

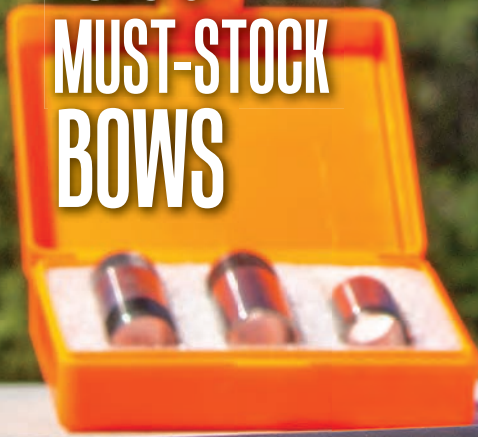
HUNTING

0 28541 03215 9

R E T A I L E R

August 2020 | Opening Day

2020'S
MUST-STOCK
BOWS



Reach New Customers:

SURVIVAL GEAR

MUST-SEE CAMO JACKETS

WHAT UPLAND HUNTERS WANT



12 POPULAR SCENTS
Your Customers Want



The Shooter's Choice

**CARLSON'S
CHOKE TUBES**

35 Years Making Choke Tube
Display Profit Centers

Superior Performance Products
That Help Grow Your Sales
See more on page 5

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES

That Actually Work

MAXIMIZE PROFITS

On Used Guns

ABSOLUTE ACCURACY. EVEN WHEN YOUR HEART'S

BEATING OUT OF YOUR CHEST.



Every riflescope in our whitetail hunting line follows in the footsteps of our most proven, battle-tested products. Otherwise, it wouldn't be a Trijicon® riflescope. Expect absolute precision, brilliant clarity from sunup to sundown, and extreme durability so you can hunt with confidence.



»THE NEW
Trijicon Huron™



»THE NEW
Trijicon Credo™ HX



Trijicon AccuPoint™

©2020 Trijicon, Inc. | Wixom, MI, USA | 1-800-338-0563 | 20TRUJ14464 | Trijicon.com

See what it takes to make a brilliant aiming solution at [Trijicon.com](https://www.trijicon.com).



Brilliant Aiming Solutions™

MOSSBERG | PRO-SERIES WATERFOWL


**BUILT FOR
THOSE WHO
PREFER
CARRYOUT.**



#85141

930 Pro-Series
Waterfowl

12GA, 5-Shot
Fiber Optic Sight

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

TAKE THEM DOWN. CARRY THEM OUT.

Pro-Series autoloaders were built for serious hardcore waterfowling — with internal parts, finishes and coatings that perform smoothly and reliably under the muddiest, muckiest, and wettest conditions. Allowing you to protect your decoys, and take home fresh carryout — hunt-after-hunt and season-after-season. Available in 930® (3" chamber) and 935 Magnum™ (3.5" chamber).

Mossberg — Makers of dependable, hardworking firearms for more than a century.

LEARN MORE AT
MOSSBERG.COM

MOSSBERG[®]
SINCE 1919

CONTENTS

FEATURES

18 A Killer Crop

This year's bow lineup is filled with models loaded with customization.
By Jace Bauserman

22 Meeting the Needs of Upland Bird Hunters

Bird hunters have specific gear requirements based on where they hunt, but there are some universal needs you should be stocking.
By Mark Chesnut

26 Selling Used Guns

Unique products, more shop traffic, and a connection to shooters most apt to buy. What's not to like?
By Wayne van Zwoll

32 Survival Gear You Can Upsell to Most Hunters

This product selection will appeal to your hunting, hiking and survivalist customers. By Darron McDougal



22



10

36 7 Tips for Social Distancing Your Marketing

Social media is great, but it's not exactly friendly to our industry, and it shouldn't be your only marketing plan.
By Ace Luciano

40 Gear Roundup

Stands and Blinds
By Gordy Krahn

44 Facebook Page Strategy Is a Whole Lot Like Dating

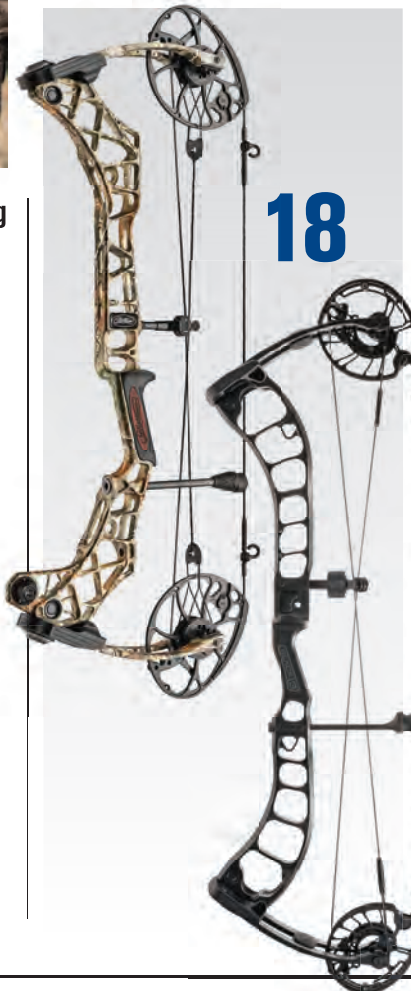
Facebook page management, oddly, is a lot like dating. What is attractive to one person is not to another.
By Hannah Stonehouse Hudson, NSSF

46 New Products

Here are a few new products to keep your eye on in 2020.



14



18

DEPARTMENTS

6 In the News

A roundup of relevant and noteworthy industry updates

8 Informed Associate: Selling the Perfect Arrow

Bowhunters are serious about their tackle. How do you know what arrows a given hunter needs?
By Patrick Meitin

10 Up Close: Early-Season Hunting Jackets

Shoppers in the market for a lightweight, high-performance jacket will want to see these options.
By Mark Chesnut

12 Gear Guru: 12 Products to Help Hunters Win by a Nose

Deer hunters are obsessive about scent. Here's what to sell them.
By Kevin Reese

16 The Top Rung: Ameristep Has a Blind Spot for Hunters

Ground blinds continue to grow in popularity, and Ameristep is helping lead the way. By Matt Crawford

48 Counter Culture: Staying Connected

Retail has changed in the COVID-19 era. How do you keep customers in the loop and buying?
By Bob Robb





32



26



36

EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief / Hilary Dyer
 Copy Editor / Alex Headley
 Product Editor / Gordy Krahn
 Digital Editor / Dave Maas

CREATIVE

Art Director / Mark Kingsbury

ADMINISTRATION

Circulation / Holly Gensler
 holly.gensler@colepublishing.com

ADVERTISING

President/Publisher GVO / Derrick Nawrocki
 derrick.nawrocki@grandviewoutdoors.com
 Regional Sales Manager / Don Harris
 don.harris@grandviewoutdoors.com
 Regional Sales Manager / Mike Kizzire
 mike.kizzire@grandviewoutdoors.com
 Regional Sales Manager / Patrick Boyle
 patrick.boyle@grandviewoutdoors.com

NATIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Byers Media / Ken Byers & Toby Shaw
 toby@byersmediaonline.com

HUNTING
 R E T A I L E R

HUNTING RETAILER® is published nine times a year in January/February, March, April, May/June, July, August, September, October, and November/December by COLE Publishing, Inc. Published and owned by COLE Publishing, Inc., 1720 Maple Lake Dam Rd., Three Lakes, WI 54562.

All rights reserved. Contents may not be printed or otherwise reproduced without written permission of COLE Publishing. Periodicals postage paid at Three Lakes, WI 54562 and at additional mailing offices.

COLE Publishing is not responsible for researching or investigating the accuracy of the contents of stories published in this magazine. Readers are advised that the use of the information contained within this magazine is with the understanding that it is at their own risk. COLE Publishing assumes no liability for this information or its use. COLE Publishing assumes no responsibility for unsolicited editorial, photography and art submissions. In addition, no Terms and Conditions agreements are recognized by COLE Publishing unless signed and returned by the Editor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Free to qualifying retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, and salespeople of shooting sports products within the U.S. and

Canada; \$60 annually for all other U.S., Canada or Mexico subscribers; and \$150 for two years to all other foreign countries. To subscribe, visit www.huntingretailer.com/order/subscription or call 800-257-7222.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:
Hunting Retailer P.O. Box 220
Three Lakes, WI 54562

CALL 800-257-7222 | 715-546-3346 | FAX 715-546-3786

EMAIL Holly.Gensler@colepublishing.com. Please include both old and new addresses.

ADVERTISING:

Advertising inquiries should be emailed to: info@grandviewoutdoors.com.

Hunting Retailer® is a member of the National Shooting Sports Foundation

© Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Copyright 2020 COLE Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the General Manager.



WEATHERTIGHT™

WE GO WHERE YOU GO.

**BUILT TO DEFEAT ALL THE ELEMENTS THAT
MOTHER NATURE CAN DISH OUT.**

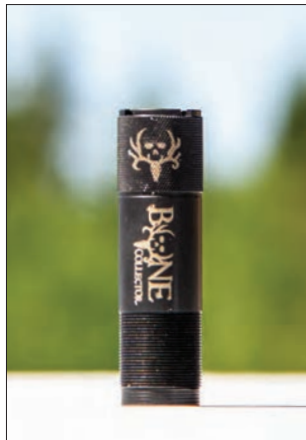


WWW.RUGIDGEAR.COM

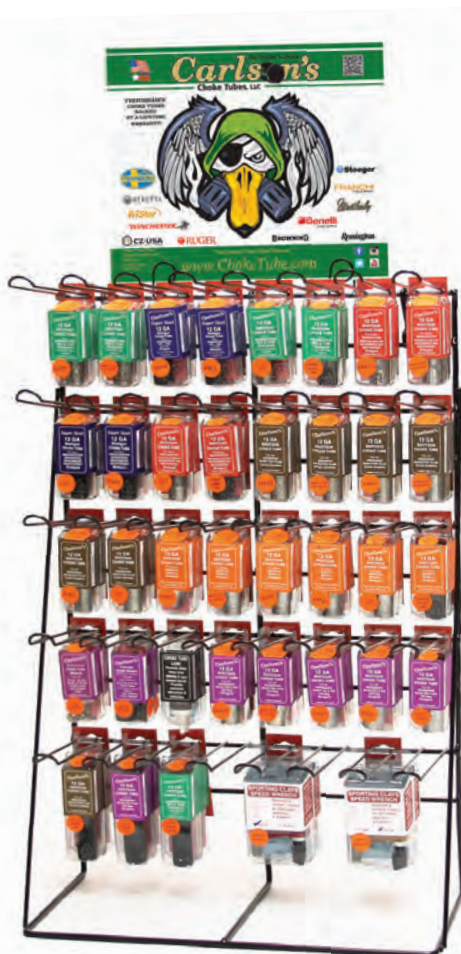


The Shooter's Choice Carlson's Choke Tubes, LLC

Carlson's Choke Tubes remains the Shooter's Choice for performance and value, both in the field and at the range. All choke tubes are made in the U.S.A. and are backed by a lifetime warranty. Always a consistent leader in manufacturing and performance technology, Carlson's Choke Tubes manufactures choke tubes for nearly every shotgun and every shooting situation you can imagine. From upland to waterfowl, turkey to tactical – and everything in between – these products consistently deliver the patterns that help our shooters break more clays and fill more tags.



Carlson's offers eye-catching displays, in various designs, and offers pre-stocked configurations as well as the opportunity to stock your displays with a custom product mix you select. And, to protect your investment, we offer a stock-balancing program to make sure you are carrying the products most likely to sell. Contact Carlson's Choke Tubes for the performance products your customers demand, through a program that helps your sales grow. www.choketube.com



Benchmade Knife Company Adds to Senior Leadership Team

Benchmade Knife Company has solidified a new leadership team. "This is the perfect moment for Benchmade to prioritize our team and culture" said Benchmade President Jon deAsis. "Our commitment to culture and performance drove me to seek out the right people to help support the incredible growth we have been experiencing. Evolving our structure with key talent and vision will energize our brand and improve our ability to satisfy customers worldwide."

Recently filling the key role of vice president of marketing, Joe Prebich joins the team with a long history of defining and developing strong brand relationships to the consumer. Prebich has previous

experience with leading brands such as Fjallraven, Oakley and Red Bull.

Charles Darby has been promoted to senior director of sales and will elevate new responsibilities for Benchmade's global sales and retail affairs. Darby has made a career at Benchmade and now ascends into the position with a continued commitment to the brand's long-time relationships.

Additionally, to emphasize continuity planning, culture and organizational development, Kristine Gittins has been promoted to the role of executive vice president.

NSSF and USA Join Forces to Mentor New Hunters and Shooters

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) has tapped the Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) to spearhead a mentorship campaign aimed at giving Americans of all ages a personal introduction to hunting and the shooting sports.

Through its Hunting Heritage Trust, NSSF awarded the USA a \$20,000 grant to implement a recruitment campaign, backed by NSSF's +ONE Movement messaging, that motivates labor union members to introduce 1,000 youth and adults to hunting and shooting.

The USA will create a mentoring partnership program to encourage union members who hunt or shoot recreationally to share their knowledge and passion for these activities with someone new in 2020.

The agreement builds on the success of past partnerships between the two organizations. The 2020 mentoring program will be modeled after the successful USA-NSSF Mentoring Rewarded Partnership of 2018, which introduced 1,500 youth and adults to the joys of hunting and shooting – while simultaneously promoting NSSF and the shooting sports nationwide via numerous marketing channels. The USA held events in Minnesota, Tennessee and Texas, drawing more than 250 participants. Thanks to the NSSF grant and funds raised at USA shoots, conservation dinners and other events, all supplies including eye and hearing protection, firearms and ammunition were provided at no charge.

Nightstick Partners with H&G Marketing

Nightstick has selected H&G Marketing as its new U.S.-focused marketing agency for outdoor and sporting goods.

"H&G's core values and business vision aligns perfectly with Nightstick's goals and business plan and they will be a great addition to our team," says Gary Owensby, National Sales Director, Public

Safety and Sporting Goods for Nightstick.

With more than 40 employees and a combined 775 years of cumulative experience in the industry, H&G brings mature relationships on a national level with many top outdoor distributors, dealers and retailers.

Zanders Sporting Goods Adds 11 Brands

Zanders Sporting Goods, a national distributor located in Sparta, Illinois, has expanded its product lines with 11 brands.

Dealers will now be able to choose products from these top manufacturers: Huskemaw Optics, Hunter's Kloak, PPU Ammunition, Thorn Broadheads, Custom Bow Equipment, DRD Tactical, Cloud Defensive, Fightlite Industries, Lucid Optics, DNZ Products and Templar Knife.

"Thanks to the diligent work of our purchasing staff, Zanders is now able to offer products from even more trusted brands," said Stefanie Zanders, President and Chief Operating Officer for Zanders Sporting Goods.

To see Zanders' expansive inventory of products from these manufacturers as well as thousands more, visit their website at www.gzanders.com.

Hoyt to Move Launch Date of Its Flagship Bows

Hoyt Archery recently announced it would be moving its annual product launch of premier hunting bows from October to January. This represents a major shift for Hoyt and is expected to benefit its dealers, allowing them to maximize sales opportunities through the hunting season and the holidays.

"We realize the past few months have been a challenge for all of us," said Hoyt President Randy Walk. "Our evaluation of current market conditions and the need for retailers to maximize sales opportunities during this next hunting season is the key driver behind this change, and we believe this is the best decision in our effort to support retailers and the entire archery industry. Rest assured that we will continue our relentless efforts to design and produce superior archery products, and I am excited to get through the summer and fall selling seasons and finish 2020 as strong as we can. I am also confident we will rally as an industry and be prepared for 2021 as a year of growth and prosperity in archery."



Firearms Checks Surge to Record Numbers Again

The number of background checks through the mandatory National Instant Check System surged to a record 3.93 million in June 2020, continuing the increase that began during the autumn 2019 presidential campaign.

The FBI released its monthly report on July 1, showing the number of NICS background checks during the prior month. The background checks do not indicate sales, as some prospective buyers may be declined from purchasing. Also, the FBI says, various state laws and purchase scenarios cannot account for a one-to-one correlation between background checks and purchases. The NICS process is mandatory for anyone purchasing a firearm through a Federal Firearm License dealer.

According to the report, a record 3,931,607 NICS checks were performed in June 2020. That topped the 3-million mark in one month for only the fourth time in the program's two-decade history. The others were in March and May 2020, and December 2015.

For May 2020, the FBI reported that 3,091,445 checks were performed. Sales of firearms and ammunition have surged in the last eight months due to the presidential campaign and accompanying rhetoric about gun control. After the COVID-19 pandemic began, sales of ammunition spiked in March 2020 during the initial stages of the nationwide lockdown. Gun sales began surging when some officials closed gun stores and ranges, deeming them non-essential, before reversing course. A significant number of those were to first-time buyers, according to the NSSF.

Sales again surged in June during nationwide upheaval after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Estimates range as high as 2.5 million new gun owners in the first half of the year.

Manufacturers have not been able to keep up with the demand for ammunition, especially in popular calibers such as 9mm, .38, .223 and others.

McCanna New VP of Sales for Walther Arms

Rob McCanna has been named VP of Sales for Walther Arms and will lead all sales execution.

McCanna's resume includes 15 years in a variety of executive sales roles with Remington Arms, including Senior Vice President – Global Sales and Marketing. Following Remington, he was president of Orca Coolers for two years.

"Rob's passion is sales, building sales teams, and helping people grow and develop. He enjoys strong relationships and a solid reputation with customers in our industry. Rob is an avid shooter, and he's amped to jump back into the firearm industry with Walther," said Adam Blalock, CEO of Walther Arms.

