes clean up a breeze. Smart Smoke technology and the two meat probes make it easy to control the temperature for perfectly cooked food. The Pursuit 20 requires a 110-volt outlet and even includes a bottle opener.



9 CAMELBACK |

Quick Stow Flasks
Small enough to fit in a pocket when empty, the Camelback Quick Stow Flask is available in three capacities: 12-ounce, 17-ounce and 21-ounce. The bite valve on the Quick Stow Flasks self-heals after each drink to eliminate drips. The BPA/BPS/BPF-free flask can be hung upside down for easy drainage and drying, and the cap is top-rack dishwasher safe. The Quick Stow Flask also features volume indicators in ounces and milliliters for tracking hydration and adding drink mixes.



10 HI MOUNTAIN SEASONING |

Jerky Cutting Board
With two cutting depths – 1/4-inch and 3/8-inch – the Jerky Cutting Board from Hi Mountain Seasonings not only cuts perfect strips for jerky, but it's also great for consistent vegetable cutting. The cutting board features non-slip rubber feet, a convenient carrying handle and ridges to keep liquid away from the meat – and it's dishwasher safe. The kit includes a 13.5-inch high-carbon, 420 stainless steel knife with non-slip, rubberized Kraton handle. All the components nestle into the board for easy storage.



11 PEPPERBALL |

LifeLite
The PepperBall LifeLite combines a bright, 350-lumen LED flashlight with a non-lethal PepperBall projectile launcher for self-defense while camping, hiking or anywhere you might need a non-lethal option. With a 60-foot range, the LifeLite features a built-in laser guide to help get on target, while a sliding safety switch ensures the LifeLite won't fire unexpectedly. The LifeLite kit includes five Live SD PepperBall projectiles, 10 inert practice projectiles, three CO2 cartridges, two CR123 batteries and a lanyard.



12 HUNTER'S BLEND COFFEE |

Black Powder Roast
Hunter's Blend Black Powder Roast is a dark roast blend, fused with some of the finest Central American and East Asian beans available. Like all Hunter's Blend Coffee, the Black Powder Roast is roasted from direct trade sourced green coffee. Black Powder Roast is roasted in small batches in the company's facility in Mechanicsburg, Ohio, and is available in whole bean or ground 12-ounce packages.

13 12 SURVIVORS |

Terra-Pod Sleeping Bag
The Terra-pod Sleeping Bag from 12 Survivors is a 210T polyester filled sleeping bag with a mummy hybrid shape designed for weather above 20 degrees. The Terra-pod features an interior chest pocket, a full foot box and draft collar with hood drawstring. The Terra-pod weighs less than 4 pounds, and the Regular model fits individuals up to 6 feet tall, with a Long model available to fit individuals up to 6 feet 6 inches tall. Additional features include hang loops for storage and airing out, YKK zippers and a 380T nylon ripstop shell.





HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS



WEATHERBY 18i

Built on the reliable inertia system, the Weatherby 18i series of semi-automatic shotguns includes three models, the Deluxe, Synthetic and Waterfowler. All three models feature a 2+1 capacity with expandable magazine and a single piece receiver machined from aluminum billet for strength and simplicity. The polymer stock of the Synthetic and Waterfowler models features a soft-touch area on the cheek rest and aggressive texture in the palm and foregrip. The 18i deluxe has a matte finish walnut stock and forearm with a 3-inch chamber, while the Synthetic and Waterfowler feature a 3 1/2-inch chamber. All three models feature LPA fiber sights and a full-length ventilated top rib. Each 18i includes five application-specific choke tubes and a choke tube wrench. MSRP: \$1,099 - \$1,899. www.weatherby.com



