

HUNTING

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RETAILER

May/June 2020 | Guns & Glass

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**WATERFOWL
SHOTGUNS**

Is the Customer
ALWAYS RIGHT?

The Year of the
RANGEFINDER

An Intro To
**SELLING
AIRGUNS**

SIG SAUER

Introducing the Cross Rifle, the First
Precision Hunting Rifle by SIG

What Makes
MOSSBERG
DEALER
FRIENDLY

2020
DO-IT-ALL
RIFLES

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VEIL CAMOUFLAGE
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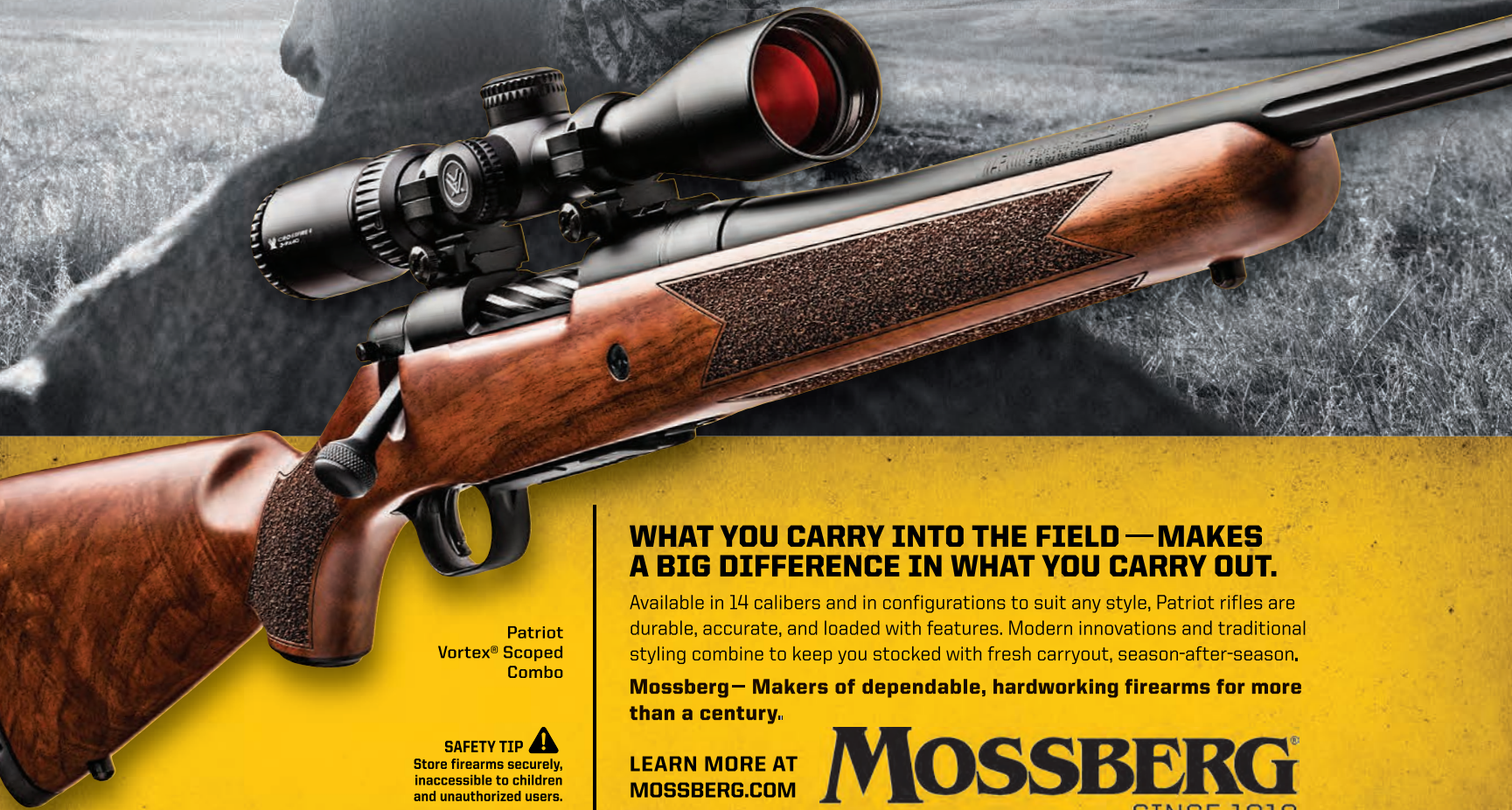
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SIG SAUER Introduces CROSS Rifle: The First SIG SAUER Precision Bolt-Action Hunting Rifle Manufactured in the USA

SIG SAUER, Inc. is pleased to introduce the CROSS Rifle – the first SIG-built precision bolt-action hunting rifle designed by SIG SAUER engineers, completely manufactured and machined at the SIG SAUER facilities in New Hampshire, and tested by premier competitive shooters, the world's best long-range shooters and a team of professional hunters the CROSS is built for.

“When our product management team and engineers researched developing a bolt-action rifle, they looked at what was missing from the market and what new innovation SIG could bring to hunters and precision shooters,” began Tom Taylor, Chief Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President, Commercial Sales. “Hunting rifles are typically focused on less weight, and accuracy is secondary. Precision rifles are designed for extreme accuracy, with no weight limitations. What was missing from the market was a true crossover. Our product management team and engineers took the best of both worlds and developed the CROSS, featuring the characteristics of a hunting rifle with the accuracy of a precision rifle.”

CROSS is a lightweight precision rifle with a push-button, foldable SIG precision stock, a one-piece aluminum receiver that eliminates the need for bedding the action, and AI magazines for creating the most accurate precision hunting platform. Featuring a stainless-steel rifled barrel with a free-float M-LOK™ handguard, a 2-stage match-grade trigger externally adjustable from 2.5 to 4 pounds, ambi-safety, a three-lug bolt design with a 60-degree throw and an interchangeable bolt handle. The precision stock is spring-loaded for one-handed operation and can be fully adjusted in the field for length of pull and comb height with no tools. The rifle has a full-length replaceable Picatinny rail that allows for direct optics mounts and is available in 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win., and the soon-to-be-released 277 SIG Fury Hybrid Ammunition.

“Right out of the box, the CROSS comes loaded with new innovation and features that hunters and precision shooters will appreciate at a very affordable \$1,776 MSRP price point,” continued Taylor. “The CROSS delivers on all fronts, and we are especially proud that everything about the CROSS from concept to completion is 100% SIG SAUER and comes directly from our U.S. operations here in New Hampshire.”

CROSS Bolt-Action Rifle Specs (6.5 Creedmoor):

Overall Length: 35.5”
Folded Length: 27.0”
Barrel Length: 18”
Barrel Twist: 1:8
Weight (w/o magazine): 6.4 lbs.

CROSS Bolt-Action Rifle Specs (308 WIN / 277 FURY):

Overall Length: 36.5”
Folded Length: 25.0”
Barrel Length: 16”
Barrel Twist: 1:10 / 1:8.5
Weight (w/o magazine): 6.2 lbs.

sigsauer.com



Firearm Industry Excise Tax Filing, Payment Due Dates Delayed by TTB

Following the direction of the Trump Administration to ease tax burdens on American businesses during the COVID-19 virus pandemic, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) is providing firearm and ammunition manufacturers and importers a 90-day delay from the required filing and payment dates of Pittman Robertson excise tax payments.

In distributed guidance, the TTB states that required excise tax filings and payments from firearm and ammunition businesses with an original filing date between March 1, 2020, and July 1, 2020, will be given an extra 90 days to do so without facing interest or penalties.

The directive states:

TTB's Acting Administrator has determined that (1) any person with a due date for submitting a Federal excise tax payment, return, operational report, or claim on ... firearms, and ammunition to TTB and (2) any person with a due date for submitting export documentation to TTB, in the period March 1, 2020, through July 1, 2020, is affected by COVID-19 for purposes of the relief described in this Industry Circular.

Additionally, the directive states:

The postponement of due dates applies to any tax payment with an original due date falling on or after

March 1, 2020, through July 1, 2020. Interest and penalties will not accrue where such payments are made within 90 days of the usual due date. This Industry Circular does not postpone the payment of any other type of Federal tax.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation strongly recommends members fully review the TTB guidance at bit.ly/TTBGov to ensure your business remains in good standing and compliant during this critical time. If you have any questions about your business and how the TTB directive may affect you, please contact the National Review Center by phone at 877-882-3277.

Montana Rifle Company Closes Amid Financial Restructuring

Montana Rifle Company, makers of premium custom rifles for 25 years, has closed amid efforts to financially restructure.

Parent company Montana Outdoor Group, a private investor group, announced the immediate closure on its website. The site only includes the announcement, a phone number and email.

Here is the announcement:

Montana Outdoor Group, a private investor group, acquired Montana Rifle Company in early 2019, has announced its immediate closure pending fiscal restructuring.

"While sales of our popular calibers have been outstanding, production levels have not risen to a profitable lever to continue, without additional investments," CEO Calvin Bontrager explained. "New equipment would be required to reach service (levels) demanded by our dealers and conservation groups."

Montana Rifle has been producing custom-grade rifles for nearly 25 years and was awarded "NRA's Gun of the Year" in 2016 and "NRA's Gun of the Year" in 2018.

Montana Rifle has also produced limited editions for California Waterfowl, SCI, RMEF, and many other conservation organizations.

"With sales of the popular M1999 control feed actions nearly doubling in 2019, Montana Outdoor Group is actively searching for restructuring opportunities," Bontrager said.

For updates on Montana Rifle Company, please visit www.montanarifleco.com/developments.

Montana Outdoor Group's acquisition of Montana Rifle Company was completed in July 2019, according to then CEO Ron Petty. He said then changes were made to update the facility and increase production, including new state-of-the-art CNC machines, and several new key personnel have made a positive impact on production and new products. Petty said its Montana Custom Barrel Division was "actively producing barrel blanks for key industry partners."

Montana Rifle Company was founded by Brian Sipe and produced custom actions featuring the Mauser controlled feed extractor. The company produced actions and barreled actions in a wide range of calibers.

NSSF Delays 2021 SHOT Show Deadlines

Deadlines have been extended for the 2021 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

The NSSF said it had been contacted by many show exhibitors with concerns about making the second show payment that was due on April 3. NSSF officials in a statement said it realizes everyone is focused on ensuring the health and well-

being of you, your staff, and your families during the coronavirus pandemic. Others have expressed concern about the future of their business.

The NSSF is pushing the deadline for the second payment to June 5. It also will push back space selection/booth changes to the second and third weeks in June, rather than April.

With the virus situation being fluid in the U.S. and

abroad, the NSSF said it will continue to monitor and evolve with any decisions and plans for the show.

SHOT Show 2021 is scheduled for Jan. 19-21 at the Sands Expo and Convention Center in Las Vegas. The show will expand this year into the new Caesar's Forum exhibition center, which will offer exhibitors on the SHOT Show waiting list a chance to get on the floor.



Sportsmen and Sportswomen Generate Nearly \$1 Billion in Conservation Funding

America's sportsmen and sportswomen generated nearly \$1 billion in excise taxes last year to support state conservation programs. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt recently announced the disbursement of these funds, generated through excise taxes on hunting, shooting and fishing equipment and boat fuel to all 50 states and U.S. territories by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Our conservation model is funded and supported by America's hunters, shooters, anglers, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts. These stewards of conservation generated nearly a billion dollars last year alone and make our

country's conservation legacy the envy of the world," said Bernhardt.

Authorized by Congress through the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act and Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, these funds support critical state conservation and outdoor recreation projects. The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) program, which the Service administers, has long been considered the foundation of fish and wildlife conservation in the United States.

Safari Club International Will Return to Las Vegas

Safari Club International has announced that its 49th International Hunters' Convention will return to Las Vegas in 2021.

The event, scheduled for February 3-6, will serve as the kickoff celebration of 50 years of SCI.

The exhibits, banquets and daytime activities will be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Evening events will be held at Caesar's Forum, a new

venue in the Caesar facilities that is currently under construction.

The headquarter hotel will be Harrah's Casino Hotel. Other block hotels will include the LINQ Hotel and Casino, Flamingo Las Vegas, Bally's Las Vegas, Planet Hollywood and Caesar's Palace Las Vegas.

"We are pleased to be able to bring the SCI

Convention back to Las Vegas in 2021," said Laird Hamberlin, SCI CEO. "Our exhibitors and members all enjoy the convenience of getting in and out of Las Vegas and the many activities to enjoy there in addition to the Convention. Many people expressed a desire to move the Convention back to Las Vegas with dates in early February. We have worked hard to make it happen."

Benelli Launches New Mobile-Friendly Website

Benelli recently launched its new mobile-friendly website for U.S. consumers that simplifies searching for the right firearm for each individual consumer's needs. The website also hosts informative videos, stunning product and lifestyle imagery and enhanced product pages.

"Consumers' time is valuable so one of our main goals with the new website was to streamline the process for consumers trying find what they want," said Tim Joseph, Benelli's VP of Brand Marketing. "With more and more people looking to their smartphones and tablets to obtain information, our other focus was to design it for optimal usage on mobile devices. Whether you are a diehard waterfowler, an upland hunter, target shooter, or interested in tactical/

home defense, the perfect gun is only a few clicks away."

The new website offers users the ability to sort through guns by filtering for specific features such as camo pattern, gauge or caliber, stock configurations, barrel length, hand dominance, sights, stock configuration, and barrel and receiver finish. Product offerings can also be easily found by choosing a particular hunting or shooting activity, including waterfowl hunting, tactical, turkey hunting, big-game hunting, upland hunting, sport shooting, left-handed offerings and more.

The new website can be found at www.benelliusa.com.

Inaugural Hunting Retailer Show off to a promising start

Despite worldwide concern over the corona virus and a deadly natural disaster that hit just a week before the show, the first Hunting Retailer Show in Nashville, March 9-10, was a success, with nearly 50

exhibitors. A tornado struck Nashville just a week before the show opened, but the host venue, the Gaylord Opryland Resorts & Convention Center, was undamaged. The show proceeded as scheduled while

other shows worldwide were shutting down or postponing over fears about the corona virus.

You can read more about the Hunting Retailer Show on page 44.

Got News?

Got some big news to share with the industry – an award, a new product launch, a record-setting year? Email it to hilary.dyer@colepublishing.com for a chance to be included in Hunting Retailer's In The News section.





Bill Conway

Waterfowl Shotguns

We take a closer look at the Benelli SBEIII with the new BE.S.T. coating and Savage's first-ever semi-auto shotgun, the Renegauge.

BY MARK CHESNUT

When it comes to hardcore waterfowl hunting, the specialized equipment needed to enjoy the sport can fill quite a long list. Sure, if a hunter is going to go out and hunt ducks only a time or two every other year, he or she can grab whatever shotgun is in the safe and a handful of steel loads, pull on some waders and head for the marsh.

But those who use their waterfowl shotguns frequently in nasty weather conditions need a gun they can rely on to get the job done, cycle reliably and make the ride home without already having

a glaze of rust on the barrel when they get there. Fortunately for those brave-hearted souls who like cold, wet, blustery weather better than any other kind, many manufacturers make specialized waterfowl models that are tough, reliable and much more impervious to the elements than the other shotguns in their lineups.

Retailers trying to determine what waterfowl shotguns to carry for their customers can sometimes become overwhelmed with all the choices. In a nutshell, hunters shopping for a waterfowl shotgun are looking for several features, not all

of which are available on every model. Some of those features include at least 3-inch chambers (many prefer 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch), an operating system that reduces felt recoil, the ability to shoot steel shot, a good recoil pad, and a dull or camouflaged all-weather finish that can take the tough conditions often endured by duck and goose hunters.

