

HUNTING

RETAILER



July 2020 | On Target

ATI

American Tactical introduces the Cavalry Over/Under Shotgun

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CAVALRY:

- + Turkish Walnut Wood Stock – Oil Finished
- + Brass Front Bead Sight
- + 4140 Chrome-moly Steel Barrel
- + Auto Ejectors

Read more about The Cavalry Shotgun On Page 3

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NON-TOXIC

Big-Game Loads

BUSINESS CREDIT

Strategies to Build It

RELOADERS

What Customers Want

WINGSHOOTING AMMO

See What Sells

Tips for Selling

THE RIGHT

SCOPE

2020

Must-Stock

CAMPING

GEAR

USE (JUST) ENOUGH GUN



AMERICAN TACTICAL

GRAND VIEW
OUTDOORS



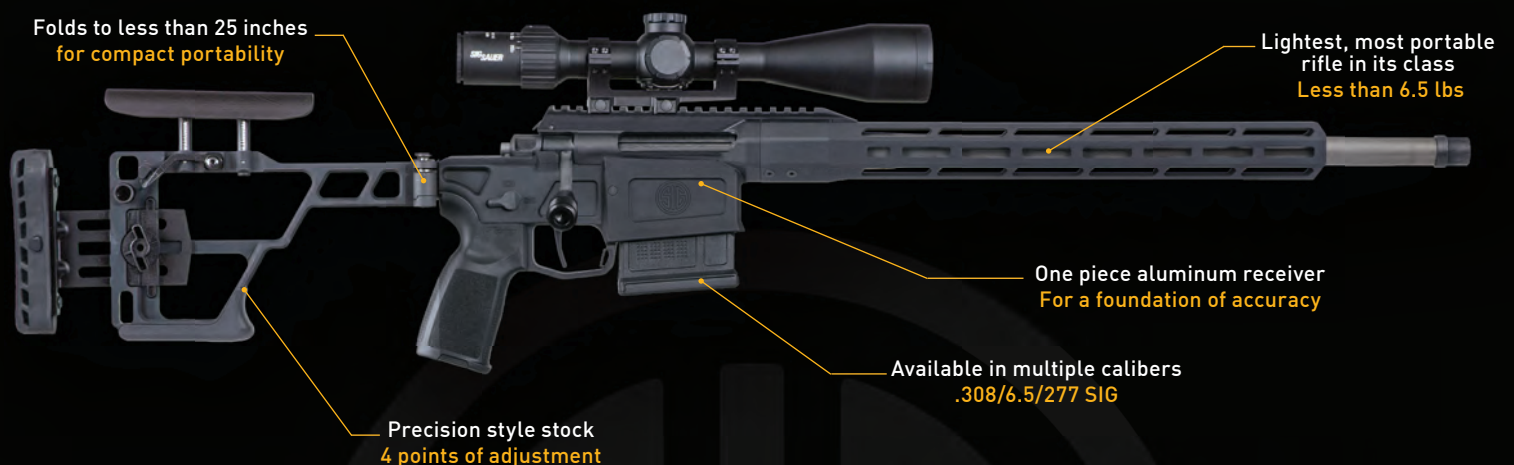
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AMERICAN TACTICAL

The Cavalry Over/Under comes from importer and manufacturer American Tactical. The Cavalry is available in three different gauges: 12, 20 and .410. Made from lightweight 7075 aluminum, the Cavalry series of shotguns weigh in at just over six pounds. The American Tactical logo is laser engraved on each Cavalry shotgun. Triggers are single selective, chambered for up to 3-inch magnum. Comes with five interchangeable chokes. Choke tubes are threaded with Beretta Benelli Mobil choke system style threads.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CAVALRY:

- + Turkish walnut wood stock – oil finished
- + Brass front bead sight
- + 4140 chrome-moly steel barrel
- + Auto ejectors

AMMUNITION:

- + Only use ammunition in its original packaging that corresponds with the caliber of the gun. The correct caliber is imprinted on each Cavalry Over/Under shotgun.
- + Never use reloaded or non-standard ammunition of a different caliber.
- + Never use dirty, wet, corroded, bent, damaged or oiled ammunition.



Outdoor Marketplace Everest Launches

Everest, the shooting sports and outdoor gear industry's first customer-centric, community-driven, multi-merchant marketplace, has officially launched. Everest is a non-discriminatory platform for hunters, shooting sports enthusiasts, anglers, campers and hikers across the country, linking consumers and retailers with a robust marketplace where they can interact, participate, contribute, learn, transact and give back. The Everest mission is to create the leading marketplace for the shooting sports, hunting and outdoor worlds – a place where retailers can sell firearms and other related items, where like-minded consumers can learn, interact, participate and shop. Everest is a community of like-minded, Second Amendment-supporting, conservation-loving and outdoor-living retailers, manufacturers, distributors and consumers.

As a significant amount of merchants make a mass exodus from other online marketplaces, Everest is creating a robust community for outdoors-

men and women. At time of launch, the Everest marketplace has already secured 500+ merchants offering more than 500,000 outdoor and shooting sports products. It is estimated by the end of 2020, Everest will offer more than 1,000,000+ products from retailers and manufacturers from around the globe. The product inventory and merchant options will certainly continue to grow exponentially over the next few years as more retailers, distributors and manufacturers join the Everest community.

The Everest experience will be consistently enhanced with fresh outdoor content such as how-to videos, product reviews, gear articles and much more. "At our core, we believe in passing down the great outdoor legacies that were passed to us," says Bill Voss, CEO/Founder of Everest. "Our mission is to create a one-of-a-kind marketplace where merchants can sell free of the noise of those

other sites. We are committed to surpassing all customer expectations by providing unparalleled service, exceptional quality and ultimate value with every interaction."

Everest consumers can participate in the direction and growth of the marketplace, including giving back to those who do so much already in the space. Specifically, customers have the option of opening an Everest "Caliber Account" which features many benefits, including Free Express Shipping, extensive relevant video entertainment, cool swag, and deep discounts on selected items. Everest will also give back to philanthropic programs and outdoor industry initiatives that reflect the issues important to the Everest community such as conservation, veterans service organizations, cancer support and firearms safety.

For more information on Everest, visit the website at www.everest.com.

Leupold Named Official Optics Partner of RMEF

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation announces Leupold as its official optics partner.

"The relentless pursuit of our mission matches Leupold's relentless pursuit of being the number-one optics brand in the outdoor industry," said Kyle Weaver, RMEF president and CEO. "Leupold strongly believes in and supports our conservation efforts to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage."

The RMEF-Leupold relationship dates back nearly three and a half decades to 1986. Since then, Leupold has steadily committed sponsorship, advertising and product toward RMEF and its mission.

"No optics company does more for sportsmen's rights and conservation across the United States than Leupold, and we're incredibly proud to support the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation," said Bruce Pettet, president and chief executive officer of Leupold & Stevens, Inc. "Their efforts have always been aligned with the goals of the Leupold team and our core consumer, and we are excited to be working hand-in-hand with RMEF for years to come."

In addition to serving as a longtime producer of optics for RMEF's extensive nationwide banquet system and an official RMEF licensee beginning in 2010, Leupold maintains many existing sponsorships:

- Elk Camp & Mountain Festival
- RMEF Films
- Hunting is Conservation campaign
- Restoring Elk Country video series
- RMEF World Elk Calling Championships
- Bugle magazine advertiser
- Donor of optics packages to top 10 RMEF chapters

"The bottom line is if there is an elk camp in the mountains, you'll find hunters utilizing Leupold's superior products. And we are thrilled that this American-made partner stands shoulder-to-shoulder with us as we go forward together," added Weaver.

Winchester Continues Support of SCTP

At a time when supporting the youth shooting sports could not be more important, Winchester continues as the official ammunition of the Scholastic Clay Target Program (SCTP) with a strong commitment to thousands of young athletes and coaches around the country.

"Youth shooting sports participation through the SCTP has exploded over the past decade thanks to the organization's tremendous leadership and coaches and parents who are dedicated to the program," said Matt Campbell, vice president of

sales and marketing for Winchester Ammunition. "We are extremely proud to align our legendary brand with SCTP and provide extensive support that will continue to strengthen their mission."

Led by more than 3,500 coaches, more than 18,000 young athletes compete through SCTP, which is part of the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF), an educational-athletic organization that exists to introduce school-age youths to the shooting sports and to facilitate their continued involvement.

Winchester also stakes claim as the official ammunition of the SCTP International Team, which is composed of the top 15 SCTP youth shooters across the country in the international disciplines.

Winchester worked with SCTP in 2020 to create a new discounted shotshell purchase program, available only to SCTP teams. Teams that would like to participate in future purchase programs should contact their SCTP representative or watch for upcoming announcements through SCTP communications.





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Offer Solutions, Not Complaints

Anyone can whine and complain about problems in the store. Be the associate who brings the boss solutions, not problems.

BY PATRICK MEITIN

If my multi-year stint in retail sporting goods was any indication of the state of the American workforce, it's no wonder millennials are regularly viewed with suspicion or frustration. The perpetual state of whining dissatisfaction from many (certainly not all) frequently got on my very last nerve. This was particularly pointed after being promoted to low-level management and ambushed daily with dramatic complaints. This whining did nothing to endear me to these people, particularly when delivered with a pontifical air of the young. Nope, quite the opposite, really.

More troubling, perpetual whiners are like that single rotten apple in a box of many, spreading their infection and quickly tainting those around them. Believe me — managers notice such things. The best description for one of my persistent problem children: the ogre of the gun counter. This fellow was hugely knowledgeable about everything related to firearms, ammo and reloading. He was generally pretty good with customers. But behind the scenes, he never quit carping. Mostly he grumbled that he

couldn't provide the products he thought customers actually wanted (usually highly specialized gear not likely to appeal to the masses), his basic premise being that our buyers and upper management were lazy idiots unwilling to do their jobs. So, one day I gave him an opportunity to solve his problems and better serve his department. I asked him to create a detailed list of frequently requested or important items that we were failing to provide. It was his opportunity to shine, to solve his perceived problem. I was told that we were not paying him enough to provide this; complaining was apparently more appealing than solutions. When we fell into our annual late winter/pre-inventory slow period, he became an obvious candidate for layoff.

I also easily recall another employee. Jovial, generally positive and bubbly, she nonetheless became someone I dreaded being approached by. By all outward appearances, she harbored delusions of manager status. She regularly delegated duties to new employees, but more annoying, she requested closed-door office meetings at least once



a week. There she would deliver a litany of everything employees in other departments were shirking, neglecting or avoiding — as if I were unaware of what was going on around me. These meetings were little more than tattletale/gossip sessions. It was tiresome and brought nothing productive to the table. My answer was always the same: “Concentrate on your own department and don’t worry about what others are doing.” After a while, a request to talk was met with an unceremonious no. As employees came and went, there were occasional shift-manager positions to fill. This woman never made the cut.

No one happily suffers woe-is-me whiners, chronic complainers or gossipy tattletales. The general impression by harried managers — and yes, managers garner higher wages because they actually accomplish things, while also carrying added responsibilities — is that of immaturity, someone not willing to be part of a team, perhaps even not bright enough to assume added responsibilities. Valuable employees are those who note problems — maybe one a manager had no idea existed — and offer solutions.

Easy example: During the hustle and bustle of everyday commerce, the multiple trashcans about the store became filled and floors grew dirty (especially during snowy winter and muddy spring months). When trashcans began to overflow, an irritated manager was forced to order someone in that department to take out the trash. This removed a sales associate from the floor during business hours, taking them away from customers. One day I saw our general manager sweeping our dirty floors and asked why he was doing that and not one of the lower-level employees. He said it was simply easier to do it himself than cajole a reluctant employee to perform the task.

A light bulb went off, a simple solution to a reoccurring problem. My off-the-cuff proposal went something to the effect of, “You know, when we lock up for the night and the cashiers are tallying tills, the gun guys putting handguns in the safe and so forth, everyone clusters to chit-chat. Why not use that time to empty trashcans, replace trash liners and sweep all the floors? Everyone would be responsible for tidying their department. No one goes home until all departments are cleaned. Peer pressure will assure it all gets done, as everyone is anxious to get out of here at the end of the day.” Additional floor brooms were ordered, an employee meeting was called, and my simple suggestion became absolute rule. I got a pat on the back (and was eventually made first a shift and then an assistant manager).

Another one: One of the girls was constantly complaining about the state of our public restrooms, which was funny only because the woman’s room was pristine

“No one happily suffers woe-is-me whiners, chronic complainers or gossipy tattletales.”

compared to the men’s. She pointed out that it wasn’t fair she was the only one cleaning toilets. I thought she offered a valid point. Moving forward, every employee took at a turn at this detested duty during evening closing-time clean-up. Our bathrooms became much more presentable, no doubt helping elevate our image with customers.



The point of all this rambling is if you want to get ahead in the retail game, land that promotion, be granted the better time slot, or even coax a manager into granting that two-hour lunch or leaving work early to accomplish an errand, be the person who offers solutions, not irritating criticism. Take a look around. What could be improved, what small tweak might provide customers a better store experience, or what reoccurring problem might you have a bright idea to remedy? Then approach your boss and clearly state your case — avoiding any sniveling. See a problem, make your boss aware of it, but then offer a viable, thoughtful solution. There may be an unforeseen reason your plan is not workable, but you will still be viewed as someone looking out for the good of the store, your fellow employees and especially its all-important customers. **HR**

↑ Keeping a smile on your face rather than complaining will go a long way with customers as well as the boss.

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.



Non-Toxic Rifle Ammo

Some of your customers will be looking for non-toxic projectiles, either because it's their preference or because it's required where they hunt. Here's what you can offer them.

BY MARK CHESNUT

Any discussion of non-toxic rifle ammunition is likely to result in an argument. On one side, you often have those who believe using lead for any kind of hunting projectile is always wrong, and those who use lead ammo must hate the environment. On the other end of the spectrum are those who refuse to consider shooting “non-toxic” bullets because they don't want the “environmental whackos” telling them what kind of ammunition they can use.

With the increasing environmental concerns about lead ammo, it's a discussion that likely will occur more often in the future. Now, I don't personally think shooting lead rifle bullets will poison me when I eat venison or pollute the areas where I hunt. After all, I only shoot a handful of bullets a year at game. However, I'm open-minded enough to at least consider that maybe putting more lead into my game, the ground and the environment might not

be necessary if non-toxic alternatives are plentiful, affordable and reliable.

When talking about non-toxic rifle ammunition, we're basically referring to ammunition that doesn't use lead in the rifle projectile. While a number of different lead alternatives have emerged for shotshells, in most cases for rifle ammunition, copper is the preferred substitute.

A Trump administration change has put mandatory use of non-toxic rifle ammo on the backburner for now, but California mandates non-lead ammo for all hunting, and the day will likely come when it's required on most federal lands. When that happens, I truly don't believe big-game hunters are going to be disappointed with the performance they get out of modern non-lead rifle ammo.

On the downside, non-toxic rifle ammunition sometimes costs a little more than traditional lead rifle ammunition. But when compared to pre-



mium rifle ammo, the difference is negligible. Since ammunition is typically a small part of big game hunting expenses, using non-lead alternatives won't significantly increase the cost of a hunt.

And what if non-toxic ammo was just as good — maybe even better — than lead ammunition? Many copper bullets can be made to expand just like lead, reaching an expanded diameter about double their normal size. They also retain a very high percentage of their weight, giving them the ability to drive deep into large game animals that need a little more punch.

I used Barnes TSX (Triple Shock X) bullets on a Namibian plains game safari nearly a decade ago, not because I had to, but because I had heard good things about its performance (see photo on opposite page). I cleanly took nine species of plains game, including two kudus, with the TSX and doubt any lead bullet would have outperformed it.

Let's take a brief look at three non-toxic rifle bullets that would be good alternatives to lead projectiles for hunters considering making the switch.



BARNES

Barnes VOR-TX Premium Hunting Ammunition is a line of non-toxic ammo that includes the TSX I used with great success on the aforementioned African plains game trip. The Barnes TSX was offered in a Federal Premium loading, and it completely changed my mind about the use of non-lead bullets on big, hard-to-kill game animals. The line includes the TSX, the tipped TSX and the TSX-FN.

With each model made of all copper, all of the bullets in the VOR-TX line are touted by the company to offer double-diameter expansion, maximum weight retention and exceptional accuracy. The result is maximum tissue and bone destruction, pass-through penetration and devastating energy transfer for clean kills on big-game animals.

Barnes offers these bullets in calibers to appeal to all types of hunters, from small game all the way up to gigantic species. It has 41 caliber choices in the lineup, ranging from .223 Rem. all the way up to .450 Bushmaster.

The TSX is a hollowpoint bullet that has been used for more than a decade by serious big-game hunters. I've shot it in both .270 Win. and .300 Win. Mag. and had success with each. The tipped TSX is basically the same bullet with a streamlined polymer tip that boosts the ballistic coefficient and improves long-range ballistics. The TSX-FN is a flat-nosed version of the bullet. In all the TSX bullets, multiple grooves in the bullet's shank reduce pressure and improve accuracy. Barnes all-copper bullets open instantly on contact, and the nose peels back into four sharp-edged copper petals for a quick, humane kill.



REMINGTON

When there's a developing trend in ammunition, Remington is sure to be involved. Big Green introduced its Premier Copper Solid line of non-toxic centerfire rifle ammunition back in 2009 with an initial offering of eight different calibers.

Premier Copper Solid rifle ammunition features a precision-engineered, polymer-tipped copper matrix bullet designed to provide a combination of extreme accuracy with devastating penetration and maximum weight retention, making it great for all big-game species. Remington offers the ammunition, which meets all requirements for lead-free hunting ammunition, in most of today's popular calibers and grain weights.