SAVAGE ARMS 110 High Country in TrueTimber Strata

TrueTimber has partnered with Savage Arms to introduce the new 110 High Country rifle in the Strata camouflage pattern. TrueTimber Strata incorporates macro and micro designs that break up the human outline and blend into any terrain at close range. The 110 High Country rifle features a spiral-fluted barrel and bolt and user-adjustable AccuTrigger. Additional features include the AccuFit system that lets hunters customize the length of pull and comb height, and a low-friction, coyote brown PVD coating on the barrel, receiver and other critical parts. Available in a variety of calibers from .243 Win. to 7mm Rem. Mag. MSRP: \$1,129. www.savagearms.com



ONTARIO KNIFE COMPANY Old Hickory Hunting Knife

With a classic hardwood handle secured with brass compression rivets, the Old Hickory Hunting Knife from Ontario Knife Company is like taking a step back in time. The 5.5-inch blade is constructed of high-carbon steel that's capable of retaining an edge better than many stainless-steel knives and has a hardness rating of 55-57 HRC. Ontario Knife Company makes knives in America with manufacturing techniques used over 90 years ago that are integrated with state-of-the-art practices and facilities. MSRP: \$29.95. www.ontarioknife.com



KENT

TK7 PENETRATOR TURKEY LOADS

Kent is stepping into the turkey shotshell market with the introduction of the TK7 Penetrator high performance tungsten turkey load. Featuring No. 7 tungsten pellets with a density of 15 g/cc, 38 percent greater than lead, to deliver superior retained energy and knockdown power. The No. 7 pellets provide 60 percent more pellets than No. 6 pellets of equal payload. The TK7 Penetrator will be offered in both 12-gauge and 20-gauge 3-inch shells with a velocity of 1,100 fps. The 12-gauge load has 1 5/8 ounce and the 20-gauge load has 1 3/8 ounce of No. 7 tungsten shot.

www.kentcartridge.com

PRIMOS

Double Bull SurroundView Stakeout

The Stakeout from Primos is constructed with two exclusive SurroundView one-way see through walls that allow the hunter to see everything in front of them without having to peek around or over the blind. With three triangular shooting windows that open and close, the Stakeout is designed with two hubs for maximum portability and sturdiness. The Stakeout weighs only 4.5 pounds and measures 59 inches corner-to-corner and 37 inches tall. MSRP: \$125.

www.primos.com





KIMLOR MILLS Browning Quilt Collection

The Browning quilt collection from Kimlor Mills includes two patterns, Nature Buckmark and Buckmark Patchwork, sure to please any outdoor enthusiast. Made from ultra-soft 100 percent cotton, the Browning quilt collection is offered in sets including the quilt and sham(s) in twin, full/queen and king sizes. The Nature Buckmark blends the iconic Browning Buckmark with outdoor elements such as pine cones, acorns and leaves with tan, brown and green. The Buckmark Patchwork is arranged in a traditional patchwork style with a collage of plaids paired with the Browning Buckmark, gray, tan and cream. MSRP varies by size. www.kimlor.com

ALPS OUTDOORZ

Long Spur Deluxe Turkey Vest System

The Long Spur Deluxe from ALPS OutdoorZ is a lightweight modular system designed for the kind of freedom-of-movement needed for fast-paced turkey hunting. The Long Spur Deluxe is built on a fully adjustable shoulder harness, to which is attached two removable front storage pockets, removable waist belt, removable lumbar pack and a removable memory foam seat. The removable storage allows the hunter to carry only what they need to save weight and allow maximum mobility. The chest pockets are designed to hold a box call or two slate calls and includes five shell loops and two mesh mouth call pockets. The Long Spur Deluxe is available in Mossy Oak Obsession camouflage pattern. MSRP: \$119.99.