Let's take a look at two models recently introduced at the 2020 SHOT Show in Las Vegas. Both are excellent candidates for your customers who might be looking for the latest and greatest duck and goose gun.





BENELLI SBE3 WITH BE.S.T. FINISH

As if the ultra-popular Benelli Super Black Eagle III could get any better, Benelli upped the ante this year by offering the gun in the company's new BE.S.T. (Benelli Surface Treatment) finish. According to the company, engineers put 10 years into developing the finish, which is touted to solve the main issue facing waterfowl shotguns: corrosion.

The proprietary BE.S.T. finish bonds molecularly to the barrel, barrel extension and select internal components to create what the company says is an impenetrable armor that stops rust and corrosion while providing superior abrasion resistance. And Benelli is putting its money where its mouth is, offering a 25-year warranty on all BE.S.T.-treated parts on the SBE3 and other guns with the finish.

In order to apply the new finish, Benelli developed a hybrid PVD/PECVD machine that uses diamondlike carbon (DLC) particles applied with a high-vacuum plasma nanotechnology. In doing so, gun makers can apply the finish at low temperatures, protecting the mechanical integrity of the steel. According to Benelli, the process is environmentally friendly and produces no hazardous chemical by-product.

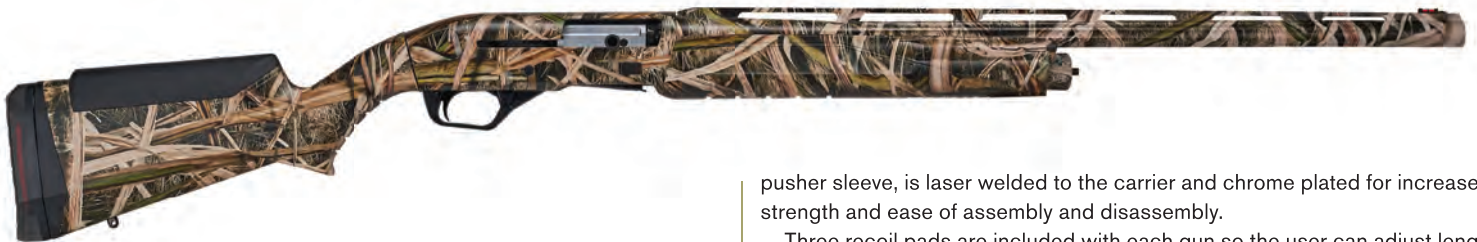
Then, Benelli chrome lines the inside of the SBE3 barrel for added protection.

Of course, Benelli didn't just invent the finish, put it on some shotguns and start selling them by the hundreds. The company torture-tested an assortment of barrels with different finishes for comparison to the BE.S.T. treatment. A normal blued barrel, which was subjected to four hours in a salt fog test, resulted in rust accumulation over the entire barrel. A barrel coated with the BE.S.T. treatment underwent 200 hours in the same conditions with no signs of rust or corrosion. In fact, BE.S.T.-treated barrels have been exposed to saltwater for more than three consecutive months with no sign of rust or corrosion.

The BE.S.T. finish should make what was arguably one of the best waterfowl shotguns around even better. The SBE3, introduced in 2017, is a complete re-design of the original Super Black Eagle line. It uses Benelli's Inertia Driven System, which never requires adjustment and cycles consistently shooting light field loads all the way up to 3½-inch magnum ammo.

It also features a Comfort Tech stock, which was designed by splitting the stock diagonally and using shock-absorbing chevrons within the stock to greatly reduce felt recoil. The gun's Combtech cheek comb pad is just more icing on the cake. Drop and cast can be adjusted by inserting supplied shims between the front of the butt and the receiver. Also, the SBE3 has a rectangular, oversized bolt release.

The SBE3 with BE.S.T. finish is currently available in 12-gauge with 26- and 28-inch barrel. MSRP is \$1,999.



SAVAGE RENEGAUGE WATERFOWL

Waterfowl hunters are fortunate to be among the targeted users of Savage's first ever semi-automatic shotgun introduction. The Renegaug Waterfowl model is another fine option for those who want a new autoloader for chasing ducks and geese, according to Al Kasper, Savage president and CEO.

"Renegaug is unlike any other semi-automatic shotgun and demonstrates our commitment to innovate as an independent company," Kasper said. "This project has been in the works for years because we wanted to enter a new category in a big way. The team in place now did an amazing job getting this to the finish line. Hunters and shooters are going to be amazed with the fit, feel, function and versatility of this shotgun. And it's a platform we can and will build on – so look for more in the very near future."

The platform Kasper alludes to is the company's brand-new semi-auto cycling system just developed by company engineers – the Dual Regulating Inline Valve (D.R.I.V.) gas system. The patented, industry-first dual-valve self-regulating gas system allows high-powered and low-powered loads to cycle with the same consistency and reliability. That's accomplished by the system emitting excess gas, thereby maintaining optimal bolt carrier velocity across the various loads.

The action is built around Savage's new lightweight, one-piece bolt carrier. According to the company, the one-piece action bar assembly, including the

pusher sleeve, is laser welded to the carrier and chrome plated for increased strength and ease of assembly and disassembly.

Three recoil pads are included with each gun so the user can adjust length of pull, and three comb height inserts are included to further tailor individual fit. The adjustment components are made of a proprietary gel designed to tame recoil for the shooter and reduce the impact on the shotgun's internal components. An included shim kit lets hunters further adjust drop and cast for minute adjustments.

For those who might want to try a renegade in shotgun or 3-gun competitions, the gun's beveled loading port, angled trigger housing, receiver and elevator are intentionally designed for easy, rapid loading of cartridges.

As far as technical specifications, the gun weighs 8 pounds, has four-plus-one capacity, is chambered for 3-inch magnums and wears a Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Blades camo finish. MSRP is \$1,549.

There are plenty of other fine waterfowl shotguns on the market, and Hunting Retailer will be publishing a review of several other models later this year. In the meantime, you can't miss with these new Savage and Benelli models that should find success at the retail level as well as in duck and goose blinds this fall. **HR**

PRO STAFF

Mark Chesnut is a freelance writer and editor who has been a professional journalist for more than 35 years. An avid hunter and bird dog lover, he is also owner and editorial director at Red Setter Communications.





Facing Cantankerous Customers

Is the customer really always right, even when they're downright rude?

BY PATRICK MEITIN

One of the biggest surprises when I started in outdoor retail was encountering downright nasty customers. Most shocking was when such rudeness was sparked by innocuous interaction, such as asking if a customer needed assistance. It proved shocking enough that my initial response was to involuntarily laugh aloud — behavior that only further inflames bullies.

Here's a real-world example (language sanitized considerably): “How are you doing today, sir?” I asked, eliciting only unintelligible grumbling.

“You look like you're in a hurry, is there something I might help you locate today?”

Man spins, eyes shooting sparks of hate, “No! I have a flippin' high-school diploma; I think I can find my own flippin' stuff!” An involuntary laugh escapes me.

“You think that's funny? Why is that funny?”

This is an extreme case mined from several years of observation, obviously. Yet there seems to be a certain element of society who believes store employees are fair game for abuse. I guess I already understood this, but it

was startling to endure personally. I experienced customers chastising me personally over product pricing, cursing me because I wouldn't throw in a free box of ammo with a rifle purchase, and yell at me for offering an alternative to something they had asked for, but we didn't have in stock.

My parents raised me to treat everyone with respect, even forgetful waitresses, grumpy receptionists or surly sales associates. Friends or acquaintances that treat service employees like bad dogs in my presence will get an earful. I just won't tolerate it — even in the face of complete incompetence. You have no idea what that person is currently dealing with.

In retail settings, the quicker you adopt this degree of empathy, the better. Some people are inherently miserable. Others may only be having an off day. It doesn't matter. In any service industry, you suck it up, maintain a bright smile and do your darndest to either push through the uncomfortable circumstance or patiently turn it around with kindness.

I recall an employee I was forced to deal with often



after being promoted to manager. This sales associate — let's call him Travis — manned the gun counter. Like many gun-counter jockeys, Travis considered himself the absolute guru on anything and everything gun and ammo related. All too frequently, Travis was faced with customers (other self-proclaimed gun-counter experts) who called him out loudly for some bit of knowledge he had offered another customer, adamantly disagreed with a piece of advice offered, or even called him a liar after relating a particular rifle shot. Sparks would fly, bringing to mind a cartoonish “Dem’s fightin’ words!” meme.

Travis was no doubt guns-and-ammo savvy, generally a useful part of our sales force, but he eventually had to go. You just can't have employees threatening to fist fight customers over inane disagreements, and Travis just couldn't work past petty slights. Of course, this is another extreme example and another product of an inability to empathize — in this case with a customer's need to feel important or superior. It simply doesn't make you any less of a person to play along.

The gray areas generally arrive in the form of customers with semi- or fully legitimate gripes. This usually hinges on some form of equipment failure or return when a piece of gear underperforms or doesn't live up to expectations. Still, there is a fine line between “the customer is always right” and allowing your sales staff to be unjustly abused. Some customers can be dealt with logically, while others just don't wish to be logical, as they may be trying to get away with something and their interaction is tainted by subconscious shame or guilt — or unmitigated, con-artist narcissism. Maintaining an even keel and not allowing yourself to be sucked into the anger and negativity is vitally important in retail.

Let's take two examples from real-life experiences and examine how I handled them: Case one, customer buys tent, takes it camping over the weekend, it rains and tent leaks. Case two, customer buys tent, takes it camping over the weekend, brings it back Monday and claims it leaked (despite no rain in forecast).

Customer one is enraged because he had to endure a wet, cold night inside a leaking tent. Response: “Oh, no, I'm so, so sorry to hear that. That must have been terrible! Been there and done that, and nothing is worse. Are you okay? Hopefully the rain passed, and you were able to enjoy the remainder of your weekend?”

“Here's what I'm gonna do for you. I'll upgrade this leaking tent — which I assure you was a fluke — with a higher-priced model at no additional charge (assuming price difference falls within retail markup and the store isn't losing money). I'm so sorry you had to endure a cold, wet night, because — believe me — I know what that's like. This upgrade tent should guarantee that never happens again.”

Customer two is shamelessly taking advantage of our store's guaranteed return policy, after using the tent free

“Some customers can be dealt with logically, while others just don't wish to be logical, as they may be trying to get away with something...”

for the weekend. Response: “Okay, why are we returning this tent?” clipboard and pen theatrically in hand.

“Do you need a reason? Store policy says there are no questions asked.”

“I have to give our customer service people a reason for the return.”

“Okay, tell them it leaked.” The tent is bone dry.



“Do you want a replacement or cash back?” End of conversation. Everyone leaves happy. Slightly used tent is re-boxed and placed in bargain bin 10 percent above wholesale price.

The real key to defusing bad situations is refusing to take things personally and showing real empathy. Customers with legitimate grievances just want to vent a little and be understood. The con artist thinks he is smarter than you, but so what? Play along for fun. They haven't kicked your dog or threatened your children. Don't be like Travis. Let it roll off your back. You have bigger matters to attend to and turning things around with a disgruntled customer and sending them out the door happy leaves more time for the important things in retail — like attending to pet customers who invariably make your day brighter. **HR**

↑ Unhappy customers are a fact of retail. Don't take it personally!

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.



On the Hunt? New Riflescopes for Your Retail Space

Scopes sell, but quality and price point can vary widely. Check out these options you can show your customers.

BY KEVIN REESE

How does one assign value to good advice? As industry retailers, you have the opportunity to influence the outdoor experiences of your customers with the guidance you give. The vast majority of your customers work hard for their money and hope to make smart buying choices that deliver bang for those hard-earned bucks. That's where you shine as an influencer and hopefully create repeat customers.

One area of opportunity (and vulnerability) is riflescopes. While picking a riflescope may be subjective, the truth remains that all riflescopes are purpose-built, and selecting the right or wrong one can enhance shooting or ruin the hunt of a lifetime. In as much as optics advice is helpful and effective in building customer loyalty, offering a diverse array of hunting optics is equally important. That said, here are some great purpose-driven optics ready to handle your hunters' needs.



SIGHTMARK VOLTA AND ELEMENT MINI SOLAR RED-DOT SIGHTS

In a world filled with traditional hunting riflescopes, a disappointing amount of attention is extended to 1X-powered red-dot-style optics; however, their features are exquisitely perfect for diverse ranges of species-specific hunts, hunting environments, a variety of firearm applications and low-light shooting. In

a nutshell, red-dot-type sights are increasingly the perfect solution for close to mid-range pursuits, and Sightmark, founded by James Sellers over 10 years ago, has risen as a big hitter in this arena. The latest results of Sightmark's laser-focused determination to innovate and deliver lifetime-reliable optics are the new Volta and Element Mini Solar Red Dot Sights.

Compact red-dot optics like Sightmark's Volta and Element Mini are exceptionally lightweight, durable and affordable, and given their diverse applications, they are perfect for turkey hunting and deer, hog and predator hunting at close to mid-range shooting distances. Both optics are constructed of rugged, matte black, 6061-T6 aluminum and feature solar and battery-powered operation. As a result, they can transition between battery and solar power automatically, depending on the environment. Battery life is 200,000 hours (one 2032 battery) for the Element Mini and 400,000 (two AAA batteries) for the Volta, and both are waterproof rated IP67. The Element Mini also features a three-MOA reticle while the Volta's is two MOA — both boast advanced, anti-reflective coated glass and are recoil rated up to .338 Win. Mag. Windage and elevation adjustments also are quite robust at 120-MOA elevation and 160-MOA windage with 1/2-MOA-per-click adjustments. Sightmark's Eclipse Light Management System also optimizes reticle brightness in the Volta and Element Mini for varying light environments.





SWAROVSKI Z5i ILLUMINATED 2.4-12X50 RIFLESCOPE

While Wilhelm Swarovski produced his pair of binoculars in 1935, Swarovski Optik wasn't founded until 1949. Even then, it took another decade for the company to unveil its first rifle scope, a fixed-power 4x32, and it wasn't until 1993 that Swarovski offered its first rifle scope with an illuminated reticle. This is important because 27 years later, in January 2020, premised on Swarovski's legendary reputation for optic quality for discriminating precision shooters and hunters, the company unveiled its latest line, Z5i Illuminated Riflescopes — among them, the 2.4-12x50.

The Z5i Illuminated 2.4-12x50 is rich with the crisp field of view and exceptional quality standards hunters have come to expect from Swarovski; however, price points are noticeably lower. This should strike quite a positive chord with consumers with an appreciation for what a brand like Swarovski has delivered for decades. As for the scope features, the Z5i Illuminated 2.4-12x50 Rifle Scope boasts a lightweight, 1-inch tube; choice of three illuminated, second-focal-plane reticles; 5X zoom; patented four-point coil spring system; capped, 1/4-MOA-per-click turrets with the option for ballistic turrets; and digital, top-mounted reticle brightness controls.



MEOPTA OPTIKA5 2-10X42RF RIFLESCOPE

Originally named Optikotechna, Meopta was formed in 1933 and focused on production of darkroom optics. From 1935 to 1938, the company produced optics for the Czechoslovakian army, and it was then forced to manufacture optics for the German army from 1939 until the end of WWII. In 1946, the company was renamed Meopta and later split between Meopta S.R.O. and TCI New York. In 2005, TCI was renamed to the Meopta USA we know today as a performance sport optic manufacturer. Since then, Meopta USA has continued to innovate and was the subject of significant 2019 SHOT Show buzz when the Optika6 lineup was unveiled. For 2020, Meopta answered with the Optika5 Rifle scope series.