The polymer-tipped nose and boat-tail base produce a high ballistic coefficient that flattens trajectory and preserves downrange energy. Plus, Premier Copper Solid ammunition is specifically constructed under a proprietary manufacturing process to deliver controlled expansion and nearly 90% weight retention. In other words, it's not going to give up much in performance to older lead loads that you might currently be shooting. I've shot a few Oklahoma whitetails with the bullet chambered in .270 Win. and found them to be just as dead when I approached as were those shot with conventional lead bullets.

Remington says another attribute of the bullet is its ability to expand over a wide variety of impact velocities, something not all copper bullets are capable of achieving. This is important for hunters who are in an area where they might shoot their game very close or at great distances.



NOSLER

While Nosler is a fairly new name in the manufactured ammo arena, I've shot Nosler ammunition in several calibers over the past few years and have been very pleased with it. The company's non-toxic rifle offering is the E-Tip.

The folks at Nosler say that upon impact, Nosler's exclusive E² Cavity (Energy Expansion Cavity) allows for immediate and uniform expansion, yet the bullet retains 95% of its weight for improved penetration. In fact, they say the E² Cavity provides excellent stopping power and peerless penetration over a broad spectrum of impact velocities.

The E-Tip bullets have an easily recognized OD green polymer tip, which is designed to initiate expansion when the bullet hits a big-game animal. The boat-tail configuration of the bullet combines with the streamlined polymer tip for extreme long-range performance and for easier loading by hand loaders.

Nosler E-Tip bullets are also available as raw bullets for hand loaders and in some Winchester factory loadings. For hand loaders, 15 different caliber/weight combinations are available. Factory E-Tip cartridges from Nosler are available in more than 30 different loads.

While I've never shot the Nosler E-Tip, I have talked to several other hunters who have and were very satisfied with their results. **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.

Fly to New Retailer Heights

Check out these 10 top-shelf upland and waterfowl shotshell options.



BY KEVIN REESE

"10 o'clock, coming in low." While one remained on lookout, the rest of us lay in wait, motionless and tucked as much as possible into the darkened, flooded timber. "Get 'em, boys!" With the command issued, we cut loose on a handful of ducks dropping through the flooded timber and attempting to land in our decoys. Every person in our hunting party sent three shells into the air, dropping a mixed bag of a half-dozen hen and drake mallards. That is, nearly every person. I managed to connect with a duck on the

first shot — but my shotgun jammed before I could send up another. Unfortunately, my problem wasn't an isolated event. Every time we received the command, I shot once, stove-piped upon ejection, manually cleared it and tried to shoot again, but the chamber was empty — the next shell had failed to feed.

While it would seem easy to blame the ammo, or worse, the shotgun, the problem often is a bit of both, perhaps a lighter load and shotgun in need of cleaning. As reliable cycling relates to target shooting or dove hunting, I've found

some shotguns most certainly do have trouble cycling lighter, slower loads, lending some truth to countless claims that "my shotgun doesn't like _____ ammo." Of course, it seems the only way to know for sure is to spend time in the field with various shotguns and a laundry list of shells, but let's be honest, it's not a practical solution for most.

At the end of the day, however, good rules of thumb include offering a wide variety of shells, carefully considering when to carry light or low-recoil shells and when to recommend them — autoloading

shotguns might not be a great fit for light loads, but they may work perfectly in break-action or pump platforms. Garnering an understanding of reliability trends, like problematic light loads in semi-autos, not only helps you make better recommendations to your hunting and shooting customers, but it can also help you determine your shotgun ammo inventory. With that in mind, here are 10 upland and waterfowl loads sure to appease the lion's share of your hunting customers.





FEDERAL BLACK CLOUD TSS

The benefits of tungsten shot to reach further and hit harder have been widely known for a few years now, especially among turkey hunters; however, the technology's bleed-over into waterfowling is fairly new. Even so, someone must have leaked it, because a number of shotshell producers have simultaneously moved in the tungsten direction. Fortunately for Federal, few have mastered it, and the addition of tungsten to the company's Black Cloud line is a big win. Black Cloud already ranked among the most trusted waterfowl ammo in the industry anyway, so the addition of tungsten to the product line was destined to resonate with demanding duck hunters.

Federal's Black Cloud TSS (Tungsten Super Shot) is currently only available in 3-inch shells for 12-gauge and 20-gauge shotguns. 12-gauge shells feature a 1¼-ounce payload, 1450-fps velocity and a mix of 40% No. 3 or BB steel and 60% No. 7 TSS pellets. 20-gauge shells feature a mix of No. 9 TSS and No. 3 steel pellets.



BROWNING WICKED WING

Browning has built a legacy upon quality and customer service. Their "best there is" tagline means there's quite a reputation to live up to, and Browning does a remarkable job defending the claim — their shotgun ammo is no different. Capitalizing on the ultra-popular BXD (extra distance) waterfowl ammo, in 2019, Browning unveiled the company's Wicked Wing ammo. Wicked Wing ammo features corrosion-resistant steel shot and Browning's wicked-stable BXD wad. The result is tighter, better controlled patterns over longer distances. Currently, Browning Wicked Wing ammunition is only available in 3-inch shells for 12-gauge shotguns, with 1¼-ounce weights. Available shot sizes are No. 4 and No. 2, and average muzzle velocity for both offerings are reportedly 1,450 fps.

I've used Browning BXD ammo for ducks and dove in my personal Benelli Super Black Eagle III, and while I have put quite a hefty number of breasts on the grill, I have yet to experience a misfeed. That said, I'm looking forward to time in the marsh with Browning's Wicked Wing ammo, and the line is sure to appeal to your customers, too.



BOSS SHOTSHELLS BISMUTH UNMUZZLED

Not long ago, I spent some quality time with Weatherby's insanely reliable, fast shooting, recoil-friendly 18i 12-gauge shotgun. To date, it's one of the finest shotguns I've handled, and coupled with BOSS Shot Shells, it was a nightmare for mallards on the North Loup River when I hunted with Weatherby and Stutzman Outdoors in Burwell, Nebraska. For a guy like me that averages at least a full box of shells for a limit of five ducks, my average of one or two shots per duck was impressive (at least to me), and often it took a single BOSS Shotshell to fold wings — after the first day, I was sold on them and Weatherby's new 18i.

BOSS waterfowling shot shells are available in 2¾-inch to 3-inch sizes, with 1-ounce to 1½-ounce payloads, for .410, 28-gauge, 20-gauge, 16-gauge and 12-gauge shotguns, in shot Nos. 7 to 2. For smaller ducks, No. 7 may work, but your average waterfowlers are most likely to be after No. 4 or No. 2 shot. Across BOSS Shot Shells' waterfowl lineup, velocity is consistently reported at 1,350 fps, and all ammo boasts copper-plated bismuth for increased density and improved patterns.



RIO ROYAL ECO BLUESTEEL WATERFOWL

As hunters, we are stewards of our great outdoors, thus have a responsibility to leave wild places as well off as when we tread upon them — enter Rio Ammunition. While steel shot is quite a beneficial eco-friendly move in that direction, Rio has painstakingly committed to helping waterfowlers take an unprecedented step in virtually erasing our presence out there with Royal Eco BlueSteel Waterfowl ammo. Rio's 12-gauge, 1,450-fps, 1¼-ounce, 3-inch Royal Eco BlueSteel shells are available in Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and BB and feature hydrosoluble wads. Considering Rio's use of steel shot and 100% biodegradable wads that effectively turn into compost, this ammo may be better than impact-free — to some extent it may actually be beneficial.





KENT BISMUTH UPLAND

Denser than steel and on par with lead, Kent Bismuth Upland ammo is a perfect solution for quail, pheasant and other upland bird species. Even better, if your hunting customers are environmentally conscious, they're sure to love features like Kent's clean-burning design and biodegradable wad. Bismuth ammo is also safe to shoot through vintage shotguns as well as through any choke system, and it offers enhanced performance in windy conditions.

Kent Bismuth Upland shotshells are available in 2¾-inch up to 3-inch lengths with ⅞-ounce loads up to 1½-ounce, and in No. 5 or No. 6 shot size. Muzzle velocity is reported to be between 1,200 and 1,400 fps. Bottom line: This is an ideal option for customers looking for clean-burning ammo that won't harm their prized shotguns or expensive chokes.



FEDERAL PREMIUM UPLAND

It's easy to get lost in the long list of Federal Premium upland bird hunting options. A quick premium upland ammo search on Federal Ammunition's website reveals no less than 36 shotshell products, including Wing-Shot High Velocity, Wing-Shot Magnum and High Velocity Pheasants Forever. Federal's Upland Premium features range from 2¾- to 3-inch shells; charges ranging from ¾- to 1⅝-ounce and shot sizes of 4, 5, 6, 7½ and 8 for 28-, 20-, 16- and 12-gauge shotguns.

With a roundup chock full of 12-gauge options, it's worth digging into a shotgun option with a tad more less recoil, perfect for smaller-framed shooters or simply a more comfortable shooting experience without sacrificing the ability to pluck upland birds of all sizes from the air. Sitting at the top of Federal Premium's popular 20-gauge offerings, you'll find Wing-Shok Magnum. 20-gauge Wing-Shok Magnum shells boast copper-plated lead shot, brass-plated heads, buffered shot for tight patterning, shot charges of 1⅞- to 1¼-ounce, 2¾- to 3-inch shells and shot sizes of 4 and 6.



WINCHESTER ROOSTER XR LOK'D & LETHAL

While Rooster XR Lok'd & Lethal isn't necessarily new, it's still a top upland bird offering from Winchester's elite ammo line, and deservedly so. Winchester poured significant research and development into XR ammo, resulting in Shot-Lok technology. Shot-Lok uses resin to eliminate any voids around shot pellets, virtually eliminating pellet deformation, tightening shot pattern at longer distances and ultimately, dishing out the bird-busting power your customers want.

Winchester XR Lok'd and Lethal ammo is available for 12-gauge shotguns in 2¾-inch shells with 1,300 fps velocity and 3-inch shells with up to 1,450 fps velocity. Rooster XR loads are quite respectable at 1¼ to 1½ ounce, and available shot sizes are 4, 5 and 6 – perfect for pheasants, quail and other upland game birds.



APEX AMMUNITION WS TSS/S3 WATERFOWL

Apex Ammunition has risen to the top of premium shotshell ranks as a result of tungsten shot research and development; in fact, their latest tungsten .410 ammo delivers impressive patterning out past 40 yards. Apex's commitment to producing premium waterfowl loads is equally impressive and best represented, considering innovation and affordability, in the company's 12-gauge, 1¼-ounce, 1,400-fps Waterfowl Tungsten/S3 Steel Blend ammo. While steel rules the waterways, Apex's use of tungsten increases energy and range. Apex Waterfowl shot sizes include BB, No. 2 and No. 4. Duck hunters may flock to Apex's No. 4 most often for ducks ranging from teal to full-size mallards; however, if they're after large ducks and geese, they may opt for No. 2s.





HEVI-SHOT HEVI-METAL PHEASANT

Countless turkey hunters count Hevi-Shot as the premier load for longer range shooting and quick kills, and that reputation for top-shelf performance has certainly bled over into upland hunting in more recent years. Why? The answer is simple: Hevi-Shot was the first load to outperform both lead and steel, and it has been proven to be non-toxic even in soil with exceedingly high concentrations of shot. The pellets themselves are misshapen but are stronger than steel and denser than lead, and they allow for more pellets in the shell. Hevi-Shot's results are undebatable — tighter patterns, longer reach and heavier hits. Indeed, for two decades, Hevi-Shot has changed the face of turkey hunting, and the same benefits continue to result in more upland breasts on the grill, too. And, if the sincerest form of flattery is imitation, proof lies in the rush to bring heavier pellet innovation to the shotgunning market

after Hevi-Shot's game-changing reputation began to take shape.

Designed specifically for upland bird hunting with 12- and 20-gauge shotguns, Hevi-Shot Hevi-Metal Pheasant ammo combines Hevi-Shot's Pattern-Density Technology with innovative pellet layering, first with steel shot and then layered with the company's proprietary denser-than-lead Hevi-Shot pellets. While Hevi-Shot's Hevi-Metal Pheasant ammo is encased in 2¾-inch shells, 20-gauge shells feature a charge weight of ⅞-ounce and produce muzzle velocity of 1,300 fps. Hevi-Shot's more popular 12-gauge loads boast a 1½-ounce payload and blazing velocity of 1,500 fps. Both 12- and 20-gauge offerings are available in shot sizes of 4 and 5. While Hevi-Shot is commonly a bit pricier, your Hevi-Shot turkey hunting customers are sure to flock to your door for similar upland bird harvesting results.



REMINGTON NITRO PHEASANT

Remington has stacked scores of ultra-reliable ammunition options for all manner of firearms for decades upon decades. While the company's Core-Lok bullets have been a favorite ammo choice for countless big game hunters the world over, their shotgunning ammo, whether for target shooting or hunting, has never slouched, either, and the company has continued to produce, innovate and produce again to remain ranked among the world's most trusted and widely used ammunitions — or rather, munitions, considering over 200 years of world-renowned firearm manufacturing, nearly 60 years of producing the most trusted, widely used, battle-proven action in the world, the Remington 700. Let's be honest: Remington definitely knows firearms, actions and ammunition, including upland game bird shells — case in point, the Remington Nitro Pheasant ammo.

Remington Nitro Pheasant ammo combines the company's proprietary

Copper-Lok Technology (copper-plated lead shot) with a high concentration of antimony to produce the hardest lead shot I know of. The harder pellets eliminate deforming, producing tighter grouping and harder-hitting, deeper-penetrating results even at longer distances — a central theme to this roundup and certainly a welcome feature for any serious upland bird hunter.

Remington Nitro is available for 12- and 20-gauge shotguns. 20-gauge ammo is available in 1-ounce (2¾-inch shell) and 1¼-ounce (3-inch shell) charges, velocities of 1,300 fps and 1,185 fps respectively, and shot sizes of 4, 5 and 6. 12-gauge options include 2¾-inch shells with 1½-ounce or 1¼-ounce loads, velocities of 1,300 and 1,400 fps, and pellet sizes of 4, 5 or 6. Pheasant Nitro 12-gauge shells also are available in 3-inch shells with 1½-ounce charges, shot sizes of 4 or 5 and velocity of 1,350 fps.

PRO STAFF

Kevin is an award-winning outdoor writer, Marine Corps veteran and avid hunter. His favorite pursuits include feral hogs with a bow or with a thermal scope and AR-style rifle in his home state of Texas. Of course, he also loves deer, elk, turkey, duck and dove hunting — and the list continues to grow.



Federal Ammunition Goes Massive in 2020

This year, Federal Ammo introduced an astonishing number of new SKUs, and there's no sign of slowing down.



Matt Addington



Jason Vanderbrink

BY MATT CRAWFORD

At the 2020 SHOT Show in Las Vegas in January, Federal Ammunition created quite the ruckus. New products. New partnerships. Creative marketing. With about 1,500 employees and nearly 90 years in business, and about a 30 percent share of the ammo market in the U.S., Federal is the big dog on the block. When Federal barks, people listen.

The 2020 SHOT Show was Federal opening the curtain on an aggressive product and promotion strategy for the new year. *Hunting Retailer* had the chance to speak with Jason Vanderbrink, President of Ammunition for Federal (as well as CCI and Spear Brands) in the wake of SHOT Show. The 42-year-old Vanderbrink, who serves on the Board of Governors for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, was downright giddy when talking about the direction Federal is taking. Here's some of what Vanderbrink had to say about the big year ahead.

HR: Is it just us, or is 2020 a particularly big year for new product introduction for Federal? We saw something like 130 new SKUs being introduced in 34 product lines? Is that a lot for Federal?

JV: It's our busiest and biggest year ever. If you look at every category we play in, we have what we consider the best new product in every category. We've gotten lots of accolades from the press already, which is good feedback for us.

HR: Why this year?

JV: When the market went down for ammo for a few years, we never turned our back on R&D. We went heavy into designing new products and using new technologies. We went even heavier into marketing. It takes a couple of years for something new to come to a head once it's in the pipeline, and this year, everything seemed to happen at the same time.



HR: That's a lot of new product. Will you sustain this pace?

JV: We will always push the envelope when we think there's a consumer need for it. I'm not sure you'll see 130 new SKUs from us every year, but there's certainly a bunch more coming as well.

HR: What's your favorite new Federal product and why?

JV: The Federal Premium Terminal Ascent is our new long-range big game cartridge. There is no better bullet. It's pretty impressive what that bullet can do no matter the caliber, the range or the game.

HR: How have retailers reacted to this gusher of new products?

"The growth in ammo is more in the shooting world. Federal is still a hunting company, so we will continue to keep hunters as a priority."



JV: They think it's a lot. They love the innovation, but we know we're throwing a lot of stuff at them. Some have wondered how they can make room for it all. We realize with so much new, that a retailer may find it hard to fit it all into their assortment. So we're putting a lot into our marketing side. The easiest way to help a retailer out is to create demand.

HR: Are we experiencing the "good old days" of ammo, with new technologies and materials pushing the performance up on precision and performance?

JV: Not sure if it's the good old days; it's far leaner that it used to be. But the current market situation allows companies that are well-



capitalized, that are already market leaders like Federal, to continue to challenge the status quo. Hunters and shooters are always on the lookout for new technologies that make them better, and we're always going to push that envelope with new products. Our objective is to be the leader in every single category. That means innovations, partnerships, marketing — all of it. We're never going to rest on our laurels.

HR: Federal recently announced a partnership with Steven Rinella — the MeatEater. How did that come about?

JV: Steven is the shining star in the hunting industry right now, but he has used our ammo for many, many years. We were having discussions and the idea came about as to 'What if we came up with MeatEater ammo?' Steven has such a following that a lot of what he endorses comes through at the cash register. He's as authentic as it comes. This is our first partnership like this, and the demographic and causes that he aligns with are certainly essential to us. We're doing things like offering non-toxic ammo and putting a recipe on each box. His message that hunting is part of living is an important concept, and maybe it allows us to target a demographic who are on the fence about hunting.