Tengwall New VP of Marketing for Smith & Wesson

Kyle Tengwall is the new Vice President, Marketing for Smith & Wesson's firearms brands.

An industry veteran, Tengwall joins Smith & Wesson from United Tactical Systems, where he most recently served as Chief Marketing Officer and Divisional General Manager for the PepperBall brand. Tengwall brings to the role more than 20 years of diverse industry experience in marketing, sales and executive leadership at companies in the shooting, hunting and outdoor markets.

"I am thrilled to join the Smith & Wesson team and help build upon such a powerful American brand," Tengwall said. "My past experiences afford me a unique perspective on consumer marketing

in the outdoor industry space, and I look forward to working with and developing Smith & Wesson's iconic stable of brands."

Tengwall joined United Tactical Systems in 2017 as the company's CMO/Divisional GM of PepperBall. In that role, he was instrumental in developing the brand's core business as well as launching a new consumer brand under the PepperBall division. He also served as Vice President/GM of Duck Commander Inc. and Group Vice President of Marketing/Strategy at Vista Outdoor.

Tengwall earned his B.S. and M.B.A. degrees from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.

NRA Cancels Shooting Championships

Due to the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and the many ensuing federal and state safety regulations and mandates, the NRA has canceled the NRA World Shooting Championship and NRA National Police Shooting Championships.

Both events were scheduled to be held in mid-September 2020 in West Virginia and Mississippi.

Lucas Oil Signs New Rep Groups

Lucas Oil Outdoor Line has signed two rep groups for the Eastern U.S. territory, V. Pestilli & Associates Inc. and Outdoor Marketing Group.

V. Pestilli & Associates will cover 13 Northeast states and Washington, D.C. Outdoor Marketing Group will cover nine Southeast states.

"We are honored to bring Pestilli & Associ-

ates and Outdoor Marketing Group into the Lucas Oil Outdoor Line family," says Lisa Marie Young, Business Development Manager for Lucas Outdoor Line. "We are confident in the experience and the skills that these two companies bring to the table to help get our products into consumers' hands." **HR**

Got News?

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



Firearms Checks Surge to Record Numbers Again

The number of background checks through the mandatory National Instant Check System surged to a record 3.93 million in June 2020, continuing the increase that began during the autumn 2019 presidential campaign.

The FBI released its monthly report on July 1, showing the number of NICS background checks during the prior month. The background checks do not indicate sales, as some prospective buyers may be declined from purchasing. Also, the FBI says, various state laws and purchase scenarios cannot account for a one-to-one correlation between background checks and purchases. The NICS process is mandatory for anyone purchasing a firearm through a Federal Firearm License dealer.

According to the report, a record 3,931,607 NICS checks were performed in June 2020. That topped the 3-million mark in one month for only the fourth time in the program's two-decade history. The others were in March and May 2020, and December 2015.

For May 2020, the FBI reported that 3,091,445 checks were performed. Sales of firearms and ammunition have surged in the last eight months due to the presidential campaign and accompanying rhetoric about gun control. After the COVID-19 pandemic began, sales of ammunition spiked in March 2020 during the initial stages of the nationwide lockdown. Gun sales began surging when some officials closed gun stores and ranges, deeming them non-essential, before reversing course. A significant number of those were to first-time buyers, according to the NSSF.

Sales again surged in June during nationwide upheaval after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Estimates range as high as 2.5 million new gun owners in the first half of the year.

Manufacturers have not been able to keep up with the demand for ammunition, especially in popular calibers such as 9mm, .38, .223 and others.

McCanna New VP of Sales for Walther Arms

Rob McCanna has been named VP of Sales for Walther Arms and will lead all sales execution.

McCanna's resume includes 15 years in a variety of executive sales roles with Remington Arms, including Senior Vice President – Global Sales and Marketing. Following Remington, he was president of Orca Coolers for two years.

"Rob's passion is sales, building sales teams, and helping people grow and develop. He enjoys strong relationships and a solid reputation with customers in our industry. Rob is an avid shooter, and he's amped to jump back into the firearm industry with Walther," said Adam Blalock, CEO of Walther Arms.

Tengwall New VP of Marketing for Smith & Wesson

Kyle Tengwall is the new Vice President, Marketing for Smith & Wesson's firearms brands.

An industry veteran, Tengwall joins Smith & Wesson from United Tactical Systems, where he most recently served as Chief Marketing Officer and Divisional General Manager for the PepperBall brand. Tengwall brings to the role more than 20 years of diverse industry experience in marketing, sales and executive leadership at companies in the shooting, hunting and outdoor markets.

"I am thrilled to join the Smith & Wesson team and help build upon such a powerful American brand," Tengwall said. "My past experiences afford me a unique perspective on consumer marketing

in the outdoor industry space, and I look forward to working with and developing Smith & Wesson's iconic stable of brands."

Tengwall joined United Tactical Systems in 2017 as the company's CMO/Divisional GM of PepperBall. In that role, he was instrumental in developing the brand's core business as well as launching a new consumer brand under the PepperBall division. He also served as Vice President/GM of Duck Commander Inc. and Group Vice President of Marketing/Strategy at Vista Outdoor.

Tengwall earned his B.S. and M.B.A. degrees from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota.

NRA Cancels Shooting Championships

Due to the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and the many ensuing federal and state safety regulations and mandates, the NRA has canceled the NRA World Shooting Championship and NRA National Police Shooting Championships.

Both events were scheduled to be held in mid-September 2020 in West Virginia and Mississippi.

Lucas Oil Signs New Rep Groups

Lucas Oil Outdoor Line has signed two rep groups for the Eastern U.S. territory, V. Pestilli & Associates Inc. and Outdoor Marketing Group.

V. Pestilli & Associates will cover 13 Northeast states and Washington, D.C. Outdoor Marketing Group will cover nine Southeast states.

"We are honored to bring Pestilli & Associ-

ates and Outdoor Marketing Group into the Lucas Oil Outdoor Line family," says Lisa Marie Young, Business Development Manager for Lucas Outdoor Line. "We are confident in the experience and the skills that these two companies bring to the table to help get our products into consumers' hands." **HR**

Got News?

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





Selling the Perfect Bowhunting Missile

Bowhunters are serious about their tackle. How do you know what arrow a given hunter needs?

BY PATRICK MEITIN

Serving bowhunters is obviously different than serving firearms-oriented customers. While matching rifles and ammunition to specific needs is fairly important to big-game success, details become absolutely vital to how well bowhunters fare while afield. Nowhere is this more pointed than with terminal tackle, namely arrows and broadheads — the gear that does the actual killing. Just as not all same-cartridge ammunition is alike, not all arrows and broadheads are created equal and suited to every bowhunting pursuit. There is seldom a one-size-fits-all solution to every bowhunter who walks through your store doors looking for equipment advice.

Even if you aren't a hard-core bowhunter, it's important to understand the basic details setting arrow and broadhead style and function apart, helping you offer informed recommendations to inquiring bowhunting customers. If you're a serious bowhunter, my best advice is to avoid the "this-is-what-I-use" approach to sales. What is ideal for you may prove ill-advised for another bowhunter working under different physical limitations or realities. Here are some factors to keep in mind while helping customers make informed buying decisions that bolster bowhunting success.

Arrow Deflection

Foremost, arrows must include deflection/spine perfectly matched to a bow's specs, i.e. draw weight and length, point weight and cam dynamics. Draw weight influences how much push an arrow's nock receives during launch. Draw length influences how much arrows flex under stress; shorter arrows are stiffer than longer ones. Point weight dictates how much flex occurs in the shaft center; lighter points cause less flex, heavier points more. Finally, some cam systems are "whippier" than others, in direct relation to draw-force curves. Traditional bows, for instance, provide an even push, generally requiring less rigid arrows, while high-energy compound cams impart abrupt energy-release spikes and require stiffer arrows for accurate launch. These are the extremes.



Properly spined arrows provide top performance and increased tuning ease and are simply safer. Every arrow manufacturer provides deflection/spine charts referencing draw weight and length and point weight, with provisions typically made for bow and cam types. Common spine ratings include 300, 340, 400 and 500 (stiffest to lightest) for Easton, Beman and Gold Tip or 150, 250, 350 and 250 for Carbon Express, as examples.

It's generally best to determine this information directly from customers' bows, using a bow scale and looking at cam settings for real numbers. This is especially true if customers seem uncertain. When dealing with bow setups on the cusp between lighter and heavier spine ratings, I typically chose a stiffer spine unless customers insist on the lesser.



Form & Function

Once you've determined proper deflection, determining what class terminal tackle might best serve an individual's actual needs begins, asking questions to gain a firmer grasp on how arrows/broadheads will be used, and from what equipment type. Many customers arrive seeking specific brands/models, usually those matching what they already own. With more in-depth knowledge, you might be able to gently steer them to products better serving their needs or help undecided patrons make more informed decisions to best match the game and conditions they face afield.

To my mind, arrows/broadheads fit into four categories: Long-range/speed, middle-ground deer, deep-penetrating heavyweights, and missiles suited to the "kinetically challenged." Long-range speed arrow/broadhead combinations suggest the lightest grain-per-inch (gpi) arrow class and sleek mini-fixed or mechanical (where legal, consult state laws) broadheads. This would be terminal tackle used when targeting thin-skinned, light-boned big game such as prairie pronghorn, Southwest Coues whitetails or alpine mule deer — generally spot-and-stalk affairs where range often stretches. This might also prove a 3-D target-ar-

chery ideal. Lighter arrows in the 7 to 8.5 gpi range (in the most common 65 pounds at 29 inches/340-350 spine) increase velocities and flatten trajectories, while more streamlined broadheads — 1- to 1½-inch-wide mini fixed or standard mechanicals opening to 1½ to 2 inches — are less apt to veer off course on longer shots.

A middle-ground option describes arrows weighing 8.5 to 9.5 gpi and serves as the do-it-all shaft for those wielding energy above, say, 65 pounds at 29 inches, or the vast majority of whitetail hunters operating from treestands. Broadhead ideals might include most average fixed-blade heads cutting 1⅜ to 1¼ inch wide, or nearly all mechanicals, save the most aggressive cutting more than 2 inches wide after deployment. Heavyweight



arrows are chosen for deep-driving, bone-splitting penetration on larger game such as elk. This includes shafts weighing 10 gpi or more and rugged fixed-blade, true cut-on-contact or mechanical broadheads with deployed cutting diameters measuring less than 1½ inches (often labeled +P or LE) with 100% steel ferrules.

Kinetically challenged bowhunters include traditional archers and many woman or youth bowhunters. The knee-jerk reaction, particularly with women and youth ar-

“The knee-jerk reaction is to reach for the lightest arrows and broadheads available to maximize speed. This is a mistake...”

chers, is to reach for the lightest arrows and broadheads available to maximize speed. This is a mistake in true big-game bowhunting scenarios. To increase penetrating momentum, heavy-for-spine arrows are in order (Easton's Axis, Bloodsport's Evidence, Gold Tip's Kinetic

Kaos or Carbon Express Maxima RED SD, as examples), combined with more efficient cutting-tip fixed or true cut-on-contact broadheads that slip through hide and muscle more effortlessly. Mechanicals are typically a bad idea for those wielding low energy.

Price Points

Depending on region, price points often factor in selling. This is part of your up-front salesman questioning, not requesting a specific number necessarily, but maybe determining how serious they are about bowhunting and the amount of performance demanded. Some customers want only the best, perceiving an edge against success; others stretch their budget thin to bowhunt at all. High-end (Rage, QAD, G5, TRUGLO), mid-priced (NAP, Muzzy, Wasp) and budget-priced (Allen Company, Rocky Mountain, Bloodsport) products then enter the equation.

A little knowledge goes a long way to creating more successful and happier bowhunting customers, while in-depth knowledge makes you a trusted resource that transforms mere customers into coveted repeat customers who also get that all-important word-of-mouth advertising circulating. Even if bowhunting is not your bag, investing a little time learning the ins and outs of arrows and broadheads will make you a more valuable sales associate. **HR**

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.





Early-Season Hunting Jackets

Shoppers in the market for a lightweight, high-performance jacket for crisp fall days will want to see these options on your shelves.

BY MARK CHESNUT

There's nothing quite like early-season big-game hunts. After long months of waiting for the deer or elk opener to finally roll around, hunters find themselves ready to hit the woods, prairies or mountains and get back to what they love to do most. But early seasons often produce somewhat of a clothing dilemma.

In my home state of Oklahoma, I'm often faced with unpredictable early-season weather. It might be in the low or mid-30s in the morning when I hike to my stand. But by the time afternoon rolls around, the temperature might have climbed into the 70s or even low 80s. What's a hunter to do?

A good, packable, lightweight hunting jacket can make answering that question much easier. Fortunately for hunters and retailers, a number of companies manufacture them in a wide range of prices. Incidentally, these same early-season jackets are also great for spring turkey hunts, when the same types of weather conditions and temperature swings are common.

Before we look at a few different jackets to offer customers, let's quickly explore what many hunters look for in an early-season hunting jacket.

Since hunters will likely be putting on and removing their jacket frequently as weather changes during the day, a full-zip jacket is much handier than a jacket with only a partial zipper or a pullover with no zipper at all.

Also, since a lot of early-season outings involve bowhunting, a jacket that allows plenty of range of motion is critical. If a hunter's jacket makes it difficult to pull back a bow at that moment of truth, he or she might as well have stayed in camp.

Another handy feature in early-season jackets is some kind of quiet material on the outside, helping to alleviate the swish-swish of some other outer materials. Jackets with breathable materials that not only keep moisture outside but allow perspiration to exit are also preferred. The ability to fold or roll down into an easily packable form is also a good attribute, and a selection of pockets is handy for carrying gear that hunters don't want to constantly remove from their packs and put back in. Lastly, a durable jacket that can stand up to lots of hard use is likely to sell better than one that looks like it might fall to pieces after only a few hunts.

Of course, what early-season hunting jackets you choose to carry in your inventory will be highly dependent on your location. If you're somewhere down South, ultralight jackets are going to be more popular, while northern retailers or those in the high country might find that even early-season hunters need a little heavier jacket to stay warm on those chilly mornings and evenings.





SITKA GEAR

For those early-season big-game hunters who want the best and aren't concerned with the price tag, look no further than the Sitka Kelvin Active Jacket. At just under \$300, it has all the features hunters are looking for, plus a few that make it even more special.

This jacket is a versatile tool for backcountry pursuits. Featuring 8-gram Polartec Alpha insulation, the jacket can serve as a great, quiet outer layer in early season and can double as an insulating layer later on when temperatures fall. Polartec Alpha Active is a non-migrating lofted fleece insulation that offers excellent breathability and moisture management.

The full-zip jacket also features a 20-Denier nylon ripstop shell and has a breathable mesh lining for wicking away moisture. The zippered chest pocket secures your necessities and doubles as a stuff sack, and the hand-warmer pockets are lined with brushed fleece for added warmth.

The neck and chin are lined with a brushed tricot to prevent chafing and add warmth, and Polygiene Odor Control Technology safely neutralizes odor caused by perspiration. Lastly, at only 13.77 ounces, the jacket stuffs down to a very small, packable footprint when not in use.

The Sitka Kelvin Active Jacket is available in the company's popular Subalpine camo pattern, which was designed specifically for stalking and ambushing ungulates from ground level in vegetated terrain and is optimized for engagement ranges of 50 yards and less.

UNDER ARMOUR

Shoppers looking for a high-quality jacket at about half the price of the Sitka jacket are likely to think highly of the Under Armour Ridge Reaper Raider Jacket. Under Armour has a great reputation in the hunting industry, and I think that reputation is well-deserved. This jacket was built for comfort and warmth, and features UA's Storm technology to repel water, which keeps the wearer dry from the outside and within.

The Raider's ultra-durable, lightweight fabric gives hunters just the right protection without sacrificing breathability. Quiet construction prevents fabric from rustling, helping hunters stay silent when game animals get up close and personal. And the jacket's durable outer will guarantee several seasons of use, even under harsh conditions.

A very important aspect for bowhunters is the jacket's four-way stretch fabrication paired with an encased elastic bi-swing, which provides full, unrestricted mobility through the chest and shoulders. It is made from 91% polyester and 9% spandex and is machine washable for convenient cleanup.

The Under Armour Ridge Reaper Raider Jacket comes in the company's Barren camouflage. With its swirls and splotches of greens, browns and grays against a light-gray background, Barren was designed with the Western hunter in mind, but it blends in equally well in the whitetail woods.

ROCKY

Budget-minded early-season hunters might find Rocky's Camo Insulated Packable Jacket more to their liking. At about half the price of the Under Armour jacket, this offering puts a major focus on stealth – an important aspect of successful bow-hunting.

The material used in the jacket is Rocky's burr-resistant fabric, which is touted to leave the underbrush in the woods where it belongs, not on hunters' clothes and, subsequently, in their tent or cabin. The rugged outer material has been treated with Rocky's DWR (Durable Water Repellent) coating.

For added comfort on those chilly mornings, Rocky made the jacket with 100 grams of Primaloft insulation, which will keep the chill away without being heavy or bulky. And for additional comfort and convenience, the jacket features a drawstring hood and drawcord waist.

Three zip pockets give hunters plenty of places to securely store a few valuable items like knives, spare cartridges, maps and cell phones. And Rocky's Scent IQ Atomic system helps control human scent at the microbial level.

The Rocky Camo Insulated Packable Jacket also compacts very well to easily stash in a pack when not in use. It features Realtree Edge camouflage, a very versatile camo with natural elements arranged in a way to disrupt the human form. **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.