Meopta's Optika5 Rifle scope lineup includes centerfire models in 2-10x42, 3-15x44, 4-20x44, 4-20x50, 4-20x50 RD and, most notably, a 2-10x42 rimfire model for the countless .22LR enthusiasts out there. All models feature 1-inch single-piece tubes, second-focal-plane reticles, rubber-armored metal turret caps, MOA-platform windage and elevation adjustability with 1/4-MOA per click, rear-facing magnification display, fast zero reset, a throw lever and crisp glass with MeoBright anti-reflective, MeoShield anti-abrasion and MeoDrop hydrophobic lens coatings.

Circling back to Meopta's Optika5 2-10x42RF, hunters can expect true premium optic performance specifically designed for their rimfire applications and perfectly suited for all manner of varmint and small-game hunting. Finally, something really big for that little cartridge fan.



TRIJICON HURON 3-12X40 HUNTING RIFLESCOPE

In 1985, Glyn Bindon unveiled the world's first tritium reticle as well as tritium illuminated iron sights and with it, the Trijicon brand. Thirty-two years later, Trijicon built its one millionth ACOG optic and is still going strong. While our industry suffered quite a loss with Bindon's death in 2003, it's tough to imagine that, considering Trijicon's continued innovation and reputation, he is not up there smiling down. And, as a hunter himself, Bindon would be quite a fan of the brand's new-for-2020 Huron Hunting Riflescopes.

Trijicon's new Huron riflescopes are available in four platforms: 1-4x24, 2.5-10x40, 3-9x40 and 3-12x40, with the latter, the 3-12x40, delivering a robust variable magnification sure to meet the needs of the lion's share of hunters out there looking for fairly close to longer-range shot opportunities. Huron 3-12x40 Hunting Rifle Scope features include rugged 6061 aluminum construction with a black-satin finish, 40mm objective lens, 3-12X variable magnification, 70 MOA windage and elevation adjustment range at 1/4-MOA per click and a second-focal-plane BDC Hunter Holds reticle. Dimensions: 12.55x2.26x2.26 inches. Weight: 17.8 ounces.



BUSHNELL ENGAGE 3-9X40 ILLUMINATED RIFLESCOPE

David Bushnell likely never imagined his company would reach the heights it has when he founded the company in 1948, but Bausch & Lomb did — Bushnell sold to B&L in 1971 and Bushnell Performance Optics was born, complete with riflescopes. Through a series of acquisitions and mergers since then, Bushnell's reins have landed in the hands of Vista Outdoor, and the company continues to develop well-respected hunting optic solutions. Case in point: the Bushnell Engage 3-9x40.

The Bushnell Engage Illuminated Rifle Scope features the vastly popular 3-9X variable magnification range with a 40mm objective lens, perfect for hunting enthusiasts who have hunted with this iconic variable-magnification-range/objective-lens-diameter combination for decades. Of course, today's technology delivers notably enhanced performance, the Engage included. The Engage 3-9x40 boasts 6061-T6 aluminum, black-anodized construction; coated glass with EXO Protection Barrier; second-focal-plane, illuminated, Multi-X reticle; capped turrets; fast-focus, tapered eyepiece and a 1-inch tube.





VORTEX RAZOR HD GEN III 1-10X24 FFP RIFLESCOPE

Since 2002, Vortex has been committed to delivering high-quality optics throughout an expanded price-point range to satisfy shooters of all experience levels. Vortex's Viper and Razor are the brand's most popular lines with first- and second-focal-plane optic solutions for demanding target shooters and hunters alike. Of the two lines, Razor has been the go-to for serious Vortex optic users. With this in mind, Vortex added yet another premium rifle scope to the lineup for 2020 — the Razor HD Gen III 1-10x24 FFP rifle scope.

As its name suggests, the Vortex Razor HD Gen III 1-10x24 features a 1-10X variable magnification range and 24mm objective lens and includes many of the same creature comforts enthusiasts have come to expect from Vortex's flagship lineup, including premium Japanese glass, a fine-etched reticle and a 34mm tube platform. The Razor HD Gen III 1-10x24 is available in EBR-9 MRAD and EBR-9 BDC MOA first-focal-plane illuminated reticle options; however, hunters are likely to lean toward the MOA option. The EBR-9 MOA reticle is calibrated to optimize holdover accuracy with 55- to 77-grain 5.56/.223 or 168- to 175-grain 7.62/308 Win. ammunition. The MOA version of Vortex's Razor HD Gen III 1-10 also features capped, low-profile turrets with 120-MOA windage and elevation adjustment ranges at ¼-MOA per click.



PULSAR TRAIL 2 LRF THERMAL RIFLESCOPE

Since prices across the thermal landscape have dropped from tens of thousands of dollars to MSRPs as low as \$1,800, customer interest in these specialized optics has heated up. There has never been a better time for thermal manufacturers to up their innovation game and for consumers to take the plunge.

Pulsar's reputation for customer service and developing premium consumer thermal and digital night-vision optics is well-earned. Combinations of crisp imaging and robust features, including brand-exclusive features like picture-in-picture, have resulted in incredible brand growth and have positioned the company alongside select few top-shelf thermal and night-vision producers. A perfect example of Pulsar's determination to deliver best-in-class thermal products was unveiled at the 2020 SHOT Show — the Trail 2 LRF XP50 Thermal Rifle Scope.

Based on the popular Trail LRF platform, the Trail 2 XP50 comes with many of the same feature sets, including picture-in-picture; integrated laser rangefinder accurate to 1,000 yards (+/- 1 yard) in zero light; multiple reticle styles; programmable rifle and distance profiles and more. The Trail 2 XP50 LRF boasts a rugged aluminum housing; IP67 waterproof-rated construction; full-color 1024x768 HD AMOLED display; rich, eight-color imaging palette; 640 microbolometer sensor; 12-micron pixel pitch; 2,000-yard detection range; multiple reticle styles and colors, built-in video with audio; integrated Wi-Fi connectivity to a smartphone or tablet via the Stream Vision App; variable magnification; three-second power-up and a removable, rechargeable, eight-to-10-hour battery.

BURRIS ELIMINATOR IV 4-16X50 LASERSCOPE

While Don Burris stood Burris Optics up in 1971, it took another four years for his first rifle scope, the Fullfield, to reach the public's eye. While Burris passed away in 1987, his optic legacy, first with Redfield, is littered with industry firsts, including a centered, non-magnifying reticle in variable-magnification riflescopes, first 4-12X and 6-18X scopes, Redfield's popular wide-angle rifle scope and, just a year after his passing, a Burris scout scope. Burris continued to innovate, and in 2006, the company introduced the first laser-scope with integrated laser rangefinding technology (LRF). With Burris' LRF foundation laid, the company dropped jaws and revolutionized riflescopes as we knew them to be in 2010 when they unveiled the Burris Eliminator, a rifle scope complete with rangefinding capability and automatic bullet-drop compensation. Now, in 2020, Burris continues to push the high-tech optic envelope with the Eliminator IV Rifle Scope.

With the Burris Eliminator III as a comparison, the Eliminator IV features a faster, enhanced ballistic calculator, Bluetooth laser activation and dramatically extended range, clear out to 2,000 yards — 25 percent farther than the Eliminator III. Based on your cartridge data, the Eliminator IV uses an integrated laser rangefinder to automatically determine your elevation and presents a red dot on the X96 reticle at your correct holdover while also assisting you with windage holds based on spin drift. As one might expect, the Eliminator IV boasts 4-16X variable magnification and premium glass; however, the optic also includes an inclinometer and what Burris refers to as a smart dope card. The Burris Eliminator IV is powered by two AAA batteries and also includes adjustable parallax, push-button illumination control with five brightness settings and a 50-MOA range of windage and elevation adjustments.





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Mossberg continues to remain a staple on gun counters everywhere.



BY MATT CRAWFORD

Every January at the hunting and shooting industry's annual SHOT Show in Las Vegas, one of the main topics of discussions centers around the health of the firearms industry. Gun sales are up. Gun sales are down. Company X is struggling. Company Y has changed its entire management team. Company Z is being bought.

Through it all, O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc., seems to carry on without major corporate drama. The company, entering its 101st year of existence, continues to add new firearms for both the tactical and hunting consumers and is a brand that retailers seek out to add to their stores. In 2019, Mossberg made a splash with its MC1sc handgun, and at the 2020 show it turned heads with new variations of autoloading shotguns and a compact version of the original MC1sc, called the MC2c.

In the wake of another successful SHOT Show for Mossberg, *Hunting Retailer* spoke with Linda Powell, who serves as director of media relations for Mossberg. An accomplished hunter, Powell has more than 23 years of experience in the firearms industry and has witnessed successful introductions of Mossberg products. She shared some insights on the steady and consistent direction of Mossberg and the hunting industry as a whole.



Linda Powell

HR: What is the overarching direction for Mossberg in the next three to five years? It seems like Mossberg is really introducing a number of new products, some quite different than we've seen before. What's the motivation for that?

LP: Mossberg continues to expand its market reach with line extensions and new firearms categories and platforms. Our entry into the handgun category is a great example. We looked at market research for new firearms purchases, which showed the largest-growing segment was concealed-carry handguns — in particular, those chambered in 9mm and .380. Diving deeper into the research, we determined that carryability (size and weight), features and price drove this segment of the market. Last year's introduction of the MC1sc reflects three years of development plus new patent-pending ideas combined with those highly desired features.



In addition to doing our homework with market research, we also listen to our dealers and customers. Highly coveted calibers, like the 6.5 PRC, 350 Legend and 450 Bushmaster, were all added to our bolt-action rifle lineup as a result of feedback from our sales reps.

HR: What are the areas for growth that Mossberg is looking at?

LP: One of the keys to success in the firearms industry is product innovation, so we remain focused on research and product development; often working years from the initial concept before bringing a new firearm to the market. This year's introduction of our new autoloading platform, the 940 JM Pro (pictured at left), is an example of a multi-year project. Our 930 autoloader has been a reliable platform for years, but thanks to our partnership with world-renowned competition shooter Jerry Miculek, we knew there were features that could be improved upon. With Jerry's input, we developed a new gas-operated, autoloading



“In addition to doing our homework with market research, we also listen to our dealers and customers.”

system that lessens required maintenance while delivering competition-level performance. As the MC1sc was an opportunity for growth in a new category, the 940 JM Pro provides an opportunity to grow and build upon our success in the autoloading shotgun market.



HR: How has the MC1sc been received?

LP: The MC1sc pistol launch was extremely successful. Honestly, I think no one in the industry, or consumers, ever expected Mossberg to enter such a crowded segment of the market. But it was perfect timing, coinciding with our 100th anniversary, for Mossberg to return to its roots with the release of the MC1sc. We continue to build on our engineering expertise in our core product categories while expanding into new territory. Following on the award-winning success of the MC1sc, we launched its bigger brother, the MC2c (compact) in January.

HR: How important is it for Mossberg to leverage its relationships with non-profits and conservation organizations?

LP: Mossberg has a long history of working with conservation organizations. Going back to the core values of the Mossberg family, four generations ago, the company's mission is to build high-quality guns that remain affordable, so everyone can enjoy the hunting and shooting sports. Conservation of our wildlife resources with focus on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation principles; firearms safety and hunter education training; and ensuring access to public lands so everyone can enjoy the outdoors and our hunting heritage serve as guiding forces.

Working hand in hand with partners like

NWTF, Ducks Unlimited and educational groups, like IHEA-USA (International Hunter Education Association) and YSSA (Youth Shooting Sports Association), is an essential part of our mission.

HR: How is Mossberg working to sharpen its brand, or position, in a competitive market?

LP: We continue to build on our 100-plus-year history of being America's oldest family-owned and operated firearms manufacturer, delivering innovative, feature-rich products, and by providing the highest level of customer service.

HR: How has the decades-long slide in the number of hunting Americans affected business?

LP: With the depth of our product lines across hunting, shooting sports, personal and home defense categories, we are not impacted as greatly as manufacturers that are strictly hunting-focused — though the decline in the number of Americans hunting is concerning. That's why efforts by many conservation and educational organizations to recruit, retain and re-engage hunters have become their top initiative and should be a focus of our industry. **HR**

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.





2020 NEW HYBRID HUNTING RIFLES





Many new firearms are meant to do more than one thing.

BY JOHN GEIGER

Manufacturers are betting that customer interest is still high in low-weight, accurate mountain rifle category. We saw that last year, and it's on the agenda for 2020 as well. Plus, they're thinking that customers want a gun that can be both a Precision Rifle Series competitor and hunting rifle. Sig Sauer's Cross — named because it's a crossover between shooting to hunting — is a great example of this kind of hybrid. It was a showstopper earlier this year at the SHOT Show.

Meanwhile, rimfires took some of the spotlight. The trend is super-accurate rifles, like CZ-USA's chassis gun, or design innovation, like Winchester's Wildcat.

And, over the last few years, your customers have grown accustomed to lower-priced bolt-actions that have crisp, quality triggers and shoot sub-MOA. They'll get more of that at the counters with several new bolt-actions that continue to deliver a lot of value for a sub-\$400 suggested retail.



HYBRID HUNTING/PRS RIFLES



1) SIG SAUER - THE CROSS

Here's a surprise. Sig Sauer's first bolt-action, The Cross, is a hybrid between precision shooting and hunting. This bolt-action is a great suggestion for any of your customers on the fence between a gun to use in PRS matches and a lighter gun for backcountry hunting. The design borrows some elements from Sig's crazy cool MCX AR platform, such as a fully adjustable stock that folds and an ambi safety, plus the precision of a one-piece aluminum receiver and bolt action. That's First Lite Cipher camo, by the way.

CALIBER: .308, 6.5 Creedmoor and 277 Sig Fury.

WEIGHT: 6.5 to 6.8 pounds

STOCK: Adjustable LOP, comb and folding

BARREL: 16 to 18 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: Collapses to 25 inches

MSRP: \$1,600 (preliminary, and could change)

2) SAVAGE - 110 ULTRALITE

Savage barrels are good, but they're not necessarily ultra-light. However, Proof Research barrels are. Savage collaborated with Proof again to develop this sub-6-pound mountain hunting rifle. It brings together Savage's reliable 110 action and AccuFit stock with Proof's carbon fiber-wrapped stainless barrel. This will be accurate and light in great long-range hunting calibers.

CALIBER: Eight calibers, including 28 Nosler and 6.5 PRC.

WEIGHT: 5.8 to 6 pounds

STOCK: Composite, Savage AccuStock

BARREL: 22 and 24 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 42.5 inches

MSRP: \$1,499

3) WEATHERBY - MARK V BACKCOUNTRY TI

Speaking of light, Weatherby's new Backcountry Ti is a great option for a customer looking for the lightest possible magnum production gun. It's a sub-5-pound rifle that shoots a new magnum cartridge called the 6.5mm Weatherby Rebated Precision Magnum, which will be stamped 6.5 WBY RPM. The company designed this cartridge rebated, that is, the base is narrower in diameter than the case. That way, it fits the smaller, lighter standard action bolt face, and that is where it shaves a lot of weight.

CALIBER: 6.5 WBY RPM

WEIGHT: 4.9 pounds

STOCK: Carbon fiber, 3-D Hex recoil pad

BARREL: 22, 24 and 26 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 46.125 inches

MSRP: \$3,349





4) BROWNING - X-BOLT MAX LONG RANGE

The X-Bolt Max Long Range is popular because, well, it's an X-Bolt, but also because of its highly adjustable Composite Max stock. The comb is fully adjustable, and the gun comes with a set of spacers to change the length of pull. It has a heavy Sporter barrel, but the gun, all told, weighs in at 8 pounds, 3 ounces. New for 2020 are two new calibers, 6.5 PRC and the 30 Nosler.