HR: As the total number of hunters declines across the country, how has that had an impact on Federal's growth strategy?

JV: The growth in ammo is more in the shoot-

ing world. Federal is still a hunting company, so will continue to keep hunters as a priority. In the last decade or so, millions of new shooters have come into the market. New hunters have not. How do you cross-pollinate that? Rinella is one way — we want to focus on hunting as a way to eat. You'll see that message that wild game is good for you on our social media channels and some of our other outreach. Maybe we can get some shooters to try hunting. We have to connect those dots.

HR: In 2019, Federal began selling direct to consumer online. You have a huge array of products, maybe too much for a small retailer. What are you doing to help the small, independent retailer?

JV: We rely on mom and pop shops. They can sell more products, generally, because their sales force tends to be longer tenured, well informed and take time to talk to the customer. A few years ago, we started a program that really puts an emphasis on the independent level. The mom and pop shops are always great communicators directly to the customer, and we've made that a priority. On the other hand, we're selling in big-box stores, too. It's a balancing act, but there's certainly plenty of room for both." **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.

Profit From Handloading

Even in a flat rifle market, handloading flourishes. Show your customers why!



BY WAYNE VAN ZWOLL

Heavy enough to anchor a small sloop, a Herter's C press cost \$15. Could I ever save that much by handloading? I took the chance. Dies and a keg of surplus H4831 left me with a choice: bullets or rent.

Fifty years later, my fortunes have improved, and that press is still chugging out cartridges.

Handloading does more than put shekels in your pocket. It's a personal investment that increases the satisfaction you get from each shot. It puts you in company with legions of the like-minded: shooters, but also engineers behind the tools and wildcatters who use them to make new cartridges. Handloading brings you ammo in pieces. Assembling them,

then testing loads, you join people doing more with rifles than simply pulling triggers. They're students, experimenters, amateur ballisticians; handloads distinguish the committed from the dabblers.

You might mention that to your customers, if you're prepared to supply them as handloaders, and perhaps bring more into the fold with in-shop demonstrations.

Gun-shop owners and companies that manufacture tools and components tell me the handloading market is resilient and has remained strong when rifle sales slump. The tsunami of new factory loads over the last couple of decades has blessed the handloading market with myriad bullets and

↑ Keep a neater bench than this, stocked here to show the variety of items that can profit your gun shop.





↑ A press like this Lyman started the author's handloading journey. Set one up in your shop to introduce newbies!



↑ Stock the most popular loading dies (Forsters are shown here). Offer fast special-order service to supply others.

powders for shooters to try. Sophisticated new tools, from electronic scales and concentricity gauges to progressive presses, give you plenty of things to sell. But aren't current factory loads much improved? Certainly! The 1959 Shooter's Bible featured 78 Winchester and Remington loads in its rifle ballistics table. Hornady's current ammo roster lists over 265, with 18 for the .308 alone! In-flight and on-target behavior are tuned to the task, from steel plates furlongs distant to sedan-size creatures a few hoofbeats away and coming.

Of course, top-tier factory loads are priced accordingly. You can't tweak them to wring all the accuracy or ballistic romp your rifle has to offer. Also, factory fodder doesn't feature every long-range and heavy-game bullet. To get the most ammo options, you must handload.

Light demand for some cartridges has left them with factory loads from the Pleistocene. Others have been blessed by evolution in bullets and powders. Example: Poor accuracy from commercial .250 Savage ammo sent me to the bench. Handloads with 87-grain Sierras reduced group sizes from 2.4 MOA to

.6 MOA! Handloading can also add spunk to cartridges designed for relatively weak actions. The .45-70, for example, has been throttled by its original home in the 1873 Springfield. Handloaded for stronger guns, it's a beast.

Handloading requires time and study. You get 24 hours each day. Study is simply an extension of passion, often sparked by hands-on experience.

You can set up a press with a sizing die in a small space. A lube pad and a few fired cases will let customers feel an old hull made fresh. Add a priming tool, seating die and bullets, and you can walk them through the entire process. Handloading is like shooting: You can describe it; but words can't impart that feel.

Loading manuals are must-reads, and not just for beginners. I have more than 30 within easy reach. After a half century of handloading, why so many? New cartridges, bullets and powders yield new data, and savvy handloaders consult multiple sources. Manuals provide cartridge dimensions, test-barrel lengths and rifling twist, bullet sectional densities and ballistic coefficients, results of penetration trials, and even the histories of cartridges, components and companies serving handloaders. Manuals are no longer the spiral-backed notebooks of my youth: they're hard-bound, profusely illustrated volumes



Gauges and tooling include items for precise measuring, such as this Hornady dial caliper for case length.

thick enough to stop bullets. Three on my shelf — Berger, Hornady, Nosler — average about 1,000 pages. Such treasure troves in gun-shops sell even to customers not yet handloading.

As a car lot crammed with shiny new vehicles draws the eye, so does a gun shop with full shelves and hangers keep customers browsing — and buying. Beyond costly progressive presses, handloading tools include affordable items that entice newbies and veterans alike. An electronic scale is an upgrade for someone like me, who's used an Ohaus balance-



Hand priming tools now include ingenious trays that right and feed primers — no touching needed.

beam for decades. Powder funnels, case and primer trays, gauges of all types and consumables like case lube move easily. Dies? You can't stock 'em all, but you can offer to order any. Give customers quick turn-around and reasonable discounts on hardware, plus an assortment of bullets and powders, and they'll visit often. Unsure about which items to carry? Ask customers before you get stuck with slow movers or run out of top sellers.

To peddle more than entry-level products, you'll offer know-how that's hard to access online. While the basics of handloading are well covered in most loading manuals, newbies still need counsel: What's headspace? What's the difference between H4350 and IMR 4350? For long shots, should

↓ A simple outside-neck-turning tool can improve rifle accuracy, and they're cheap.



I use 115-grain Berger VLDs in my .240 Weatherby? You'll also be tapped for tips. Here are a few from my notebook.

Reloading Tips

Know the signs of excessive pressure and adjust handloads right away to avoid it. Difficult extraction and primers with flattened edges tell you to back off! Extruded primers, with a lip around the striker dent, often indicate high pressure but can also mean the striker hole in the bolt face is oversize. Measuring case head expansion is a useful way to read pressure.

Markedly reduced charges of slow-burning powder have produced detonations, the prevailing theory is that primer flame jets across a charge in a horizontal case, igniting it from both ends so pressure curves join near the middle. For reduced charges, consult the manuals. Use reasonably fast powder with a filler like corn meal in front of it.

Keep cases trimmed! A case too long can jam against the chamber mouth, then pinch the bullet as you lock the bolt. If the case mouth won't easily release the bullet, pressures can spike. Trimming cases a bit shorter than necessary does no harm and gives you more reloads between trims. Exception: straight-walled cases that headspace on the mouth must not be trimmed short!

Handloading for the Long Poke

Marksmanship determines reach. Accurate, flat-shooting loads extend effective range only to the limits of your ability to hit. At distance, uniformity is crucial. Uniformly good shooting matters most, but I'll get off that horse to review how top shooters reduce variables in their ammo:

Long-range competitors sort cases by make and weight, even by lot. They turn necks to the same wall thickness and outside dimension, clean primer pockets, ream flash-holes to the same diameter. They trim hulls to the same length, just short of SAAMI spec, and chamfer the mouths. To extend case life and ensure snug fit in the chamber, they neck-size only.

Finicky shooters try several primers before choosing one. Magnum Rifle primers deliver a longer flame; they're not necessarily hotter. I use them for powder charges of 65 grains and up — in other words, slow propellants in big cases. Hand-priming helps ensure uniform seating.

The high ballistic coefficients of long-range bullets come at a price. Long noses and tapered heels make these heavy missiles so long that they may not function in ordinary magazines or throats. They may require extra-steep rifling twist to stabilize. Thin-jacketed hollow-points so accurate at distance don't reliably produce lethal wound channels in big game. Stronger jackets, bonding and mid-section dams help ensure adequate penetration up close. At distance, deceleration impedes upset, no matter the bullet design. Most hunting bullets will expand down to impact speeds around 1,600 fps. Few loads bring that velocity with lethal punch past 700 yards. Bullet-makers are working to broaden velocity windows.



Adjust neck-size only when handloading for one rifle. Set the sizing die a penny's thickness below the shell-holder. You'll reduce "working" of the brass and increase case life.

Seat bullets .1 from the lands so the bullet can move before contacting them, keeping pressure in check and ensuring easy extraction of loaded rounds. Minimal clearance usually delivers best accuracy. If you don't have a gauge, seat a smoked bullet out and chamber it. Feel for resistance and inspect the bullet for rifling marks. Seat it incrementally deeper until none appear; then seat .1 deeper.

Check for function with hunting loads by cycling them from the bottom of the magazine. Once, after loading early square-nosed Winchester solids for my .375, I got into a running battle with a buffalo. To my chagrin, I later found cartridges pressed into the magazine jammed on its curved face!

Safety First

Like racing motorcycles, sky diving and snorkeling with sharks, handloading is not as dangerous as it might appear to the uninitiated. The IQ of a plow horse will suffice. But lose concentration, and you imperil your shooting career. Keep these caveats in mind:



↑ Choose temperature-stable and high-energy options among the many powders on the market. Hodgdon alone lists more than 80!

Secure your loading room — priming compound is an explosive. Smokeless powder burns so fast it can literally kill in a flash. Keep both away from the hands of innocents and dullards.

At the bench, admit that no matter how long you've been shooting, you do not know all there is to know about handloading. Focus on the job. Limit yourself to one powder canister and one box of bullets within reach at a time. Store components in original containers. Bullets scant thousandths bigger than on the label can hike pressure. A fast-burning powder mistaken for a slower fuel can burst your rifle.

Label every box of handloads with age-resistant ink. When working up several loads for one cartridge, color-code





← Check hunting handloads by cycling all rounds from the bottom of the magazine through ejection.

“To peddle more than entry-level products, you’ll offer know-how that’s hard to access online.”

them with a dab of marker on each primer and record the codes in a notebook.

If a cartridge won’t chamber easily, extract it, check the bullet for rifling marks and measure the case to ensure it’s at or under SAAMI length. A snug fit at shoulder, belt or rim (minimum headspace) isn’t dangerous. But before you lean on that bolt handle to close it, figure out what’s tight.

Discard cases showing incipient separation, typically a white line in front of the extractor groove, where the web tapers thin. You’ll get stretch here as the brass flows forward with each shot — more with belted hulls in generous chambers. Firing “work hardens” brass; a thin spot becomes a point of separation. Escaping gas can then wreck your rifle and leave you blemished. Always discard visibly tired brass.

Unless you crave quality time with your attorney, do not sell or donate your handloads to anyone. Your pet 7mm-08 loads become bombs when the unwitting thumb them into a .25-06. A friend grabbed a box of .308 loads one morning to check zero on a fine .270 I’d sold him. The hull was, of course, short for the chamber; it slid right in. Pressure swaging the .308 bullet to .277 tore the rifle apart.

It would also be smart to avoid handloads assembled by someone else. Once, at a range, I agreed to fire a pal’s mid-level handloads in his lever rifle as he watched. The cases extracted easily. We chatted briefly, then I turned back to the target, thumbed the hammer, aimed and squeezed. Clack.

I waited several seconds before opening the action, in the event of a hang-fire. When I dropped the lever, an empty case tumbled out.

“I must have forgotten to cycle.” I chambered another round and prepared to fire again. Then an angel tapped me on the shoulder. There was one other possibility. Dropping the lever, I looked into a muzzle black as a coal shaft at night. I had not forgotten to cycle. The “empty” had been a primed case with a seated bullet but no powder. When I triggered that shot, the primer pushed the 200-grain softnose into the bore, where it lodged just ahead of the throat. The primer’s report couldn’t escape case or bore and was further muffled by the hammer fall. Had I fired a second cartridge, its bullet would have crashed into the lodged bullet near the peak of the pressure curve, almost surely shredding the rifle and my left hand — or worse.

Handloading under stress or a tight deadline causes mistakes. A Navy report after the Civil War noted that of 25,476 muzzleloading rifles found on battlefields, “at least 24,000” were loaded, with half containing “two loads each, one fourth from three to 10 loads each.” Many held “two to six balls ... with only one charge of powder. In some, the balls [were] at the bottom of the bore with the charge of powder on top...” One barrel had 23 loads stacked atop each other.

If you lack the time or presence of mind to pay attention, your handloads will show it!

Enough caveats. Sensibly done, handloading is safe, fun and economical. It gives you options in ammo that can trump even the best factory loads. It’s a step to wildcatting. It puts you in good company. Veteran handloaders know all that. Setting up a press in your shop will prompt the uninitiated to ask questions, then try handloading. They’ll remember where they got counsel, tools and components! **HR**







Bill Conway

SELLING CUSTOMERS THE RIGHT SCOPE

Optics are one of the most confusing but necessary product purchases that many customers will make. How do you guide them to the right scope for their needs?

BY TRENT MARSH

In my experience, there is no product category with a larger gap between what customers think they want and need and what they actually want and need than optics. This alone makes getting the customer the right product a more challenging proposition, because they may not be asking the right questions or sharing the right information. To ensure the customer gets a product that will make them happy and keep them coming back, it is critical that the staff behind the counter knows how to get to the root of the customer's needs, so they make the right sale, not just a sale.

Getting a customer the right optic starts with the very first question. Customers often walk up to the optics counter and announce what they think they need.

"I'm looking for a 3-9X scope."

This is the first opportunity to help improve the shopping experience. Rather than walking straight to the 3-9X scopes, the counter worker should follow up with, "Sure, what are you using it for?"

It may well be that the 3-9X is the right choice for the customer, but all too often, habit or bad information has customers looking for the wrong thing. The example I often use is a .30-06 rifle. It helps that the caliber is so common, because we all know someone who has or has used one. It is just as likely to be used in the dense forests of upstate New York as it is in elk country in Wyoming, but nobody would use the same optics for 50-yard shots in New York as 400-yard shots in Wyoming.

Understanding the purpose of the firearm is the single most important factor when choosing an optic. This is where the range of chassis options can be narrowed to accommodate the primary purpose of the firearm.

The next piece of the puzzle is making sure you have an adequate range of product to match the most common uses your customer base will have. It's incredibly difficult to sell optics if the customer can't put them in their hands and look through them. Hopefully you're already doing this, but it should be something that you evalu-



ate every season to ensure you have the best mix of product and aren't losing out on sales because your inventory isn't matching customer needs. This means having common chassis options that your customers require as well as multiple budget options to accomplish the same thing. As a practice, I have always presented optics choices in a good/better/best format as the second step of the selection process.

level lets you know that your bases and gun are level when you go to place the scope into the rings. With the scope installed in the ring bases, install the ring caps and screws until you start to feel resistance. With the scope secure, but not locked into place, there are two important steps to proper scope installation that have to happen here.

The first is proper eye relief. Ideally, the customer is in the store while you set eye relief, as the scope and rifle should be married to match the shooting form for the customer.

ers can change where the rifle sits on the shoulder and affect proper eye relief. It's easier to adjust to this on the bench during spring and summer shooting than in the moment while hunting.

Once eye relief is set, it's time to make sure the scope is level. While there are a lot of gadgets that claim they do this, the best method I've found is using a plumb bob. Hang a plumb bob with some brightly colored string in the area where scopes are mounted and use the vertical axis of the scope reticle to align the scope with the hanging string. Unless you are able to find a plumb bob that doesn't hang level, it's as fool-



Leupold

Budget is always a factor when it comes to optics selection. While there are still those who hold with the old saying that your optics should cost more than your rifle, modern technological advancements mean that neither rifle nor optic need to break the bank. As it applies to optics, there are great choices at virtually any price point.

Once the sale is made, many shops assume the process is over, but this is where you can separate your shop from the rest with after-sale support and knowledge. While mounting a



Bill Konway

“Ideally, the customer is in the store while you set eye relief, as the scope and rifle should be married to match the shooting form for the customer.”

scope seems straightforward and simple, this is where many optics problems begin. Getting your staff proper training and understanding of this process can put your customers on the right path to a simple sight-in process.

It's important to have a location to mount scopes that provides a stable, secure platform. Ideally, the mounting bases allow you to install the ring bases while also using a bubble level. The bubble

level lets you know that your bases and gun are level when you go to place the scope into the rings. With the scope installed in the ring bases, install the ring caps and screws until you start to feel resistance. With the scope secure, but not locked into place, there are two important steps to proper scope installation that have to happen here.

One tip: If the rifle is primarily going to be used during cold weather months, consider having the customer throw on a jacket before they put the scope up to their eye. Additional clothing lay-

proof as anything can be.

Now that eye relief and level are set, we reach the first place where common issues are made, by over-tightening the ring screws. Every manufacturer has their own specifications, but most are going to advise tightening the rings to 16 to 20 inch/pounds of pressure. There are several quality scope installation tools available that come with inch/pound torque drivers that can ensure that ring pressure is adequate. If the ring pressure is too loose, the scope will be able to move and rotate in the rings. If it is too tight, you can damage the erector tube assembly, impede adjustment ranges, or, in the case of side-focus scopes, prevent the erector tube and side-focus assembly from moving.



With the scope mounted properly, the next step is getting the new combo sighted in. Many shops offer boresighting to help get a customer on paper. Personally, I discourage this practice. The goal of any rifle/scope combo should be to adjust the scope as little as possible. The closer the scope is to optical center, the better it will perform. Every click of adjustment takes it a little bit out of optical center.

On the extreme fringes of adjustment, there are multiple issues that can arise that lead to declining performance. First, the further from optical center you stray, the more you will see fringing and focus issues with the optics. Additionally, with some scopes, it is possible to either remove adequate pressure from the erector tube, which can cause it to bounce, leading to point-of-impact issues, or to pinch the erector tube against the scope wall and cause the vertical adjustment to not be truly vertical.