12 Products to Help Hunters (and Retailers) Win by a Nose

Deer hunters are obsessive about scent – managing it, eliminating it, recreating it. Here's what to sell them.

BY KEVIN REESE

Bowhunting can be tough. The art of getting close to animals or getting them close to you can come at quite an excruciating price, up to and including your sanity. Even rifle hunters endeavoring to close the distance for easier, quicker kills face challenges, especially scent – controlling it, suppressing it, mimicking it or eliminating it altogether. Indeed, when it comes to hunting, win-

ning by a nose can mean the difference between meat in the freezer and never-had-a-chance. Or, in the words of that famous fictional NASCAR driver, Ricky Bobby, "If you ain't first, you're last!" Here are 12 scent-creating and scent-controlling products you can offer to help customers win big this fall.





OZONICS ORION

Ozonics burst onto hunting's scent-control scene in 2007 and soon after introduced a revolutionary scent-elimination system based on creating a scent-eliminating ozone environment around the hunter. To say it revolutionized scent control is an understatement — the premise being that oxygen is electronically changed to ozone to eliminate human scent. The popularity of ozone technology has grown rapidly, and now several manufacturers offer similar products. In 2019, Ozonics unveiled its latest and greatest, the Orion.

While the Orion is based on the same technology that has made Ozonics an industry scent-elimination leader, the company's latest offering delivers 25% more ozone than previous models via a proprietary Hyperboost mode and double the battery life. The Orion also includes rubber overmolding for quiet handling, easy user interface (even in the dark), Integrated Pulse technology for balanced ozone dispersal, and EZ Mount technology for rapid installation.

www.ozonicshunting.com

WILDGAME INNOVATIONS ZERO TRACE PUREION FIELD GENERATOR

True to the Wild Game Innovations' name, the company's focus on innovating hunting products has been a staple of its success — case in point, the Zero Trace PureION Field Generator. WGI's PureION is reportedly the industry's first field-ready ION generator. In a nutshell, the Pure ION Field Generator deploys millions of ION molecules into the air to bond with atoms. The bonding results in deactivating impurities that produce scent.

The Zero Trace Pure ION Field Generator includes a rechargeable six-hour battery and features large forward-facing digital controls for easy operation, even with gloves, a rugged TRUBark molded plastic housing for reliable performance even in adverse weather conditions, and Wildgame Innovations' new magnetic mounting system. Once the mount has been installed to tree or other platform, the ball-joint style system allows the PureION to be perfectly positioned at nearly any angle. The result, according to WGI, means hunters can hunt their favorite spots regardless of wind direction.

www.wildgameinnovations.com

ELIMISHIELD HUNT X10D

One of the biggest problems hunters face in their pursuit of effective scent control is eliminating odor locked in fabric — this is where ElimiShield Hunt X10D wins by a nose, at least semi-permanently. ElimiShield X10D eliminates human odor from fabric fibers through up to 50 washings. Even better, scent elimination, including what ElimiShield refers to as "souring," also is ensured while hunting clothing and other fabrics are stored. Hunting aside, ElimiShield Hunt X10D's technology makes it a worthwhile bit of liquid-tech for household uses.

ElimiShield Hunt X10D is available in a 10-ounce bottle, enough to treat 10 pounds of laundry in just 10 minutes. Of course, treating garments once means hunters shouldn't have to worry about treating again until the next hunting season rolls around. The bottom-line benefit for your customers is clear. They can effectively manage scent control without buying high-priced, high-tech hunting clothes.

www.elimishieldhunt.com

SCENTLOK OZ RADIAL EZ

For nearly 30 years, ScentLok has been recognized as the premier producer of carbon-activated scent control products, from inner and outer apparel layers to scent-containing bags and containers. While carbon technology created ScentLok's empire, the company continues to push the R&D envelope in additional technologies, including ozone scent elimination as recently demonstrated in the OZ Radial EZ. ScentLok's OZ Radial EZ is positioned just upwind of the hunter and converts oxygen to ozone in order to eliminate scent. Of course, the side benefit for your hunting customers is the bacteria- and virus-eliminating power of ozone production in homes, vehicles, offices, etc.

ScentLok's OZ Radial EZ boasts CycleClean technology for maximum performance and longer battery life, 360-degree ozone generation, eight-hour rechargeable battery, four operating modes and a USB charging port to charge a smartphone, tablet or other device on the go. A flat base and included tether strap allow the OZ Radial EZ to be placed on virtually any flat surface or hung just about anywhere. www.scentlok.com





BUCK BOMB XTRUS CERTIFIED DOE 'N ESTRUS

As retailers working with hunters and guiding them in their product choices as well as their strategies it's important to take time to test as many products as possible. Buck Bomb is another product I have used extensively and with great results, both as an attractant and a cover scent, and my best results over the years have been with Doe Estrus. Of course, the only constant is change, and fortunately for Buck Bomb, the latest result is XTRUS Certified Doe 'N Estrus.

As the product name implies, Buck Bomb's biologically enhanced XTRUS Doe 'N Estrus scent is certified to contain optimum levels of whitetail doe estrogen. According to Hunter Specialties, Buck Bomb XTRUS is guaranteed to contain "peak estrus urine" captured by a patent-pending collection method. Buck Bomb XTRUS Doe 'N Estrus cans features an NVERTR valve to enhance dispersal and long-lasting scent. According to Buck Bomb, dispersing scent via the lock-down or burst method can result in scent detection up to a quarter of a mile away on a 3-mph breeze. www.buckbomb.com

WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER SCENT KILLER GOLD

From the late '50s and clear through the '60s, the curiosity of brothers John and Brian Burgeson, along with their passion for hunting, evolved into their first product, Trails End #307 attractant, and soon after, Scent Killer. Rutgers University conducted testing on Scent Killer and found the product to be 99% effective in eliminating replicated human odor, and it gets better. R&D improved upon Scent Killer and unveiled Scent Killer Gold Spray.

Not only does Scent Killer Gold Spray stop human odor for up to 20 days after drying, but it also works on both wet and dry skin, as well as clothing, footwear and equipment. Scent Killer Gold Spray also lasts longer than the original offering, and the high-output spout allows for spraying while the bottle is held upside down. Like Dead Down Wind, Scent Killer Gold is available in a full spectrum of scent-eliminating products, including laundry detergent, deodorant, soap, field wipes, shampoo and more. Retailers looking for a single brand offering a complete odor eliminating strategy should consider Scent Killer products. www.wildlife.com

TINK'S # 69 DOE-IN-RUT

Developed by legendary bowhunter Tink Nathan and brought to market in the early '70s, Tink's #69 Doe-in-Rut Buck Lure remains the most popular, most comprehensively field-tested doe-estrous buck lure in the industry. Even after 47 seasons of use, Tink's #69 still gets the big boys close, and while it's worth sharing the good news with your customers, chances are good that they are already well aware.

Offered in both synthetic blend as well as 100% natural doe estrus, Tink's #69 is designed for most effective use during the pre-rut and pushes sexual attraction into overdrive. Tink's #69 is available in three sizes: 1-, 2- and 4-ounce bottles, as well as in Tink's Scent Bomb. With a reputation for success for nearly a half a century, Tink's #69 Doe-in-Rut most certainly should claim some of your retail shelf space. www.tinks.com

BE THE TREE COVER SCENT

Cover scents can be tricky. Product lines are sold from coast to coast and land in the hands of hunters in every region. This can be problematic if consumers are using scents that are not familiar to the game they are hunting. An easy fix is to employ cover scents like Be The Tree. Be The Tree is specifically designed to incorporate odors from a significant array of tree species common to most hunting environments.

While a cover scent like Be The Tree is a different approach to scent control, covering rather than attempting to eliminate, it has proven to be quite effective in my own field testing. Of course, I used Be The Tree after following a scent suppressing/eliminating strategy — I have yet to use it to simply cover unmanaged scent. Retailers serving hunters from the bottomlands of the Southeast to the high mountain black timber overlooking the Northwest would do well to leave a little shelf space for Be The Tree. www.covermyscent.com





CODE BLUE DOE ESTROUS

For years, Code Blue Doe Estrous has been touted as a top natural urine attractant, and like some of the other products in this roundup, I can personally attest to it — this stuff works! Code Blue differs from many producers in that the urine in each bottle is sourced from a single deer. In Code Blue's words, "One deer to one bottle." The advantage is simply that bucks lock on to the urine scent of a single deer. In addition to the benefits of single-deer collection, bottles are composed of amber glass to retain freshness and potency and to increase the lifespan of the urine's effectiveness. Each bottle also includes a registration number denoting the specific doe from which the scent was collected. www.codebluescents.com



DETONATOR RETRACTABLE SCENT WICK

Speaking from years of personal experience, the Detonator Retractable Scent Wick is tough to beat for manual scent dispersal. As one might guess, the Detonator Retractable Scent Wick is composed of a molded plastic cylinder, O-ring sealed side-port and 12x1-inch wick. To employ, your hunter simply pulls the wick out and wets it with a preferred scent. The Detonator can be laid onto a surface or hung. After the hunt, the wick is simply retracted into the canister and sealed by the O-ring to prevent leaking. www.hunterspec.com



DEAD DOWN WIND EVOLVE 3D+ FIELD SPRAY

For 15 years, Dead Down Wind has been touted by avid bowhunters as one of the most popular scent-elimination sprays on the market. Unlike ION or Ozone technologies, Dead Down Wind focuses on what the company calls Enzyme ScentPrevention (ESP) and the manner in which enzymes work at the molecular level to prevent production of odor-causing bacteria. Like Dead Down Wind's other products, Evolve 3D+ Field Spray works on the premise that enzymes prevent odor at the source — bacteria. The spray is safe for skin contact and is perfect for on-the-go scent suppression, including re-treatment while on the hunt. This is especially important for active hunts or while hunting in warmer temperatures. If customers are looking for a single brand offering a complete scent-suppression strategy, Dead Down Wind products belong on your shelves, and I can personally attest to positive results through years of active use as an avid bowhunter. www.deaddownwind.com



SCENT BLASTER

Scent Blaster takes on dispersal with quite an effective three-pronged approach. First, wicks dry out, and as a result, effectiveness may be compromised. Scent Blaster's system keeps the wick saturated with the fresh scent throughout the duration of the hunt. Second, the Scent Blaster employs a silent fan to blow scent into the air, thus, according to Scent Blaster, improving reach, up to 15 times the distance of a traditional hanging wick. The third prong is simple — more scent.

The Scent Blaster includes a reservoir capable of holding quite a bit of attractant or cover scent. The Scent Blaster's wick actually sits down into the reservoir, in front of the silent fan. Moist wick, more scent, fanned out; the right components certainly are there. If you're looking for something just outside the norm with a lot of promise and a decent price point to offer patrons, a Scent Blaster just might be a great solution. I sense Scent Blaster may add more dollars and cents to your bottom line. www.scentblaster.net

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.



Ameristep Has a “Blind Spot” for Hunters

Ground blinds continue to grow in popularity, and Ameristep is helping lead the way.



BY MATT CRAWFORD

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States just about the time spring turkey hunting seasons were getting underway. While the virus affected retailers of all sizes greatly, turkey hunting — which has always been a social distancing activity — continued pretty much on schedule in most places.

That was good news for Ameristep, a hunting blind company that's part of the Plano Synergy portfolio of outdoor brands (Avian X, Frabill, Plano and about a dozen others are all sister companies). Starting with this year's turkey season, the 2020 hunting seasons are expected to be a boom for Ameristep, after the company brought a number of new, innovative ground blinds to the market.

Joe Snatchko, vice president of sales of outdoors for Plano Synergy, provided a glimpse of where Ameristep is going with its ground blinds and how that dovetails to where Plano Synergy is growing as a larger company.

HR: You introduced some new products at SHOT Show, including the Pro Series Thermal Ground blinds. Can you talk about the new products that have rolled out?

JS: The No. 1 rule in retail that's tried and true is “newness sells.” With that in mind, we've delivered over 50 new hunting products across 11 brands into the market for 2020. Our newness spans the good, better, best price segments, and we remain committed to driving exciting innova-

tion into the market while providing our consumers great price-value product offerings.

The Pro Series Thermal Ground Blind is a great example of just that. It features heavy-duty, insulated material to keep you comfortable in any weather conditions; full walk-through door; extra-large footprint, providing 37% more space versus a standard blind; quick-adjust ratchet tie-downs for quick and effective setup; and it's



topped off with Mossy Oak's newest Terra Elements Camo for ultimate concealment.

We've also delivered an expanded lineup of sub-\$100 ground blinds offering the quality and design our consumers have come to value without breaking the bank when making a multi-blind purchase to outfit all of your best hunting spots. This lineup consists of the Doghouse Run & Gun, Caretaker Run & Gun and Caretaker Magnum — all tried-and-true designs now in different configurations to meet any consumer's needs.

HR: What specific styles/types of hunting have you seen the most growth in recently?



JS: That's the great thing about ground blinds — they're so versatile and accommodate all types of hunters and hunting situations. Whether up against the edge of a thicket, tucked underneath the canopy of a tree along a field edge, or brushed into the edge of a corn field, you can throw it up just about anywhere and be successful. Better yet, it's great for running and gunning solo for that buck on your hitlist or packing the family in it for a comfortable evening hunt.

HR: Who are your bread-and-butter consumers? Whitetail hunters? Turkey?

JS: Without a doubt it's the whitetail hunter, though you can't discount our turkey hunters. I've found it's a great way to get the kids out during youth turkey season and to ensure an enjoyable hunt given the ability to move around and stay concealed. My son A.J. shot his first gobbler last spring out of our Ameristep Caretaker Kick-out Blind.

“That’s the great thing about ground blinds — they’re so versatile and accommodate all types of hunters and hunting situations.”

HR: Is there a specific type or style of hunting where you think there is great growth potential?

JS: Ground blinds for sure. With all of the continual efforts surrounding hunting participation, I feel ground blinds are the best way to introduce

We focus on each individual channel and work to cater our offering and selection to ensure success. Whether inline product or special make ups, we want each retailer to assort what's going to sell best for their consumers.

HR: Pro deals ... good for the industry or a bad practice?

JS: When handled correctly, pro deals are very beneficial — it allows the retailers to become well versed with your product and to gain appreciation for it. We've all been there — it's pretty evident when you're being sold a product that the salesman obviously has never used and has zero idea about. What a bad experience! On the flipside, it's so refreshing to have that great consumer experience when working with a knowledgeable, helpful salesman that gets you into the right product and out the door ready to go afield.

HR: Has the COVID-19 outbreak affected your business practices in the short-term?

JS: COVID-19 has caused every business in every industry to adjust business practices. I pray that we're soon back to some sense of normalcy.

HR: What are some the more unique or creative ways you've seen your blinds being used?

JS: Whether brushed-in like a cedar tree or the extension of a corn field, it's exciting to see the creativity that our hunters display with our Ameristep Blinds.

HR: Can you talk about your relationship with Mossy Oak and Realtree?

JS: Who can really say enough about the amazing job Toxey Haas and Bill Jordan have done pioneering what we know today as “camouflage” and the relentless pursuit of concealment both of their great companies pursue? Hats off to both of them and their awesome teams. **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.

the next generation of hunters into the sport as well as provide our fathers and grandfathers the ability to continue hunting successfully when they prefer a blind over a stand.

HR: As the total number of hunters declines across the country, how has that impacted your growth strategy?

JS: Our goal is actually the help reverse the trend of declining hunters, and we feel promoting ground blinds can assist with those efforts. As well, when the pie isn't getting any larger, we hustle to grab the largest share.

HR: Retailers have had their issues in recent years. What's Ameristep doing to incentivize the smaller, specialty retailer to help keep them moving forward?

JS: We work hard to drive both newness and value into the market with the goal of providing the winning combination for all of our retailers.



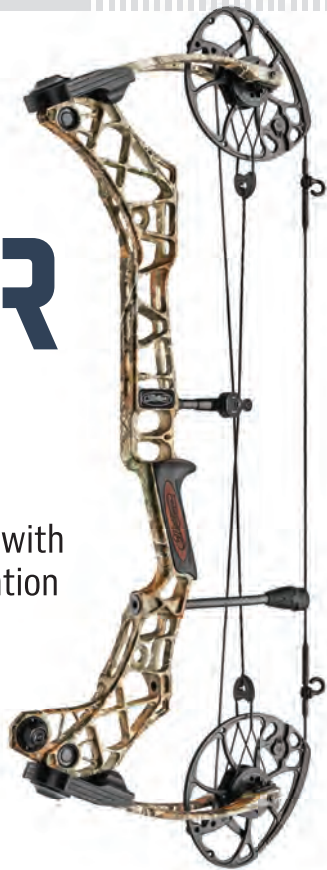
A KILLER CROP

This year's bow lineup is filled with models loaded with customization archers shouldn't ignore.

BY JACE BAUSERMAN

When the rifle world creates a stellar model, that model typically isn't discontinued the next year. The bow world, however, is different. Each year, typically starting in October, the stick-and-string masses begin to ask: What's next? It's become the norm. While the argument over whether this norm is good or bad fluctuates depending on what circle of archers you're chatting with, I will simply note that constant pressure to perform has pushed bow makers to levels of greatness I don't think anyone thought was possible.

After I shot many of 2020's flagship models, a plethora of thoughts jumped to the forefront of my mind. Of course, balance, durability, smoothness, speed and a quiet shot flashed like the lights on the Vegas strip, but another theme emerged as well. The more I shot and the more I tinkered, the more I realized the emphasis bow manufacturers placed on customization this year. This bow lineup features rigs designed to accept a face-mounted rest or the addition of a bow rope, tune with an Allen wrench, or achieve a wide range of let-off options and adjustable draw-weight and draw-length ranges bow toters will surely appreciate.