CALIBERS: 10, from 6mm Creedmoor to 30 Nosler
WEIGHT: 8 pounds, 3 ounces for short actions
STOCK: Composite, adjustable, with InFlex recoil pad
BARREL: 26 inches
OVERALL LENGTH: 46.125 inches
MSRP: \$1,299 to \$1,359

5) BENELLI - LUPO

Benelli, best known for shotguns like the Super Black Eagle, now aims to take a bite out of the centerfire market. The Italian company introduced the Lupo – Italian for wolf – a bolt-action, modular chassis rifle that sports high-end adjustability and recoil reduction. Of most interest to me is transfer of Benelli's superb Progressive Comfort recoil-reducing system; it's been proven on their shotguns and only makes sense to bring it to a rifle. The gun also has an array of shims and cheek pieces for the best possible fit, plus a sub-MOA guarantee.

CALIBERS: .270, .30-06 and .300-Win Mag.
WEIGHT: 7 pounds
STOCK: Synthetic black
BARREL: 22 to 24 inches
OVERALL LENGTH: 44.625 inches
MSRP: \$1,699

6) FRANCHI - MOMENTUM ELITE

This rifle could have gone in either Hunting-Hybrid or Budget categories. Its street price will probably hover around \$800, which is remarkable for a rifle of this quality. The Elite is the second generation of the Momentum, and they actually nailed the first gen when it came out two years ago. It shot lights out, with a great adjustable trigger. It made a huge impression on me right out of the box and on a New Mexico mule deer hunt. The original and the Elite are highly ergonomic to pair up with hunters' most common shooting positions. Franchi sweat the details, like recessed swivel studs that don't interfere with a shot from a shooting house window, for example. And now this Elite version is even more customizable with more shim and spacer options. They also replaced the original black with a Cerakote coating and hunting camo, like Realtree and True Timber Strata. It's a shooter.

CALIBER: .223, .308 and 6.5 Creedmoor.
WEIGHT: 7.1 to 7.5 pounds
STOCK: Synthetic, recessed swivel studs and hand hook
BARREL: 22 to 24 inches
OVERALL LENGTH: 44.25 to 46.25 inches
MSRP: \$849 to \$899



SUPER-ACCURATE RIMFIRES



7) CZ-USA - 457 VARMINT PRECISION CHASSIS

This is CZ-USA's first chassis rifle. The Varmint Precision is chambered only in .22LR and the aluminum gun is made for competition, like Practical Rimfire Challenge or National Rifle League 22 matches. But it's equally at home popping varmints from a bench. It has a five-round detachable mag and is threaded for a suppressor.

CALIBER: .22LR

WEIGHT: 7 pounds

STOCK: Composite adjustable

BARREL: 16.5 inches or 24 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 31.6 inches

MSRP: \$999

8) CHRISTENSEN ARMS - RANGER 22

Christensen puts a lot of their centerfire tech into the rimfire Ranger. The trigger is a Trigger Tech Remington 700 match-grade trigger. The 18-inch barrel is a carbon fiber tension barrel, and the stock also is carbon fiber, which helps keep the total weight to about 5 pounds. It ships with a sub-MOA guarantee at 50 yards. It comes in classic black with gray webbing and tan with black webbing.

CALIBER: .22LR

WEIGHT: 5.1 pounds

STOCK: Carbon fiber

BARREL: 18 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 38.25 inches

MSRP: \$795



9) WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS - WILDCAT 22LR

This little rimfire was introduced last year as a SHOT Show special but wasn't widely available until now. It's built to be accurate, with an 18-inch button-rifled chromoly steel barrel. It has a detachable 10-round mag and the bolt stays open after the last round. The Wildcat also has a quick-detach action that comes right out of the bottom of the gun for easy cleaning, and you can clean the barrel from the back end, which keeps the action cleaner. Clever.

CALIBER: .22LR

WEIGHT: 4 pounds

STOCK: Composite black

BARREL: 18 inches

OVERALL: 36.25 inches

MSRP: \$249



BUDGET BOLT-ACTIONS



10) SAVAGE ARMS - A22 BNS-SR

One of the best things about this rimfire isn't actually a new feature. It's the user-adjustable AccuTrigger. All rimfire shooters appreciate that they can customize the trigger weight, and many like the blade safety concept as well. We all know how important a trigger pull is to accuracy. Another way to get more accuracy is through a good barrel. Savage is using very good barrels, and this one is an 18-inch button-rifled carbon steel. The blow-back action is quick and reliable.

CALIBER: .22LR

WEIGHT: 6.6 pounds

STOCK: Laminate wood, Forest green

BARREL: 18 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 37 inches

MSRP: \$479

11) THOMPSON/CENTER - COMPASS UTILITY

The Compass line has been around a few years now, and there are now various upgrades to the rifle, such as the Compass II line, which came out last year. But if your customer is looking for a budget rifle that has a MOA guarantee and a low price tag, show them the Compass Utility. It has a flush-fit mag, target crown and 60-degree throw, which is good for a budget rifle. If your customer prefers a better trigger, suggest an upgrade to the Venture II, which has T/C's next gen trigger.

CALIBERS: Six calibers, from .223 to .30-06

WEIGHT: 7.25 pounds

STOCK: Black composite

BARREL: 21.125 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 41 inches

MSRP: \$325

12) MOSSBERG - PATRIOT PREDATOR IN 350 LEGEND

Mossberg is noticing that hunters want straight-walled cartridges for hogs and deer in states that don't allow necked cartridges for big game. Last year, Winchester Ammo brought out the 350 Legend – a fast straight-wall that is made to throw less recoil and still offer excellent penetration on game. The Patriot rifle is a practical gun. It helped me drop a 150-inch Kansas whitetail at 306 yards in .30-06. The bolt-action has a straight comb, 22-inch barrel and a user-adjustable blade trigger.

CALIBER: 350 Legend

WEIGHT: 6.5 pounds

STOCK: Synthetic black

BARREL: 22 inches

OVERALL LENGTH: 42.75 inches

MSRP: \$396



“Over the last few years, your customers have grown accustomed to lower-priced bolt-actions that have crisp, quality triggers and shoot sub-MOA.”



RRA LAR Chambered in Straight-Wall 350 Legend

Rock River Arms has chambering their reliable LAR-15M in 350 Legend, which gives you a reliable, modular AR-style hunting rifle in the newest straight-wall cartridge. The LAR has a 16-inch barrel, full-length top rail for optics, 10-round magazine and six-position stock. All that, and it's only 6 pounds. No more excuses that an AR in a deer-sized caliber is too heavy to lug around the field or into the tree stand. You could almost look at this as a hybrid as well, although 350 is no PRS caliber. Now, if we could only figure out how to chamber a round without a clang!

CALIBERS: 350 Legend
WEIGHT: 6.8 pounds
STOCK: Six-position, RRA Operator CAR
BARREL: 16 inches
OVERALL LENGTH: 33 inches, retracted
MSRP: \$1,100



Henry Rifles Combine Popular Tube, Side-Gate Loading

It's amazing that a rifle like a Henry lever-action, that's based on the original 1860s repeater, can still handle innovation. Yet here comes another new hybrid of sorts: Henry recently introduced the Side Gate Lever Action in .45-70, which combines their removable tubular magazine and a side-gate loader. Folks at Henry said customers demanded it. It lets you fill the mag and top it off after you fire, which makes total sense. They also have a similar gun in .410 that will be available this year. Power to the people!

CALIBER: .45-70
WEIGHT: 7 pounds
STOCK: American walnut
BARREL: 19.8 inches
OVERALL LENGTH: 38.1 inches
MSRP: \$1,077



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AN INTRODUCTION TO AIRGUNS FOR RETAILERS

ARE YOU STOCKING AIR RIFLES?
MAYBE YOU SHOULD BE.





BY JIM CHAPMAN

Mention airguns and most of us think of the Daisy Red Ryder or the Sheridan multi-pump of our youth. But in the global market, airgun technology has developed at a rapid pace, and the American market has seen explosive growth over the last few years. Some of this growth has been driven by plinkers and competitive shooters, but the primary driver has been hunting. Regulations have evolved across much of the country, permitting airguns to be used for everything from squirrels to bears.

This article will focus on the hunting segments, discussing the types of guns and powerplants being used, the calibers currently available, appropriate projectiles and the power levels these guns can generate. Then we'll wrap it up by taking a look at some popular guns and the current market landscape.





Most states allow some form of small game, varmint, and/or predator hunting with airguns. In recent years, several jurisdictions have permitted airguns as a legal method of take for deer and other large game. Several states allow deer hunting with airguns during the rifle season, and more are implementing or considering new laws that favor airguns every year.

The spring-piston airguns most commonly found in retail shops today are at the lower end of the pricing spectrum.

These rifles are generally priced at \$150 to \$300 and offer a decent build quality and level of performance. This type of rifle is the cornerstone of the retail-oriented airgun market and is suitable for small-game hunting and pest control. The typical rifle in this segment is a break-barrel spring-piston action in .177 or .22 generating power in the 12 to 25-ft./lb. energy (FPE) range. These products serve their purpose and are often the only airguns a prospective customer has experience with.

In the growing ranks of dedicated airgun hunters, a different category of gun is becoming popular: higher-end rifles implementing either spring piston or precharged-pneumatic (PCP) mechanisms. These products are priced in the \$300 to \$2,500 range and tend to be more refined,

with PCPs generally being more expensive. Perhaps it's counterintuitive to those unfamiliar with airguns, but they are not necessarily inexpensive. There are several reasons for this, especially when discussing PCP rifles: the manufacturing tolerances are tighter, the scale of economies is smaller, and production of many of the best rifles come from countries in which a premium is placed on high-end products. However, they are far less expensive to shoot on an ongoing basis.



There are several power plants in production, including CO2, spring piston (both mechanical and gas-piston configurations), and precharged pneumatics. While CO2 is one of the best-known power plants, they are generally low power and used mostly for informal plinking guns, often in replicas of popular firearms. It's conceivable these guns could be used for pest control, but they are rarely used for serious hunting. Unlike a firearm, airguns store energy in the gun and not the ammunition, so selection of the powerplant is very important in a hunting gun.

← A .25 caliber PCP air rifle is suitable for small to medium game out to 100 yards.

↑ The Fx Crown is one of the author's favorite high-end PCP rifles.



PCP rifles and spring-piston rifles, also known as “springers,” are preferred for hunting. Each of these have advantages and disadvantages. Springers are simple to operate, relatively inexpensive and self-contained, requiring no additional charging gear. On the downside, they are more difficult to shoot accurately, are hold-sensitive, they have a more limited power output (compared to PCPs) and they are more suited to smaller calibers such as .177 or .22.

In business, remember that customers will require a source to fill their guns with high-pressure air. Several solutions exist. Hand pumps that look like bicycle pumps on steroids are the least expensive. SCUBA or carbon fiber (CF) air tanks can be filled at paintball or dive shops and are another option, while some customers will prefer to charge guns or tanks using a compressor. The price of compressors has dropped significantly, and if your shop builds a large enough customer



PCP airguns have an onboard air storage system, usually an under-the-barrel reservoir or a bottle in the forestock or buttstock of the gun, that is charged from an external air supply at high pressure. The onboard air storage contains enough air to power multiple shots. Some small-bore PCPs might store enough air to generate more than 100 shots before a refill is required, down to a couple shots for some big-bores. This is dependent on the volume and pressure of air stored and the amount of air used on each shot. Some guns start to drop velocity with each shot, as the pressure in the air tank drops, and these PCPs are said to be unregulated. Regulated guns use a mechanism to reduce the pressure to a consistent and specific level so that every shot uses the same pressure, and consistency from shot to shot is significantly improved.

The disadvantages of the PCP are that they tend to be more expensive and require external fill equipment. The advantages are that PCP rifles tend to be very accurate, they can be very quiet, they can generate power up 800 fpe or more of energy, they work well with large calibers, they are mostly recoilless, and many have adjustable power. Adjustable power in an airgun serves the same purpose as handloading for a firearm, allowing the shooter to tailor the performance based on application or projectile.

If you plan to sell PCP air rifles through your

↑ A conventional spring piston rifle can be an excellent choice for small game.



base, providing a service to fill tanks can provide an additional revenue stream.

Small-game and pest-control hunters usually employ springers and PCP guns in the .22- to .25-caliber range generating 15 to 50 fpe. These guns can be quite accurate, and many PCPs are capable of half-inch accuracy at 60 yards, delivering more than enough energy to drop small game on the spot. Many guns come equipped with a shrouded barrel that reduces the sound signature to a whisper. Besides being quiet, the ballistic characteristics are such that while the gun is pro-

Airguns to Consider Stocking

Here are a few airguns you might consider carrying that span the range of applications and price points. As an example of a low-cost, high-performance spring-piston rifle, one of my favorites is the Walther Parrus, a break-barrel rifle available in .177 and .22 generating velocities over 1,000 fps (in .22). The gun is smooth-shooting and easy to cock, and it offers great performance in a fairly refined package that can be sold for less than \$300. It is available with either a wood or a black synthetic stock that is ergonomic and functional.

For a high-end heirloom-quality springer, I really like the Weihrauch HW 80 – it's a proven German design that is low-recoil with a smooth firing cycle. The gun generates substantial power in both .177 and .22, but what sets this gun apart for me is the fit and finish of wood and metal components. The traditional styling of the sporter stock results in a classic that will both last and hold its value. I often see these guns avail-

able around the \$700 mark.

Next is the PCP segment. A couple of my favorites in this category include a traditional sporter-style rifle from Crosman called the Benjamin Marauder, which is priced at \$540, and a bullpup from Hatsan called the FlashPup, priced at \$420.

Stepping into the high-end enthusiast PCP space, there are several rifles from well-respected global players, such as Daystate, Brocock, AirArms and FX. My personal favorites are the FX Crown, a lightweight rifle available in .177 to .30 caliber (with an arrow barrel and slug option) starting at \$1,600, and the Brocock Bantam Sniper, available in .177, .22 and .25, which can be found starting at \$1,400. And the last category is the big-bore PCP. This market is driven by the U.S. consumer, regardless of where they are manufactured. Many of the rifles are produced by boutique builders as well as a few of the major airgun manufacturers. My current favorite of the uber-powerful big bores is the Hatsan Piledriver, which is priced around \$1,190 and is available in both .457 and .50 caliber. Generating over 700 fpe and 800 fpe respectively, this rifle is ergonomic, accurate and consistent, and it hits like sledgehammer. This is a rifle that can take just about any big-game species in North America or large-plains game in Africa.



ducing knockdown power at 60 yards, the energy is spent at 100 yards. This permits these guns to be safely used for hunting and pest control in more built-up areas.

Medium-sized game and predators are the ideal quarry for the mid-bore PCPs, shooting .30- to .35-caliber pellets in the 75 to 175 fpe range. These guns are often used for hunting coyotes inside 75 yards, where their limited carrying range and low report make them a useful tool for hunting suburban environments, which often hold large populations of game with little hunting pressure.

Big-game hunting with airguns has evolved in North America over the last decade. As mentioned earlier, many states now allow deer, hogs, antelope, javelina, bear, turkey and other big game species to be taken. In my view, this sport falls somewhere between blackpowder and archery in terms of range and approach. Big game airgunning requires closing in to 60 to 100 yards and making the right shot placement — it has the challenge of archery but requires traditional marksmanship skills. Guns being used for this type of hunting are always PCP (often a legal requirement) usually in .35 to .50 caliber generating 215 to 800 fpe.