As a general rule, I recommend not making more than one full revolution of adjustment to either the windage or elevation turret. This ensures you maintain proper adjustment in the scope, as well as staying in the best part of the optical system for optical performance.

Boresighting tends to lead to cranking on turrets without paying attention to how far the scope is being adjusted. Moreover, if the store employee makes that adjustment but doesn't log how much movement was made, the customer can't find optical center again without the scope being returned to a service center. Don't believe what the internet tells you — you can't just back the turrets out and count clicks to get to optical center.

I always sight my rifle in the same way. I start with the target at 25 yards and get my windage dialed in. Provided my scope doesn't require more than one full revolution to get on line at 25 yards, and my elevation impact isn't high or low by more than 6 inches, I then move the target out to 100 yards and dial in my elevation.

If my scope requires more than one revolution of adjustment in any direction, I start by re-mounting the scope, rings and bases. Many times, an issue that couldn't be seen with the naked eye is resolved simply by completing that procedure again. Depending on the specific setup of the rifle, shims or an adjustable base may be needed, but those situations are less common than most would have you believe, and for a normal hunting rifle, exceedingly rare.

If you decide to offer boresighting, I recommend that your staff be instructed to count and record all adjustments made from optical center, so the customer can return to it if needed, and they can ensure they don't exceed the one revolution maximum. **HR**

A Scope for Every Budget

It used to be that quality optics were tougher to find and more expensive than a quality rifle. Technological advances have brought down the price of quality optics, which means solid, serviceable options are available at virtually any price point.

Budget-Priced (Less than \$200)

Sightmark has options at a lot of price points, but their products really stand apart from the competition in this range. Less than \$200 can be a tricky place to buy optics — you can find a hidden gem or a real skunk — but there are no such worries with the Core HX 3-9x40. The Core HX checks all the boxes that you can and would expect at that price, and the optics outperform many other units at this price. For the money, it's hard to beat, especially considering the reticle options. www.sightmark.com



Mid-Priced (\$200-\$500)

If you haven't looked into the line of optics from Styrka, you're missing out. The S3 line of scopes from Styrka offers one-piece tube construction that provides extra stability for the heaviest-hitting calibers and a remarkable optical system at this price. There are four reticle choices in the 3-9x40. In addition to the standard plex and BDC option, there are two caliber-specific options for the 350 Legend and the 450 Bushmaster. www.styrkastrong.com



Premium (\$500-\$1,000)

In fairness, Vortex could have a scope anywhere in this mix, but let's focus on the Viper HS in 2.5-10x44. As a rule, I'm a big fan of scope chassis that bottom out below 3X. People often overestimate how long their shots will be and are left wishing they had a lower magnification for quicker target acquisition in close quarters. Vortex and its products and warranty are well known, and the quality is well-established. The Viper HS is a 30mm tube chassis, which offers some improvements in durability and optical system. A great chassis and design that fits a lot of needs. www.vortexoptics.com



Ultra-Premium (More Than \$1,000)

German Precision Optics may not be a name you are familiar with, but that's likely to change. The folks driving things at GPO come from places like Zeiss and Swarovski, so when it comes to optics, they know what they are doing. While optics at this price aren't for everyone, they compare with models that cost multiple times the GPO variant. The Passion 6X 2.5-15x50i uses the 6X optical system, which provides the most flexibility in magnification of any scope on this list, and does so in a 30mm chassis. Don't let the 1cm at 100M turrets scare you — they adjust almost exactly like the quarter-inch at 100 yard turrets you're used to. www.gpo-usa.com





Weatherby



USE [JUST] ENOUGH GUN

Faced with a customer making a first-time rifle purchase? Helping them make an informed decision goes a long way toward instilling long-lasting trust.

BY PATRICK MEITIN

When I manned the gun counter at a largish sporting goods outlet, it was common to serve customers looking to buy themselves or a loved one their first hunting rifle. The fact these customers' opening line went something to the effect of "I'm looking for a rifle for (type of hunting or relative)" told me they had little idea where to begin. Experienced hunters were invariably more resolute, typically declaring, "I'm looking for a (preferred brand) in (preferred cartridge)." That made things easy; it was a simple matter of checking inventory for the availability of whatever item they had in mind. But when you're dealing with less experienced rifle customers, especially first-time buyers, require more probing and insight borne of in-field experience to match actual needs or even tolerance levels.

This is more pointed when customers are buying big-game rifles for girlfriends, wives or youth hunters. It's safe to say that in most cases, the person who will be receiving that rifle has little or no centerfire shooting experience, so they have not developed a tolerance for heavy recoil and obnoxious muzzle blast (shotgun recoil is a different matter entirely). I would contend that shot noise causes more flinching than recoil.

It wasn't uncommon to be faced with customers making obviously ill-informed decisions. I vividly recall a 98-pound girl who earnestly insisted she wanted a .300 Remington Ultra Mag, only because it was more powerful than her brother's .300 Win Mag. After further quizzing, she confessed she'd never shot anything larger than the family's .223 Remington. It was an obvious recipe for disappointment and a nasty case of the flinches. And this assessment certainly isn't isolated to women. There are plenty of men for whom the .300 RUM would prove a poor choice (myself included!); despite the magazine article declaring it the ultimate big-game medicine. I could've rung that petite girl up and sent her on her merry way, but I would have been blamed when she discovered her grave error. Instead, I carefully coaxed her into something better suited to her needs and capabilities.



INEXPERIENCED RIFLEMEN

Customers marginally familiar with shooting but new to big-game hunting, even if they have no real grasp on what they will be pursuing down the road, are actually fairly easy. My basic approach was to steer them away from exotic cartridges and the biggest boomers and suggest a readily available classic. Cartridge choice, particularly for Western residents, might require handling anything from average deer to perhaps elk.

This suggests mid-sized cartridges in the .270 Winchester, .308 Winchester, .30-06 Springfield, and more recently, the 6.5 Creedmoor, class. All, when paired with suitable ammo (translating into proper bullet construction), will easily handle any commonly hunted animal in North America — given proper shot placement, of course. In

the wildly popular 6.5 Creedmoor, for instance, bullet choices might include (using Federal Premium as an example) a 130-grain Terminal Ascent or 135-grain Berger Hybrid Target for deer and 140-grain Nosler AccuBond or 140 Fusion Rifle for large black bear or elk.

Eastern customers are even simpler, especially if they're only interested in collecting some local venison for the freezer, eliminating the big stuff from the equation. For whitetail hunters plying the heavily wooded East, the .30-30 Winchester is still difficult to beat. Any of the .308 Winchester derivatives, such as the .243 Winchester, .260 Remington, 7mm-08 Remington and .338 Federal — and the .308 itself — make wonderful deer rounds, especially if a new hunter might be a scouch recoil shy.

NEW WOMAN & YOUTH SHOOTERS

I would be the last to suggest all women are automatically excluded from magnum cartridges. My good friend Kirstie Pike, owner of Prois (maker of high-tech women's hunting attire) and the very definition of petite, has shot critters around the globe with her biting Weatherby 6.5-300 Magnum. That said; there is generally no better way to turn beginners — particularly light-framed shooters — off shooting than to hand them a rifle delivering punishing recoil. Make sure the rifle they purchase offers a proper fit, because an ill-fitted rifle accentuates felt



recoil. The industry has responded to the growing ranks of women and youth shooters with scaled-down stocks or adjustable systems accommodating various-sized shooters, so this isn't the problem it once was.

It's also important to ask enough questions to gain a firmer grasp on what animals might be targeted. Here in Idaho, for instance, deer are certainly popular, but elk are the bigger seasonal draw, as everyone loves elk meat and we have plenty of them. This likely applies to many Western states, especially those where youth cow-elk hunts are common. For these customers, I usually suggest a 6.5 Creedmoor or 7mm-08 Remington as first choices, the .260 Remington or .308 Winchester also viable. These are rounds big enough to cleanly kill elk (with ammo loaded with quality, controlled-expansion bullets) but also producing mild recoil.

In the East, when whitetail deer and wild hogs are the only game on the menu, I would suggest a .243 Winchester (what I grew up on), or newer cartridges like the .224 Valkyrie, .300 AAC Blackout or .350 Legend (paired with proper ammunition). The latter, in particular, offers ultra-pleasant shooting but is also deadly on medium-sized game such as deer and hogs.

Petite ladies believing a .300 RUM will make them "one of the guys" are fortunately the exception in rifle-selling scenarios. Customers new to the centerfire arena will eagerly look to you for help in making informed decisions, and a little gentle and diplomatic guidance can go a long way toward creating happy repeat customers. **HR**

7 HOT DEER RIFLES FOR 2020

1] RUGER: Ruger's new 6.3-pound Scout Rifle .350 Legend offers an agile bolt-action rifle chambered in a potent medium-range cartridge legal in Eastern straight-walled-cartridge deer seasons. The forward-mounted, integral Picatinny rail allows the addition of a long-eye-relief scope for quick target acquisition with both eyes open, though built-in ghost-ring/protected front-blade iron sights are included. It includes a detachable box magazine, soft-rubber recoil pad and a 16.5-inch, free-floated cold-hammer-forged barrel. Three 1/2-inch butt pad spacers allow adjusting length of pull from 12.75 to 14.25 inches. Other features include non-rotating Mauser-type, controlled-round feed/extractor, lightweight synthetic stock with forward aluminum bedding block and rear aluminum pillar, one-piece, stainless steel bolt and three-position safety.

MSRP: \$1,239.

CONTACT: ruger.com

2] SAVAGE: Savage's new AXIS II Flat Dark Earth (FDE) comes complete with a Bushnell Banner 3-9x40mm scope mounted, bore-sighted and ready to hit the range out of the box. It includes an ergonomic synthetic stock and proven, user-adjustable AccuTrigger. Thread-in head-spacing, floating bolt head and a 22-inch, button rifled sporter-weight, carbon-steel barrel maximizes accuracy potential, for a fraction of the cost of most hunting rifles. It holds a detachable box magazine for quick unloading after the hunt. It is offered in .243, 6.5 Creedmoor, .270 and .308 Winchester and .30-06 Springfield. It weighs about 7.5 pounds.

MSRP: \$495.

CONTACT: savagearms.com

3] REMINGTON: Big Green's new Model Seven Threaded Mossy Oak Bottomlands (same as Kuiu model) is a lightweight and compact rifle that's lighting-fast in tight cover, but accurate enough for the long pull. This Remington Model Seven weighs only 5.5 pounds out of the box and includes a 16.5-inch, 5R rifling barrel that is threaded for a suppressor. Also new for 2020 is the 6.5 Creedmoor chambering, adding to .308 Winchester and .300 AAC Blackout options. The rifle includes an integrated 20 MOA Picatinny rail for simpler scope mounting. The synthetic stock is film-dipped in Mossy Oak's Bottomlands camouflage and includes a hinged floor plate for fast and safe unloading.

MSRP: \$829.

CONTACT: remington.com



4] WINCHESTER: Winchester's new XPR Renegade Long Range SR holds an advanced pistol-grip, wide/flat forend Grayboe Renegade Long Range stock, Perma-Coat barrel, receiver and bolt finish and a threaded 22-inch barrel (5/8x24 TPI) to accept a suppressor. It weighs 8 pounds, 8 ounces out of the box. The stock comes with three 1/4-inch length-of-pull spacers to create a perfect fit. It also includes Winchester's superb zero take-up/creep/overtravel M.O.A. trigger system, bolt unlock button for safe unloading, enlarged bolt knob, fluted bolt with slick nickel Teflon coating and detachable box magazine (four-round capacity). The Perma-Coat matte-black finish minimizes glare and protects from erosion, while the Inflex Technology recoil pad directs recoil away from the cheek for more comfortable shooting. Accuracy is enhanced through a steel recoil lug, the receiver is milled from solid steel bar stock and heat-treated to be stronger, and the target-crowned barrel is button rifled, stress relieved and free floated. Look for it in .243 Winchester, 6.5 Creedmoor, 7mm-08 Remington, .308 Winchester and three magnum chamberings.

MSRP: \$1,069.99.

CONTACT: winchester.com





5] BROWNING: Browning's 6-pound, 5-ounce X-Bolt Hell's Canyon Speed A-TACS AU (Arid/Urban) includes a stable but lightweight composite stock with textured surface and right-hand palm swell, flat-finish, Burnt Bronze Cerakote finish, detachable rotary magazine (three-round capacity) and adjustable Feather Trigger. It is chambered in .243 Winchester, 6mm and 6.5mm Creedmoors, .308 Winchester and eight magnum cartridges. Accuracy enhancements include an ultra-stiff and glass-bedded action and free-floated fluted 22-inch barrel with target crown. Recoil is tamed via the included muzzle brake (can be removed to add suppressor) and Inflex recoil pad. A-TACS AU camo blends well in a wide variety of habitats. The bolt includes a quick 60-degree lift and the top tang safety includes a Bolt Unlock Button for safe unloading.

MSRP: \$1,259.99.
CONTACT: browning.com

6] MOSSBERG: Mossberg's popular Patriot Predator bolt-action rifle is now offered in 6.5 PRC (also .22-250 Remington, .243 Winchester, 6.5 Creedmoor and .450 Bushmaster). These are optics- and suppressor-ready (5/8"x24 TPI) turn-bolts with synthetic stocks finished with a durable Flat Dark Earth (FDE) synthetic stock and matte-blue metalwork or TrueTimber Strata with Patriot Brown Cerakote. They weigh 7 pounds. Included are Mossberg's twin-lug, push-feed machined-steel action, spiral-fluted bolt with oversized handle, four-round box magazine and standard-contour, free-floating 24-inch barrel with 1:8 twist rate and straight-edge fluting. Accuracy is further enhanced by Mossberg's LBA (Lightning Bolt Action) 2- to 7-pound user-adjustable trigger. The integrated Picatinny rail makes optics mounting easy.

MSRP: \$455 to \$540.
CONTACT: mossberg.com

7] MARLIN: Marlin's Model 336C Curly Maple lever rifle offers a true classic with hard-rock maple forend and pistol-grip stock fitted with rubber butt plate, plus polished-blue metalwork. Chambered in the iconic .30-30 Winchester the 20-inch Micro Groove Rifling barrel (1:10-inch twist) delivers dependable mid-range accuracy through adjustable semi-buckhorn rear/hooded front bead iron sights or modern scope compatibility. The approximately 7-pound rifle includes a six-round magazine, the classic, fast-handling lever action allowing quick follow-up shots.

MSRP: \$954.99.
CONTACT: marlinfirearms.com





Can Camping Gear Boost Your Bottom Line?

Give hunters and outdoor enthusiasts one more reason to walk through the doors of your shop by adding camping gear.

BY JACE BAUSERMAN

The great thing about camping gear is that it's used by hunters and non-hunters alike. It's a massive market, one you should try tapping into. Of course, it will be hard to compete with the big-box stores. That's why you must be strategic in your approach. Making walls in your shop look like the camping section in a Sportsman's Warehouse probably isn't the best idea.

"There is a method to my madness," said one western archery/gun shop owner. "I've made camping a big part of my business, but it took a bit of time."

This shop owner asked that he remain nameless, but I've visited his locale several times, and his camping section is quite impressive. In fact, I've watched it grow a lot over the years.

"Most of my clients are hunters," the shop owner said. "I try and stock items they are going to want. When it comes to tents, I don't move many four- and five-man models. Most guys and gals are looking for one- and two-man tents. I keep several of these in stock. Over the years, I've sold multiple one- and two-man tents to fishermen and rock climbers as well. Word gets out that you have quality product, and

that's the key. Don't carry cheap tent brands. Families going on camping trips are probably headed to Walmart. That's not your crowd. Your crowd needs ultra-specific gear. They want quality items they can depend on, and if you have it, you can add a little extra to your bottom line."

Of course, tents don't make up the entire camping industry, and hunters and non-hunters alike will be looking to find different items.

"We move a lot of headlamps," said Cody Rowe of Gene Taylors Sporting Goods in Gunnison, Colorado. "All campers need headlamps. Yes, we get a lot of hunters and fishermen through our doors, but we get throngs of campers as well. I recommend carrying a solid selection of headlamps. We offer them across a broad price range. Some guys and gals want them with all the bells and whistles, while others just want a simple \$20 headlamp."

"In addition to the headlamps, we also move a lot of camping cookware. Small stoves and the like are great to have on hand. We also carry a selection of quality sleeping bags. Camping is a bit seasonal, but we've found during the spring and summer months that we get lots of fish-

men and other outdoor recreationalists through our doors. In the fall and even into early winter, we get lots of hunters that need a headlamp or a stove. Then there are those times when someone in camp forgot their sleeping bag. You just never know, but you need to be prepared to meet their needs."

Backcountry or Bust

I've been roaming the canyonlands and alpine peaks of the West since I turned 16 and got my driver's license. During my backcountry tenure, I've experienced most everything. I've been lost — bad — twice. My elk-hunting partners and I survived a four-hour golf-ball-sized hail storm followed by a monsoon that created mountain mud slides. I've gone to bed in 50-degree weather and awoke to six inches of snow. I found a man in the woods suffering from altitude sickness so badly he couldn't tell me his name. The backcountry is no joke. One minute it's peaceful and the next it's trying to kill you. The good news is, there are some great products on the market that you can outfit your customers with — products that will make their camping venture safe, fun and more comfortable.



“Don’t carry cheap tent brands. Families going on camping trips are probably headed to Walmart. That’s not your crowd. Your crowd needs ultra-specific gear.”



(1) Kelty Night Owl 2

When it comes to tents, it's hard to beat a Kelty. They are light, durable and a breeze to set up. While your choices of what to carry are many, I do recommend the Night Owl 2 (\$230). Noted by Kelty to be the ultimate backcountry wingman, the Night Owl 2 is a three-season tent with a pair of doors and a packed weight of just 5 pounds 15 ounces. Kelty Quick-Corner Technology reduces setup time, and the two-vestibule design helps keep gear tidy and organized. The tent also comes with a Stargazing Fly that can be opened and closed from the inside. Kelty also offers this tent in a one-man version. For more information, visit www.kelty.com.