MATHEWS VXR 28 & 31.5

A true dynamic duo, the VXR 28 and 31.5 (\$1,199) from Mathews blend speed, smoothness and stealth into a ready-for-any-hunt platform bowhunters are sure to cheer. Both rigs feature a six-bridge riser that was specifically engineered to boost strength and reduce weight. The new platform is said by Mathews to enhance cam efficiencies and the tried-and-true hushing effects of 3D damping. A must-add accessory, the all-new Silent Connect System kit (SCS) fits between the limbs and requires just four screws to secure the SCS arms between the limb pockets. With the SCS in place, bowhunters can quickly and quietly attach Mathews' bow rope and bow sling. The VXR 31.5 tips the scale at 4.66 pounds, measures 31.5 inches between the axles and is capable of speeds up to 343 fps. The 28-inch axle-to-axle VXR 28 has a fighting weight of 4.44 pounds and spits arrows up to 344 fps. Both bows are fitted with a 6-inch brace height and come in draw weight options of 60, 65, 70 and 75 pounds. Color options are many. www.mathewsinc.com



PRIME BLACK SERIES

When it comes to bow offerings from Prime, great things come in fours. Giving shooters 31-, 33-, 35- and 39-inch axle-to-axle offerings is the new-for-2020 Black Series (\$1,099). While specs on these four vertical wonders vary slightly by model, the big story is the Roto Cam System. This innovative system, a first for Prime, allows the user to adjust draw length via a self-contained rotating module. No press is needed, and the modules can be moved in half-inch increments. Let-off can also be adjusted with the Roto System between 65 and 90%, making the Black Series one of the most adjustable, headache-free platforms on the market. When it comes to riser design, few do it better than Prime. Branding the riser on the Black Series to be its strongest to date, this durable platform features an accuracy-enhancing center balanced grip position and engineered to reduce-pin-float Centergy Technology. The Swerve, which adds stiffness to the riser while synching the top and bottom half, is also back in action for 2020. www.g5prime.com





Prime





BEAR STATUS EKO

A bow designed with customization in mind, Bear's Status EKO (\$1,000) allows let-off to be set in four different (75, 80, 85 and 90%) positions, making the bow great for bowhunting as well as 3-D and target archery. Align Lock Technology works in concert with the bow sight to make aligning second- and third axis all the easier, and the ShockWaves limb-dampening device adds a serious touch of stealth. This 33-inch axle-to-axle rig has a weight of 4.3 pounds and hits speeds up to 344 fps. Draw weights options are 45 to 60 pounds and 55 to 70 pounds, and the bow ships with a VersaGrip and a NaroGrip. Color options are numerous, and the bow is draw-length adjustable between 26 and 30 inches without the need of a bow press. www.beararchery.com



HOYT ALPHA SERIES

Offered in carbon and aluminum riser designs, the specs of the Carbon RX-4 Alpha (\$1699) and Axis Alpha (\$1,199) mirror one another, minus the weight, of course. The Carbon RX-4 has a mass weight of just 3.9 pounds, while the Axis Alpha weighs in at 4.3 pounds. Both rigs measure a maneuverable 29½ inches between the axles (Hoyt's shortest to date) and sport a brace height of 6½ inches. Equipped with a refined version of the now three-generation ZT Cam, the ZTR promises a smooth draw, firm back wall and a rock-solid anchor. Another hat-tip-er of the Alpha Series is the new Integrate Mounting System. Removing the need of the Berger hole for rest mounting, the Integrate System places a pair of slits into the face of the riser, which accepts the clamps of QAD's Integrate MX drop-away rest. Of course, proven Shock Pods and StealthShot make the bows scream Hoyt, and both technologies greatly reduce noise and vibration. Color offerings are too many to list. www.hoyt.com



OBSESSION LAWLESS 4T

Sure to be held in high regard by the speed crowd is the 356 fps Obsession Lawless 4T (\$1,000). Fitted with Obsession's OB Adjustable 4-Track Cam System, the bow is noted by Obsession to be a breeze to tune, and rotating modules allow for no-bow-press-needed draw-length adjustments. With a mass weight of 4.1 pounds, this 33.25-inch axle-to-axle bow features a new rear stabilizer mount and one-piece limb-pocket construction sure to improve alignment and lead to increased shot-to-shot consistency. A visit to Obsession's website allows customers to design the Lawless 4T the way they want it in terms of peak draw weight, riser color, limb color, string color and cam color.

www.obsessionbows.com



ELITE EMBER

Measuring 31 inches between the axles and sporting a 6¼-inch brace height, Elite's Ember (\$500 bow only) boasts a draw-weight range between 10 and 60 pounds and is draw-length adjustable from 15 to 29 inches without the need of a bow press. This means the Ember will fit shooters of all ages, and this two-cam bow ensures shooters get a firm back wall even when set at low draw weights. This is made possible through a limb stop on the Ember cam. Capable of speeds up to 310 fps, this split-limb bow comes complete with Elite's new Vibex Dampening Blocks and Winner's Choice Strings. A ready-to-hunt package is also available for \$600.

www.elitearchery.com





PSE

For 2020, PSE Archery and stick-and-string kingpin John Dudley joined forces to bring you the Nock on EVO NTN 33 and Nock on Carbon Air Stealth Mach 1. Weighing just 3.5 pounds, the Mach 1 is branded with a 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch brace height and hits speeds up to 324 fps. It measures 32 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches axle to axle. The laid-back limbs along with a redesigned grip area provide the shooter with increased comfort and stability. The Mach 1 is available in draw weights of 50, 60, 65 and 70 pounds and is fitted the PSE's smooth shooting Evolve Cam. The EVO NTN 33 measures 33 inches between the axles; this aluminum-riser bow also comes with a number of Nock On-inspired technologies like the T. Rest Mount, Precise Lock Cable Guard, Optimized Fall Away Riser Shelf, Direct Drive Rest Cord Connector and integrated Riser Ready Quickstand. The EVO promises a dead-in-hand feel and is offered in peak draw weights of 50, 60, 65, 70 and 80 pounds.

www.psearchery.com



BOWTECH REVOLT & REVOLT X

A pair of masterpieces from the minds at Bowtech, the Revolt and Revolt X (\$1,099) were created with a Deadlock Cam System. This system allows the archer to achieve a maximum tune using only an Allen wrench. Tune and Lock screws are labeled on the cams, making the system a breeze to operate. Deadlock Pockets marry perfectly with the Deadlock Cams to make the entire bow a single functioning unit. Both bows ship with the low-profile Clutch Grip, but the Clutch Control Grip is available for purchase if a customer is in the market for a grip that sports a 1/4-inch raised heel. The Revolt measures 30 inches axle-to-axle, has a 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch brace height and hits speeds up to 335 fps. Specs on the Revolt X are 33 inches axle-to-axle, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch brace height and a speed rating of 340 fps. Both rigs are offered in draw weights of 50, 60 and 70 pounds and have a draw-length range of 26 to 31 inches.

www.bowtecharchery.com



XPEDITON MX-15

One of the fastest vertical bows of 2020, the MX-15 (\$1,099) sends arrows at speeds up to 362 fps. Best of all, according to Xpedition, archers don't have to sacrifice smoothness or accuracy. The 4.2-pound, 5-inch brace height MX-15 was designed with a caged riser to provide increased stability and aid in noise and vibration control. The bow is also fitted with a new limb-pocket system that is being heralded for its ability to ensure perfect alignment through the power stroke of the bow to boost performance and maximize overall shootability. Available in draw weights of 40, 50, 60, 65 and 70 pounds, the MX-15 is draw-length adjustable in half-inch increments between 25 and 30 inches. No press is required.

www.xpeditionarchery.com



GEARHEAD DISRUPTER 24

Gearhead had been dropping the jaws of archers for years. Aside from the fact that Gearhead bows shoot incredibly well, bowhunters are blown away by their dimensions and look. Enter the new Disrupter 24 (\$749-769). With redesigned, wider Zero Gap limb pockets and draw-length specific cams in lengths of 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 inches, this racy rig measures a mere 24.625 inches axle-to-axle, hits a speed rating of 330 fps and has a weight rating of 4 pounds. Gearhead's "Pick a Grip" system gives archers six different grip options to choose from, and the 24 comes with a ST-2 Stabilizer mount and can convert from right- to left-hand or vice versa.

www.gearheadarchery.com





Meeting the Needs of Upland Bird Hunters

Bird hunters have specific gear requirements depending on what region of the country they're in, but there are some universal needs you should be stocking.

BY MARK CHESNUT

Upland bird hunters are an interesting breed. Many keep a kennel full of bird dogs, have a safe full of shotguns and fill their closets and garages with a ton of specialized equipment — all to hunt a little (or sometimes somewhat bigger) bird.

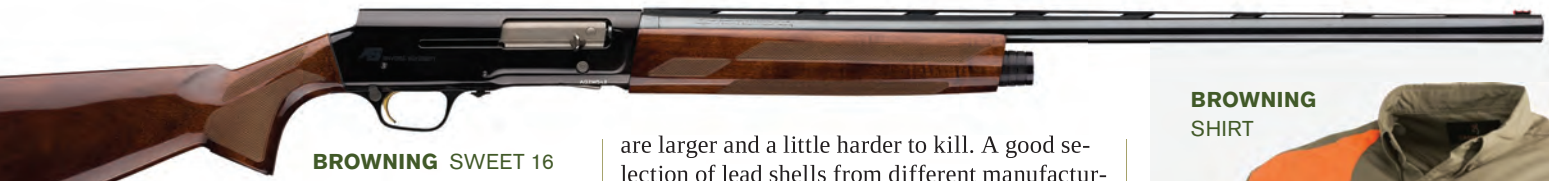
I don't say that flippantly. In fact, I've been an upland bird hunter for more than half a century, and I realize that many people question my and other such hunters' sanity. Still, we plug along, enjoying our dogs, wild country and delightfully tasty game birds.

From the ruffed grouse of Michigan's Upper Peninsula to the bobwhite

quail and pheasants of America's heartland, all the way to the desert-dwelling quail of southwest Arizona and chukars in the rugged mountains of the Pacific Northwest, upland game birds are popular quarry for many hunters. And these hunters all have a number of specific equipment needs in order to enjoy their sport to its fullest.

If you're not already catering to upland bird hunters, you're missing out on a piece of business you should strongly consider addressing. Let's take a quick look at some of the products in demand by upland bird hunters.





BROWNING SWEET 16

Guns

Number one is guns, and the shotguns typically used by upland bird hunters run the gamut from semi-autos to side-by-sides to over-and-under doubles and even pump guns. Most are light-weight, well balanced and easy to swing on fast-moving upland birds. While gauges run the gamut from .410 bore to 12-gauge, the vast majority of hunters use 20- and 12-gauges. Slight upticks in hunters who use the diminutive 28-gauge and others who prefer the 16-gauge make the market for those guns fairly strong, also. Most upland bird hunters prefer improved cylinder chokes, as many bird species are small and shot at somewhat short distances. However, those hunting bigger birds like pheasants and some Western grouse often step up to a modified choke for a better pattern at extended ranges.

Companies that make fine upland bird-specific models include Remington, Browning, Beretta, Benelli, Mossberg, Franchi, Ruger, Ithaca, Winchester, CZ-USA and several others. Since bird hunters run the demographic range from the very wealthy to modest-income beginners, a selection of guns in different gauges, types and price ranges will give your customers the best opportunity to purchase one or more.



Ammo

Ammunition is another important requirement, and many hunters burn through a lot of ammo in a typical season. Hunters pursuing quail and smaller grouse species typically opt for fairly light loads in No. 7½ or 8. In steel, they typically move up to No. 6s since the lighter steel doesn't hit as hard as a lead pellet. For those hunting pheasants, partridges and larger grouse species, more powerful No. 6 lead (4 steel) loads are the most commonly used, since those birds

are larger and a little harder to kill. A good selection of lead shells from different manufacturers ranging from light No. 8s to heavier 6s will meet most upland hunters' needs quite well.

Many companies make great upland bird ammunition, including Winchester, Federal, Browning, Focchi, Remington, Kent, Estate and Rio. Some areas, especially some publicly owned lands, require the use of nontoxic (non-lead) ammunition for hunting upland birds. Companies that make and market steel upland bird ammunition include Federal, Winchester, Kent, Remington and Rio. Additionally, Kent, Hevi-Shot, Rio and a few other companies make upland bird shells loaded with bismuth, tungsten and other non-lead shot.

Apparel

Upland bird apparel is another product segment that holds good profit potential. Of course, it's possible to hunt most upland birds in an old flannel shirt and jeans with the pockets stuffed full of shotgun shells. But specialized apparel designed just for upland hunters makes that unnecessary.

For lower wear, most upland hunters go with either chaps or upland hunting pants. Both are made to be comfortable while protecting hunters' legs from the slashing, scratching and poking bushes, shrubs and trees where upland birds seem to always take refuge.

For upland pants, hunters typically look for those made from a durable material that will stand up to wind, rain, snow and harsh terrain. They must be tough enough to hold up to heavy brush, while comfortable enough to wear while walking all day. They also need to be light enough to wear during warmer, early-season hunts. Lastly, they need a reinforced fabric, like Cordura or nylon, on the front of the legs to protect hunters from scratching, stabbing and cutting flora.

Note that upland hunting pants are available in a wide range of prices, from about \$50 to well over \$200. Companies that market quality upland hunting pants include Browning, Wrangler, Under Armour, Gamehide, Kuhl, Columbia, Carhartt and Mountain Khakis.

For upper wear, many companies manufacture upland hunting shirts made specifically for bird hunters. While having such a shirt isn't a necessity, they sure look cool and quickly identify you as an upland bird hunter to those who see you wearing one.

BROWNING SHIRT



GAMEHIDE SHIRT

GAMEHIDE UPLAND PANT



Many are made in brown and khaki colors with orange highlights, which contributes to safety in the field. Most are long-sleeved and fairly lightweight, making them good for early-season hunts and also still useful for late-season hunts with a base layer or two underneath. Most have a somewhat padded patch on the right shoulder or both shoulders, although I consider it more of a symbol of membership in the upland fraternity than an actual recoil reducer.

Companies that market good upland shirts include Browning, Gamehide, Banded Gear, Columbia and Duck Camp.

Hunting Vests

A good upland bird hunting vest is another critical piece of equipment and serves several important purposes. A good vest will securely hold a large number of extra shotgun shells, provide room to

carry game birds that have been bagged, and have plenty of pockets to carry other important stuff like

that resists tearing in heavy brush, a strong zipper or other enclosure that won't fail with repeated use, and at least some blaze orange on the exterior for safety purposes. Some newer models are being made with an enclosed hydration bladder, which is handy for both hunters and dogs, especially in hot, dry climates.

Vest brands to consider include Browning, Columbia, Carhartt, Tenzing, Q5, Trekker and Filson.

Consider the Cold

For retailers in very cold climates, an upland jacket or two in their inventory might be another good option.

But for much of the country, jackets are just too warm to wear when walking long distances during much of the upland season.

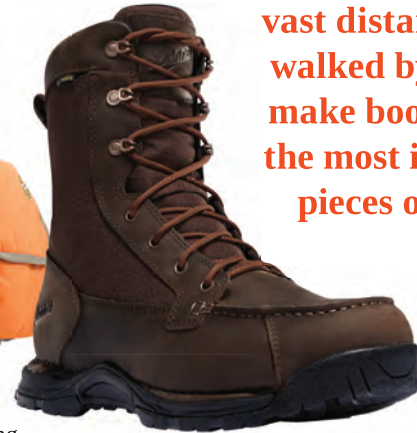
Upland hunting boots could be a story all their own, as the vast distances often walked by hunters make boots among the most important pieces of gear. They're also one of the most likely products to be bought from a local retailer instead of online because fit is such an important factor.

Because of all the walking, upland hunters need boots that are lightweight and comfortable. Yet they also must have plenty of structure and stability to

“Upland hunting boots could be a story all their own, as the vast distances often walked by hunters make boots among the most important pieces of gear.”



TENZING VEST



DANNER PRONGHORN



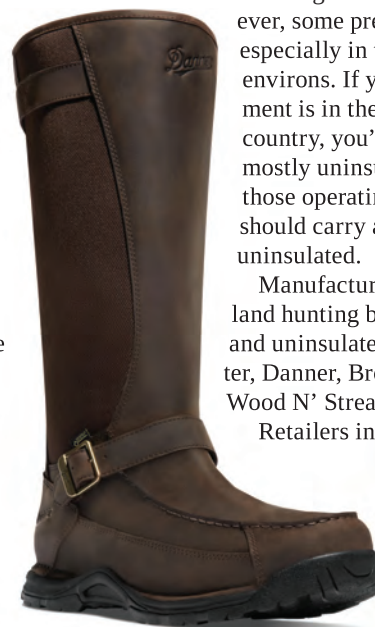
IRISH SETTER BOOT

avoid knee and other leg injuries. A boot with a waterproof lining is a plus, especially for those who frequently hunt in wet habitat or during inclement weather.

Many hunters wear uninsulated upland boots, especially in warmer climates, because with lots of walking comes sweaty feet. However, some prefer insulated boots, especially in the late season in cold environs. If your retail establishment is in the southern part of the country, you'll likely want to carry mostly uninsulated boots. But those operating in colder climates should carry a mix of insulated and uninsulated.

Manufacturers offering fine upland hunting boots, both insulated and uninsulated, include Irish Setter, Danner, Browning, Rocky and Wood N' Stream.