www.alpsoutdoorz.com

FLIR Scion Outdoor Thermal Monocular



FLIR has launched a new thermal monocular for outdoor enthusiasts, the FLIR Scion Outdoor Thermal Monocular (OTM). The Scion OTM includes Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity and provides long-range detection, up to 550 yards. Featuring FLIR's high-performance Boson thermal core, to provide clear vision in low visibility conditions and allow users to quickly detect objects with greater detail, the Scion OTM is available with a 9 hertz or a 60 hertz refresh rate. With 2 GB of internal storage and a microSD card slot to expand recording of both images and video, up to 128 GB, the Scion OTM's intuitive controls allow single-handed operation. Additional features include an IP67-rated housing, picture-in-picture zoom and GPS functionality. MSRP: \$2,495. www.flir.com

allow single-handed operation. Additional features include an IP67-rated housing, picture-in-picture zoom and GPS functionality. MSRP: \$2,495. www.flir.com

MATHEWS Tactic

Weighing only 4.24 pounds, the new Mathews Tactic measures 30.5 inches axle-to-axle with a 7-inch brace height. Lightweight and maneuverable, the Tactic is available with draw weights of 50, 60 and 70 pounds and with draw lengths of 23 inches to 30 inches. With the proven AVS cam system, the Tactic shoots up to 335 fps with 80 percent let-off. MSRP: \$849.

www.mathewsinc.com

SPYPOINT Link-Micro

The Link-Micro from Spypoint is one of the smallest cellular trail cameras available. With a 0.5-second trigger speed and 80-foot flash range thanks to low-glow LEDs, the Link Micro delivers 4G photo transmission (where available) with unlimited photos the first month after activation. The Buck Tracker feature in the Spypoint App sorts photos with advanced photo analysis technology to allow the user to skip the photos of raccoons and antlerless deer. A free data plan will send 100 photos per month as long as the camera is operational, with higher count plans available for purchase. MSRP: \$169.99. www.spypoint.com



Our Proud Hunting Heritage

BY BOB ROBB

Hunters in America have a heritage to be proud of. It's one we should be trumpeting to the heavens so that those who do not hunt understand why what we do is both honorable in its nature and critical to all things wild in our country. Sadly, we often do a poor job of explaining this to the public at large.

For the longest time, I was guilty of ignoring the threats of anti-hunting groups. In social settings I was quiet about what I do for a living. Not anymore. I proudly tell people that I'm a hunter. The fun part is explaining our heritage, something that many even in our own ranks don't know much about.

In America's infancy, how people hunted didn't matter — the population density was extremely low, game was plentiful and hunting was not for sport but for survival and profit. But by the late 1800s, unregulated sport and commercial market hunting had taken its toll, and wildlife was no longer abundant. Enter Theodore Roosevelt, who formed the Boone and Crockett Club (www.boone-crockett.org) in 1887 to address this rapid decline. Their solution? Promote a new system of natural resource use called conservation, and promote regulated hunting as the foundation for this new system. Soon, they began promoting another then-radical concept: fair chase.

If hunting was going to continue, how it was being conducted and the character of the hunter now mattered. Fair chase became a part of an overall conservation ethic, defining a true sportsman as one who could kill game, yet use self-restraint and stand guard to ensure that wildlife

populations would never be threatened again. Fair chase defined the rules, elevating sportsmen to respected members of the community, both for their skill as woodsman and also for their commitment to something greater than themselves.

Fifty years later, in 1937, with the urging and backing of key hunters and conservationists, Nevada Senator Key Pittman and Virginia Congressman Absalom Willis Robertson co-sponsored the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, which today is most commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Act. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the legislation into law on Sept. 2, 1937 and it became effective July 1, 1938. The Act levies an 11 percent excise tax on the sale of sporting arms and ammuni-

“In 2017, more than \$650 million was collected in Pittman-Robertson excise taxes, and since 1937, more than \$12 billion — that's billion, with a B — has been collected.”

tion. In 1970, the Act — which had been amended several times before — was again amended to include a 10 percent excise tax on the sale of handguns and handgun ammunition, and an 11 percent tax on the sale of archery equipment. In essence, sportsmen asked the government to tax them, the caveat being that all monies collected be spent on conservation.