(2) Badlands Artemis Two-Man

Badlands knows the backcountry, and if you're already carrying their packs and clothing, why not add a few tents? The Artemis Two-Man (\$490) is a 28-square-foot structure that tips the scales at 4.1 pounds. This three-season tent was designed to keep campers dry, safe and comfortable. The Artemis packs neatly into a small sack and was designed specifically to be toted around the woods. Like the Kelty Night Owl, the Artemis also comes in a one-man model. For more information, visit www.badlandspacks.com.

(3) Alps Mountaineering Zephyr 3-Person

A perfect early-season shelter for a plains pronghorn or high-country muley hunt, the Zephyr 3-Person (\$220) from Alps Mountaineering sports walls composed entirely of mesh, ensuring must-have ventilation and air flow. Though it's a three-man, packed weight is only 6.2 pounds, and the inside living space is a full 40 square feet. A unique two-pole design provides maximum head room, and the pair of doors make entry and exit simple. The included fly buckles to the tent, which is a big bonus on those windy nights when elastic attachments get ripped to shreds. For more information, visit www.alpsmountaineering.com.

(4) MSR Access 2 Two-Person

Mountain Safety Research's Access 2 Two-Person tent (\$600) is a four-season beauty designed for those who seek adventure in the high country when snow covers the ground. A limited amount of mesh on the tent body helps trap in warmth, and Easton Syclone Poles won't snap or break no matter how brutal the conditions. The tent boasts a packed weight of 4.1 pounds, has a total square footage of 29 inches and has DuraShield-coated fabrics. For more information, visit www.msrgear.com.



(1) Coast FL78R

I tip my cap to Coast Headlamps. They offer a wide range of options, and they perform. Whether I'm on a hunt or running a back-country marathon, a Coast sits squarely on my head. One of my favorites is the FL78R (\$70). This lamp features a hinged, tilting head that allows for maximum adjustment of your beam. Also pleasing is the dual power option. Coast Dual Power technology gives you the choice of running the headlamp off standard alkaline batteries or a USB-rechargeable battery. Twist Focus means you can rotate the lamp's dial to move between spot and flood beams. Visit www.coastportland.com

(2) Cyclops 210 Lumen 2 PK

A great buy, the 210 Lumen Headlamp 2 PK (\$40) from Cyclops provides the camper with a pair of powerful 3W white LED headlamps. The 210 also has a pair of white, red and green 5mm LEDs, which provide options for the user. The headband is easily adjustable, and campers can count on between six and 16 hours of burn time on a pair of included AAA batteries. Visit www.cyclopsolutions.com.

(3) Therm-A-Rest NeoAir UberLite Sleeping Pad

No one likes to sleep on the ground, especially without some padding between your sleeping bag and the tent floor. Enter the NeoAir UberLite Sleeping Pad (\$155 - \$225) from Therm-A-Rest. Weighing just a touch north of half a pound, this sleeping pad shrinks down to nothing, allowing you the ability to store it virtually anywhere in your pack. Separating you from the cold earth is 2.5 inches of cushion, and a Triangular Core Matrix helps maximize rest on those long back-country excursions. Visit www.thermarest.com.

(4) Alps Mountaineering Swift Air Mat

New from the minds at Alps Mountaineering is the Swift Air Mat (\$70). Weighing just one pound, this mat is sure to make a great backwoods companion. A number of small, pillow-like chambers provide additional support, meaning you can grind hard the next day after a good night's sleep. The Swift Air Mat showcases a flat valve that allows for rapid inflation and deflation. A stuff sack and a repair kit are included. Visit www.alpsmountaineering.com.

(5) SlumberJack Ronin 0 Sleeping Bag

Branded with a comfort rating of 0 degrees Fahrenheit, the all-new Ronin 0 Sleeping Bag from SlumberJack (\$90) is ideal for mid- to late-fall excursions. The polyester Ripstop Shell boosts durability and promises season after season of no-fail performance. Preventing those frustrating cold spots during the night is layered, offset construction, and External Velcro Tabs combined with dual zippers allow for "arms out" functionality. A compression stuff sack is included. Visit www.slumberjack.com.

(6) MSR PocketRocket Deluxe Stove Kit

I've cooked more meals in the mountains with a PocketRocket than you can shake a stick at. The unit is reliable and boils water in minutes. Upgraded for 2020, the Deluxe model (\$115) includes a premium lightweight cook and eat kit. The entire kit has a mass weight of just 13.1 ounces, and the compact design allow the Trail Mini Duo Cook Set to efficiently nest in the PocketRocket Deluxe Stove Pot. Visit www.msrgear.com.

(7) Black Diamond Ergo Cork Trail Trekking Poles

I won't go into the woods without trekking poles. I don't care if it's for a dainty day hike or a 10-day backcountry excursion — trekking poles are a must-have item for any camping enthusiast. Black Diamond's Ergo Cork Trail Trekking Poles (\$130) heed the backcountry call. These poles measure 29 inches collapsed and quickly extend to a max length of 55 inches. The angled natural grip has been updated and features a soft-touch top for better handling. The cork



grip keeps hand sweat under control, and when Mother Nature gets nasty, the cork doesn't get slippery. Double FlickLock adjustability — easy-to-open-and-close buckles on the poles — makes adjustments quick, quiet and ultra-smooth. Visit www.blackdiamondequipment.com.

(8) Platypus Big Zip EVO

Available in 1.5-, 2-, 3- and a 2-liter Lumbar option, the Platypus Big Zip EVO (\$37 to \$40) is an ideal choice for the camping crowd. Ideal for the backpack and around camp, the EVO features Secure SlideLock, which slides in both directions to make opening and securing the reservoir after fill super easy. Other features like the Hand Pincher Grip, High Mount Quick-disconnect and HyFLO Self-sealing Bite Valve make the EVO hard to ignore. Visit www.platypus.com. **HR**



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FEATURES

3 Calibers - 22 LR / 22 WMR / 17 HMR	Beaver tail Forend
Two - 10 rd Detachable Mags	OAL - 37"
18" Thread Capped Barrel	6.3 LBS
Tactical/Varmint Style Synthetic Stock	Nikko Stirling GamePro Scoped Options Available 3.5-10x44
Oversize Tactical Bolt Handle	Lifetime Warranty on Rifle and Scope



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Retail Showstoppers

It was gear galore when the inaugural Hunting Retailer Show kicked off at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

BY GORDY KRAHN

Hunting and outdoors industry manufacturers and retailers from around the country gathered in Nashville March 9-11 for a trade show geared exclusively toward the brick and mortar and online distribution of a staggering array of innovative products. In this, the inaugural year for the Hunting Retailer Show, more than 35 companies were on hand to say howdy, shake hands and show off their wares – despite a recent tornado and the early rumblings of the COVID-19 outbreak. Everything from archery equipment to firearms and accessories, retailer software solutions, hunting optics, hunting boots and so much more were on display.

Hosted by COLE Publishing, owner of Grand View Outdoors (GVO), the event was designed to fill the need for a hunting-specific trade show – the horsepower to promote and launch the event provided by GVO's business-to-business titles: *Hunting Retailer*, *Shooting Sports Retailer*, *Tactical Retailer* and *Archery Business*.

Here are some of the products that were front and center at the 2020 Hunting Retailer Show.

AIR ONYX TACTICAL CROSSBOW

Air Venturi, a leading manufacturer and importer of airguns and airsoft guns is pleased to showcase the ONYX crossbow, the industry's first and only one-push cocking (OPC) crossbow. The ONYX features collapsible limbs for easier transport and an arrow speed of up to 330 fps. But the biggest differentiator is the one-push cocking system powered by a refillable high-pressure air tank. A simple touch of a button cocks and de-cocks the bow, erasing the safety concerns associated with traditional crossbows, which hunters often carry fully cocked and ready to fire. With the ONYX, hunters can automatically cock the crossbow when needed, immediately before shooting. MSRP: \$1,749.99/Basic combo; \$2,059.99/Premium combo; \$3,199.99/Ultimate combo. www.airventuri.com



ALASKA GUIDE CREATIONS KODIAK C.U.B.

There are times when it is better to have more than not enough. Integrating simplicity and utility, the Kodiak C.U.B. (compact utility bag) delivers an optimal storage solution in a compact unit. In its main compartment, the C.U.B. will accommodate binoculars with up to 42mm objective lenses – most 8x42mm and 10x42mm models – measuring approximately 6.5 inches tall by 6 inches wide by 3 inches deep. It employs a hook and bungee closure system that allows for quiet and easy one-handed operation. For additional storage the C.U.B. also has spacious and secure front, side and rear compartments. MSRP: \$99.99. www.alaskaguidecreations.com



ALPINE INNOVATIONS SCOPE SLICKER

The Alpine Innovations Scope Slicker is available in three weatherproof versions – the DX Ultralight, NX .5mm Neoprene and NX2 2mm Neoprene – designed to keep riflescopes protected from the elements. The ultra-light DX features retaining bands to keep it securely in place. Just flip up each end to view through the optics, then flip them back down to cover the scope. Each end includes a pocket with a microfiber cleaning cloth attached inside. The NX and NX2 offer all of the features of the DX with added neoprene impact protection. Models are available to fit and protect all commonly used hunting scopes. MSRP: \$16.99-\$29.99. www.alpineproducts.com





ATN THOR LT 160 3-6X THERMAL RIFLESCOPE

ATN's Thor LT is the lightest thermal rifle scope in its Thor lineup, providing more versatility when mounting to a crossbow, air rifle or other shooting platform where weight is a critical factor. It is also the least expensive in the Thor line, while upgraded with ATN's new cutting edge 320x240 12um resolution sensor for optimum performance. The Thor LT is easy to mount using standard 30mm rings and its intuitive controls shorten the learning curve and get hunters out in the field quicker. And they can stay there longer, too, because the LT 160's internal lithium-ion battery has an incredible 10-plus hours of run time. MSRP: \$1,199. www.atncorp.com

COREWARE CORESTORE

Corestore from Coreware is a great point of sale solution for firearms dealers, and it is cloud-based so it can be accessed from anywhere. Dealers with multiple stores can see on one screen how all of them are performing. At the

heart of Corestore is a powerful inventory control system with the ability to conduct all business transactions from one screen. Sales and returns, layaways, consignments, exchanges, trade-ins, special orders, estimates, rentals, work orders – it's all here. And sales associates can be trained in a matter of minutes. Other features include the ability to scan a customer's driver's license and email receipts, easily import and export data, set up tiered pricing and much more. MSRP: \$99-\$199/per month, per location. www.corestore.info



CELERANT CUMULUS GUN SHOP SOFTWARE

Celerant is a premier provider of gun shop software, including shooting range software, gun store POS systems and firearms dealer software in the United States, serving the firearms industry for close to two decades. Sportsman retailers can leverage its solutions integrated electronic A&D book, e4473 and digital waivers, easily import products from vendor catalogs such as Sports South, Zanders and RSR, and upload products to third-party marketplaces such as GunBroker, Guns.com and Amazon. As a preferred software provider of the NSSF and the NRA, Celerant supports the hunting, archery and outdoor industries and will continue to do so long-term with its gun store eCommerce and other retail management solutions. www.celerant.com



EOTECH MAGNIFIERS

EOTech has added three weapon sight magnifiers to its 2020 product lineup. The G30, G43 and G45 join the existing G33, the magnifier used by members of U.S. Special Operations Command. The G43 is one of the most compact and lightweight magnifiers available. Its flip mount provides fast transitioning from 3X to 1X and the optic offers tool-free vertical and horizontal adjustments. The G45 5X magnifier has similar weight and dimensional properties as the G33 magnifier, but with an additional 2X magnification for precision aiming at greater distances. The G30 provides shooters with the same great magnification properties as EOTech's G33 magnifier at less than half the cost. MSRP: \$319/G30; \$629/G43; \$699/G45. www.eotechinc.com



AMERICAN REBEL AR-50 GUN SAFE

Constructed entirely of pressure-formed American-made steel, the American Rebel AR-50 gun safe is built tough – designed and engineered to keep firearms safe and secure in a stylish unit. The AR-50 is the largest safe in the American Rebel lineup, with a capacity of more than 40 guns. It features stout 11-gauge steel walls (three times stronger than the standard 14-gauge steel used for many imported safes), 14 locking bolts, 4.5-inch double-plate steel plate door and 1.25-inch diameter door bolts. It also has interior LED lighting with a motion sensor. Available in three trim models, the AR-50 measures 40 inches wide by 72 inches high by 28.5 inches deep and weighs approximately 925 pounds. MSRP: \$2,999.99. www.americanrebel.com





JTS GROUP M12AR SHOTGUN

The JTS M12AR semi-auto tactical shotgun features the familiar controls of an AR-platform rifle in a 12-gauge format, giving the shooter the comfortable feel of an AR and the flexibility of adding optics and other accessories via its Picatinny rail. Designed to chamber 2.75- and 3-inch shotshells, it has a four-position adjustable gas system to accommodate a wide variety of loads. The M12AR accepts Rem. chokes and comes with two five-round magazines. It has an 18.7-inch chrome-lined barrel, removeable front and rear sights and an aluminum forearm with M-Lok compatible slots on the 3, 6, and 9 o'clock positions and two side plates. Overall length is 37.99 inches. MSRP: \$599. www.jtsgroup.us



KENETREK MOUNTAIN EXTREME BOOTS

Kenetrek Mountain Extreme boots give hardcore hunters the wherewithal to pursue their favorite high altitude big game species no matter what Ma Nature throws at them. They feature 10-inch tall 2.8mm thick premium full-grain leather uppers with one-piece vamp construction with no seams down the tongue for abrasion resistance and waterproofing. Reinforced double and triple stitching make them durable and they have 7mm nylon midsoles for extra support when packing heavy loads. Other features include a reinforced rubber sole guard for abrasion resistance, Windtex waterproof breathable flexible membrane and lightweight K-Talon outsoles for positive traction. Kenetrek Mountain Extreme boots are available in non-insulated and 400- and 1,000-gram insulated versions. MSRP: \$465-\$505. www.kenetrek.com



FORT SCOTT MUNITIONS PACK & LOAD AMMO

Shooters looking for an efficient and economical solution for auto-loading their magazines, need look no further than the Pack & Load "ammo box" – manufactured by the Right Tool Company and loaded with 30 rounds of Fort Scott Munitions Non-TUI/Non-Solid Copper range ammunition. The shooter doesn't even have to touch the ammo. Simply remove the wrapper along the perforated edge located at the top and locate and pull the removable tab at the bottom of the ammo rounds. Place the Pack & Load cup on top of the magazine and place the index finger on top of the pusher saddle, with the thumb and middle finger on each end of the pusher. Firmly press downward, driving the rounds into the magazine. MSRP: \$18.49. www.fortscottmunition.com

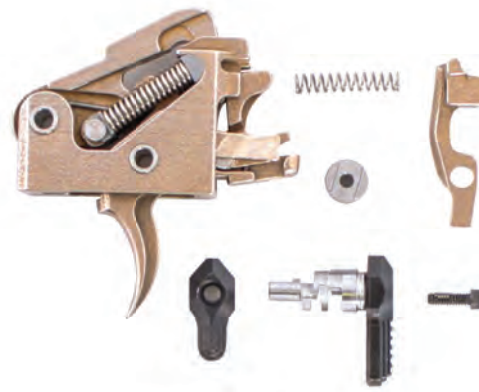


HUNTER'S BLEND COFFEE ORIGINAL ROAST

Hunter's Blend Coffee Original Roast is a smooth blend of perfectly roasted Central American and East Asian coffee that will get hunters out of bed and into the woods in the morning. It's made in small batches in Mechanicsburg, Ohio, roasted from direct trade sourced green coffee. And while many coffee importers support lobbyists who work against hunting and Second Amendment rights, by choosing Hunter's Blend consumers are not only getting great coffee and gear made by hunters, for hunters, they're also supporting the hunting community and its traditional way of life. MSRP: \$14.50/12 ounces. www.huntersblendcoffee.com

FOSTECH ECHO AR-II TRIGGER

The Echo AR-II trigger from FosTech is a drop-in design that allows the shooter to select from three different firing modes: Safe, where the firearm will not fire; Semi-automatic, where the firearm fires when the trigger is pulled; and Echo, where the firearm fires when trigger is pulled and also when the trigger is released. The Echo trigger is designed with safety being the utmost priority. When the shooter is in the Echo mode and depresses the trigger one round is fired. If the target moves, the shooter can move the selector to the safe position and a second round will not fire upon release. The ECHO is ATF approved and has a light, clean and crisp pull in the semi-automatic mode. MSRP: \$479. www.fostech.us





KOLPIN RHINO GRIP XLR

Kolpin's newest addition to the Rhino Grip family has been redesigned to have increased clamping functionality, stronger arms, stronger straps and the ability to move the arms independently to grab different-sized gear. With a weight capacity of 15 pounds and durable flexible grips that cushion and protect while providing a custom fit, they securely hold tools, firearms, bows, crossbows, fishing poles and other gear. A heavy-duty base system mounts to tubular or square bars or flat, drillable surfaces. A thumb-screw-actuated grip stabilizer allows 360-degree rotation and the grips can be easily removed from the base via a thumbscrew. Heavy-duty retaining straps, hardware and mounting plates are included. MSRP: \$29.99/Pair. www.kolpinoutdoors.com



MOUNTAIN LAKES CUSTOM EMBROIDERED CAPS

You design it and they will make it. Mountain Lakes high-quality custom hats are a popular and cost effective way to advertise any company or product. And it now has a special offer on custom embroidered caps in numerous fabric types in a rainbow of color choices. The price includes free setup and up to 10,000 stitches, choice of fabric and embroidery locations, pre-curved bill and proof sample by photo – or just pay shipping for a physical proof product. For an extra charge puff embroidery and a sandwich bill are also available. MSRP: \$3.25 plus shipping/minimum quantity of 288; \$1.98 plus shipping/large quantity of 10,000 and up. www.mloutdoors.com