Retailers in areas with lots of



DANNER SNAKE BOOT



CARHARTT VEST

gloves, water bottles, dog boots, first aid items, leashes, tracking collar transmitters and other miscellaneous gear.

One of the most important criteria of an upland vest is being lightweight, since vests are likely to be worn while walking several miles a day. Of course, hunters are just going to load it down with heavy shotshells and a bunch of other gear, but starting out a little lighter is still a win. While the historical vest design covering all of the back and front is still very popular, many hunters, especially younger ones, are opting for more untraditional designs made more like lightweight hiking packs. Whichever hunters choose, they need to have a rugged exterior



SCHEELS VEST

upland season.



rattlesnakes should consider carrying a few different models of snake boots for their upland bird hunting customers. Danner, Irish Setter and Rocky all offer taller boots designed to protect hunters from rattlesnakes and other poisonous vipers.

Don't Forget the Dogs

With the upland hunter outfitted, dog supplies are another category that could be a complete story of its own. If upland bird hunters love anything more than hunting, it's their dogs — and most are willing to spend a good bit of money taking care of them.

The vast array of dog products fall into several different categories, and we won't try to look at them all here. However, categories that could bolster your bottom line include travel kennels, whistles, leashes, collars and gear boxes. Training supplies like check cords, bird launchers, blank pistols and first-aid kits are also commonly used by upland hunters.

Dog boots are good sellers in areas where lots of cactus, stickers and other sharp things are found on the ground, making hunting bootless nearly impossible. Additionally, many hunters have begun outfitting their dogs with



protective vests to guard against those kinds of dangerous nuisances and others.

Electronic dog-training devices can provide retailers with yet another profitable category of upland gear.

Many upland bird hunters use electronic training collars. And even many who don't use electronic training collars do utilize GPS tracking collars. Both are made by a number of manufacturers, and their popularity continues to grow.

In truth, the vast amount of equipment needed by upland bird hunters is likely one of the things that keeps more people from entering the sport. But those who are longtime upland hunters have it in their blood and will continue to purchase the products they need year after year. Taking advantage of that opportunity can help retailers better serve their customers also while bolstering their bottom line. **HR**

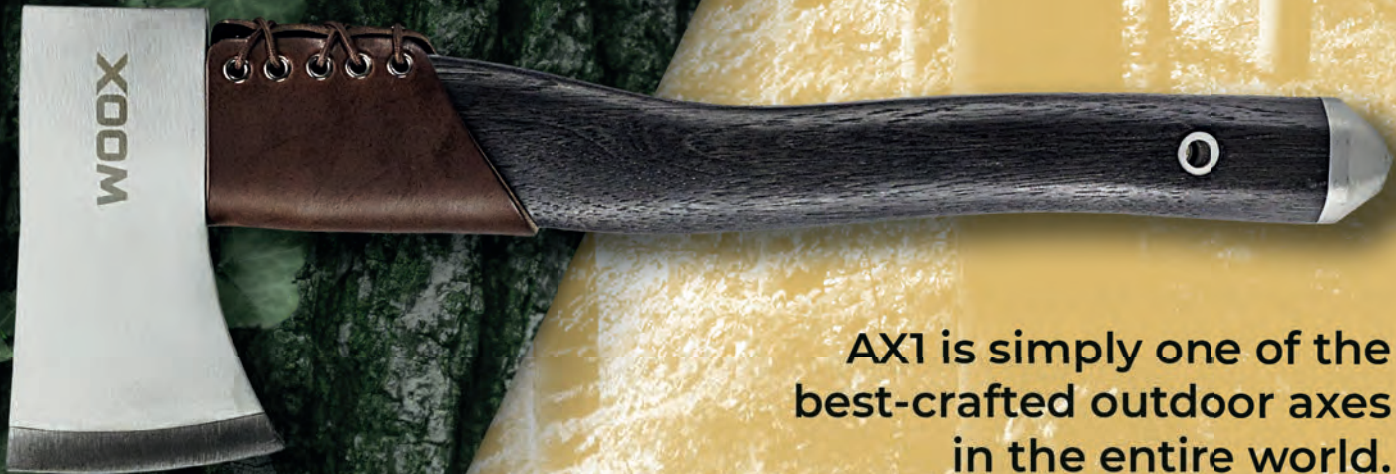
RUFF LAND KENNEL

DOGRA COLLAR



The future of tradition

WOOX
wooxstore.com



AX1 is simply one of the best-crafted outdoor axes in the entire world.



Made in Italy and US







Selling Used Guns

Unique products, more shop traffic, and a connection to shooters most apt to buy. What's not to like?

BY WAYNE VAN ZWOLL

One afternoon last summer, I walked into a gun shop, spotted a rifle I liked, and paid asking price for it — no checking the competition on a smartphone. The rifle just wasn't available elsewhere. Secondhand, it bore light field scars, but also the machining and handwork of another time. I can't say what the shop's proprietor got from that sale, only that it was what he wanted.

If you're counting fewer customers these days and the faithful stop by less frequently, you can't expect strong sales. Automobile dealers know that tire-kickers and test drives pave the path to profits. The more eyes and hands they can put on shiny metal, and the more fannies in the seats, the more cars they'll sell. The daily directive is simple: Bring more people in and keep them longer. It's also the mantra of successful gun shops.

A couple of weeks ago at this writing, the CEO of a major gun firm declared: "The bloom is off AR-15s." His company manufactures a suite of firearms, including ARs. "The market changes. We must offer what it demands," he declared. That's easier said than done if you must invest in design, tooling, manufacturing, proofing, marketing, packaging and delivery before demand shifts yet again.

Selling guns is less complicated. Shops





John Hatner

↑ From a practical standpoint, used guns can represent great value for the customer. The average shooter will never fire enough rounds to wear out a handgun barrel, for example, so a used gun probably has plenty of life left in it before it'll need repairs.

Selling guns is less complicated. Shops are cheaper than factories, and gun racks and display cases are a real bargain compared to CNC machines. You needn't tie up capital in raw material or pay engineers and skilled machinists or tend a complex off-site pipeline.

All you have to do is stock the guns people want, price them intelligently and convince customers to buy them.

New products bring traffic, but any new firearm you can get is also available elsewhere, so your pool of customers must be shared. Increasingly, too, gun enthusiasts include people with little interest in new firearms. They pine for guns they remember from their youth, or rare or historically significant arms. Some seek collectibles or a gun no longer produced to fill a reserved spot in their rack at home.

There's still a market for purse pistols, entry-level deer rifles, and mean-looking guns with high-cap magazines. But does your shop offer anything really interesting? Black stampings and polymer grips won't win hearts forever. Ditto for dipped camo patterns and 6-pound triggers. In many gun stores, traffic is migrating to secondhand racks.

Said one shop-owner: "Our regulars — customers who stop by weekly to see what's come in — are mostly middle-aged guys. They know guns and they buy guns, but they're picky." While we talked, one of these fellows entered: silver hair, tattered ball cap, plaid shirt, roomy jeans. He cruised by the ranks of gleaming new long guns and auto pistols under glass to scrutinize the secondhand racks. "Eight visits out of 10 he buys nothing," the shop owner told me, "but he's here every Tuesday. Do the math."

The Appeal of History

While the future of shooting sports does indeed belong to young shooters, most available cash is still in the pockets of their elders. Serving youth and the one-time buyer who wants to try grouse hunting doesn't preclude you from

courting enthusiasts like me. Used guns of early manufacture appeal to me, even those used hard. Each has a history — travels and travails — beyond the factory floor. History gives a firearm more than scuffs and age, just as a baseball Ted Williams slammed into the stands is more than second-hand horsehide.

Remember walnut? It once graced rifles and shotguns. Hand-fitted and unique in grain and color, each stock made the firearm unique — as did iron sights and rust blue and triggers that broke like tiny icicles. Indeed, a gun's cachet can have more to do with manufacture than use. I recall visiting Winchester's old New Haven plant in its dotage, empty rooms echoing the distant pop and creak of an occasional footfall on oil-soaked floors that during WWII bore the traffic and tooling of 20,000 workers — men and women spurred in their labors by memories of the Great War, who tended engines with massive flywheels and machinery driven by overhead belts. The upper windows, I saw, were still blacked, a precaution against Nazi air raids. To my nostalgic soul, any gun boxed in this ancient brick behemoth was and is intrinsically more desirable than one cut exactly like the next of its type by a five-axis CNC machine under fluorescent lights on polymer-finished concrete in an industrial park.



I also prowl used-gun racks because I like the solid, simple, carefully-fitted firearms now too costly to produce for the proletariat — guns of steel and walnut, with the cosmetic imperfections and glass-smooth function of handwork, without superfluous safeties, plated pot-metal triggers or glittery finish.

Then there's the allure of finding a sleeper that's underpriced, or one in fine condition to replace a sound but scarred specimen in the home stable. The prospect of a surprise is also a draw. I wasn't on the hunt for a lovely Swedish Mauser I bought recently, or the equally appealing Krag I couldn't afford.

Enthusiasts include an eclectic mix of people, some with narrow focus. No matter how comprehensive your



selection is, only by chance will you sell a used gun to an advanced collector. But history, scarcity and obsolescence apply not only to collectibles. Guns produced in quantity for hard use may be relatively rare in excellent condition. Savage's 1899 is one example, Winchester's Model 12 another, S&W's .45 Hand Ejector (Model of 1917) yet another. These gems can suck traffic to your shop when ranks of black self-loaders gather dust.

If aging firearms don't tug at your heart, consider their utility. I've yet to pick up a secondhand firearm sold as functional that didn't function. On-target performance matches what you'd get with respective models fresh off the line. Rifle and handgun barrels retain their accuracy for many more rounds than most hunters

fire. Shotgun patterns repeat faithfully for decades. Excepting rifles fed fast in frequent competition with frisky loads, ruinous throat erosion is uncommon. Corrosive priming has been obsolete for nearly a century. Besides, even pitted grooves and faint lands can still direct bullets. Carbiners dating to the Depression have blessed me with golf-ball-size groups despite their chimney-like bores.

Guns that have endured frontier use and neglect won't walk into your shop often, but those that do still carry profit. Customers keen to pick up an early Colt without draining Junior's college account know they must tolerate bore shadows, thin blue and cosmetic scars.

The difference between collectible and desirable can hinge on more than condition. Any gun with provenance linking it to a celebrity, good or bad, can bring a premium. Buy without the

provenance, and you should pay less. Of course, the claim that a pistol passed from Wild Bill Hickok to George Custer to Annie Oakley might not pan out, and a serial number can fail to link a gun with all who used it.



I came to lever-actions late. In my youth, new Winchester 94s listed for \$89.50. These were pre-1964 carbines. For a couple of decades thereafter, you could snap up lightly used "deer rifles" for \$200. No more — prices have climbed steeply. Less common Winchesters like the 1886 and Model 71 now start in four figures; the best specimens make a dangerous-game safari look cheap.

The same truths apply to shotgun country in the Southeast, where Parkers and Foxes hold sway and centerfire rifles sell as briskly as snow shovels. Of course, when you buy or trade for used guns, you consider local traditions and the yield of the local bush. If your customers motor up in 2WD pickups with bird dog condominiums in the back, better go light on .30 magnums.

What to Buy and Sell

An indispensable resource for anyone dealing in used firearms is the Blue Book of Gun Values, published annually for decades by S.P. Fjestad, who passed away last

year. As thick as a metropolitan phone book with more than 2,500 pages, this comprehensive work lists thousands of shotguns, rifles and handguns, foreign and domestic. From Azanza & Arrizabalaga (Spanish) to Antonio Zoli (Italian), if the firearm was commercially manufactured, it's almost surely here, with notes on special features and production runs. Market prices are keyed to seven levels of condition. There's a trademark index and a section with serial ranges by year, as well as a glossary.

If you're going to buy used guns or accept them in trade to resell, you need an eye for detail: Differences in market value between sub-models, manufacturing dates, chamberings and grades of appearance affect your profit. Pay too much, and the price you put on the tag will relegate that gun to months on the rack. Changes in design or manufacture, or a perceived slump in quality, affect pricing. Of the 581,471 Model 70 Winchesters shipped before that rifle's 1963 overhaul, only 362 were barreled to .300 Savage, just 404 in .35 Remington. Those now fetch exorbitant sums. But there's strong demand even for pre-'64 M70s in .30-06. Winchester built 208,218 of those!

Alterations matter. Little changes like a hole drilled for a scope mount screw can drain significant value from an otherwise factory-original firearm. Aftermarket sights and buttstocks aren't fatal if they've been added without violating the barrel or buttstock, but lopped barrels and butts will force deep discounts. Factory refinish that's hard to detect will slip by many customers; others will accept it with a shrug. Re-blue and stock refinishing by amateurs send "collector value" into a tailspin. Even hunters looking for a 1950s-era lever rifle or pump shotgun, or a pinned S&W revolver, may prefer honest wear to a fresh finish.

Not to discount the market for guns whose provenance and cosmetic integrity matter not. Utility, price and "feel" clinch many sales. Then there's the inscrutable appeal of a unique firearm to just the right buyer — like the chemistry between two teenagers, neither of whom will ever make the football team or cheerleading squad or score 1200 on the SAT. At a gun show decades back, I spied what appeared to be a Winchester M54 stock with a patchwork of additional wood fitting it snugly to a re-barreled 98 Mauser. Intrigued by the obvious effort in this project and impressed by the

Top Tips for Selling Used Guns

Having bought and sold hundreds of firearms, I've learned that...

1. Brands matter. Guns with a name other than the manufacturer's (Glenfield, not Marlin) bring less.
2. Pretty wood adds value to an otherwise ordinary gun; so do screws that have never been touched.
3. The original box, hangtag and paperwork significantly boost prices of collectible firearms.
4. A cheap scope and carrying strap add no value to a fine rifle. A pristine, period scope and sling can.
5. Custom-built rifles seldom bring near replacement cost and are often hard to sell, even at discount.

A little attention to a neglected or lightly scarred firearm can give it rack appeal:

1. Cleaning a bore is like detailing a car's interior. It adds sparkle and contributes to a good first impression.
2. A light scrub with a toothbrush and boiled linseed oil renews checkering. Follow with a dry brush.
3. Replacing or reshaping a disfigured or ill-fitted aftermarket recoil pad gives the stock a crisp profile.

— Wayne van Zwoll





Cartridge Equivalents

Re-barreled guns not stamped for the chambering deter most buyers – but don't instantly dismiss unfamiliar numbers! You can fire .38 Specials in .357 chambers, .44 Specials in .44 Magnums, .45 Colts in .454 Casulls. Likewise, you can use .25-35 ammo in chambers cut for the .25-36 Marlin. Rifles in .38-55 accept .375 Winchester ammo – but its high pressure makes it hazardous in vintage .38-55s. The .244 and 6mm Remington are identical, so too the 7x57, 7mm Mauser and .275 Rigby. Early Winchester M70s stamped .300 Magnum are bored for the .300 H&H, as the .300 Winchester and .300 Weatherby hadn't yet appeared. Cartridge names don't all reflect bullet diameter. The .256 Newton fires a 6.5mm (.264) missile. The .386 bullets of the .41 Colt would rattle down a .41 Magnum barrel, groove diameter .410.

result, I threw this hybrid to my shoulder. The bead centered instantly in the aperture sight. Like a mutt with unpapered lineage but the promise of brilliance, this rifle followed me home.

"Sporterized" infantry arms, once common, have drifted into obscurity as supplies of bolt-action battle rifles have diminished. Still, they turn up in the hands of aging hunters asking a few rubles at local gun counters. Over the years I've ferreted out three fetchingly modified 1903 Springfields, also an SMLE better fitted and finished than the one I re-stocked as a teenager.

Making Money

Restrictions in some states requiring all gun sales to be conducted through licensed dealers have diminished attendance at gun shows — as legislation in 1968 throttled traffic in mail-order firearms. Such lamentable laws, as ineffective as they are at curbing crime, benefit shops that sell used guns. The most convenient place to buy discontinued or secondhand firearms is a brick-and-mortar store.

To best tap the secondhand market, let customers know you accept trade-ins and can appraise used guns. The most valuable firearms from estates often wind up with appraisers. "That service pays me twice," a proprietor told me. "I charge to appraise, and I get first crack at guns that have been closeted for years." You're smart to acknowledge a conflict of interest here. The customer will appreciate it, and you shouldn't lose your chance to buy.

Secondhand guns deserve better than second-tier status in cobbled racks or wedged between new firearms. Better to display them prominently and apart from new firearms, so buyers like me notice

"If aging firearms don't tug at your heart, consider their utility. I've yet to pick up a secondhand firearm sold as functional that didn't function."

them right away. Mark the model, chambering and price on a hang tag anyone can read without corrective glasses or lifting the firearm. No trigger locks, please.

Cabela's stores feature plush "Gun Libraries" that add perceived value to used firearms, but you can build atmosphere at much a lesser cost. Dedicate a corner or section, then hang period posters and calendars, maybe a dash of tasteful taxidermy. Images of film stars with iconic firearms — John Wayne and a Winchester, Tom Selleck with a Sharps — evoke nostalgia that can help you sell period guns. Add hunting photos, vintage cartridge boxes, gun belts, duck decoys, bullet boards, old copies of periodicals like *Gun Digest* and *American Rifleman*, and tin reproductions of industry placards. Set up a 1940s-era loading bench, with period guns and tools.

You want visitors to relax and perhaps remember, to enjoy a few moments in another era. As with automobiles, smartphones and beer, you're peddling more than product — you're selling a lifestyle!

Remind buyers of related items: ammunition, but also gun cases, holsters, sights, scopes, slings, chokes, targets, cleaning supplies and hand-loading tools and components.