Airguns that shoot arrows are gaining a great deal of interest and are being produced by several manufacturers such as Hatsan, Umarex, Crosman, FX and Air Venturi. Some of these guns only shoot arrows, while others support interchangeable barrels that allow the gun to be used for either standard pellets or arrows.

The airguns you should stock in a retail shop depends on your customer demographics and the level of support you plan to provide. Spring-piston airguns for small-game hunting and pest control are the easiest segment to



↑ This wildebeest was taken with the .50 caliber Air Venturi AirBolt in South Africa.

support, and products from the likes of Hatsan, Umarex, Gamo and Crosman all have extensive product offerings. If you want to up the level but still not include PCPs, higher-end springers from RWS, Weihrauch, Walther and Diana would make a good addition to the product mix.

There is a growing demand for PCP rifles as customer awareness grows, but there are few brick-and-mortar shops addressing this demand in the U.S. The primary barriers to selling PCP airguns are a lack of product knowledge

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by most retailers, the need to provide the accessories to charge these guns, and the inventory costs associated with often-expensive niche products. The first can be addressed with a little homework. The complexity and cost of filling gear is coming down with many products (compressors, tanks and pumps) becoming readily available, and there are many PCPs available from large-scale manufacturers that have brought the cost of PCP technology into a much more affordable range.

High-end guns and most big-bore models are currently handled primarily by online specialty



Pellets and Accessories

There are several good pellets to choose from, produced by H&N, RWS, Gamo and Crosman. But the pellets I use most frequently are from JSB. The JSB Diabolo Exact series are very well made and consistent, shooting well out of most of my guns. I tend to stick to lead Diabolo pellets with a round head for hunting, though some of the new hollowpoint designs such as the innovative JSB Hades circumvent the accuracy issues often found with hollowpoints. These pellets are accurate and expand well while achieving very impressive terminal performance.

Airgun scopes, besides all the typical requirements, need to have a very good system of aimpoints and an adjustable objective correction. The reason for the aim points is that airguns have a significant trajectory that can affect the point of impact over very short increments in range. And the AO correction is predicated on shooting at closer ranges at high magnifications. Several manufacturers have a line of airgun optics, such as Hawke, Leapers/UTG, MTC and Athlon. These days, I find myself using the first focal plane MTC Cobra model. What I like about this scope is that the glass-etched crosshair and FFP reticle allow a wide range of magnifications to be used without affecting the aimpoints. I also find the glass has very good low-light capabilities, all of which make it ideal for the airgun hunter.

– Jim Chapman

vendors that might or might not have a brick-and-mortar operation as well. These hybrid shops can support a dispersed customer base while addressing the local market with a physical presence. There are potential opportunities for general hunting retailers to formulate strategies to access these niche market and connoisseur products for their customers on a local basis.

The airgun hunting market is growing, both in

the scope and the number of participants. There are products currently available to address every application and every price point. As I've traveled around the country speaking with new airgunners as well as enthusiasts, lack of a venue where customers can look at, hold and discuss a purchase face to face is often cited as a limiting factor. I would suggest this also provides an opportunity for retailers! **HR**



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022020





OPTICS 2020: THE YEAR OF THE RANGEFINDER

In a world driven by technology, optics manufacturers raise the bar for 2020.

BY JACE BAUSERMAN

There are few items hunters covet more than quality optics, and having a wide range for customers to choose from is critical to growing your bank account. From January 21 to 24, I combed the aisles of 2020 SHOT Show in search of the industry's best. As I did, a single and undeniable theme emerged. In short, manufacturers are pushing the limits of optical design, especially when it comes to both stand-alone rangefinders and binoculars with rangefinding capability. The good news is that savvy manufacturers have developed a number of optics spanning a wide range of price points. Take a peek at what's to come and find some must-carry-on-your-shelf models.





1] LEICA GEOVID 3200.COM

A leap forward in rangefinding binocular design, Leica gives consumers its Geovid 3200.COM (\$2,999). Like other members of the Geovid family, the 3200.COM features legendary Leica glass, which guarantees excellent contrast and maximum light transmission. The big story, though, is the 3200.com's ability to pair with the Leica Hunting App. Using the app, hunters can quickly save ballistic profiles and then import them as needed. In addition, the app will link with a Kestrel, and because all of the ballistics happen on the Kestrel side, there is no long, drawn-out process with the rangefinder. The 3200.COM, of course, reads reflective targets out to 3,200 yards, but according to Leica engineers, the new rangefinding binocular also promises improved soft-target distances. www.leicacamerausa.com

2] LEUPOLD SX-4 PRO GUIDE HD

Leupold wanted to launch a spotter that provided an additional 30 minutes of glassing time. That's not an easy task, but the SX-4 Pro Guide HD's (\$1,040 to \$1,300) all-new Twilight Max Light Management System makes it possible. Engineered to reduce glare-producing stray light, this spotter is fitted with an oversized eyepiece that virtually eliminates eye strain, allowing Leupold lovers to stay behind the glass for extended periods of time. In true Leupold fashion, the spotter is built like a tank and is offered in a pair of models: 20-60x85mm and 15-45x65mm. Both SX-4 models are offered with a straight or angled eyepiece.

www.leupold.com

3] GERMAN PRECISION OPTICS RANGEGUIDE

New from the minds at German Precision Optics, the RangeGuide (\$1,778) is fitted with a Class 1 laser that gives users right-now readouts on reflective targets at distances up to 1.75 miles. Designed for those who get joy from testing their rifle's ballistics, the 6.3-inch-tall, 10x50mm RangeGuide ensures right-now readouts, and Scan mode provides three readings per second via the orange OLED display with nine levels of adjustable brightness. The ergonomic magnesium frame screams durability, and the unit weighs a mere 35 ounces. Those that wander off the path in search of big-game nirvana will appreciate the RangeGuide's 22.36 twilight deflection factor and the double-HD laminated 50mm objective lenses. Also, a hat-tipper is the fact that this rangefinding binocular sports diopter-focus adjustments on both the left and right side, and the diopter utilizes GPO's premium cut-brass gear-focused wheel system.

www.gpo-usa.com

4] MUDDY'S RANGEFINDER SERIES

Offered in a trio of models that include the LR650, LR850 and LR1300, Muddy's all-new series of laser rangefinders are fitted with 26mm glass and promise 6X magnification. The number following the name of each rangefinder represents the optics' maximum range of readability on reflective targets. Engineered with clarity, lowlight gathering and durability in mind, LR rangefinders are fitted with an IP54 rated lens, which protect internal parts from water, dust, debris and other rangefinder nightmares. Capable of measuring targets in yards or meters, the LR Series showcases an integrated scan mode, angle compensation and a litany of other sure-to-please features.

www.gomuddy.com





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5] VORTEX RAZOR HD 4000

Deeply rooted in optic lore, Vortex unveils a new rangefinder capable of reading reflective targets out to a distance of 4,000 yards. The Razor HD 4000 (\$730) boasts 7X magnification and is said by Vortex to boost target acquisition time and identification and provide a rapid yardage readout. This lightweight unit features Horizontal Component Distance, Line of Sight and Scan modes. Adding icing to this already sweet cake are four ranging modes: Normal, First, Last and Extended Laser Range. Optic lovers thrive on customization, and this solid-grip-in-all-weather rangefinder delivers it in spades.

www.vortexoptics.com

6] FLIR SCION 36MM

Getting a facelift for 2020 is Flir's Scion. While previous models sported a 13mm fixed lens, the newest member of the family sports a 36mm lens with manual focus. The detection range has also been boosted from 510 meters to 1,120 meters. An ergonomic monopod that fits nicely into the hand, the Scion 36MM features a new rechargeable ion-lithium battery. The unit will also run on older CR123 batteries. The Lock Span Mode is noted by Flir to create highly detailed images by eliminating unwanted temperature detection with a locked temperature range. The dials on top of the unit are large and easy to access, and the monocular will mount to a tripod.

www.flir.com

7] SIG KILO3000BDX

Sig never fails to disappoint, and 2020 will be no different. The Kilo3000BDX (\$1,440) and its Light-Wave DSP technology equal undeniable clarity and the ability to range medium-sized game at distances up to 1,500 yards. In addition, larger optics like trees and sizable brush can be detected at a maximum range of 2,000 yards. What about those reflective objects? Not a problem. The Kilo3000BDX provides a reflective readout out to 5,000 yards. Designed with what Sig is calling HyperScan technology, these rangefinding binos provide four range updates per second when the unit is in scan mode. In Line of Sight or Angle Modified modes, readouts are shown on a clear OLED display. With a fighting weight of just 31 ounces, the Kilo3000BDX operates on a CR2 battery and can be linked to other Sig Sauer optics. The unit is covered by Sig's "Infinite Guarantee" and electronics limited warranty.

www.sigsauer.com

8] NIKON LASERFORCE 10X42

Blending Nikon optical performance with rapid rangefinding technology is the name of the game for Nikon's LaserForce (\$1,200) 10x42. A breeze to set up, this system showcases ED (Extra-low Dispersion) glass and Nikon's ID Technology to compensate for incline and decline angles. Ideal for the rifle and bow crowds, the LaserForce boasts a bright, clear display with four-step intensity adjustment, making yardage readouts possible regardless of the lighting conditions. The LaserForce sports a long eye-relief design, and lead- and arsenic-free glass is used on all lenses and prisms.

www.nikonportoptics.com





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9] BUSHNELL PRIME

2020 was, in my opinion, the year of the rangefinder, and optics giant Bushnell didn't miss the party. The Bushnell Prime 1300 (\$170) and Prime 1700 (\$200) are winners. The numbers following the "Prime" branding, of course, depict each rangefinder's reflective-yardage capability. Bushnell testing notes the Vivid Display to be twice as bright as competing models, and the EXO Barrier coating bonds to the exterior of the lens surface to fend off water, oils, dust and debris. Other crowd pleasers include the fast-focus eyepiece, extra-large laser aperture window, ultra-wide band coating and fully multicoated lenses.

www.bushnell.com



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11] TRIJICON VENTUS

Built with Doppler Lidar Technology, the new-for-2020 Ventus (\$8,000) from Trijicon sets a new standard in rangefinding technology. Designed to improve long-range shooting, the Doppler Lidar engine is capable of measuring headwind, tailwind, crosswind and vertical wind components at six different distances. In addition, the rangefinder will range real-world targets out to a distance of 5,000 yards. The advanced polymer housing and scratch-resistant lenses are tested to Mil-Std810G standards, and the diopter ring is sizable and easy to adjust. A powerful 9X optical magnification and center cross-dot reticle marry perfectly to provide excellent target acquisition at extended ranges. The unit is powered by a pair of rechargeable lithium 18650 batteries, and the collimated lasers are said by Trijicon not to experience the divergence found with traditional lasers. This allows more energy to be returned to the detector for improved long-range performance.

www.trijicon.com



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10] PULSAR AXION SERIES

Designed by those looking to conquer the night, the Axion XM30, XM38 and Axion Key XM30 heed the after-the-sun-goes-down call. This trio of quality optics detect heat signatures from distances ranging from 950 to 1,700 (depending on model) meters during the day and night. The IPX7 magnesium-alloy body is waterproof, which allows for use even when Mother Nature is at her worst. Fitted with a Mini B-Pack system that features a four-hour-life rechargeable battery, these units can be charged on the go. Both the XM30 and XM38 models allow for video recording with 16GB of built-in memory. Video can be streamed and shared with the Stream Vision App.

www.pulsar-nv.com



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12] STEINER PEREGRINE 8X42

An 8X binocular loaded with features, the Peregrine 8x42 (\$552) features phase-coated high-contrast lenses and a fast-close focus that works to a distance of a mere two yards. The distance control allows the user to pre-set focus at a known distance, and you can bank on bright, true color images that are sharp and provide positive target identification.

www.steiner-optics.com



“Manufacturers are pushing the limits of optical design, especially when it comes to both stand-alone rangefinders and binoculars with rangefinding capability.”

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13] ZEISS VICTORY HARPIA 95

Designed for the hunt, Zeiss' Victory Harpia 95 (\$4,000) sports an unusual optical system that features a 3X wide-angle zoom, up to 70X magnification and an objective lens diameter of 95 millimeters. Focusing from rapid to ultra-fine is not an issue via the spotter's precise focusing with convenient automatic transition. A 72-degree wide-angle field of view through the entire 3X zoom range promises exceptional performances on both close and ultra-distant targets. The coveted Zeiss T* coating guarantees bright, high-contrast images regardless of outside lighting conditions.
www.zeiss.com

14] SWAROVSKI EL SERIES

Offered in a trio of models that include the EL 32, EL 42 and EL 50, Swarovski's EL Series (\$2,443 to \$3,154) contain fluoride-containing HD lenses along with an innovative optical design that minimizes color fringing while enhancing color fidelity. The bins feature a durable, ergonomic frame with a non-slip focusing wheel. The optics' new objective lens and eyepiece covers are manufactured from quality materials and protect internal components. Designed for those who wear eyeglasses as well as for those who do not, the EL binoculars combine the largest possible field of view with undeniable edge-to-edge sharpness.
www.swarovskioptik.com

15] LEUPOLD RX-FULLDRAW 4

Created specifically for the archery crowd, Leupold's Fulldraw 4 (\$550) measures just 7.5 ounces and has a length of just 3.8 inches. Compact and portable, this rangefinder combines the lightning-fast accuracy of Leupold's DNA engine with Archer's Advantage software. Enter your personal arrow ballistics, and viola – the Fulldraw calculates laser-accurate ranges based on your specific gear. Flightpath technology is used to determine if your arrow will clear obstructions between you and your target out to 150 yards, and the 6X magnification means easy target acquisition.
www.leupold.com

PRICE POINT

No one knows your customers like you do – that's a fact. If your shop is a must-stop for the high-end optic crowd, it will be tough to ignore items like Leica's Geovid 3200.COM and Trijicon's Ventus. If your shop services those wanting great optical performance but who don't want to dig into their kids' college funds, Sig's 3000BDX seems awfully tough to beat, as does Nikon's LaserForce 10x42. The Vortex Razor HD 4000 also provides a lot of bang for the buck. If you get a lot of consumers through your door seeking a budget-friendly rangefinder, Bushnell's Prime Time Series, Muddy's LR Series and Leupold's RX Fulldraw 4 are great models to point them toward.









National Shooting Sports Month - Get Involved!

National Shooting Sports Month is coming up in August. Is your shop ready to participate?

BY JENNIFER L.S. PEARSALL, NSSF DIRECTOR, PUBLIC RELATIONS

Throughout the month of August, our industry will celebrate the shooting sports during the fourth annual National Shooting Sports Month. This month is all about getting new people introduced to the shooting sports and showing them how safe and enjoyable they are. This is a chance to focus on your community – reaching out to people beyond your regular customer base and letting others see the value in your business and the resources you offer them – and the best part is that how you get involved is limited only by your imagination. Here are just a few ideas to get you started.



“Get to Know Us Open House”

Pick a Saturday, put some hotdogs and hamburgers on the grill outside, and encourage your regular customers to bring someone new with them to see what firearms and target shooting are all about. Seeing staff handle firearms responsibly and talk about them intelligently can go a long way toward easing apprehensions people unfamiliar with firearms often have — and can help spark the curiosity that turns them into customers.