Think about it. What other group of so-called “conservationists” or “animal rights” organizations have demanded they be taxed for the sole benefit of wildlife

and its habitat? For the most part, they enjoy the outdoors and wildlife while riding free on the backs of hunters and fishermen. The Dingell-Johnson Act, passed in 1950, closely mirrors the Pittman-Robertson Act with excise taxes placed on boats, motors, fuel, fishing tackle, etc.

How much money are we talking about? In 2017, more than \$650 million was collected in Pittman-Robertson excise taxes, and since 1937, more than \$12 billion — that's billion, with a B — has been collected. These excise taxes are collected by the Tax and Trade Bureau, which then transfers the funds to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). After minimal administrative expenses are taken, USFWS allocates the remaining funds to the 50 state wildlife agencies, with those individual distributions based upon an apportionment formula. Once in the states' hands, roughly 65 percent is spent on operations, administration, capital developments, land acquisition and maintenance projects such as habitat improvement. Another 12 percent goes to hunter education, and 23 percent goes toward research. On top of all that, hunters donate an estimated \$1 billion more to

private conservation organizations.

In North America, we provide the bulk of the funding so that wildlife can be enjoyed by all. Should that not make us proud? Our system of conservation, funded by generations of sportsmen, has restored our wildlife from the ashes of commercial hunting in the late 18th century. The numbers? Pronghorn from 5,000 to a million-plus, whitetail deer from a half-million to 32 million, elk from 41,000 to more than a million, wild turkeys from 100,000 to seven million. The system is working — and there is no alternative funding plan on the horizon. These are the facts we need to proudly share.

How do you help both your customers and non-hunters understand how important hunting is to conservation? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com; I'd love to hear about it. **HR**

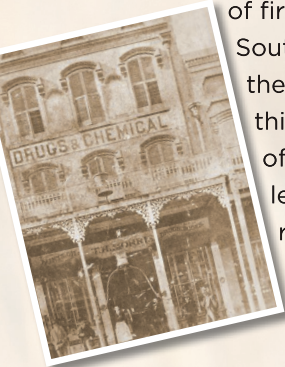


PRO STAFF - Bob Robb has been a full-time outdoor writer since 1978. He's a former staff editor for *Peterson's Hunting* magazine, as well as the former editor of *Western Outdoor News*, *Peterson's Bowhunting*, *Inside Archery*, *Whitetail Journal*, *Predator Xtreme*, and *Waterfowl & Retriever* magazines. He's hunted on five continents with both rifles and archery equipment and lived in Alaska for 15 years, where for a time he held an assistant hunting guide's license.

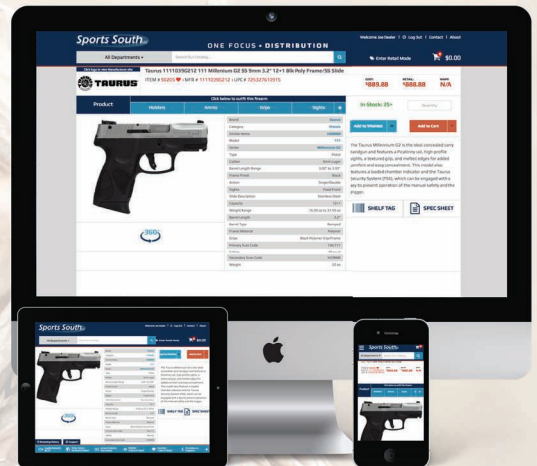
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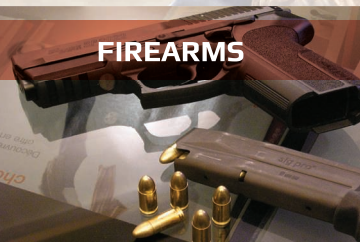
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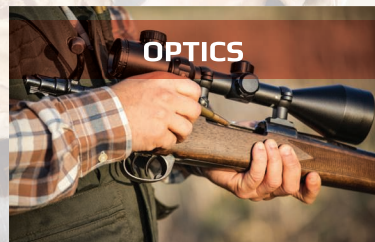
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