Offering guarantees on used firearms is your call. Declaring every sale final won't prevent you from acting charitably later on. It's the frontier way to deal in used guns, and perhaps still the best. **HR**





A GAME-CHANGING B2B MAGAZINE LIKE NO OTHER

brought to you by  **GRAND VIEW
OUTDOORS**

FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL

LISA ADAMS
833.306.5062 | 205.407.4550
lisa.adams@grandviewoutdoors.com



Check us out at

WWW.HUNTINGRETAILER.COM

Survival Gear You Can Upsell to Most Hunters

This product selection will appeal to your hunting, hiking and survivalist customers.

BY DARRON MCDUGAL

There are obvious product categories that belong in hunting and sporting goods stores: Think firearms, deer calls, ground blinds and compound bows. Then, there are less-obvious categories that could fit into your hunting-supply store but aren't often thought of or discussed. One in particular is survival gear.

If you haven't tapped into this category, perhaps it's time to consider it. Backcountry hunting is growing in popularity thanks to countless YouTube channels that promote it as a lifestyle. Self-reliance is also wildly popular, as is doomsday prepping. Regardless of genre, most folks agree that being prepared to address emergency or survival situations in the forest is important. Thus, it creates an opening to add survival gear to your store's offerings.

Of course, deciding which products to order can be challenging. For example, you don't want to miss a sale, but likewise, you don't want to end the year with a shelf full of unsold products. For that reason, educate yourself on what's available and also what's popular. It's typically best to begin small with select items that are versatile enough to cross over between several survival genres. After one year, try to identify buying trends so you can make smarter purchasing decisions moving forward.



To get the ball rolling, here are several important survival-gear subcategories as well as a few products within each that will stand out in your survival-gear section or department. Let's review.

First Aid

Sometimes, the unexpected occurs deep in the backcountry. A cut is an outdoorsperson's worst nightmare. If I was to incur an unwanted slash, I'd want to halt the bleeding and keep dirt and debris out of the wound with a ZipStitch Laceration Kit (\$119.95 per five). It features hospital-grade technology for fast and secure wound closure that outperforms butterfly stitches. ZipStitch is so reliable that hospitals around the



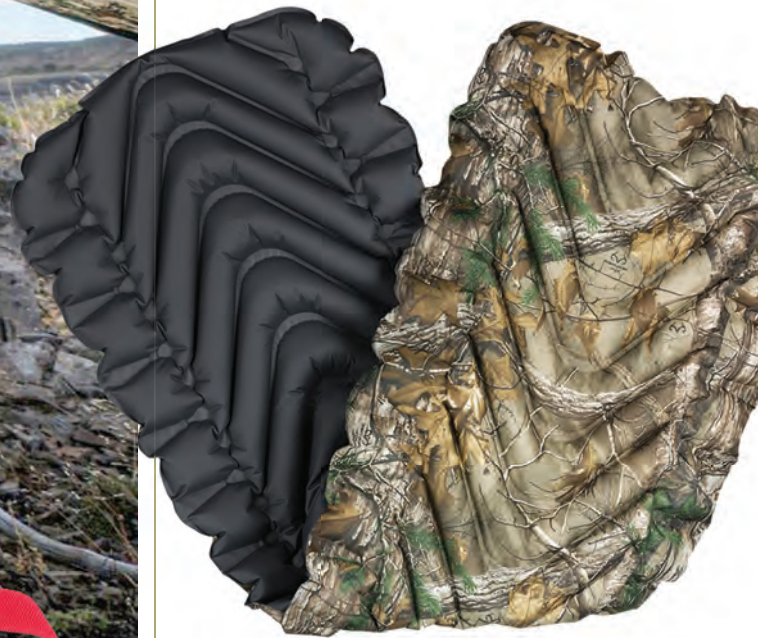


← Sitka Gear's Flash Shelter weighs just 19.3 ounces and offers emergency shelter from precipitation or sun.

organized and at your fingertips. Address burns, bleeding, fractures, splinters, illnesses, dehydration, hypothermia, airway blockages and more with all of the useful tools this kit stores within its 4x6.5-inch confines. Visit www.mymedic.com for more information.

Emergency/Camping

If I were to face an unexpected night under the stars, I'd want to spend it on a Klymit Insulated Static V (\$99.95) sleeping pad. Regardless of sleeping position, Klymit's patented V-shaped mat delivers superb comfort and weight distri-



globe use it. Bikers, hikers, climbers, hunters and many other enthusiasts will find ZipStitch useful in time of need. One ZipStitch can close a wound measuring 1½ inches long, but multiple can be used to close up larger wounds. Each kit includes a gauze pad, alcohol wipe, ZipStitch and a bandage. Visit www.zipstitch.us for more information.

In the event of greater emergency, I'd be happy to be packing a My Medic My FAK (\$120, basic; \$240, advanced). This full-on first-aid kit weighs merely 907 (basic) 1,275 (advanced) grams and includes effective solutions for many survival incidents. Available in five colors, the kit keeps everything from paracord to bandages to a whistle and even Liquid Skin



bution for a great night's sleep. Side Rails keep the sleeper centered on the mat and impede air movement while adjusting from one sleeping position to another. Not only is the mat comfy, but it provides a nice thermal barrier between you and the ground thanks to Deep Weld Patterning and Klymalite Synthetic Insulation. Whether backpacking or hunting in the wildest of wilds, the Static V provides packable sleeping comfort in a 24-ounce design that inflates with just 10 to 15 breaths. Visit www.klymit.com for more information.

Some things aren't meant to get wet, but the unpredictable elements can easily soak important items such as paper, tinder or certain food items. YETI's Panga Backpack 28 (\$299.99) solves this dilemma. It is 100% waterproof so you can focus on negotiating difficult terrain or



wading through chest-deep water — your gear will stay dry thanks to the HydroLok Zipper and U-Dock. DryHaul Shoulder Straps provide positive fit and comfort as you traverse the unknowns. The Panga weighs only 3.9 pounds (empty) and provides ample storage for the necessities. Visit www.yeti.com for more information.

Getting caught in a mountain whiteout is one way to risk life, but you can plan for it if you spend anytime roaming the high places. Once your core gets cold, extremities are the first to freeze as your body fights to conserve warmth in the vital organs. With Fieldsheer's Ridge Jacket (\$239.99), you can buy time with the Far-Infrared Heating system, which uses two chest and two back heating zones that are controllable wirelessly via Bluetooth and the Mobile Warming app. Four separate heat settings allow you to manage heat output and battery life. On the lowest heat setting, get up to 11 hours of warming comfort via the 12-volt rechargeable lithium-ion battery. Visit www.fieldsheer.com for more information.

When storm clouds unleash a brutal downpour, the ability to deploy a fast barrier is a must. Sitka Gear's Flash Shelter 8x10 (\$249) provides instantaneous housing from pelting rain, snow and sleet. At just 19.3 ounces, Flash Shelter stows easily in your pack and you won't know it's in there until you need it. Gore OptiFade camo provides great concealment for glassing for game, and a reflective cord helps users easily locate the shelter in the dark with a flashlight. Six reinforced corners and six tie-down anchors help the shelter withstand wind and driving rain. The Flash Shelter can also provide much-needed refuge from the hot sun. Reinforced pockets accept most trekking poles for fast pitching. Visit www.sitkagear.com for more information.



↑ Hunters and survivalists alike will appreciate healthy, light-weight, calorie-dense food options that can be thrown in a pack for on-the-go eating.

Mountaineering Food

Mountain House's Just in Case Classic Assortment Bucket (\$102.99), which weighs merely 3.45 pounds, provides a generous 29 servings of freeze-dried eats that can easily be reconstituted with pure water. Dine fine in the wild on beef stroganoff with noodles, chicken teriyaki with rice, beef stew, lasagna with meat sauce, noodles and chicken and granola with milk and blueberries. Just in case your backwoods stay unexpectedly lengthens, the Just in Case Classic Assortment Bucket will provide long-lasting

nourishment with a 30-year shelf life. Visit www.mountainhouse.com for more information.

Protein in a pouch can calm a rumbling stomach, which makes Hi Mountain Seasonings' Beef Jerky (\$7.99) a must-pack item for any woods visit. Whether you're facing a punishing pack-out duty following a successful hunt or simply trying to stay nourished as you navigate through the sticks, sink your teeth into four mouth-watering flavors — Original, Mesquite, Hickory or Pepper. Created in small batches in Wyoming, Hi Mountain Beef Jerky offers su-



“Regardless of genre, most folks agree that being prepared to address emergency or survival situations in the forest is important.”



perb flavor with expertly blended spices. Best of all, when you bring down an animal, Hi Mountain has a jerky kit to match so you can duplicate your favorite flavor with wild game. Visit www.himtnjerky.com for more information.

Don't drop the FBomb (\$2.50), for if you do, you'll leave behind 22 grams of natural fat provided by dry-roasted macadamia nuts. Wilderness Athlete produces these high-energy nut-butter packets, which are gluten-free, in a peanut-free facility. Caloric counts vary between 205 and 215 calories depending upon which flavor you choose of the four that are available. Visit www.wildernessathlete.com for more information.

Tools

Whether you need to skin a freshly-bagged grouse or start a fire on a whim, Outdoor Edge's Ignitro (\$27.50) is a multi-use tool perfect for everyday carry. It weighs just 1.5 ounces due



to a hollow ABS grip. The 2.3-inch stainless steel blade keeps a sharp edge after repeated use, and a special storage compartment houses a fire-starter rod and striker plus fire-cord tinder to create a blaze. Top that off with a 110-decibel



One can last days without food, but hydration is vital to every survival situation. Every hunter should carry a LifeStraw (\$19.95) for peace of mind should a primary water source deplete. Drink from virtually any water source as the proven personal-sized filtration system removes dangerous bacteria, parasites and microplastics, giving you great-tasting water from deep-woods creeks and streams. It weighs just a tenth of a pound; outdoor enthusiasts can't afford not to carry it. Included are a mouthpiece cap, bottom cap and detachable lanyard. Visit www.lifestraw.com for more information.

whistle, and you have a highly useful and potentially life-saving tool that easily fits in a pocket. Visit www.outdooredge.com for more information.

If lost, a viable method to harvest frogs or even chipmunks for nourishment comes with the Pocket Shot Survival Kit (\$35). Pocket Shot is a contemporary alternative to the time-tested slingshot. It uses a pouch to retain the projectile for incredibly user-friendly operation. A zippered case can store the pouches when not in use. Easily deploy the Pocket Shot when your life hinges on obtaining a small forest meal.

Also included are numerous other survival tools: a compass, wire saw, safety pins, fishing hooks and rubber fishing worm, among several others. Visit www.thepocketshot.com for more information.

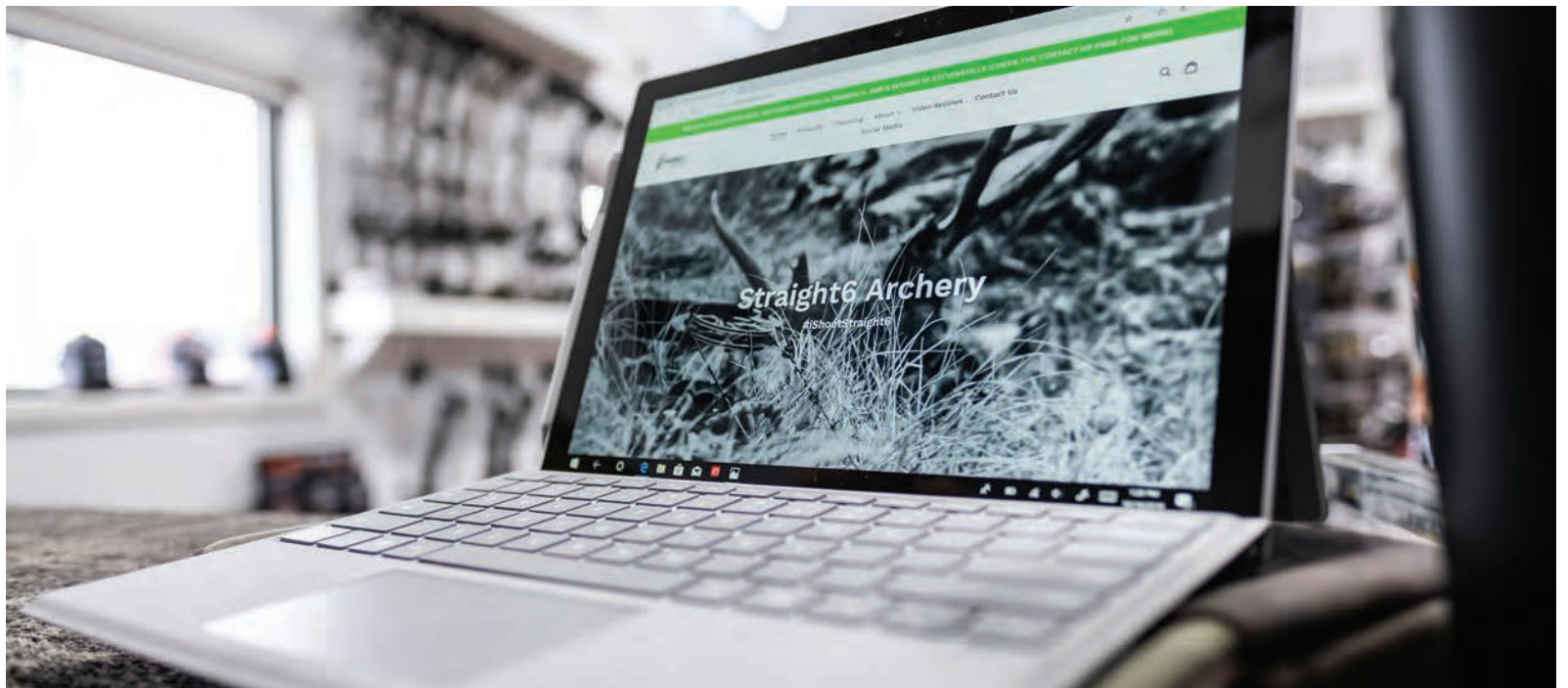


Light up the night with the Cyclops TF1500 Tactical flashlight (\$59.99). Anodized aluminum-alloy construction can withstand knocks and blows, while Cree XHP50 20W LED unveils a 1,500-lumen output that stretches across 360 meters so you can find your way through the inky unknown. Four modes including an SOS mode make this a wise carry for anyone who'll possibly be afield after darkness falls. At 8.6 ounces, the TF1500 easily operates with a rear tactical switch. Visit www.cyclopsolutions.com for more information. **HR**



7 TIPS FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING YOUR MARKETING

Social media is great, but it's not exactly friendly to our industry, and it shouldn't be your only marketing plan.



BY ACE LUCIANO

It's a beautiful Monday morning. You wake up, pour yourself a steaming hot cup of coffee, and proceed as you always do — by opening your Facebook account to look at some of the posts from your friends and customers, as well as make one of the many social comments and posts you do for your business.

Today, though, something is wrong. Your account won't load. It's having problems.

You do a search for your social media page and it returns no results.

After logging into your personal account, you notice a red mark under the notifications area of your account. When you open that notification, you read the following: "It has been determined that you have violated Facebook policies regarding your account. Your account has been permanently suspended." That's all there is.

You panic. It's Monday morning. You were in the middle of running a big social media contest and hadn't extracted all of the names and data from your social programs yet. You need to find someone to call.

You spend the next two hours searching the social media site and, finally, researching on various search engines by typing in "my (insert chosen offending social media site here) account has been suspended and I don't know what to do..." only to find there's really no way

to contact anybody or to get a good answer to what has happened. Years of hard work have been permanently deleted in an instant — and there's nobody you can call and nothing you can do to fix it.

This scenario and more have played out hundreds of times in the firearms and outdoor industry.

Some of the larger media organizations and businesses have sent demand letters and their attorneys aggressively after these companies, many times to the tune of thousands to tens of thousands of dollars. Can you afford to do that?

It is no secret that social media companies, many of their employees and their technological counterparts in the Silicon Valley most often do not agree with your right to keep and bear arms or your desire to pursue game and fish — and many other opinions and beliefs that you might have. They will use their powers to censor your voices and opinions





and, ultimately, even to harm your business on their platform.

Social media has ingrained itself into our DNA and is an effective way to build and do business with your customer base, but it does have some rather serious risks.

You've heard the term "never put all your eggs in one basket" before, right? Well, the same rule for eggs goes for your marketing plan. Additionally, social media has been around long enough now that there are people out there who have never experienced nor know much about the plethora of methods of marketing and advertising that can still have tremendous ROI for your business dollar. I have run across several who at least claim that 90% of their marketing is through "social" companies.

Regardless of the knowledge we now have as to the opinions and power of these main social companies, do you really believe it is a good idea to put that many eggs in a single basket?

Your business and livelihood deserve thorough planning. There's no question that social media can be an effective business tool. Following are seven additional effective methods of marketing that your business deserves and should use.

1 The Irresistible Offer

Using one of the most powerful tools in marketing, the "irresistible offer," will exponentially enhance the efficacy of each and every method of marketing you use. Nothing grabs a potential customer's attention more than something of high value given to them in exchange for their business. This can be something like a low cost but high value gift, or even a single, very high discount for a first-time customer. The rule of thumb for determining if something is an "irresistible" offer is that it should make you at least slightly uncomfortable to give it.

Remember: In today's hyper-connected world, almost everybody knows what things cost and can easily research it if they don't. 20% off MSRP often puts the "real world discount" at between 1 and 5%. In the marketing world, we refer to these types of ads as "highly resistible." This type of advertisement can actually force customers to shop or research elsewhere for their needs, giving you a net loss to your customer base.