Community Safety Day

Do you offer firearms safety and handling classes? That’s great — for people looking for that kind of instruction. But what if you had a day devoted to all sorts of safety classes such as first aid, CPR certifications, emergency preparedness for extreme weather events, hiking trail safety and wilderness survival? Instructional offerings like these draw in people from all walks of life to your store. Add to that a few officers from the local police or sheriff’s department to give some youth safety presentations, or hold a “Have Your Fire Extinguisher Checked Free Today” event with the local fire chief, and now entire families have an excuse to visit your store. Such events show people that you are truly invested in the community, and they give exposure to your store and your services to many who might otherwise have never thought to pay you a visit.

Non-Gun Promotions

As a firearm retailer, you naturally carry all sorts of inventory beyond firearms and ammunition. Take a look at some of your non-gun inventory and think about how that might appeal to someone who might not realize you stock and service those products.



This is truly a think-outside-the-box promotion — thinking outside your box as a retailer primarily of firearms. The truth is, you have products and services that appeal to a wide variety of people. Get them in your store for those products and services and you have your best chance of turning them into firearms customers as well.

For example, you could hold a canned-goods drive for your local food kitchen and offer a gift certificate, free firearms safety class or a coupon good for a discount on other instruction to anyone who brings in more than 10 items. Such an arrangement gets people into your store who, again, might otherwise not visit. It gives them a chance to see the good your business does, and by offering a *piiff* (gift certificate/free class/coupon) for participating, your staff has an unprecedented opportunity to do more than say “Thanks for dropping off that can of beans.”

For ranges, charity shoots are a no-brainer. They’re also a spectacular way to get new people involved in the shooting sports when that charity or cause has wide appeal locally. Animal shelters, public parks, hiking trails and other recreational spaces, scholarships for the area high school’s top graduates, even the local library, community center and boys’ and girls’ clubs are things that your neighbors and your neighbors’ neighbors can get behind.

While that common cause is a great starting point, it may not be quite enough to get someone who doesn’t know anything about firearms to your store or range. This is where you’ll want to get your current customers on board with NSSF’s +ONESM Movement, which is all about having

“NSSF will send you a collection of National Shooting Sports Month T-shirts and ballcaps — great for giveaways as door prizes, for match or tournament participants, any way you can think to reward your customers for visiting your business.”

You probably have at least one counter devoted to knives, for instance. Offering a free knife-sharpening service or a “Buy a New Knife and We’ll Sharpen Your Favorite Kitchen Knife Free” promotion during August would be a super way to see all sorts of new customers. How about your binocular case? A special sale advertised to backyard bird watchers, high school sports team parents or the area hiking club would be another smart way to drive new traffic to your store.

Charity Events

Gun owners are some of the most charitable people around, and letting other people know that is a great way to turn heads. But while national and global causes are sure to gather attention from the general public and are, therefore, certainly worth your time to consider, if you really want to seize the attention of the people in your community, pick a charity important to you and your neighbors.





with the proceeds going to purchase new helmets and jerseys for the team could be the ticket for doubling your customer base. And the husband and wife with the two foster kids? You can bet they'd bring a few minivans full of likeminded folks to your Steel Challenge shoot that raises funds for a new afterschool program for underprivileged children at the community center.

The list could go on and on. The key to success is knowing your customers, knowing what's going on in their lives beyond your store, and then putting that knowledge to work in a way that appeals to people outside your core customer base.

NSSF's Resources Boost Your Customer Participation

We mentioned NSSF's +ONE Movement in the paragraphs above. To help build the strength of this initiative, NSSF has created a number of re-

- **Selfie Frames** — The selfie is as popular as ever, and new retail and range customers using +ONE and National Shooting Sports Month selfie frames and posting to social media help spread the word to other non-shooters about how inclusive and enjoyable the shooting sports are. Remember to have your customers use the #PlusOneMovement and #LetsGo-Shooting hashtags when they post their selfies to all their social media platforms.
- **Online Marketing Toolkit** — A collection of free, downloadable +ONE logos, branding activation guides, scripted social media posts, digital ads, public service announcements and professionally photographed range and hunting images for use in marketing and social media communications.
- **+ONE Stickers and Challenge Coins** — exclusive to the +ONE toolkit, these mementos of a great day at the range or in the field can go a long way toward encouraging return activity. Give the stickers to those who've had a great first time on your range or taken their first firearms safety class, while also rewarding mentors who've taken the time to pay it forward with NSSF's special +ONE Challenge coins.



Grab Your Swag

When you create an event for National Shooting Sports Month, the first thing you'll want to do is list it on the national calendar at ShootingSportsMonth.org. There's no limit; list as many events as you wish. Once you do that, NSSF will send you a collection of National Shooting Sports Month T-shirts and ballcaps — great for giveaways as door prizes,

experienced shooters introduce someone new to the shooting sports.

Your customer who has the "I Love My Rescue Dog" sticker on their car window? Yup, they're your best choice for inviting all the other rescue dog people they know to your .22 fun shoot raising money for the local animal shelter. All those regulars who wear "Fighting Badgers!" sweatshirts in diehard support of the scrappy but underfunded high school football team? A "Shoot for the Goal Posts" sporting clays tournament

sources to help your retail store or range promote the movement both year-round and in conjunction with National Shooting Sports Month. +ONE resources (found at NSSF.org/plusone) and National Shooting Sports Month resources (found at ShootingSportsMonth.org) include:

- **Banners, Posters, Gun Mats and Tent Cards** — Retailers and ranges can display these on countertops, store and clubhouse walls and other high-visibility, high-traffic customer areas.

for match or tournament participants, any way you can think to reward your customers for visiting your business.

For more information on National Shooting Sports Month, NSSF's +ONE Movement and how your store or range can get involved, contact Ann Gamauf, NSSF Retail & Range Business Development Coordinator, at agmauf@nssf.org or 203-426-1320 ext. 247. She has lots of ideas to help you host a successful event and guidance on making the most of NSSF's free resources. **HR**



HUNTING RETAILER

GEAR ROUNDUP

HUNTING FIREARMS

BY GORDY KRAHN



1] WEATHERBY MARK V BACKCOUNTRY

Weatherby's Mark V Backcountry bolt-action rifle (\$2,499 to \$2,599) provides the craftsmanship and quality in stunning color combinations and true rugged dependability that embodies its name. Developed in conjunction with the Backcountry Ti, this model carries many of the same innovative technologies, including a carbon-fiber stock, 3D HEX recoil reducer, TriggerTech trigger and Accubrake ST. Chambered in the new 6.5 Wthby. RPM, the Backcountry weighs in at a mere 5.3 pounds and is built on a six-lug receiver. The Outback's fluted barrel, trigger guard and receiver are finished in tan Cerakote, while the bolt, bolt knob and safety are coated in graphite black Cerakote. The carbon-fiber stock sports green and tan sponge pattern accents. www.weatherby.com

2] SAVAGE RENEGAUGE WATERFOWL SHOTGUN

The American-made Savage Renegaug semi-automatic waterfowl shotgun (\$1,549) was built to handle the hottest high-brass and the mildest low-recoil shotshells with the same dependability. Its D.R.I.V. (dual regulating inline valve) gas system ensures excess gas vents before it drives the bolt, resulting in consistent ejection, less felt recoil and a lightning-fast cyclic rate for dependably fast split times. The Renegaug was designed to fit almost any shooter. Everything from length-of-pull to comb height and drop at the heel can be adjusted for an individual fit. It features a fluted barrel with a melonite finish and carbon steel ventilated rib with a red fiber-optic sight. It comes dressed head to toe in Mossy Oak Shadow Grass Blades camo. www.savagearms.com

3] ZANDERS SPORTING GOODS IMPALA PLUS SHOTGUNS

Zanders Sporting Goods, a leading national distributor of firearms, shooting accessories and hunting products, recently announced an exclusive shotgun offering from Istanbul Silah, a Turkish-based industrial corporation known for producing high-quality firearms. The Impala Plus line of shotguns (\$449.99 to 799.99) features TruGlo fiber-optic sights, additional comb riser (removable upon request), rotary locking six-lug bolt, high-pressure tested six-lug design barrel with chrome-coated exterior along with a turn-and-remove bolt handle. Zanders will be offering multiple variations of Impala shotguns that will include different color variations, finishes, barrel lengths and more. www.gzanders.com

4] CENTURY ARMS PSL 54 RIFLE

One of the most famous DMR (designated marksman rifle) rifles ever made, the Century Arms PSL 54 7.62x54R rifle (\$2,199.99) is packed with features. From the sleek skeleton stock to the tip of the muzzle brake, this powerful rifle is a head-turner at the range and out in the field. The PSL 54 has a laminated thumbhole stock and comes with one 10-round magazine and a Russian-made PO 4x24mm optic. Its 24.5-inch four-groove chrome-lined barrel has a 1:10 twist. This rifle is manufactured exclusively in Romania for import by Century Arms. Cleaning rod is not included. www.centuryarms.com





5] MOSSBERG PATRIOT LR HUNTER

Accurate long-range shooting requires a precision-built rifle with design features that provide a stable shooting platform. That's why Mossberg designed its new Patriot LR Hunter (\$721) stock with precise contours for comfort and accuracy. Its Monte Carlo elevated comb works in combination with the optics top rail to keep the shooter on target, and a special coating process provides a full-rifle micro-textured surface for a comfortable, firm hold. The LR Hunter stock has aluminum pillar bedding and its symmetrical profile with deep contoured grip wells provides a comfortable hold for left- or right-handed shooters. A flat-bottom benchrest forend provides a stable resting surface for long-range shots and tapers inward toward the barrel for easy handling. www.mossberg.com

6] SEEKINS PRECISION HAVAK ELEMENT

Seekins Precision has created a hybrid, ultra-lightweight hunting rifle in its Havak Element (\$2,795). Utilizing aerospace grade 7075 aluminum to encase high-strength stainless steel and a 21-inch Mountain Hunter contoured fluted barrel, this rifle weighs in at a mere 5.5 pounds. The Element has a 20 MOA integrated Picatinny rail as well as an integrated bubble level and recoil lug. Other features include a Timney Elite Hunter trigger set at 2.5 pounds, four locking lugs with a 90-degree bolt throw, M16-style extractor, threaded muzzle with thread protector, camo carbon composite stock, detachable carbon-fiber three-round magazine system, heat-treated alloy steel bolt head and much more.

www.seekinsprecision.com

7] CVA CASCADE

Long known for its quality muzzle-loading rifles, CVA has introduced its first ever bolt-action centerfire rifle – the Cascade (\$566.95 to \$657.95). The rifle's 4140 carbon steel barrel is finished in a rich matte blue or in Cerakote Flat Dark Earth and comes with a threaded muzzle, ready for a muzzle brake or suppressor. Its bolt design incorporates a 70-degree throw for smooth and fast operation and generous scope clearance, and a two-position safety is conveniently located for natural and instantaneous operation. The Cascade's adjustable synthetic stock is fiberglass reinforced and has a SoftTouch finish, available in either charcoal gray or Veil Wideland camo, for easy gripping, even in the harshest weather conditions. Available in a wide assortment of popular hunting calibers. www.cva.com

8] BERGARA PREMIER MOUNTAIN 2.0

A member of Bergara's Premier series, the Mountain 2.0 (\$2,150-\$2,250) is an extension of the gunmaker's Custom Rifle Series, but with standardized features for greater efficiencies in parts production and assembly – providing near custom performance at an affordable price. Bergara premium stainless-steel barrels receive a Cerakote finish and are coupled with the company's proprietary Bergara Premier action, featuring a nonrotating gas shield, coned bolt nose and sliding plate extractor. The Mountain 2.0 weighs in at just over 6 pounds and features include a 22- or 24-inch barrel, AG composite 100 percent carbon-fiber stock, adjustable TriggerTech trigger, a hinged floor plate and more. It's available in 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC, .308 Win., .300 Win. Mag., .300 PRC and .28 Nosler chamberings. www.bergara.online





9] THOMPSON/CENTER ARMS COMPASS II

One of four new-for-2020 Thompson/Center rifles is the Compass II (from \$405) – offering the reliable performance of the original T/C Compass rifle, but now equipped with Thompson/Center's Generation II trigger system with a crisp 3- to 4-pound pull. The Compass II is a feature-rich, budget-minded rifle that is packed with value. It has a threaded muzzle for use with compensators, muzzle brakes and suppressors, and scoped combinations are available with bore-sighted Crimson Trace 3-9x40mm optics. A Compass II Compact version is also available, featuring a 16.5-inch barrel with an interchangeable, extended butt pad for length-of-pull adjustments from 12.5 to 13.375 inches to fit a broad range of hunters and shooters. www.tcarms.com

10] RUGER HAWKEYE HUNTER

Built for versatility, style and performance, the Ruger Hawkeye Hunter (\$1,099) features a classic American walnut stock and free-floated, cold hammer-forged threaded stainless-steel barrel with a factory-installed Picatinny rail. It is now available in these right-handed chamberings: 6.5 PRC, 6.5 Creedmoor, .308 Win., .204 Ruger, .30-06 Sprg. and 7mm Rem. Mag. New left-handed models are chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor and .300 Win. Mag. The Hawkeye Hunter's non-rotating, Mauser-type controlled round feed extractor features a fixed blade-type ejector that positively ejects empty cases as the bolt is moved fully rearward, and its three-position safety is easily accessible and allows the shooter to lock the bolt or to load and unload the rifle with the safety engaged. www.ruger.com

11] H-S PRECISION PLR LONG RANGE HUNTING RIFLE

The PLR Long Range hunting rifle from H-S Precision (\$3,799) was specifically designed to meet the needs of long-range hunting and shooting enthusiasts. Its newly designed vertical grip stock with an ambidextrous palm swell provides a solid platform for the prone position shooter, and its magnum barrel contour allows for maximum stability and heat dispensation yet is light enough to pack to the most remote locations. The PLR weighs 8.2 to 8.9 pounds and with its 24-inch 10X cut-rifled fluted barrel measures 43.5 inches overall. It has a Pro Series 2000 action, full-length aluminum bedding block and detachable box magazine. www.hsprecision.com

12] DIXIE GUN WORKS KODIAK DOUBLE RIFLE

Dixie Gun Work's Kodiak double rifle by Italian gun maker Pedersoli (\$1,525) is the nostalgic big-game hunter's dream come true. This authentically styled side-by-side muzzle-loader – available in .50 and .54 calibers – harkens to days gone by, field tested in Africa and North America. Its classic American walnut half-stock sports a satin finish with checkering on its straight grip wrist and on the forend. Barrels are attached to the stock by a single barrel key, and the front action lock and hammers are engraved. Trigger guards and breech plug tangs are color case hardened. Other features include double triggers, a bead-style front sight on a ramp and two folding adjustable rear sights. www.dixiegunworks.com





13] TRADITIONS NITROFIRE

Traditions Firearms has partnered with Federal and Hodgdon to make a safer, more reliable and more consistent-shooting muzzleloading rifle. The new NitroFire (MSRP pending) is the only muzzleloader that uses the new Firestick from Federal – an encapsulated polymer powder charge loaded with clean-burning Hodgdon Triple Eight powder. The NitroFire is designed so that the Firestick can be loaded from the breech, while the bullet is still loaded from the muzzle. This makes the powder totally impervious to moisture and the elements and provides for fast, effortless loading and unloading. The NitroFire features an ultralight 26-inch chromoly steel fluted and tapered barrel with 1:28-inch twist rifling, Dual Safety System and Traditions' new Elite XT trigger system.

www.traditionsfirearms.com

14] DIAMONDBACK DB10 6.5 CREEDMOOR

The DB1065CDMB from Diamondback Firearms (MSRP pending) – chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor – features a 20-inch medium 416-R stainless steel fluted barrel, rifle-length gas system with pinned gas block, and shot-peened, magnetic particle inspected mil spec 8620 carrier. It utilizes 7075-T6 aluminum receivers, Diamond 15-inch M-LOK anti-rotation handguard, MOE-K2+ grip and MOE carbine stock, and it comes with a Diamondback muzzle brake and 2.5-pound single-stage trigger. The DB10 is available in black and Flat Dark Earth and represents value and versatility at an affordable price.

www.diamondbackfirearms.com

15] MASTERPIECE ARMS ULTRA LITE HUNTER SS

Weighing in at just 7.5 pounds, the MasterPiece Arms Ultra Lite Hunter SS (\$2,999–\$3,600) is purpose-designed for on-the-go hunting applications. It utilizes the BA Ultra Lite chassis, which is machined on MPA's CNC Horizontal Machining Centers to exacting tolerances from 6061 aluminum and includes a built-in inclinometer, thumb notch, lower-mounted Picatinny rail and spigot mount. The Ultra Lite Hunter includes a precision-drilled, reamed and honed MPA 416 stainless hand-lapped barrel, and its buttstock comes with an adjustable cheek riser, length of pull and bag rider. Multiple colors are available in its Cerakote finish, and the rifle is available with a folding or non-folding stock.

www.masterpiecearms.com

16] REMINGTON MODEL SEVEN THREADED – MOSSY OAK BOTTOMLAND

Built for speed, made for tight places, Remington's Model Seven Threaded (\$1,595), now cloaked in Mossy Oak Bottomland camo, is considered by many riflemen to be one of the finest dense-cover, factory-made rifles in America. Its petite profile – 16.5-inch barrel and weighing only 5.5 pounds – makes it a great outback gun or for hunting in close quarters. It features the same legendary strength as the Model 700 action "three-rings-of-steel," with the bolt face, barrel and receiver encasing the cartridge head and its cylindrical receiver design providing a consistent bedding area in the stock. Remington's SuperCell recoil pad, 20 MOA Picatinny rail, X-Mark Pro externally adjustable trigger and threaded barrel round out the package. www.remington.com





HUNTING RETAILER

2020 SHOW

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Inaugural Hunting Retailer Show off to a promising start

Didn't make it to the first Hunting Retailer Show? Here's what you missed.