L&Q TACTICAL LAPTOP BACKPACK

The Laptop Backpack from L&Q Tactical comes equipped with padded air mesh shoulder straps and back panel and has a robust grab-and-go handle. It will safely transport up to a 17-inch laptop computer via its spacious main padded compartment with a rigid board for enhanced support and stability. It also features a zippered tablet pocket, a zippered pocket with an organizer/office panel and a kidney pad with a hidden, padded zippered pocket for a concealed weapon. An integrated rain fly keeps the backpack dry and stows away in the bottom. MSRP: \$150. www.lqtactical.com



MC3 TRADITION REMINGTON STOCK

The Mc3 Tradition Remington hunting stock is the newest generation of high-performance rifle stocks designed, engineered and manufactured by McMillan. This classic hunting stock is modeled after McMillan's best-selling hunting stock, the Game Scout, and is compatible with most short- and long-action Remington 700 rifles with a factory hinged floor plate and a molded barrel channel. It upgrades the original Remington 700 with a completely solid stock, constructed from a state-of-the-art proprietary polymer blend called Zenolite, resulting in a stronger, stiffer product. The Mc3 Tradition stock weighs 2.8 to 3 pounds, has a fixed LOP of 13.5 inches and includes a 1-inch McMillan recoil pad by Pachmayr, two front sling studs, one rear sling stud and three finish options. MSRP: \$269-\$319. www.mc3stocks.com



KLYMIT CROSS CANYON TENTS

Available in two-, three- and four-person models, Klymit Cross Canyon tents feature a rectangular freestanding design that allows for multiple sleeping configurations – a great weekend warrior tent built to deliver comfortable interior living space with exceptional storage options at a great value. The series features quality materials and premium aluminum poles. Two entry doors and dual overhead ventilation keep the tent cool and condensation free, and easy setup and takedown means less time spent working and more time spent enjoying the outdoors. A multi-anchor point front vestibule creates a spacious storage area protected from wind and rain and three overhead pockets and two corner pockets provide spacious interior storage options. MSRP: \$199.95 to \$249.95. www.klymit.com





OSPREY ELITE SERIES 1-12X26MM IR RIFLESCOPE

Osprey Global's Elite Series 1-12x26mm IR riflescope offers a wide magnification range for close- to mid-range shooting, combining impressive in-the-field performance with a stealthy appearance. Designed with serious shooters in mind, it features a second focal plane elite reticle calibrated for 55-grain 5.56/.223 projectiles. Built with a sturdy 34mm tube, the Elite Series 1-12x26mm scope has an overall length of 10.6 inches and an eye relief of 4.72 to 3.5 inches. Other features include red, green and blue illumination, 94-7.9 foot field of view at 100 yards, 100 MOA elevation and windage adjustment and more. Uses one CR2032 battery. MSRP: \$649. www.ospreyscopes.com



RUGID WEATHERPROOF DUFFEL BAGS

Big Stone weatherproof duffel bags from RUGID are engineered to protect clothing, gear and valuables from the harshest conditions. Every Big Stone duffel bag has a durable PVC exterior shell combined with a SCUBA-style fully waterproof zipper and double-stitched seams – an unmatched performance bag for heavy-duty field use. They are available in 40-, 70- and 90-liter sizes, providing options for any travel adventure, from a weekend getaway to a weeklong mountain expedition. Big Stone lightweight duffels can be handheld using the heavy-duty grab handles, shoulder slung, or worn as a backpack, providing hands-free versatility. They are equipped with waterproof internal and water-resistant external pockets to keep gear organized and dry. MSRP: \$119.99- \$159.99. www.rugidgear.com



POCKET SHOT 2.0

The Pocket Shot 2.0 has an aluminum chassis that operates on a gimbal allowing it to swing and pivot. The gimbal connects with the pouch to center the shot and makes it easy to aim. The result is the evolution of the slingshot. The Pocket Shot allows users to load and shoot different projectiles at two to three times the rate of a regular slingshot. It's perfect for hunting and recreational use because its small size – 2.3 by 1.3 inches when closed – allows users to keep it in their pocket, tackle box or backpack while storing ammo in its watertight compartment. It generates speeds up to 350 fps and each unit includes aluminum rings, a silicone grip and PRO pouch. MSRP: \$49.50. www.thepocketshot.com



SEAL 1 GUN CLEANING KIT

National Tactical Officers Association member tested and recommended, Seal 1's All Rifle and Pistol gun cleaning kit includes the supplies to thoroughly clean rifles and pistols from calibers .22 to .45 as well as .410 and 28-gauge shotguns. Each kit contains 25 .22-270, .270-.35, .38-.45, .410 and 28-gauge pre-saturated cleaning patches and 10 cleaning patches for those same bores, along with a 1-ounce jar of Seal 1 CLP Plus Paste, a 2-ounce bottle of Seal 1 CLP Plus liquid, two each cotton swabs, four each 6x6-inch pre-saturated clothes/wipes, one each 12x12-inch microfiber cloth and one each nylon tactical brush. Retail: \$36.99. www.seal1.net



SHEFFIELD FIELD BOX

The Sheffield Field Box was redesigned and is now even better for protecting, storing and safely transporting ammo and other valuables in the outdoors. With a compression fit lid that resists water and dust, plus a molded lip for added strength and protection against contaminants, this sturdy field box has many uses. It's ideal for hunting and fishing gear, electronics, tools and many other items. It features three locking options to guard against prying and tampering, providing peace of mind that belongings are safe and secure. A base-to-lid interlocking system reduces tipping and allows easy stacking to save space and enhance organization. The Field Box has a hefty handle for easy carrying and is available in a variety of colors. MSRP: \$10.98. www.sheffield-tools.com



PULSAR DIGEX N450 NIGHT VISION RIFLESCOPE

The Digex N450 night vision riflescope from Pulsar uses a rugged and lightweight all metal 30mm scope housing with an anti-we ar coating that will stand up to the elements and heavy use. Its excellent image quality comes via its 1280x720 HD imaging sensor and 1024x768 HD display screen, and the N450 includes a removable 850nm IR illuminator for nighttime operation. Three adjustable IR power levels help choose preferred effective range and illumination level of an object observed. The N450 features a built-in recorder that captures still images and HD-quality videos with sound, and footage can be transferred to a PC/laptop or mobile device via a wired connection or Wi-Fi. MSRP: \$1,439.99. www.pulsar-nv.com





SIGHTMARK ELEMENT MINI SOLAR RED-DOT SIGHT

The new Sightmark Element solar red-dot sight combines solar and battery power to provide a true dual-power system with uninterrupted operation. And forget messing with reticle brightness – an innovative Eclipse light management system auto dims and brightens the red-dot reticle based on the environment. Powered by solar cells positioned directly on top of the optic housing and a single CR2032 battery, the Element provides users the choice of which power source works best for their situation. Its 3 MOA red-dot reticle and 120 MOA elevation and 160 MOA windage adjustments make the Element ideal for a wide variety of shooting scenarios and distances. It includes a low Picatinny mount and absolute cowitness mount. MSRP: \$239.99. www.sightmark.com

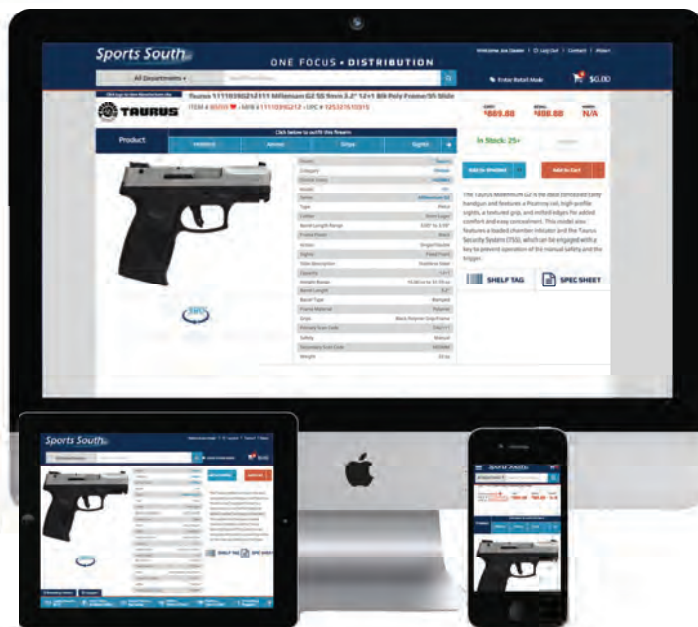


SPOT-HOGG TUFF GUY RELEASE

The Tuff Guy bow release from Spot-Hogg features a single closed jaw that fully captures and secures the release to the string loop. And like all Spot-Hogg releases, the trigger delivers excellent accuracy due to its zero creep, no travel design. Trigger tension is fully adjustable and will satisfy both light and heavy trigger fans. The Tuff Guy's micro-adjustable length, rigid connection fits a wide variety of hand sizes and allows the release to securely lock back out of the way when not in use. It is compatible only with bows that have a D-loop. MSRP: \$129.99-\$159.99. www.spot-hogg.com

T-BIRD ARCHERY MODULAR ARROW SAW

T-Bird Archery's modular arrow saw is a versatile, quiet running arrow cut-off saw powered by an 8,000 rpm motor, ensuring quick cuts through any type of arrow shaft. Spin testers check for arrow shaft straightness and broadhead runout and a deburring tool chamfers the inside of the arrow shaft to allow easy insert installation. An adapter accommodates a vacuum cleaner to remove carbon dust and a built-in squaring device quickly and accurately sands the ends of the arrow shaft to make certain the nock and insert are perfectly aligned with the arrow shaft. The T-Bird Archery modular arrow saw is built for pro shop and home use and can be purchased as a basic model or upgraded with the new arrow squaring device. MSRP: \$167.90/Basic; \$180.85/Full kit. www.modulararrowsaw.com



SPORTS SOUTH SHOOTING WAREHOUSE

Sports South maintains an industry leadership position through the relentless pursuit of innovation to drive long-term success and growth. With the nation's largest single source of shooting sports products from leading manufacturers under one roof, Sports South can deliver unmatched distribution services to its customers. Its virtually live online inventory is available 24/7 – access to 37,000-plus products and many other retailer account features that will make day-in and day-out transactions effortless. Sports South also offers many web service APIs so customers can take advantage of the same data as its own website. www.theshootingwarehouse.com



SPORT EAR GS EXTREME EAR BUDS

Sports Ear delivers three products in one with its GS Extreme all-in-one ear buds. It's like having Bluetooth ear buds, noise isolation headphones and electronic earmuffs all in one unit. Users can switch between hearing enhancement and protection mode to Bluetooth Audio mode or use both at the same time with independent volume controls to tune to the environment. Features include 6X hearing enhancement for normal hearing to moderate hearing loss, sound cancellation at 85 dB or louder and 5.0 Bluetooth audio for studio quality audio and hands-free communication. MSRP: \$199. www.goaxil.com





WOOX WILD MAN PRECISION RIFLE STOCK

The WOOX Wild Man is an aftermarket replacement for several OEM rifle stocks. Its traditional style integrates groundbreaking technology with a classic look and feel to offer today's outdoors enthusiasts a solid rifle stock they can rely on – a great option for both a new build and upgrading a favorite hunting rifle. WOOX precision stocks have been tested with manufactures' rifles and components and should not require any bedding or custom in-letting. Features include a high-quality aluminum chassis, forged monoblock body and vibration reducing hardwood. Available for long- and short-action Remington 700 BDL rifles. MSRP: \$449. www.wooxstore.com

ZONE INVISIBLE HUNTER INSECT REPELLENT

Odorless and long-lasting, Zone Invisible Hunter insect repellent spray was designed with the deep-woods outdoorsman in mind. Picaridin-based, odorless and providing 12+ hours of protection from mosquitoes, ticks, flies, fleas, chiggers, gnats and no-see-ums, it is safe, effective and ideal for hunters who want to keep biting insects at bay without alerting game. According to Zone, Hunter repellent's 20 percent Picaridin formula is more effective than DEET and is non-oily, non-greasy, non-sticky and goes on easy. Safe for the entire family, it won't harm hunting clothing or gear. MSRP: \$9.95/4-ounce spray bottle. www.zonerepellents.com



X-FACTOR OUTDOORS SIDE BAR MOUNT

X-Factor's Xtreme side bar mount features roller ball technology and is the only single-adjust 365-degree side bar mount in the industry. Instead of using teeth to lock it in place, the X-factor side bar mount uses a single set screw that allows for unlimited adjustment. The American-made mount carries a guarantee and comes with a black anodize finish. MSRP: \$117.99/ with bolted rear mount; \$128.99/with quick release. www.xfactoroutdoors.com

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TEXAN 50-CF

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TRI-TECH SYSTEMS AIM SOFTWARE

Tri-Tech Systems' AIM software is a complete business solution for firearms retailers. It has everything needed to maintain ATF compliance – integrated A&D book, 4473 form integration and Smartwaiver – to manage inventory from receiving to sales and to import products from industry-leading supplier catalogs such as RSR Group, Sports South and Lipseys. AIM also covers the basics, such as managing range memberships, lane usage and customer sales. Features include electronic A&D book, complete point of sale for firearms, class scheduling and billing, gunsmithing estimates, marketing solutions and more. Cost: \$995/Basic package; add-on modules available. www.gunpointofsalessoftware.com



TIMBER CREEK OUTDOORS ENFORCER KIT

Timber Creek Outdoors' Enforcer kit features high-end performance parts and jaw-dropping looks. It's perfect for sportsmen, competitive shooters, firearms enthusiasts and people who trust their lives to their equipment. When combined together, these parts improve usability, ergonomics and dependability of any small-framed modern sporting rifle – making the Enforcer kit one of the best investments a shooter can make to improve his or her equipment. The kit includes an Enforcer 15-inch hand guard and AR pistol grip, ambidextrous safety selector, AR billet dust cover, Enforcer ambidextrous charging handle, AR extended magazine release, quick disconnect end plate, low profile gas block, .223 Heart Breaker muzzle brake and an AR over-sized trigger guard, takedown pin set, forward assist and buffer tube. MSRP: \$749.99. www.timbercreekoutdoorsinc.com

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BARNES VOR-TX 6.5 GRENDL

Barnes' all-copper VOR-TX ammunition in 6.5 Grendel produces great expansion, maximum weight retention and excellent accuracy — handload precision in a factory-loaded round. Loaded with the newly developed 115-grain TAC-TX bullet, optimized for the 6.5 Grendel cartridge, it provides excellent pass-through penetration and devastating energy transfer, effective for stout predators such as coyotes at long range and wild hogs. All-copper TAC-TX rifle bullets have a proven reputation for accuracy, are designed for controlled, double-diameter expansion and are effective at close or long range. These bullets also track straighter through barriers and have better weight retention than lead-core bullets, according to Barnes.

MSRP: \$35/Box of 20

CONTACT: www.barnesbullets.com

BROWNING BXC CONTROLLED EXPANSION TERMINAL TIP

The Browning BXC Big Game Controlled Expansion Terminal Tip bullet was designed specifically for large, tough animals such as elk and moose. An anodized aluminum tip increases accuracy in flight and then drives back into the bonded bullet upon impact, creating consistent, controlled expansion. This expansion is controlled further through the use of a gradually thickening jacket profile and bullet skiving. The result is consistent penetration through tough hide and bone with maximum trauma to the vital areas where it counts. In addition to other big game calibers, BXC is now available in .28 Nosler, its 155-grain bullet producing a muzzle velocity of 3,250 fps and exiting the barrel with 3,635 foot-pounds of energy.

MSRP: \$55 to \$65/Box of 20

CONTACT: www.browningammo.com

FEDERAL TERMINAL ASCENT

Federal Terminal Ascent's match-grade bonded bullet construction delivers deep penetration on close targets, while its patented Slipstream polymer tip helps flatten trajectory and initiates expansion at velocities 200 fps lower than comparable designs. The bullet's long, sleek profile offers an extremely high ballistic coefficient and its AccuChannel groove technology improves accuracy and minimizes drag and wind drift. Its copper shank and bonded lead core retain weight for deep penetration at any range. Terminal Ascent is available in a full selection of long-range hunting cartridges ranging from 6.5 Creedmoor to .300 WSM.

MSRP: \$42.95 to \$53.95/Box of 20

CONTACT: www.federalpremium.com

FIOCCHI EXTREMA 6.5 CREEDMOOR

Fiocchi Extrema 6.5 Creedmoor ammunition is loaded with a 130-grain Swift Scirocco bonded bullet that leaves the barrel at 2,820 fps — specifically designed for today's fast, flat-shooting long-range rifles. Its secant ogive, 15-degree boat-tail base and polymer tip create a sleek, aerodynamic profile that helps maintain downrange velocities and flat trajectories. An extra heavy tapering jacket wall with an internally bonded lead core provides structural integrity, reliable expansion and penetration with over 70% weight retention. Produced with precision cases and reliable Fiocchi primers, this ammunition is made with new production, non-corrosive, in boxer-primed reloadable brass cases.

MSRP: \$40.99/Box of 20

CONTACT: www.fiocchiusa.com





FORT SCOTT MUNITIONS .308 SCS TUI BRUSH HOG

Fort Scott Munitions .308 TUI Brush Hog ammo features a solid copper match grade bullet engineered to tumble upon impact to provide devastating stopping power and precision machined and loaded with the utmost care within tight tolerances for dependable accuracy. Upon entry into soft tissue, the TUI projectile will begin to tumble, causing a high degree of energy transfer and massive internal damage. And hunters can enjoy the freedom to pursue wild hogs, deer and black bears with these solid copper-spun bullets where lead ammo is prohibited. With its tumble-upon-impact technology, Brush Hog ammunition is also a good choice for personal and home defense.