Need proof that this works? Huge organizations like Ducks Unlimited often lose money on their initial (and sometimes even subsequent) membership dues because they include a

premium gift like a duck call, microfleece, or pocketknife with their solicitation to do business with them. They do this because they have a deep understanding of the lifetime value of a customer. This is a very important concept that you should research, but it will take up too much space to explain here. The simple explanation is if you confuse the transactional value of a customer with the lifetime value of a customer, you are likely losing a lot of potential money. Remember, though, to always ask your customer for something of value in exchange — at least their name, address and cell phone number.

2 List Marketing

This should be the No. 1 priority of every business. A list of your current customers, potential customers, and the general public that have opinions and needs that align with your business is a gold mine of potential revenue. If you haven't already been doing this, you need to start immediately.

A good way to get people to give you their information is to offer them a discount or "value-added" product or service in

exchange for their contact information. Additionally, every time your customers check out, either online or in person, you need to do everything you can to gain, update and maintain their information. Several businesses I have worked

"There's no question that social media can be a very effective business tool."



with will give their customers an extra 90 days warranty on any products they buy from their store just in exchange for filling out some contact information on one of several electronic tablets located throughout their business. Another developed a private club that gave them a year of added value and service for a small fee. The Sportsman's Guide has their Buyer's Club that does the same thing. Think of this like your own personal "social media" company — but now you are the one in control of all of the content and information that is delivered and shared.





John Hafner

Want to dramatically enhance the results and revenue from your list? First, make certain that you deliver a great deal of value in your communications, rather than just the typical, “Hey, you’re my customer, buy my stuff, here’s the stuff that’s on sale,” messages that are all too common — though this type of communication is better than NOT communicating regularly at all. Instead, use the 5-to-1 rule: Deliver at least five things of value before

EST. 1952

KINSEY'S

INDUSTRY-LEADING

FREIGHT PROGRAM

\$300 MINIMUM ON ACCESORIES!

We'll Keep You Busy this Busy Season

Remington CORE-LOKT

5041L 20

Call Today to Set Up Your Account!
(800) 366-4269 | KinseysInc.com/#new-accounts

you ask for anything. I preach the mantra of “What, When, Where, How.”

What can they go and do, when do they go and do it, where is it done and how can they easily do it? This can work with everything from starting in competitive shooting to easy weekend hunts for kids. Make a list of 25 or 30 and get writing!

Don't overwhelm your list with communications. Once a month should be considered under-delivering. Once a week is about perfect. Offer an option for subscribers to upgrade to a premium service that gives more information, services or discounts.

3 Print Advertising

Flip through the magazine you're reading right now, and you'll see examples of businesses marketing their business to a very targeted audience. You can, too, and can add significantly to your bottom line by doing so.

The opportunities for this are almost endless. You can advertise in your local paper. Local magazine publications, regional publications, and, yes, even national-level publications like this magazine. If you add a compelling headline and an irresistible offer, these already effective methods can often double or triple your ROI.

4 List Sharing/Co-op

This is also a very effective way to increase the size of your marketing list, but it needs to be done with an abundance of caution. Your goal here is to find companies that align with your business, products and values and offer to send a message to your list in order to have them do the same for you. A great example of this would be an archery store pairing up with a gun store. Each could offer the other's customers a special discount for signing up for their monthly/weekly newsletter or even a special “deal week” where the other store's customers can shop in your store for a special, discounted rate. What you want to avoid is a simple exchange of names without something of value for the customer, because nobody likes marketing emails out of the blue. This can actually have negative ramifications on both your spam rating for email marketing and your list size, as customers will unsubscribe at a higher rate.

5 Direct Mail

Remember that list you're supposed to have been building over the life of your business? Make sure that, in addition to their email, you also get your customers' physical mailing address. You would be surprised at how effective



even something as simple as mailing out a coupon for your business can be.

Don't have a list? There are hundreds of places where you can buy or rent the use of a list of your exactly desired demographic — all the way down to things like income level, past license purchasing, other purchasing habits, and even if someone is right- or left-handed! Many companies that provide the service can also provide the mailing list for prospecting, making it even easier for you to do business with them.

6 Dialing for Dollars

It's not too often people talk to their customers outside of their place of business. Especially with the change in economy caused by the recent coronavirus and subsequent quarantine, most people have extra time on their hands. That might be you and your customers. You may have fewer customers coming to the store, or perhaps you have too many employees and not enough business to support them all being at your business during this trying time. Now is a great opportunity to "dial for dollars."

Hopefully, you have a thriving business with hundreds or thousands of regular customers who happily come in and spend money with you on a frequent basis. Hopefully, you have some of their names and contact information. Obviously, it would be difficult for you or your employees to call 10,000 people (however, there are services that can do this for you — and, if you have their cell phone numbers, it makes it really easy) — but what if you or a few of your employees took just your top 200? Imagine if you and/or your staff took the time to pick up the phone and called 20 customers a day for 10 days. Have a pre-written message and topic — something like, "We wanted to make sure to let our best customers like you know that we are still open during this event..." Or, "You're such a valued customer to our business that we wanted to offer you personally a special discount of 10% off anything in the store on Thursday."

If each call takes only a couple minutes, that's one hour per day. This type of marketing works especially well around an event, promotion or holiday, so keep that in mind.

7 Join "The Club"

Everybody wants to be a member of "the exclusive club."

There are currently several large retailers in the outdoor industry that effectively utilize this type of promotion, and there's no reason you can't do it with your business as well. In exchange for an upfront fee, you give members of the club discounts and special pricing on future services.

That might mean that they get two hours of free range time every month. It may mean they get an extra 5% off for every purchase. It could earn them 25% off labor in your store. The possibilities are endless. One of the keys to making this program work effectively is to make sure club prices are listed prominently and separately from regular customer prices.

Retailers who rely too heavily on social me-

dia for their marketing could be in for a nasty surprise at the most inopportune moment. In the marketing and business world, there was a phrase that I have become very fond of "Diversity is security." The more customers you have, the more products you carry, and the more methods of effective marketing you use, the more confident you can be in making money no matter what the environment. **HR**

The image is a promotional graphic for Precision Airgun Distribution. It features a central circular logo with a stylized wolf head. Surrounding the logo are various airgun components and accessories, including a Daystate airgun, MTC Optics, Brocock, and dB Silencer. The text "THE WORLD'S FINEST AIRGUNS" is prominently displayed across the center. At the bottom, a white box contains the contact information: "DEALER INQUIRIES, CONTACT: PRECISION AIRGUN DISTRIBUTION (480) 539-4750".



HUNTING RETAILER

GEAR ROUNDUP

GROUND BLINDS AND TREESTANDS

BY GORDY KRAHN



ALPS OUTDOORZ DECEPTION PORTABLE BLIND

The Deception from ALPs Outdoorz (\$179.99) has a smaller footprint than most standard portable blinds – just 48x44x46 inches – delivering greater mobility and faster setup for on-the-go hunting while providing ample storage space and leg room. And it is now available in Mossy Oak Bottomland and Obsession camo. Its four-hub design is constructed of aluminum while the frame employs strong yet flexible fiberglass poles for multi-season durability. To maximize concealment, the blind has a blacked-out interior. Custom viewing and shooting portals come courtesy of its 270-degree Silent-Trac window system, and for easy entry/exit the Deception features an extra-large door with a No. 10 zipper to ensure smooth, hassle-free operation. Included stakes and tie-downs keep the blind secure.

www.alpsoutdoorz.com

AMERISTEP PRO SERIES THERMAL BLIND

The quilted-fabric Ameristep Pro Series thermal blind (\$349.99) will help hunters stay protected from the worst weather, and its five-hub, pentagon design creates an asymmetrical shape that offers plenty of room for bulky clothing and lots of gear and helps it blend into its surroundings. It has a huge 59x59x30-inch footprint and a maximum height of 70 inches. Twelve silent-slide windows offer ample room to maneuver while ShadowGuard coating eliminates shadows and silhouettes within the blind. The easy-access walk-through door is quiet to operate and large enough for smooth, silent entrees and departures. The blind is dressed in Mossy Oak Elements Terra camouflage and comes with a carry bag, ground stakes and tie-down cord.

www.ameristep.com

BARRONETT BLINDS OX 5 BX550 HUB BLIND

The OX 5 BX550 hub blind from Barronett Blinds (\$299.99) is made from OxHide, a unique two-layer bonded fabric that maximizes exterior concealment with a soft, no-shine and color rich camouflage layer permanently bonded to an ultra-durable, waterproof, woven polyester interior layer. In addition, the dark interior fabric creates a dull black backdrop to conceal movement that will never scratch, crack or flake off. Its silent slide window system opens horizontally across three sides from the center to any desired width or height. The OX 5 is a five-sided blind that has a deceptively large interior, giving the hunter a panoramic view and enough room to stay back from window openings.

www.barronettblinds.com

DOWN&OUT XL PANEL BLIND

The Down&Out XL panel blind (\$999.99) sets up in less than five minutes and is built to withstand harsh weather so it can be left out all season. Its panels are made of heavy-duty 600 denier No-shine Cordura fabric that resists water and fading secured to a robust, powder-coated aluminum frame. All windows are comprised of an inside fabric with a silent elastic cord/clip system and outer camo shoot-through mesh with quiet magnetic closures. The door panel also features a magnetic closure system and measures 48x60 inches for easy access. The Down&Out XL system includes all-steel stakes and a heavy-duty carry case. It also features a configured floor that adapts to Muddy Deluxe 5- and 10-foot towers.

www.downandoutblinds.com





MILLENNIUM Q200 BUCK HUT SHOOTING HOUSE

The lightweight Millennium Q200 Buck Hut shooting house (\$699.99) weighs just 323 pounds – making it easy to relocate. It has two adjustable legs for leveling on uneven ground and all metal frame parts are made from heavy-duty powder-coated steel. It has a 500-pound weight capacity and an anchoring kit is included. Its multi-configuration windows can be adjusted for a rifle, crossbow or vertical bow and each window has an adjustable height shooting rest. The Buck Hut is constructed from a heavy-duty, waterproof soft shell material that will last for many seasons and its interior measures 7 feet, 4 inches wide by 4 feet deep by 7 feet tall – plenty big for gun and bowhunters to shoot while sitting or standing.

www.millenniumstands.com

MUDDY OUTDOORS INFINITY GROUND BLIND

All-new Infinity ground blinds from Muddy Outdoors (\$199.99/two-person; \$279.99/three-person) are available in two- and three-person configurations, designed to meet the key needs of bowhunters – specifically, the need to configure the window opening shape and size to meet changing hunting conditions. The Infinity 2 features a silent-slide window adjustment system to give hunters the ability to independently raise or lower the dual Shadow Mesh windows for top or bottom viewing. A specialized memory wire allows the hunter to custom-form the shape of the window to best match the hunting situation and shooting style. The Infinity 3 has three independent silent drop-down Shadow Mesh windows. Both blinds have an ultra-dark interior to assist in staying undetected in even the brightest hunting conditions.

www.gomuddy.com

PRIMOS DOUBLE BULL 270/360 SURROUNDVIEW BLIND

The Primos Double Bull SurroundView 270 and 360 (\$449.99/360; \$349.99/270) are blinds without a blind spot – constructed with exclusive one-way see-through walls that let hunters see all of their surroundings without being seen. The 270 – 270-degree view – comes with three one-way see-through walls and one rear blackout wall. The 360 – 360-degree view – has four one-way see-through walls with one movable blackout panel to place on any wall. The SurroundView's hub system is made from extremely rugged materials and sets up easily. Both blinds are cloaked in Primos Truth camo that features a mix of shadows and patterns with a depth of field specifically designed for maximum concealment in all ground-level hunting conditions.

www.primos.com

RHINO BLINDS R150 BOTTOMLAND FIVE-HUB BLIND

The R150 ground blind from Rhino (\$139.99) – dressed top to bottom in Mossy Oak Bottomland camo – is built tough to withstand the most inclement weather conditions. This five-hub blind comfortably fits two to three hunters and setup takes as little as 60 seconds. The window system consists of a large front window and three smaller windows on the backside. An over-sized, zipper-less door allows silent access and brush loops line the top and bottom of the blind. All Rhino blinds have reinforced stress points and are treated with a durable water repellent and an antimicrobial to help prevent mold and mildew. The Rhino 150 comes with a backpack, stakes and tie-down ropes.

www.rhinoblinds.com





SUMMIT LEDGE XT HANG-ON

Designed for comfort and safety, Summit's new Ledge XT hang-on treestand (\$109.99) features a contoured mesh backrest and seat and a folding footrest to prevent leg fatigue. That comfort is further enhanced by its generous 30x24-inch platform that allows for even more foot room thanks to the stand's dual post design that positions the cables farther apart. And the Ledge XT is also incredibly safe thanks to its dual straps that include a large buckle strap on top and a securing strap near the stand's base. Setup is easy thanks to Summit's Quick-attach straps for fast, secure hanging. The stand weighs in at 23 pounds.

www.summitstands.com



FAMILY TRADITION TREESTANDS HD/HO LOCK-ON

The HD/HO lock-on treestand from Family Tradition Treestands (\$260) is built tough – with galvanized tubular steel for structural integrity and extra-durable baked-on textured powder coating for rust resistance. Its premium quality nylon webbed flip-up seat measures 20 inches wide by 13.25 inches deep and its standing platform measures 25 inches wide by 31 inches deep. A large footrest is welded to the standing platform for added comfort and security. The HD/HO includes two 1,900-pound working load rubber-sleeve chains to support the platform and two 3,300-pound breaking strength camo ratchet straps with rubber-coated handles to secure it to the tree. An included T-handle screw holds the stand in place while securing it to the tree with the ratchet straps.

www.familytraditiontreestands.com

HAWK HELIUM PRO HANG-ON

Forged out of lightweight aluminum and weighing only 12 pounds, the Helium Pro hang-on stand from Hawk (\$209.99) provides a combination of comfort and mobility. This stand features a pressure-relieving perch with 3 inches of Hawk memory foam that forms to the body and staying quiet has never been easier with an ergonomic platform design that's welded at all contact points and includes self-lubricating Teflon washers between metal-to-metal contact points. For stability, the Helium Pro has Tree-digger teeth to bite and grip bark and includes a 1-inch cinch strap with silent over-molding, backpack straps, as well as an adjustable footrest. All Hawk stands are tested to TMA standards and include a full-body safety harness.

www.hawkhunting.com



RIVERS EDGE LOCKDOWN 21-FOOT LADDER STAND

Using its new ratcheting system, hunters can secure the Rivers Edge Lockdown ladder stand (\$299.99) before leaving the ground. Simply pull the straps up to the top of the stand while standing on the ground and then ratchet them tight up top, firmly securing the stand to the tree. The Lockdown one-man ladder stand measures 21 feet to the shooting rail, and its extra-wide flip up TearTuff mesh seat provides all day comfort and the ability to stand while shooting. Its 32.5-inch deep platform with flip-out vinyl dipped footrest provides plenty of leg room for standing and stretching. The Lockdown also features dual tree blades, oversized platform ratchet straps and octagonal tubing for added stability.

www.huntriversedge.com





BIG GAME WARRIOR ELITE ULTRA-WIDE LADDER STAND

Big hunters need big stands! And the 17-foot ultra-wide Warrior Elite ultra-wide ladder stand from Big Game Treestands (\$129.99) fits the bill – with its 18- by 10-inch deep platform and 24- by 14-inch seat. Its padded shooting rail provides a steady shot and can be flipped back for a completely clear shooting lane, and a built-in footrest and seat platform can also be flipped back for full platform use. The Warrior Elite's innovative Flex-Tek Zero-Gravity seat/backrest design provides all-day comfort and its Rock Solid mounting system consists of a ratchet strap, two stabilizer straps and an adjustable support bar. The stand also comes with a full-body safety harness.

www.biggametreestands.com

SKYLINE SAFETY SYSTEM LADDER STAND BUDDY

The Ladder Stand Buddy from Skyline Safety System (\$129) mounts to most ladder stands' back bar and will allow the user to secure the stand to the tree prior to stepping off the ground – made of lightweight high-strength aluminum with two pivot arms that close using a pulley system and ratchet strap. Simply attach the Ladder Stand Buddy with the included Universal Mounting Kit, secure the tree bracket and place the stand up against the tree. The ratchet strap closes the pivot arms tight around the tree and secures the stand. Safe and simple to use, the Ladder Stand Buddy has a durable powder coat finish to protect it from the elements.

www.theladderstandbuddy.com



PRIMAL TREESTANDS MAC DADDY XTRA WIDE DELUXE LADDER STAND

The Primal Treestands 22-foot Mac Daddy Xtra Wide Deluxe ladder stand (\$219.99) provides a safe, durable, rock-solid perch for hunting from high places. Its comfortable flip-up 24- by 16.5-inch mesh seat and large 29.1- by 24-inch foot platform means hunters can stay still and alert. The Mac Daddy's innovative Grip Jaw provides sure-grip installation and its Truss Stabilizer ensures stability and eliminates squeaks and creaks. Plus, the Truss Stabilizer strap allows the stand to be used where others cannot. All of this means a safe, quiet ladder stand that can be placed on almost any tree. The Mac Daddy also has a padded, flip-up adjustable shooting rail and padded armrest covered in durable nylon fabric.

www.primaltreestands.com



Facebook Page Strategy Is a Whole Lot Like Dating

Facebook page management, oddly, is a lot like dating. What is attractive to one person is not to another.

BY HANNAH STONEHOUSE HUDSON

We all have our likes and dislikes. It's the same for the Facebook fans who create the most engagement for us. Facebook page fans will like and interact with one post type but not another and will engage more with one type of content than another, including links, native photos, video, live video, text statuses and albums versus one-photo posts.