BY HILARY DYER

The 2020 Hunting Retailer Show, held at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee, on March 9-10, represented the debut of the new trade show.

The idea for the show was born in 2019, when Jeff Bruss, president of COLE Expos and COLE Publishing, which owns Grand View Outdoors, identified a need for a hunting-specific trade show.

"I'd been to multiple shows over the past few years, and they were either not targeting the hunting market at all, or they were specifically targeting one type of hunter," he said. "The hunting industry is much more than just guns and archery equipment, and we wanted to showcase it all. Even more disappointing are outdoor shows that don't include the hunting market at all, concentrating solely on the camping, climbing, hiking, biking side of things. Hunting is a strong market, and we intend to proudly represent that through this show."

COLE Expos, with 40 years of trade show management, teamed up with Grand View Outdoors' business-to-business titles (*Hunting Retailer*, *Shooting Sports Retailer*, *Tactical Retailer*, *Recreational Retailer*, *Bait & Tackle Business* and *Archery Business*) to promote and launch the event.

"Our brands, teams, audience and content lanes all live and breathe in this hunting community," said Derrick Nawrocki, President and Publisher

of Grand View Outdoors. "One of our main goals for this show was to provide an engaging and valuable face-to-face opportunity for the B2B hunting community to get together and gain ground. Operating any business in today's environment can be extremely challenging. We understand that and plan to leverage our media platform and trade show expertise to drive this show forward and make it a must-attend event for exhibitors and retailers alike."

Aside from the normal challenges inherent to a first-year launch, the Hunting Retailer Show also faced external complications: a tornado devastated parts of Nashville just a week before the show, and fears of the spreading Covid-19 virus kept some attendees and other participants away. The IWA show in Germany, scheduled to overlap the Hunting Retailer Show, actually postponed their entire event due to virus fears.

Nevertheless, the Hunting Retailer Show went on, with about 40 exhibitors (a full list of exhibitors can be found in the sidebar). In addition to the opportunity to place orders, make contacts, collect leads and ink contracts, participants reported that they enjoyed the amount of one-on-one time they were able to experience with dealers, media and even fellow exhibitors. "I spent 30 minutes talking in-depth with one exhibitor," a retailer reported. "You just don't get that kind of time and interaction at the huge shows."



Education

The show also offered a variety of educational seminars that were very informative and well-attended.

On Monday morning, Whitney Johnson, who works at the family-owned Danville Outdoors LLC in Danville, Ohio, gave a seminar on meeting the needs of female customers. She identified four primary categories of women who will walk into your store and shared information on how to meet each category's needs as well as how to identify which category a given shopper might fall into. Whitney's three big takeaways were:

1. Never make assumptions about what a woman is looking for.
2. Pink is not a strategy. Focus on fit and usability.
3. A gender-balanced sales staff is ideal if you're able to achieve it (understanding that this isn't always possible).

Also on Monday morning, Boston-based patent attorney Gary Lambert gave an excellent talk on trademark, patent and copyright law. He was a wealth of free legal information about how to obtain a trademark, what a trademark and patent does and does not allow you to do, and what is considered infringement. A couple of Gary's big takeaways:

1. In trademark law, first use rules the day. If you trademark something and it turns out another company has been using that phrase or design longer than you in a similar manner, their "first use" generally wins over your trademark.
2. To get a patent, your idea must be "novel" and "not obvious," and a utility patent is better than a design patent, although it's harder to get.
3. A composition (piece of writing or music, a photo, website content) is copyrighted the moment you create it, but you can only protect your copyright if you register it.
4. Never send a cease-and-desist letter.

Before lunch on Monday, Audience Sherpa founder Tim Glomb gave a seminar on building and managing your database. With social media turning into a pay-to-play platform, Tim described social media as "A nice-to-have, not a must-have," and shared that email outperforms social media by 180 percent.

Tim shared the example of Bowtech and how that company now values its data higher than they value their physical manufacturing facilities. "They're no longer a manufacturer," Tim



said. “They’re data managers.” Tim also shared simple methods that dealers can use to grow their database through surveys and giveaways, reminding listeners that, “Your database is the ultimate focus group.”

Eric Wille gave a Monday-afternoon seminar about retail and point-of-sale (POS) technology. He spoke about the pros and cons of an on-premises versus a cloud-based system, why you should consider upgrading your POS system, or why you should invest in one if you’re not already using one. The ideal POS system can improve your retail operations by:

1. Trimming excess labor that was once dedicated to managing inventory
2. Keep you up to date on exact inventory numbers
3. Offer better reporting across multiple stores or locations
4. In some cases, the right POS system can integrate with the eNICS and e4473 systems for e-signatures and e-storage.

On Tuesday morning, William Napier of the National Shooting Sports Foundation gave a seminar on securing your store. The NSSF runs a number of programs that can help you as a retailer prevent theft by complying with ATF regulations, training your staff in security measures, making your range OSHA compliant, and designing and implementing general security measures. Some of William’s takeaways:

1. Check out operationsecurestore.org for an FFL Risk and Security Self-Assessment you can take to determine where you need to improve your security.

2. Visit nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention to learn how to talk to people about firearms suicide prevention and even what to do if a tragedy occurs in your store.
3. Take a look at dontlie.org for information about how to spot a straw purchase and what to do if you suspect one. Remember: You have the right to deny any firearms purchase for any reason whatsoever, and you do not have to be able to articulate why.

Later Tuesday morning, Chris O’Hara from Bonnier Corp. gave a lecture on Successful Exhibitor Sales & Marketing Strategies to help retailers get the most of their attendance at consumer shows. His key points:

1. Your goal as an exhibitor is to market your store and move product – new product as well as old, clearance and discontinued merchandise.



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2. Maximize your reach by promoting your participation in the show, local advertising, giving out show offers that can be redeemed in-store, and utilizing manufacturer and your own store's pro-staffers.
3. Use your time at the show to create new relationships with sales reps, find new manufacturers and distributors, find new speakers or store pro-staffers, and form relationships with other like local business (such as the local ATV or truck dealership).

Finally, Tuesday afternoon's seminar was by Nathan Dudney, who spoke about the rise of world-class manufacturing in the firearms and munitions industry. For a very long time, guns and ammunition were essentially manufactured the same way. When the Japanese auto manufacturers started introducing new manufacturing techniques in the 1960s through the 80s, things began to shift. When the economy tanked in 2008, many of the top auto manufacturing managers and machinists were looking for work at a time when the firearms industry was selling more guns than they ever had, thanks to President Obama's "greatest gun salesman of all time" reputation. That allowed some of the gun and ammo manufacturers to pick up manufacturing experts from the auto industry, and in turn, production began to shift to things like LEAN manufacturing and the 5 S method. Automation increased and we saw advances in standards.

Exhibitors and Attendance

Though coronavirus fears did keep some attendees and even a few exhibitors away, the overall vibe of the show was very positive, with exhibitors enthusiastic about the business they were able to get done and eager to return to the show in 2021.



The exhibitor list showed a wide variety of products and services, with software companies like Celerant, Coreware, *AmmoReady* and *TriTechRetail.com*; archery companies like Spot-Hogg and T-Bird Archery, tactical-leaning companies like ATN and EOTech, traditional hunting brands like Kenetrek Boots and Alpine Innovations, distributors like Sports South and Davidsons, and some newer, smaller brands like Hunter's Blend Coffee and Zone Repellants — as well as many more.

Dates and location for the 2021 Hunting Retailer Show are being determined as we speak. Keep an eye on this magazine and our websites, *huntingretailer.com* and *huntingretailershow.com*, for updates. We hope to see you at the even bigger and better 2021 show. **HR**

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Company Profile:

Veil Camouflage

The story of Veil Camo, LLC begins with, "One day in a treestand ..."

BY BILL MILLER

Any day in a treestand is full of possibilities. When you climb up, there's always the thought, "today could be the day." The reality of hunting is there are far more days of staring at an empty stage on which the main character never makes an entrance. But as every deer hunter also knows, the real success of a day in the stand doesn't depend on seeing the buck of a lifetime. The time spent alone in a tree can be productive in many other ways.

Joseph Skinner, the founder and designer at Veil Camo, knows that as well, perhaps better than any other. It was a slow day in the stand when a completely new way to design camouflage came to him.

Quick History

Skinner says, "I was whitetail hunting in the Hudson Valley of New York in the fall of 2010. The hunt itself wasn't particularly exciting or interesting in any way. In fact, I was sitting in that treestand, seeing zero activity all day. I spent the time observing my surroundings and my mind started to drift. Then I had a sudden moment in which I could start to see the patterns in the natural world around me. This totally inspired me to figure out how this could be applied to camouflage design."

From that slow day in the stand, time sped forward, and in less than 10 years, Veil Camo was begun and quickly became a success. Highlights include:

October, 2010 – The "aha" moment in the treestand.

November 2010-2012 – Heavy research and testing; Veil Camo officially formed.

2013-2016 – Patterns developed for First Lite and Leupold; more patterns developed for different applications and animal species.

2016 – Veil Camo, LLC formed with new partners.

2016 – Present – Fast growth with an increasing family of partners throughout the outdoor wear industry, including Walls, Prois, 5.11 and more.

The Veil Difference

The skeptical hunter or retailer looks at camouflage clothes hanging on the rack and wonders, "What's best?" and "Does it really make a difference?"

Skinner is quick to make it clear that there's a big difference in the patterns Veil Camo designs. He says, "We use a four-pillar design approach that incorporates camouflage theory,

mathematics, animal research and color. We aren't mimicking nature. We are using research and its application to fool the brain of the target species and give discerning consumers an advantage.

"Every pattern we create is purpose-built with the end-use and target species informing all of our design choices. We aren't recycling tired ideas seen for 20-plus years in the camo industry. We're building new and more innovative approaches to concealment. We are constantly pushing, refining, improving and looking for ways to push the state of the art."

Their Own Lingo

In checking the veilcamo.com website, one quickly recognizes this isn't grandpa's camo designer. It's there to be seen in the patterns for hunting, fishing and tactical wear. It's also there in the descriptions of Veil's patterns like GEO7, Cervidae, HID3, Cumbre, Alpine, Avayde and more. Hunters and retailers may come face to face with terms they've not encountered before:

Macro disruption – The ability to break up big shapes. This characteristic aids in ability to hide the human form.





Textural disruption – The break up that blends a pattern into the surroundings.

Scalable disruption – The characteristic allowing the different breakups to work together at any distance.

Disruptive mimetic coloration – Similar to textural disruption, this concept uses a combination of color and small shape based solely on the intended environment for the pattern.

Modification by mathematical algorithms – Nature looks the way it does because of specific reasons. They are accounted for by the mathematics of fractals (self-repeating patterns) and chaos (all the outside forces in nature that cause all irregularity). Veil consciously incorporates these theories into its patterns.

Cell-like distortions – Literally, shapes that look like cells that break up the pattern design.

Visual biases – Common natural shapes and patterns found in an environment.

Controlled color – Veil Camo analyzes the color of a target environment in a range of situations and weather conditions, then creates and utilizes a specific palette for the pattern.

more. This, along with their environment, influences what type of concealment will be effective.

“Range also has a big effect on concealment. Bowhunting will be considerably closer than rifle hunting. The eyesight of animals plays a big part in how we account for range as well. Environment also has a crucial part to play. We design shapes and patterning based on environmental bias. We can’t go putting a tree-stand pattern out in the plains. It’s just not going to function as well as it does in its intended environment.”

Veil’s GEO7 pattern applies these concepts

disruption, it works really well in a lot of places. Thanks to what we as humans can see and how we see, the color palette, the break-up concepts, and how it works in the environment are very different from how our hunting patterns work.”

Veil’s GEO7 and GEO7 NIGHT patterns are available on 5.11 tactical gear.

A Different Way

The camouflage design industry is sometimes accused of being based more on marketing than research, but Veil Camo has set out to change that notion. Skinner says, “It’s true that you can get away with wearing all kinds of things. This is no secret, but this accusation against the camo industry is the reason I decided to start doing this.

“So much of what the big camo companies actually do is more marketing than innovation. This lack of innovation and over saturation of the same old stagnant camo fueled my drive to make it all better. Powerful concealment makes a powerful difference; 100-plus years of research in camo and biology (both wildlife and human) backs that up. Our patterns are for the brands and consumers that rely on their gear to give them advantages.

“While the marketing element is important, we don’t position ourselves as a marketing company. We are a design company that brings better, more innovative concealment to brands with a totally different approach to the business model.” HR

“We aren't mimicking nature. We are using research and its application to fool the brain of the target species.”

Camo for Specific Purposes

The evolution of camouflage design began as one pattern for all uses and species. Since then, modest steps have been made in creating patterns for a scope of generic environments. Today, we have patterns for woods, marsh and prairies. Veil is driving the next phase of the evolution by designing patterns geared to specific environments and species.

Skinner notes, “Every species has a specific way it sees and perceives the world around them. This is because of their eyes, head shape and

to human vision, as well, to achieve optimal performance for tactical wear. Skinner explains, “The biggest differences come directly from how different species see color, perceive shape, see binocularly vs. monocularly, etc. Humans perceive shape really well, have some of the best eyesight with a lot of binocular vision, and also react to movement. Contrast this with any of the hunted species and you see some huge differences.