MSRP: \$45.74/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.fortscottmunitions.com



HORNADY PRECISION HUNTER .300 WIN. MAG.

New for 2020, Hornady has added a 178-grain ELD-X .300 Win. Mag. option to its Precision Hunter ammunition lineup. The ELD-X bullet is a great load for any hunting situation because of its effective terminal performance at all practical ranges. A streamlined secant ogive with optimum boattail design, highly concentric AMP bullet jackets and Heat Shield tip combine for aerodynamic efficiency. With high velocity – 0 to 400 yards – impacts, the bullet continually expands throughout its penetration path and retains 50 to 60% of its weight. With long-range low-velocity impacts, the Heat Shield tip drives backward into the bullet for controlled expansion and deep penetration while retaining 85 to 90% of its weight.

MSRP: \$36.52/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.hornady.com



HSM AMMUNITION 6.5MM CREEDMOOR LOW RECOIL

HSM Ammunition has engineered a 6.5mm Creedmoor cartridge that reduces felt recoil by 47%. Now, one rifle chambered in this popular cartridge can be shot by any man or woman, girl or boy without worrying about excessive felt recoil. HSM partnered with Sierra Bullets in developing its proprietary standard weight-for-caliber 140-grain bullet with a distinct HSM orange ballistic tip. Using premium cases and primers combined with a blend of temperature tolerant powders, the bullet leaves the barrel at 2,340 fps with 1,695 foot-pounds of muzzle energy. In addition to the 6.5 Creedmoor, HSM Low Recoil ammunition is available in seven other popular big game cartridges.

MSRP: \$28/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.hsmammunition.com



LIBERTY AMMUNITION ANIMAL INSTINCT .30-06

Liberty Ammunition took its Civil Defense projectile design and toughened it up a bit – thickening up the base to increase penetration – to create the Animal Instinct line of hunting ammunition. Its newest offering in the line – the Instinct .30-06 – uses a light-for-caliber 100-grain bullet with a muzzle velocity of 3,500 fps and 2,700 foot-pounds of kinetic energy with devastating effect, designed to drop animals on the spot. And thanks to its lighter bullet there is also less felt recoil. Animal Instinct rounds are spun on a lathe to keep them consistently accurate out to 500 yards.

MSRP: \$64.95/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.libertyammo.com

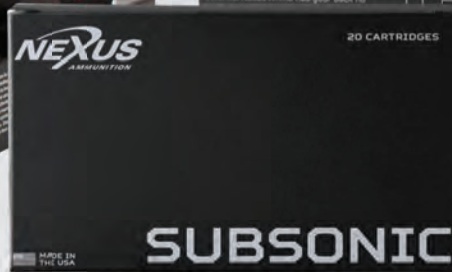




NOSLER TROPHY GRADE LONG RANGE

Loaded with the new AccuBond Long Range bullet, Nosler's Trophy Grade Long Range is designed for hunters and shooters looking for high-performance ammunition loaded with an ultra-high B.C. bonded-core bullet. Developed using a combination of bullet manufacturing techniques unique to Nosler, the design of the AccuBond-LR allows for the highest B.C. possible. Its high-performance boat tail, long ogive and polymer tip combine to make it a sleek, flat-shooting bonded hunting bullet – loaded in Nosler brass for quality, consistency and accuracy that rivals custom handloads. Available in a variety of big game loads.

MSRP: \$54.40 to \$109.45/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.nosler.com



NEXUS .300 BLACKOUT RN PRO-HUNTER SUBSONIC

The Nexus match grade 220-grain .300 Blackout Pro-Hunter cartridge is loaded with a Sierra Match King FBRN bullet that is optimized for suppressed precision gas gun applications. The Nexus Hunting line of ammo was designed to deliver maximum terminal ballistics in a precision package. Using the same proprietary loading methods as with its Match line of ammunition, Nexus has developed these cartridges utilizing top-quality components that provide optimal terminal performance from traditional lead projectiles.

MSRP: \$23.24/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.nexusammo.com



REMINGTON HTP COPPER

Remington HTP Copper ammunition features the venerable Barnes TSX bullet, which has a time-proven reputation for delivering massive knockdown power. This all-purpose hunting line of ammo is available in most popular big game hunting cartridges and is specifically designed for optimum weight retention and terminal performance. The Barnes TSX bullet is precision engineered with four cutting petals that deploy upon impact to inflict enormous wound channels, along with deep penetration and the kind of integrity only a one-piece bullet can deliver – nearly 100 percent weight retention every time. HTP Copper is loaded with top-quality components to provide hunters the fullest measure of confidence in pursuit of large game.

MSRP: \$42.98/Box of 20/.270 Win.
CONTACT: www.remington.com



RIO ROYAL STAR SLUG

Hunters understand that pursuing large, dangerous game demands absolute confidence in their equipment – from their rifles and optics to the ammo they chamber. They must be able to count on their hunting ammunition to perform reliably and consistently every time they pull the trigger. Rio's Royal Star line of slugs delivers the optimal penetration, multiple fragmentation and accuracy hunters can count on – an excellent hunting load for deer, wild hogs and large or dangerous game. It's available in 2.75-inch 12-gauge only and its 1-ounce payload leaves the barrel at 1,410 fps, delivering excellent knockdown power and performance when it's needed most.

MSRP: \$183.34/Case; \$3.67/Box of five
CONTACT: www.riocartridges.com





SIERRA GAMECHANGER

The GameChanger hunting bullet is a combination of Sierra's legendary match accuracy coupled with deadly penetration and quick, controlled expansion. Sierra re-engineered its MatchKing bullet into a hollow-point design for dynamic expansion and fitted it with a transparent green polymer tip for ballistic uniformity. Inside, the GameChanger features a unique construction that utilizes a special lead alloy surrounded by a tough copper jacket that delivers excellent penetration and expansion at a variety of ranges. The GameChanger employs a boat-tail design for stable flight and increased accuracy and an optimal jacket wall thickness to control expansion and maintain weight retention. Sierra recently added .300 AAC Blackout and .223 Rem. to the GameChanger lineup.

MSRP: Box of 20: \$26.99/.223 Rem.; \$19.99/.300 AAC Blackout
CONTACT: www.sierrabullets.com



SIG SAUER ELITE PERFORMANCE COPPER

Sig Sauer's Elite Performance Copper Hunting line of ammunition delivers deep penetration and consistent 1.8X diameter expansion for maximum terminal ballistic performance in a highly accurate big game hunting load. Industry leading primers are matched to proprietary powder blends to ensure dependable ignition and consistency while its lead free monolithic copper bullet with an optimized nose geometry and premium nickel-plated shell casing delivers reliable accuracy and easy feeding. The Sig Sauer Elite Copper Hunting bullet is California Fish and Game compliant and available in a variety of big game calibers.

MSRP: \$27.95 to \$56.95/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.sigsauer.com



WEATHERBY 6.5 WBY RPM

Weatherby's 6.5 WBY RPM cartridge is based on a lengthened version of the .284 Winchester. It has a rebated rim, making it compatible with standard .30-06 bolt faces and reloading equipment. However, the large body diameter, low body taper and 35-degree shoulder mean that case capacity is greatly increased, leading to higher velocities. In addition, bullet innovation in the 6.5mm category is highly efficient with less drop and wind deflection than many heavier calibers. All these details culminate into an accurate cartridge that delivers 1,500 foot-pounds of energy at 500 yards. The Weatherby 6.5 WBY RPM comes in three bullet choices —127-grain Barnes LRX, 140-grain Nosler Accubond and 140-grain Hornady Interloc.

MSRP: \$50 to \$65/Box of 20
CONTACT: www.weatherby.com



WINCHESTER .350 LEGEND POWER MAX BONDED

Winchester has added the .350 Legend to its Power Max Bonded ammunition line for 2020, which uses a proprietary bonding process to fuse the lead core to the copper jacket for maximum retained weight and deep penetration through dense hide and bone. Ideal for hunting big northern whitetail bucks and heavily armored wild hogs, its 160-grain JHP bullet delivers excellent terminal performance on the toughest big game animals. The Winchester .350 Legend perfectly fills several important growth segments in the hunting and recreational shooting market — compliant in states that allow straight-walled cartridges for deer hunting. Extremely low recoil makes it ideal for recoil-sensitive shooters.

MSRP: \$24
CONTACT: www.winchester.com





Bill Conway





Knowledge Is Power—But Does it Make Sales?

Just because an employee knows everything about guns, that doesn't mean he can sell them.

BY JOSH FIORINI

Every industry needs salespeople. Whether those sales are institutional, business-to-business, online, factory direct or in a retail environment, each organization in the marketplace has to have employees who create relationships with its customers, manage their experiences and, yes, close the sale.

The basics of selling are the same no matter what the product is, but every industry is different; obviously, the products and services being sold differ enormously, but so do the demographics and behavior of the customers for those products and services. So, for the shooting sports industry, what skill set makes a good salesperson?





John Hafner

Walk With Personality ...

At most major corporations utilizing large salesforces, especially those that are commissioned, one of the first things you will find present in the interview process for their sales positions is some sort of personality test. The company wants to determine if you have the appropriate personality type to sell and, specifically, to sell their products.

Each test may have slightly different criteria, but all agree that an effective salesperson should possess a few key qualities: They need to be outgoing, curious, and optimistic such that they are not easily discouraged, and they must remain cool in uncomfortable situations. Salespeople should be likable but not obsessed with being liked, and they should be goal oriented.

Everyone at some point in their life has met someone and thought, “That person is a natural at sales.” It’s true, some do have a knack for sales and do their jobs well with relatively little effort. It’s also true that some of those natural skills can be taught, but that is difficult and not often successful. The personality traits and inherent inclinations that make a person naturally good at sales tend to be in place by the time that person has reached adulthood. At its core, sales are

“Everyone at some point in their life has met someone and thought, 'That person is a natural at sales.'”

about both a talent and a skill, but talent cannot be taught or developed quickly.

... But Talk With Knowledge

Beyond having a personality that closes sales, your salespeople must know the details of what they are selling and be able to speak intelligently about it. They must be able to understand the customer’s concerns and desires and respond with logical recommendations.

I once told a gentleman I was looking for a milling machine, and he tried to sell me a lathe, referring to it as “that machine over in the corner that takes the material off.” Needless to say, I did not buy the lathe. I did buy a milling machine (which he couldn’t identify) from that man for about a third of what it was worth — good day for me, bad day for him.

A lack of product knowledge can be disastrous for a sales team. But with so many different types of products and services out there, how can one find the right combination of inherent sales talent and product knowledge? And, if forced to choose one or the other, what should an employer choose?

The “Gun Guys”

It is true that the shooting sports have some of the most educated and technically adept retail customers. No shoe buyer calls Adidas to inquire about the vulcanization process used in the rubber and at what temperature it cures its soles, but those types of deep-detail inquiries are common among firearms buyers. Firearms are a relatively expensive product, and many customers are spending a significant portion of their discretionary income on them. As such, they educate



themselves to make sure they're getting what they want or need. This most often leads companies at all levels, but especially retail, to hire product experts as salespeople. The thought process is that one must be a "gun guy" to talk intelligently to or sell to another "gun guy" (or gal) and that customers will reject canned sales palaver from someone they perceive as inauthentic. There is merit to this thought process, but we must remember balance.

Those who possess the most detailed technical knowledge on any subject are, perhaps surprisingly, often not the best people to present that knowledge in a sale or teaching context. That's because the same personality traits that led them to accumulate that knowledge are actually opposite those required of a salesperson. Let me give you an example.

Early in my career in the firearms industry, I was confronted with a subject-matter expert who had decades in law enforcement and the firearms trade. He had a wealth of knowledge and taught me many things, but in a sales position, he was ineffective. Even though he was well-liked, many potential customers stayed just that — potential. He often led with the negative, overshaed information that clouded the issue at hand, and prized the conversation over the sale. Indeed, he would shy away from difficult sales situations. Many attempts were made to train him on sales techniques, but it never did take.

Is it easier to teach a natural salesperson product knowledge, or to teach a product expert sales skill? I will tell you from experience like that I've just described and backed up with research, that it is the former. Any intelligent person can be taught product knowledge, but not every intelligent person can be taught or coached to effectively sell. If you can find someone who has both skill sets, good for you — but that doesn't

happen often. If forced to choose, your time and resources are much better spent hiring a sales professional and teaching them about firearms than the other way around. In doing so, make the first element of their training admitting what they don't know and have them refer tough questions to you or another expert when they're working with a customer. That's both honest and authentic — the customer will respect it, and you will have

maintained the sales opportunity instead of lost it via someone who was unable to generate attention and interest.

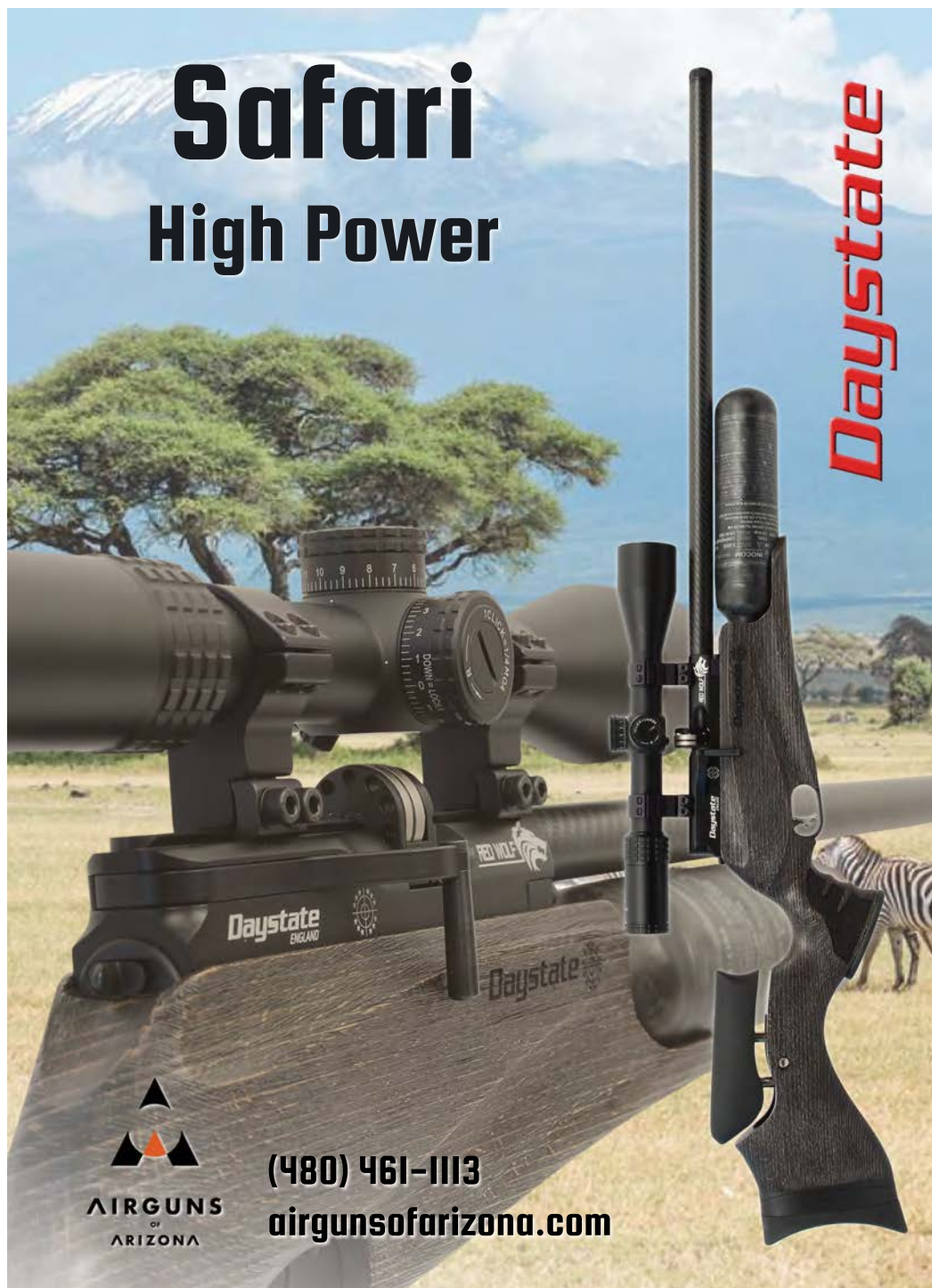
There are places within every industry for all personality types and shooting sports is no different. But remember that sales and customer service are not the same thing — and while you may need product experts for the latter, you need salespeople for the former. **HR**

About the Author

Josh Fiorini is the former CEO of PTR Industries, Inc. He spent the first decade of his career in finance, holding positions as an equity analyst and portfolio manager before starting his own hedge fund. This experience, along with a deep background in manufacturing, banking and private equity, has made him a sought-after contributor on numerous boards and discussion groups on political and economic issues for media outlets, corporations and community organizations. Fiorini currently invests his time and resources with non-profit initiatives and acts as a contributor and management consultant to various firms in the firearms industry as the founding and Managing Partner in the firm Narrow Gate Management.

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Ensuring Your Business Has Good Credit



Even if you're not planning to borrow money for a capital purchase any time soon, it's smart to make sure your business is creditworthy.

BY JUDY KNEISZEL

Entrepreneurs often use personal assets as startup capital and rely on their personal credit scores to secure startup loans. Once their businesses are up and running, however, wise owners separate personal and business finances. One way to do that is to build a good credit score for the business so future capital can be borrowed by the business, not the owner.

If a rookie business owner isn't convinced about the necessity of keeping personal and business finances separate, it will become clear at tax time. Separating personal and business finances makes tax preparation simpler because expenses are easier to track. And if business expenses are simple to track, it's easier to take full advantage of available deductions. Separation of finances also gives a new business credibility while reducing personal liability.