“GEO7 is special for several reasons. It’s visually unique, and because of the cell-based



HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS

BY GORDY KRAHN



SPOT HOGG FAST EDDIE XL

The Fast Eddie XL is Spot Hogg's latest addition to its Mobb series of bow sights. Built off the original Fast Eddie sight, the Fast Eddie XL features a newly designed 6-inch dovetail bar and quick-release bow mount – with special attention given to the bar design to maximize strength and minimize weight. The Fast Eddie XL is easy to remove and reinstall while still maintaining perfect sight marks. Other features include Rack Stop for a quick return to zero, MRT multi-pin housing, micro-adjustable second and third axis, coarse horizontal and vertical adjustments, solid 6061 aluminum construction and much more. Retail: \$289.99. www.spothogg.com

TIMNEY REMINGTON MODEL 783 TRIGGER

Timney has added a drop-in, replacement trigger for the Remington Model 783 to its extensive line of premium aftermarket triggers. Every component of the new trigger was engineered to elevate accuracy in the 783 Remington bolt-action rifle, featuring its new Sear Engagement Adjustment Lock design (SEAL'd) that ensures a user-friendly experience and is adjustable for pull weight and overtravel – from 1½ to 4 pounds – and features a trigger-blocking side safety to ensure reliability. The trigger's sear and shoe are precision-machined, heat treated to 56 Rockwell, with a black oxide trigger coating and an NP-3 plated sear for maximum lubricity for a lifetime of reliable performance. The Timney 783 is available in a right-hand, curved trigger shoe model. MSRP: \$164.95. www.timneytriggers.com



LEGACY SPORTS HOWA GEN 2 GAMEPRO

For hunters who prefer a threaded barrel to accommodate either suppressors or a muzzle brake, HOWA GamePro scoped rifle combos are now available with threaded barrels for all of its blued calibers. Additionally, stainless models in .308 Win. and 6.5 Creedmoor have been added to the lineup. For those who choose not to take advantage of the threaded barrel, a threaded cap is included. All HOWA 1500 series rifles come with a 22-inch barrel for standard chamberings and a 24-inch barrel for magnums. They feature a Hogue pillar-bedded overmolded stock, three-position safety and a Nikko Stirling GamePro 3.5-10x44mm scope. MSRP: Starts at \$699. www.legacysports.com

SITKA GEAR MOUNTAIN OPTICS HARNESS

Sitka took a systems-based approach to carrying optics, electronics and other accessories into the field with its new Mountain optics harness, which features a quiet magnetic one-hand-operated front flap for quickly deploying bins. Removable, modular side pockets can accommodate a rangefinder, GPS, cell phone or other accessories for quick and quiet access. The chassis has zippered stash pockets on the back for added secure storage. Numerous elastic pockets provide at-hand storage for a wind gauge and calls plus an internal lens cloth for keeping optics clean and sharp for glassing. The Mountain optics harness has a brushed polyester face fabric for silent stalks. MSRP: \$149. www.sitkagear.com



TETRA HANDS-ON WIPES

With a scientifically proven lead decontamination formula designed to be gentle and soothing, Tetra Hands-On wipes are offered in a convenient compact container and remove up to 99 percent of lead and other fouling residue from hands and forearms. Shooters can store this handy container of 50 wipes in their range bag and keep their hands free of lead and fouling during and after a day of shooting. FTI, Inc. pioneered synthetic lubricants over 30 years ago with its invention of the original Tetra gun grease, a fluoropolymer lubricant engineered to withstand the elements under a diversity of climates and conditions. Retail: \$7.99/50 count. www.tetraguncare.com



ALPS OUTDOORZ DELUXE WETLANDS SEAT

ALPS OutdoorZ recently expanded its waterfowl product line with addition of the Deluxe Wetland seat, designed for marshlands, flooded timber and water-covered or saturated ground where typical hunting seats are not feasible. Based on a height-adjustable, vertical support system made of lightweight, rigid aluminum, the Deluxe Wetland seat inserts into the ground courtesy of its wedged post end. Tri-folding support arms post pivot 90 degrees to prevent sinking into soft soil and to provide stability. The seat is made from a durable tech mesh that allows water to drain and rotates on a swivel for 360-degree coverage. Height is adjustable from 24 to 34 inches to accommodate a broad range of shooters. MSRP: \$89.99. www.alpsoutdoorz.com





BOW SPIDER RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

One of the hassles of hunting with a compound bow is figuring out how to securely and safely carry it afield while keeping it handy enough to immediately spring into action should an unforeseen opportunity arise. The solution is simple: the Bow Spider bow retrieval system. Use the included belt to attach the Bow Spider to a pack, hip, truck headrest, blind or tree. Here's how it works. An aluminum arm attaches to the bow's riser and slides into a slot on the lightweight, injection-molded receiver, which can be worn on the included belt or attached to other objects via its long bolts. The bow is held securely in place by a gravity-locking system yet slides out with minimal effort. MSRP: \$84.95. www.bowspider.com



HONOR DEFENSE PRO 9 PISTOL

Honor Defense's Pro9 pistol is offered in a compact version with a 3.8-inch barrel and a sub-compact version with a 3.2-inch barrel. These 100 percent made in the USA and assembled by veterans pistols feature a polished stainless steel chassis with a crowned barrel. The Pro9 comes standard with two 10-round magazines and is backed by a lifetime warranty and also features a ported slide, flat tactical gold two-piece trigger, gold PVD barrel with a 15-degree match crown. Models are available in three handsome finishes – black, mil green and coyote brown. No trigger-pull or tools are required for disassembly. Retail: \$399. www.honordefense.com

FIRMINATOR ATV FOOD PLOT IMPLEMENT

For landowners/managers who work on a smaller scale, the Firminator G-3 ATV food plot implement was designed with all of the same features of the full-sized G3 – such as rugged, 16-inch ground turning discs, seed hopper with precision ACCU-Seed delivery system and an agricultural grade cast iron culti-packer – in a unit sized just right for an ATV (500cc or greater). The G3 ATV is great for accessing remote regions of a property where large implements can't go. It comes with a tow bar sized for a 1½-inch ball but also has a three-point hitch for use with a small tractor, a discing width of 32 inches and culti-packer width of 34 inches. It has a two-bushel seed capacity. MSRP: \$6,000. www.thefirminator.com



DSG OUTERWEAR AVA SOFTSHELL HUNTING JACKET AND PANTS

For the huntress who spends her spring chasing wild turkeys and fall pursuing deer, what could be better than tailor-made jacket and pants designed specifically for women to keep out the chill and deceive those prying eyes. The Ava softshell hunting jacket and pants from DSG Outerwear – clocked in Realtree Edge camo – are made from a windproof softshell fabric that provides just enough warmth for spring turkey hunts or mid-season deer hunts. Each garment incorporates DSG's durable water repellant treatment on the outside of the micro-tricot fabric and the inner layer is a comfy aqua soft fleece liner. The garments' Agion Active XL dual-action scent control will come in handy when the focus shifts to white-tails in the fall. MSRP: \$124.99/Jacket; \$114.99/Pants. www.dsgouterwear.com



AXEON DOG SOLDIER PREDATOR SCOPE

Made in collaboration with Steve Criner, professional predator hunter and host of Dog Soldier TV on Pursuit Channel, the Axeon Dog Soldier predator scope was designed for hunting in the most unforgiving conditions. Built on a rugged 30mm tube, it is shock rated for 1,200 Gs. And because predator hunting often occurs in low-light conditions, it features a large 4-16x50mm objective lens with a red or green illuminated mil-dot reticle. The Dog Soldier second focal plane scope has 3.5 inches of eye relief and covered, toolless ¼-MOA low-profile turrets – designed for hunters by a hunter, with Criner's extensive time in the field giving him insight into the characteristics that make a bullet proof predator scope. MSRP: \$249.99. www.axeonoptics.com

INNERLOC BLOOD BUG BROADHEAD

Developed for small game hunting and inspired by the recent emergence of arrow-shooting air rifles – specifically the new Umarex AirJavelin – the Innerloc Blood Bug is a special folding 50-grain fixed-blade broadhead, designed for pneumatic arrow guns made to shoot lightweight carbon-fiber arrows. A friction plug drags on the Blood Bug's blades and holds them in the shooting position, which allows them to remain in the open position when in flight and throughout impact. After the shot, they pivot forward for easy removal from game or targets. The three-blade design creates a large wound channel for lethal and ethical kills on small game and varmints. MSRP: \$24.99/Three pack. www.innerloc.com



Service Above All Else

How do you compete with the big-box stores? By offering the personal touch that they can't.

BY BOB ROBB

When we lived in Alaska, my wife, Cheryl, started a small business from scratch. It began as a retail shop catering to hockey players, swimmers, kid's dance, the sale and engraving of trophies, and the like. Over the 15 years she owned it, it morphed several times until, during the final years, it was centered on commercial embroidery, engraving and the hockey community. She kept it going strong through hard work, dedication, keeping costs to a bare minimum, staying abreast of changing times and meeting current market demands — and by providing platinum levels of customer service.

When a huge national big-box store moved nearby and started selling skates and hockey gear, Cheryl didn't panic. She still charged a little more than they did, but she grew her sales by providing great customer service, often turning the box-store customer into one of her own. She knew that one of the key ways that a small local business can differentiate themselves and gain a competitive advantage over bigger businesses is to simply provide great customer service. She knew that what customers want is pretty basic: to be heard, to have their issues understood, and to get their questions answered and problems solved quickly and accurately, preferably on first contact.

A 2019 study by Verint Systems, "The New Rules of Customer Engagement," tells this same story. The study questioned 18,000-plus adults worldwide to find out more about their customer service expectations and experiences. The results revealed key findings (percentages based on the U.S.). Here's what they are.

1) Resolution is more important than relationship: For the vast majority of respondents, all they really want is to have their questions answered. Despite the clamoring from brands and marketers for "engagement" and "relationship building," more than half (55 percent) said they viewed customer service as a transaction and not as an experience that "should reflect me as a person." When asked if they wanted answers to questions or for companies "to know my mood and respond accordingly," an overwhelming eight in 10 agreed that answers were more important. And, 47 percent said that the one thing that most created a favorable impression was a quick response.

2) Personalization vs privacy: In today's world,

there is an ongoing struggle for companies trying to find the right balance between privacy and personalization. To further complicate matters, that balance — and the reasons for not liking the service provided — can lie in different places, depending on the sector. Respondents were evenly split (51/49 percent) between those who accept that a degree of personalization is necessary to provide a good service and those who were suspicious about how their data is used. But for Americans under the age of 35 years, the balance was more in favor of personalization (59 percent), compared to just 36 percent for those older. For "high relationship" sectors such as banking, dissatisfaction with service most often came from mistakes or an uninterested staff. On the other hand, for supermarkets and other retailers, price was said to be key in driving a preference of personalization.

"Happy customers are vocal customers. They tell their friends, they write reviews, and they spend more."

3) Long-term relationships are declining: Businesses are in danger of becoming a commodity. The research found that, when compared to a similar study completed in 2012, the proportion of consumers that maintained a relationship with a provider for three years or more had dropped from 85 percent to 60 percent. For millennials, that figure dropped to just 40 percent. Longevity of relationships varied significantly between sectors, with banking, supermarkets, grocery and clothing earning the most loyalty. At the other end of the scale, phone and broadband providers, as well as online retailers, showed the most customer churn. This is where a local small business

can reap some significant benefits. Going above and beyond to deliver great customer service at the time of sale and strategically putting systems in place that allow you to stay connected to, and serving, your customer base can go a long way toward building enduring relationships.

The results of the study suggest that speed and convenience are the top priorities for customers. Delivering on that means having well-trained first contact and frontline staff and ensuring they have real-time information available to answer customer queries. It means building systems throughout the organization and (hopefully) maintaining an up-to-date Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. That way, the same information is available to all members of your team on a moment's notice, and a consistent approach is adopted, whether contact is made by phone, face-to-face, by email, online, chat, or by way of social media channels. Most importantly, it means staying in touch with your customers after the sale and communicating with customers regularly as part of your email marketing efforts.

The study also showed that satisfied customers often take positive action. In the study, 61 percent would tell friends and family about their experience, 38 percent would write a positive review, 27 percent would sign up for a loyalty program, 25 percent would renew/upgrade products or services even if it was not the least expensive option and 17 percent would talk about it on social media. Only 15 percent said they would do nothing.

As you can see, happy customers are vocal customers. They tell their friends, they write reviews, and they spend more. That's powerful fuel for any business, but for a small local business, it's a way to level the playing field — even against big brands.

What's your take on this survey? Can you share how your business provides topflight customer service? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com and let me know. **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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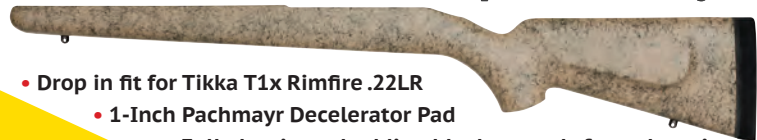
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SKU1024

Tikka T1x Rimfire Sporter Style



- Drop in fit for Tikka T1x Rimfire .22LR
- 1-Inch Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full aluminum bedding block extends from the grip to the front swivel stud, free floated barrel

NEW PRODUCT!

SKU7011

Winchester Model 70 M40 Style



- Drop in fit for Winchester Model 70, one-piece floorplate, heavy contour barrel, short action/WSM
- 1-Inch Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length aluminum bedding block

NEW PRODUCT!

SKU6509

Howa 1500/Weatherby Vanguard Sporter Style



- Drop in fit for Howa 1500, Weatherby Vanguard, Smith & Wesson 1500 and Mossberg 1500, standard contour barrel, short and long action
- 1-Inch Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length aluminum bedding block

NEW PRODUCT!

SKU1010, 1011

Remington 700 BDL Long Range Hunter



- Drop in fit for Remington 700 BDL Long and Short Action, heavy barrel
- 1-Inch Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system extends through the forearm, with aluminum "tail piece"

NEW PRODUCT!

SKU1052, 1053

Ruger American® Sporter Style



- Drop in fit for Ruger American®, LONG & SHORT ACTION, rotary magazine, standard and predator contour barrels
- Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system

NEW PRODUCT!

SKU1007, 1009

Savage 10 & 12 "Detachable Mag" Sporter Style



- Drop in fit for Savage Model 10 and 12 Short Action with detachable mag and sporter weight barrel
- Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system

NEW PRODUCT!

SKU6510

Howa 1500/Weatherby Vanguard Sporter Style



- Drop in fit for Howa 1500, Weatherby Vanguard, Smith & Wesson 1500 and Mossberg 1500, standard contour barrel, short action
- 1-Inch Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length aluminum bedding block

NEW YOUTH MODEL!

SKU1003

Howa Mini Action, M40 Style



- Drop in fit for Howa Mini Action with factory detachable mag, heavy or sporter barrel contour
- Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system

NEW PRODUCT!

SKU2460

Remington 700 BDL Sporter Style

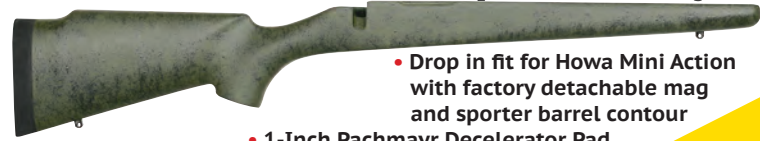


- Drop in fit for Rem 700 Short Action, standard and magnum contour barrels, BDL hinged floor plate design
- Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system

NEW YOUTH MODEL!

SKU1002

Howa Mini Action Sporter Style



- Drop in fit for Howa Mini Action with factory detachable mag and sporter barrel contour
- 1-Inch Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system extends through the forearm, with aluminum "tail piece"

NEW PRODUCT!