What some business owners don't realize is that business credit is also an important reason to separate personal and business finances. Having personal and business finances

together makes it difficult to establish business credit because a bank or lending agency can't easily isolate business income, which is the number a lender needs when assessing whether or not to approve a business loan.

Taking out personal loans to operate a business can negatively impact a business owner's entire family because any repayment problems show up on the business owner's personal credit reports. This will make it harder to borrow money for a family home or car. Even if there aren't problems, a personal loan used to fund a business can hinder the ability to borrow as an individual because lenders limit how much can be borrowed based on both income and existing debt. Borrowing for a business can quickly bring the borrower to the limit.

Also, unless business credit is established, lenders will require a personal guarantee — and that means putting assets such as your home on the line as collateral for the loan. This could make it difficult to move or refinance a home.



Transparent Scores

Keep in mind that while personal credit scores are confidential, business credit scores are not. Anyone, including suppliers and potential customers, can check out your business score, which means having a favorable one can make day-to-day operations easier. Suppliers, for example, are likely to give a business more time for repayment if it has a good credit score.

A good credit score is also a sales tool. A potential customer considering giving your company ongoing work that could last years wants to know you'll still be in business all that time. Likewise, a longtime customer might hesitate to renew a contract if he or she discovers your company has a low credit score because that could indicate instability.

Another benefit of a business having good credit is that credit scores are often used to help commercial landlords decide if they want to rent to a particular company. And, of course, the main benefit of a good business credit score is that when you do want to borrow money, you'll get more favorable rates. Interest rates are, in part, based on the amount of risk the lender is taking on. And finally, having good business credit may also qualify you for lower business insurance rates.

“Remember, business credit reports are public, which means anyone can pay to see yours.”

Credit Checkup

A business credit score is similar to a personal credit score like the well-known FICO score. There are differences, however. Personal FICO scores range from 300 to 850; business credit scores generally range from zero to 100. While FICO algorithms are used to calculate scores by several consumer credit bureaus, business credit scores can vary from bureau to bureau because they don't use the same algorithms.

Dun & Bradstreet, Equifax and Experian are the three major business credit bureaus. You can go to their websites to check if your business is in their databases. If you discover there are no reports on your company with these bureaus, they can assist you in setting up your profile.

Another key difference is that you can get your personal credit report free once a year from each of the three major consumer credit bureaus:

TransUnion, Equifax and Experian. Plus, you can probably get your personal FICO scores free from your credit card issuer. It's likely you'll have to pay to see your company's information, however, with the price of getting a business credit report from one of the three major bureaus ranging from \$40

Use as many lines of credit as you can, since more history is better. Be careful not to max out business credit cards, but rather limit spending to 20 or 30% of the established limit.

Taking out a small-business loan and making on-time payments can improve your credit score.



to \$100. All three provide a credit summary and business credit score. Beyond those two things, there are slight differences in the type of information provided. Their websites should help you decide which bureau reports you want to purchase.

Remember, business credit reports are public, which means anyone can pay to see yours. On the other hand, you can get information on other companies as long as you are willing to pay for it.

Improve Your Score

To build business credit, you want to maintain a good credit score or improve a mediocre one. One way to do this is to use credit responsibly. Ask vendors to allow you to pay several days or weeks after you receive inventory and report your payments to a business credit bureau. Having that type of accounts-payable relationship with two or three vendors, even small ones, can improve your credit as long as you are fastidious about making payments on time, or even early, with all of your creditors.

Just make sure the lender actually reports to the credit bureaus, or you won't be rewarded for your efforts. Most banks do report, but some smaller lenders do not, so always check.

A good credit score doesn't happen overnight, especially if you've had a rocky business history. While it helps to pay off your business credit cards on time each month, things like bankruptcies, liens and judgments against the business in collections lawsuits stay in credit reports for seven to 10 years, having a continued negative effect on credit scores. Keeping your public records clean is crucial to establishing good credit.

Ensure Accuracy

Keep information about your company up to date with the three major credit bureaus and check your credit reports for accuracy at least once a year. Despite claims of careful vetting by the bureaus, mistakes sometimes get through. If you can provide evidence that information is inaccurate, the bureaus will correct the error. **HR**



HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS

BY GORDY KRAHN

HATSANUSA VOLT DUAL-POWER PORTABLE COMPRESSOR

Charging an air rifle has just gotten more convenient. HatsanUSA's new Volt dual-power portable compressor is designed to run on either a 12V power source or plugged directly into a wall outlet, and its smart digital gauge unit controls the power and auto-shutoff pressure, which can be set in 10-BAR increments. The screen displays system voltage, system pressure and the set shutoff pressure. Internal sensors keep it from overheating. At just 14½ pounds, The Volt can fill airguns up to 10 percent faster than other compact units, and a mounted carry handle makes it easy to grab and go. Its tough steel frame is built to withstand years of use. MSRP: \$699.99. www.hatsanairgunsusa.com



HI MOUNTAIN SEASONINGS PEPPERONI SAUSAGE KIT

Who doesn't love pepperoni? After all, it's a favorite for pizza and is great on sandwiches and crackers and in salads. And with Hi Mountain Seasonings' new Pepperoni Sausage Kit, making delicious aged pepperoni is no longer just for old-fashioned butcher shops. With perfect proportions of black pepper, paprika, garlic, cayenne pepper, crushed red pepper, mustard seed and other spices, Hi Mountain Seasonings' Pepperoni Kit offers a palate-pleasing balance of salt, spice and heat with a little spike of acidity. It includes everything needed to make delicious pepperoni time and time again: seasonings, cure, citric acid, casings and detailed, easy-to-follow instructions. Each kit will season 18 pounds of meat. Available late summer/early fall of 2020 at retailers nationwide. MSRP: \$21.99. www.himtnjerky.com



DELTA MCKENZIE IMP 3-D TARGET

Delta McKenzie, a leading innovator of realistic, durable 3-D targets, recently added the Imp to its lineup, designed for archers who want to add a little fun to their backyard practice sessions. The Imp target is cast from DM's high-quality durable self-healing target foam and features a detailed, hand-painted impish finish. It is an ideal addition to any 3-D target range and will provide hours of shooting fun while improving archery skills. The 18x18x18-inch Delta McKenzie Imp weighs 10 pounds and is rated for field points and broadheads. MSRP: \$99. www.dmtargets.com



BLOODSPORT GRAVEDIGGER EXTREME BROADHEAD

Bowhunters who are looking for a cut-on-contact broadhead that produces devastating wound channels and maximum blood loss need to look no further than Bloodsport's Gravedigger Extreme hybrid mechanical broadhead. This broadhead packs a lethal one-two punch – a large 1.25-inch cut-on-contact leading blade followed by two expandable blades that delay opening until entry into the animal, adding an incredible 2.25 inches of cutting surface. The Gravedigger Extreme has no O-rings or rubber bands that might fail in flight or on impact. Its unique retention system locks the two expandable blades closed until penetration begins, and its large leading blade is aerodynamically designed for optimum accuracy. Little to no tuning is necessary to obtain field-point accuracy. MSRP: \$34.99/three-pack. www.bloodsportarchery.com



CONVERGENT BULLET HP BLUETOOTH GAME CALLER

Convergent Hunting Solution's flagship electronic game caller, the Bullet HP, allows hunters to pair a smartphone with the e-caller and operate it remotely from up to 300 feet away. The Bullet HP features a conical design for premium sound quality in any environment, is Android and Apple compatible and allows for complete control of the unit via a variety of sound apps including predator, deer, wild hog, wild turkey, crow and snow goose. The unit produces high-volume, clear sound and is powered by an integrated lithium-ion battery that provides more than 10 hours of run time. At just 2.9 pounds, the Bullet HP is easy to carry and comes with a built-in decoy and ground spike. MSRP: \$368.95. www.convergenthunting.com





LEGACY SPORTS INTERNATIONAL CITADEL LEVTAC-92

The new Citadel LevTac-92 lever-action rifle from Legacy Sports is equipped with a modular forend M-Lok design for easy accessory attachments while providing a firm grip. Topped with a Picatinny rail, rear peep sight and front blade sight, the LevTac-92 features an 18-inch barrel, eight-round capacity and a large lever loop for easy access. The rifle comes chambered in .357 Mag., .44 Mag. and .454 Casull – sure to be a hit with deer hunters in straight wall cartridge allowance areas while doing double duty for home defense or as a truck gun. MSRP: Starting at \$799. www.legacysports.com



RADIANS T-85 FIVE LENS INTERCHANGEABLE SHOOTING GLASSES KIT

For many hunters and shooters, one lens shade won't fit the various lighting conditions encountered during a hunt or shooting competition. The Radians T-85 is a one-piece, interchangeable five-lens kit that allows users to easily switch lenses for different lighting conditions caused by changing weather, time of day or outdoor environment. This sleek, lightweight shooting eyewear has many comfort features, including adjustable temples that extend for a custom fit, rubber nosepiece and rubber temple pads. Lens colors include clear, smoke, amber, orange and copper, and the kit includes a neoprene carrying case, neck cord and microfiber lens bag. It has a scratch-resistant hard coat and provides 99.9% UVA/UVB protection. MSRP: \$29.99. www.radians.com

TRUGLO TRU•TEC MICRO RED-DOT SIGHT

Whether riding the slide of an optics-ready handgun or outfitting a rifle or shotgun with ultra-lightweight accessories, the new Tru•Tec Micro red-dot sight is a great option. The Micro incorporates components of the Tru•Tec line in a lightweight and versatile profile, including digital push-button brightness control and an idle auto-off system to save battery life. Three new models deliver a host of features, including a 3-MOA reticle for fast target acquisition, 23x17mm multi-coated objective lens, digital push-button brightness controls with 10 settings, locking windage and elevation adjustments, a Picatinny rail mount, ABS hard shell cover and much more. MSRP: \$235.99 to \$261.99. www.truglo.com



SWAGGER STEELBANGER BASIC BIPOD

Featuring Flex Ready technology, extendable legs and lightweight materials, the Steelbanger Basic bipod from Swagger is a modern twist on a simple and classic design – providing shooters with a solid platform and fast target acquisition. This bipod was designed for shooting enthusiasts and hunters with the need to acquire multiple or moving targets. It mounts directly to a Picatinny rail, which makes it perfect for modern sporting and precision rifles. Ideal for shooting from the prone position or a bench rest, the Steelbanger Basic weighs just 15 ounces, extends from 4 to 10 inches and features one-hand adjustment. MSRP: \$149.99. www.swagger.com



VIKING FX1 CROSSBOW

The affordable Viking FX1 recurve crossbow from Masters Outdoors Manufacturing comes decked out and ready to hunt right out of the box. It features KO Shooting Gear Vibrapole touchpoint and Vibrawave technology to disperse vibration for a smoother shooting experience and a KO adjustable stock and ergonomic KO foregrip with removable thumb guard. The FX1-45 version is fitted with a KO 45 pistol grip for a closer shooting stance. The Viking FX1 has a 175-pound draw weight and launches arrows at 240 fps. It comes with a quick-detach quiver, four carbon arrows with field points, 4x32mm scope, two-point shoulder sling and rope cocking device. It has an ambidextrous auto safety and a large boot-style foot stirrup. MSRP: \$209.99. www.mastersoutdoors.com

SPORTDOG SPORTTRAINER

The 1275 SportTrainer remote training system from SportDog features a digital OLED (organic LED) transmitter screen that provides easy-to-read information regardless of hunting or training conditions. Now, with just a glance, the user can view the selected dog, static stimulation level, training mode and battery status. This, combined with large plus/minus buttons to quickly toggle among dogs and stim levels, makes the 1275 SportTrainer a great choice for both single- and multi-dog hunting situations. Expandable to six dogs, it has a range of ¾-mile and is compatible with the SportDOG remote beeper and launcher electronics. It has 10 selectable static stimulation levels in low, medium and high ranges, vibration and tone options and is submersible to 25 feet. MSRP: \$219.95. www.sportdog.com



UMAREX 850 M2 AIR RIFLE

The Umarex 850 M2 CO2-powered pellet rifle has a wide range of features, including a Picatinny rail, removeable cheek piece, modern fiber-reinforced synthetic stock, fiber-optic sights, two-stage adjustable trigger, 11mm scope mounting rail and a high-quality aluminum eight-round magazine. One 88-gram CO2 cartridge can power as many as 200 shots at up to 700 fps with pellet-on-pellet accuracy. Like its Hammerli 850 Air Magnum predecessor, the Umarex 850 M2 is offered in both .177 and .22 calibers – good for everything from everyday plinking to hunting small game. MSRP: \$299.99; \$29.99/per additional eight-round aluminum magazines. www.umarexusa.com



The Importance of YouTube

Are you leveraging the power of YouTube to help your store?

BY BOB ROBB

Admittedly, I am not a big fan of social media. I'm just not exciting enough of a guy to spend a lot of time talking about myself on Facebook or Instagram. But I do have to admit — when I need to learn how to fix something in a hurry, the first thing I do nowadays is spin up YouTube and look for a quick video that can help me solve my problem.

What, exactly, is YouTube? Basically, it's a video sharing service started by three former PayPal executives in 2005. Google bought the site in November 2006, for \$1.65 billion; YouTube now operates as one of Google's subsidiaries. To show how it has grown both as a business and in popularity, mostly with younger people, in 2019 it had revenues of \$15 billion. It has firmly established itself as a mainstay for today's younger generation. And while entertainment preoccupies much of a viewer's time on the platform, it's also evolved to a place of search and product discovery, ultimately influencing many on their path to purchasing products across all marketing categories.

"On YouTube, there's a lot more content by kids for kids that is deeply appealing to them," said Michael Preston, executive director of the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop (JGCC), www.sesameworkshop.org. "Having search and discovery tools embedded in the platform makes it a different kind of experience." Founded in 2007, the JGCC is an independent, non-profit research and innovation group founded by Sesame Workshop in order to advance children's literacy skills and foster innovation in children's learning through digital media.

On YouTube today, there is a preponderance of so-called "social media influencers." According to www.influencermarketinghub.com, influencers in social media are "people who have built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts about that topic on their preferred social media channels and generate large followings of enthusiastic, engaged people who pay close attention to their views. Brands love social media influencers because they can create trends and encourage their followers to buy products they promote."

Let's look at a July 2019 survey conducted by Wunderman Thompson Commerce (www.wundermanthompsoncommerce.com), a global

eCommerce consultancy focused on bringing strategic clarity, tech know-how and creativity to help businesses deliver profitable commerce capabilities across digital channels, including everything from Amazon to online retail to direct to consumer (D2C) marketing. In this survey, the leading influencers in both the U.S. and United Kingdom on children/teen (ages 6 to 16) purchases were friends (29%); influencers on YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. (25%); family members (21%); celebrities (6%); athletes (4%); business people (1%); in-store sales people (1%); journalists (1%); and politicians (1%). Thirteen percent said that nothing/nobody makes me want to buy something, and "other" scored 2%. The survey did note one caveat, and that is that younger kids might not be able to differentiate vlogger authenticity from paid promotions.

I find it quite interesting that celebrities and athletes, held in such high esteem by much of our society and that many companies and business covet as product endorsers, don't have near the "juice" that friends, influencers, and parents have — at least in this survey.

OK, you say, that's all very nice. But since these kids don't have any discretionary income to speak of, how does this affect my business? Like this. In an October 2019 survey conducted by the National Retail Foundation (www.nrf.com) entitled "Fall 2019 Consumer View: Keeping Up With Gen Z," roughly 95% of U.S. parents say that it is "important" to involve their children in purchases specifically for the child, and 85% said the same regarding purchases for the family or household. The poll also found that among those who included their children in the pre-purchase process, 67% looked at products online, and 54% read or watched product reviews. The survey showed that 69% of respondents looked at products in-store; 67% looked at products online; 60% watched

commercials; 56% added items to their wish list or shopping cart; 54% read or watched product reviews; and 52% browsed through catalogs.

How can you use YouTube today? Ever thought about creating your own little YouTube channel that promotes the services and products that your business offers each and every day? That offers tutorials on how to maintain and service the products you sell, using products you carry in-store? Perhaps you have potential nano-influencers (defined as folks with no large social media following, but great expertise in a niche area) that are well known in your own market area. This could be anyone from the best bass fisherman in town sharing techniques and gear-rigging tips to a former military member sharing tips on maintaining his rifles and how to improve shooting skills to a bowhunter discussing seasonal tips and tactics for hunting the local deer herd, and more. You can even be the "star" of your own YouTube productions designed to teach your customers something as well as draw them into the store for special promotions. You promote it via your customer email lists and in-store flyers.

The successful retailer today has to be looking not just at its bottom line today, but how you will successfully compete tomorrow. As families continue to redefine how they research, browse and buy products, understanding the loyalty and utility kids have for their preferred platform is integral to understanding them as the consumers of the future. Remaining indispensable for its reliable search and discovery features, YouTube will likely continue to influence the purchase decisions of kids — and by extension, their parents — for the foreseeable future.

Do you use YouTube to promote your business, and/or help customers learn? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com. I'd love to hear about it. **HR**

PRO STAFF

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



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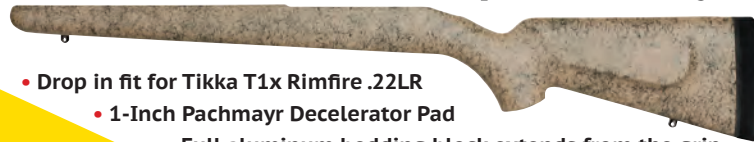
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SKU1024

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

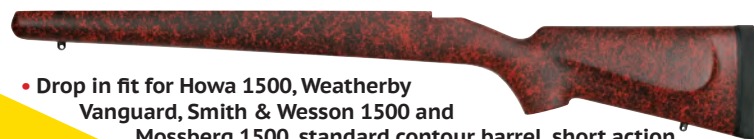


- Drop in fit for Savage Model 10 and 12 Short Action with detachable mag and sporter weight barrel
- Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system

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!

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