What this means is that there's no secret sauce or formula for every Facebook page. Every page is different in terms of what types of posts create interaction and what items get zero attention. The key is to find what kinds of posts work for your page, what specific post types engage your audience. It will take a lot of trial and error at the beginning, but once you find your mix of content and post types, you can build on that data to create a genuinely engaging page that has incredible organic reach levels.

NSSF
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association



Grandma's "Like" Doesn't Count

When trying to find that perfect "fan match" for the page, it is essential that you have a clear picture of who you are looking to attract. You're not just looking for "vanity" likes or those likes that do nothing more than increase fan numbers. Attracting likes just to show big numbers will actually hurt your Facebook reach in the long run. To be effective, your fans' likes and interests must match the type of person you want your posts to appear for in their Facebook feed. In other words, Facebook's algorithms determine where your posts show up based on the interests of your fan base as a whole.

This is why it's essential to only ask people to like your page if they would be an actual potential client or customer. Don't ask your aunt to like your page just for numbers. Asking someone not in line with your target demographic to like your page only confuses the algorithm.

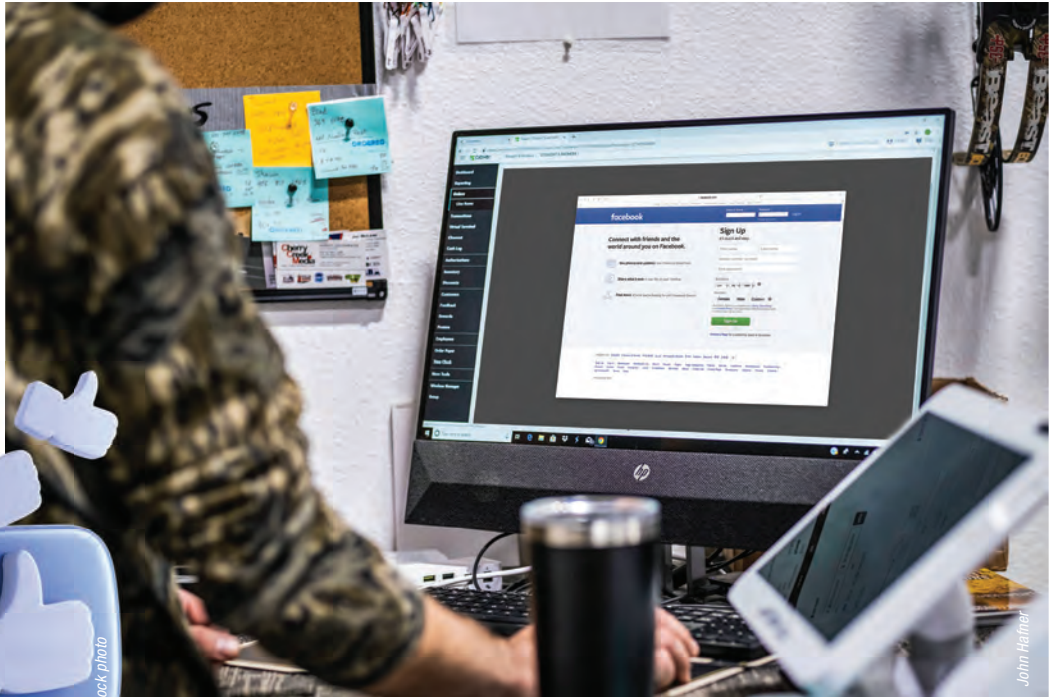
Finding the Ideal Facebook Page Fan

To find that ideal fan, take the time to brainstorm. Who are the people who will buy from you, act on the content you share and bring more fans like them to you? Resist the urge to be everything to everyone. Dial down to discover the perfect person. Brainstorm their traits and find out where they currently visit on Facebook. Create an avatar out of those traits and start speaking to those fans in your posts.



What is an avatar? An avatar is also known as a "target persona." This is the person you imagine you are talking to when you post. They are your ideal client or customer. It could be as specific as a woman in her mid-30s with a salary of \$80K, who drives a Ford Edge, has two kids and likes AC/DC. Or it could be a guy in his mid-50s heading towards retirement, no kids at home, with a salary of \$150K who drives a used Chevy Silverado.

Once you have the avatar of your ideal fan, start experimenting with different post types, posting times and topics related to your page. Ask



“Attracting likes just to show big numbers will actually hurt your Facebook reach in the long run.”

lots of questions, create engagement in the posts themselves and keep notes on what works best for your audience. Your Facebook page insights will also help. What other pages do your fans like? Where do they shop? What are their ages and their other demographics? With this info, you should then:

Take a look at the content that works for the other pages your fans like. What works for those pages organically? What falls flat? Though you should not copy other pages' strategies, the success of those pages will still give you insight into what might work best for your target fans.

Look for the Facebook groups these people might be in. Join these groups as yourself and engage with those people. See what they are looking for and what kinds of content they engage with, and work those things into your overall Facebook strategy.

Now that you have done the work of finding and engaging your ideal fan — learned their likes and dislikes, what gets them going, and what turns

them away — you can build your fan numbers and engagement for much less than if you have to pay to boost posts. Even better, your page will have great initial organic reach numbers in a time when organic reach is trending towards zero.

Appealing to the Algorithm Gods

Once you have figured out what works for your ideal fan and you have created an engaged page that has good organic reach based on those specific types of posts and content, keep posting on a schedule. Increased engagement on a page leads to the Facebook algorithm that shows your page to even more people, and your reach will be increased exponentially. In other words, the increased reach will happen as a snowball effect.

As I've said in previous posts, resist the urge to use Facebook as a billboard or only as a selling tool. Instead, give great content to your audience. Treat those fans well and with respect rather than only as potential buyers. That leads to increased organic reach because those fans will be ready to act on and engage with what you post, and that leads to Facebook's algorithm determining that your page is important to these fans and the virtual community. Your posts will now show higher up and in more peoples' newsfeeds. In turn, when you do have a call to action or sales offer, they will also show up to more of your fans in their newsfeeds, and those fans will be actual potential buyers who will act on your offer because you have done the work to attract that specific person to your page. **HR**



HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS

BY GORDY KRAHN



OUTDOOR EDGE WILDGAME STEAK KNIVES

A great addition to any carnivore's knife collection, Wildgame steak knives from Outdoor Edge are made from taper-ground 420J2 stainless steel for long-lasting durability and corrosion resistance. The final edges are finished with a micro-serration that never needs sharpening and cuts through steak like a razor. Ergonomically shaped, nearly indestructible polypropylene handles feature an elk horn inlay that ensures an enhanced grip and optimal balance. Handles are available in black and blaze orange finishes and are dishwasher safe. MSRP: \$29.95/Set of four. www.outdooredge.com

QAD ULTRAREST MXT DROP-AWAY ARROW REST

The QAD Ultrarest MXT drop-away arrow rest takes quality and accuracy to a new level – with precision tuning capabilities, anti-backlash technology and extreme mechanical tolerances. In fact, it's so precise that with each click the rest will fine adjust vertically or horizontally 1.9 thousandths of an inch. The MXT sports a sleek, lightweight design, weighing in at only 2.9 ounces, is available in left- and right-handed versions and comes with a limited lifetime warranty. Other features include complete arrow containment, total fletching clearance, a positive locking dovetail system and noise-reducing, laser-cut felt and rubber dampeners. MSRP: \$234.95 to \$258.95. www.qadinc.com



BLACK GATE HUNTING PRODUCTS ALPHA HD SCOUTING CAMERA

The Alpha HD high definition 32 MP scouting camera from Black Gate Hunting Products features a 5 MP CMOS sensor and three shooting modes – Photo, Video and Photo+Video. Its ultra-wide detection zone and 0.2- to 0.6-second trigger speed means it won't miss any of the action day or night. The Alpha HD's fully automatic IR filter is coupled with 940 NM No Glow technology and 45 IR LEDs to capture crystal-clear low-light images and night-time images out to 65 feet. Setup, navigation and image review is accomplished via its 2.36-inch LCD display screen and the camera utilizes a 512GB SD card for image and video storage. MSRP: \$119.99. www.blackgatehunting.com

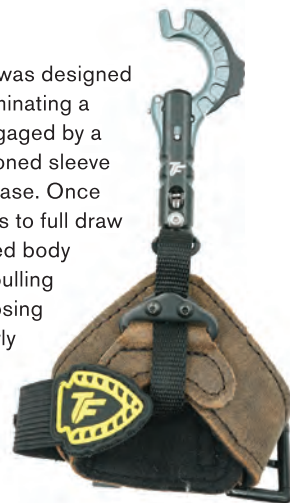


HATSAN PILEDRIVER .50-CALIBER AIR RIFLE

Designed for high-powered hunting, Hatsan's PileDriver .50-caliber air rifle is capable of producing over 800 foot-pounds of energy. Although it utilizes a 33-inch barrel, the PileDriver's bullpup design keeps the rifle's maximum length to under 4 feet. Its side lever cocking mechanism is easy to reach and operate and a 480cc carbon fiber bottle fills to 4,350 psi and will provide up to six high-powered shots. The PileDriver's unique, patented hammer design eliminates traditional steel coil springs in favor of a smoother, easier-to-cock gas piston mechanism. This top-loading single-shot rifle also features an extra-large loading port that will accommodate ammo up to 34mm in length. Three Picatinny accessory rails are attached around the air bottle for added customization. MSRP: \$1,199.99. www.hatsanusa.com

TRUFIRE THRU FIRE RELEASE AID

New-for-2020, the ThruFire bow release aid was designed to enhance accuracy and consistency by eliminating a shooter's tendency to punch the release. Engaged by a manually closed hook system, a spring-tensioned sleeve exposes the trigger contained inside the release. Once attached to the bow string the shooter comes to full draw with the index finger in the release's C-shaped body frame. The actuation process is initiated by pulling with back tension through the shot thus exposing the hidden trigger. With this system it is nearly impossible to produce a command style or "punch" actuation. The ThruFires' trigger features fully customizable travel modification as well as trigger exposure tension adjustment from 5 to 30 pounds. MSRP: \$159.99. www.feradyne.com



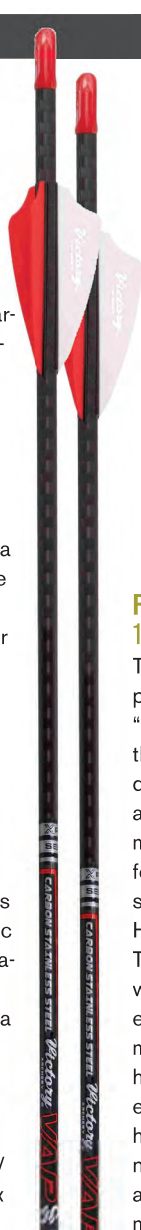
FEDERAL MEATEATER BISMUTH WATERFOWL/UPLAND LOADS

Federal Premium has partnered with MeatEater's Steven Rinella to produce a potent line of bismuth shotgun ammunition with payloads that pattern and impact like traditional lead shot, providing more killing power at longer ranges and meeting non-toxic requirements for waterfowl and upland bird hunting. The new line of shotshells comes in 20- and 12-gauge options with Rinella's photo on the box, along with one of his mouth-watering wild game recipes. Bismuth shot is softer than tungsten and steel, so it is safe and effective to use in older shotguns as well as modern guns. The loads' FliteControl Flex wad tightens patterns and increases lethality over comparable steel loads. MSRP: \$62.99 to \$71.99/Box of 25. www.federalpremium.com



VICTORY ARCHERY VAP-SS ARROW

The VAP-SS hunting arrow from Victory Archery is a marriage of tradition and innovative technology – featuring a .166-inch micro diameter shaft for maximum penetration and minimum wind interference. Hand fletched from the factory, it blends the custom craftsmanship of a pro shop built arrow with the latest in digital spine alignment technology for superior consistency and grouping. Woven stainless steel mesh is infused with layers of high-quality Mitsubishi carbon fiber and is finished with a proprietary 90-degree carbon fiber weave for added hoop strength. VAP-SS features include Victory's proprietary Ice Nano ceramic coating for improved penetration and easy removal from targets and each arrow has a 50-grain Shok TL aluminum insert for improved concentricity and durability. MSRP: \$124.99/VAP-SS Elite fletched/Six pack; \$109.99/VAP-SS Gamer fletched/Six pack. www.victoryarchery.com



REDDING COMPETITION MODEL 10X POWDER MEASURE

The Redding Competition Model 10X powder measure – designed as a “bench rest” quality unit intended for the handgun silhouette market – is a dedicated small case measure with an operating range from approximately 1 to 25 grains of powder, ideal for all popular pistol calibers and small rifle calibers such as the .17 Hornet, .22 TCM and 5.7x28mm FN. The metering cavity was designed with a test tube-like bottom to ensure extremely consistent and accurate metering. Made from cast iron and hard chrome, it features a micrometer adjusting metering chamber with hemispherical cup, backlash eliminating micrometer for repeatability, adjustable powder baffle, positive metering chamber lock and more. MSRP: \$336.25.

www.redding-reloading.com



SIG SAUER SUBSONIC .300 BLK TIPPED HUNTING AMMUNITION

Sig Sauer's subsonic .300 BLK ammunition features a yellow-tipped, 205-grain lead-core bullet designed for explosive expansion and exceptional accuracy – using the same single-base extruded powders as Sig Match Grade rounds, ensuring consistent muzzle velocity and insensitivity to temperature change. Optimized for the AR-15 platform, .300 BLK Tipped Hunting ammunition is engineered to allow hunters to load 30 rounds in a 30-round magazine and have the cartridges feed properly using a stepped-down bullet design with a shouldered ogive that keeps bullets from hitting the ridges of the magazine. This load is ideal for use with a suppressor, greatly reducing sound signature and muzzle flash. Muzzle velocity is 1,000 fps and muzzle energy is 455 foot-pounds from a 16-inch barrel. MSRP: \$33.95/Box of 20. www.sigsauer.com/ammunition



THERMASEAT INFUSION SERIES

The Thermaseat Infusion is a “triple threat” cushion that features a three-layer design that keeps hunters' backsides warm and dry. It's made of a 3/8-inch layer of Softek closed-cell foam for maximum heat retention, a 1 1/2-inch premium, furniture-grade urethane Comfotek foam for comfort and a 1-inch layer of rigid polyethylene foam that provides protection from the cold, wet ground. Each Infusion cushion is covered with waterproof, freeze-proof, polyurethane-coated SilentTouch fabric and comes with an aluminum carabiner clip, making it easy to carry. Lightweight and built to last, the Infusion features the breathable mesh for added comfort, military-grade hardware, webbing and a rubber-coated non-slip base. Available in Large and Big Boy sizes. MSRP: \$32.99 to \$63.99.

www.thermaseat.com



LEGACY SPORTS HOWA M1100 RIMFIRE RIFLE SERIES

Legacy Sports International recently announced the launch of the new Howa M1100 bolt-action rimfire rifle available in .22 LR, .22 WMR and .17 HMR calibers – sure to be a hit with small game hunters. It comes with an oversized tactical bolt handle, an 18-inch thread-capped barrel and two detachable 10-round magazines. The 37-inch M1100 is housed in a tough synthetic tactical/varmint-style stock with a beavertail forend in either an OD or black finish. A Nikko Stirling 3.5-10x44mm Gamepro scoped package option is available and the rifle and scope come with Legacy Sports' lifetime warranty. MSRP: \$478 to \$589. www.legacysports.com



ROSSI RIO BRAVO LEVER GUN

The Rossi Rio Bravo .22 LR is based on the company's popular line of R92 lever-action firearms, featuring a rich German beechwood or rugged black polymer forend and stock with a polished black metal finish. The hammer-fired rifle is built with a smooth sliding lever action, incorporates a cross-bolt safety system and can hold up to 15 rounds of .22 LR ammo. The Rio Bravo is well-suited for small game hunting, target shooting and around-the-farm pest control and utilizes traditional buckhorn sights on the wood model and adjustable fiber-optic sights for precise target acquisition on the synthetic version. The rifle includes a barrel band sling for easy transport in the field. MSRP: \$346.97. www.rossiusa.com



Staying Connected

Retail has changed with the outbreak of COVID-19. How do you keep customers in the loop and buying?

BY BOB ROBB

As this is being written on April Fool's Day, the COVID-19 crisis has changed the way Americans live and do business. While it's impossible to see into the future, one thing is very apparent, even now — we will not be doing business the way we did business in the past. There will be more work-from-home situations and more employees told to “do more with less.” Non-essential business and school closures and travel restrictions have accelerated the importance of the internet in our daily lives. One indicator of weakness in our business appeared on March 31, when industry retail behemoth Bass Pro Shops' debt outlook rating was lowered from “stable” to “negative” by Moody's, a reflection on the risk that Bass Pro's credit metrics may weaken on a sustained basis as a result of recessionary conditions and declines in discretionary consumer spending.

Things are tough; we all know that. And while progress has been made in combating the COVID-19 outbreak, another outbreak of the disease, which seems likely according to medical experts, will further negatively impact consumer spending. So, with rapidly changing market conditions due to COVID-19, what do you do? Many marketing experts say that communicating with customers via social media has never been more important.

The pandemic has accelerated the importance of social media as a source of instant information (some of it inaccurate, of course) and communication between individuals and their families and friends, and between businesses and their customers. Carissa Hill, author of the 2017 book *I LIKE MONEY: The Secrets to Actually Making Money with Facebook*, said it is imperative business owners embrace the instantaneous nature of social media to keep stakeholders and clients informed. “Every business owner should have at least a pinned post on their Facebook page sharing where their business is at in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic,” said Mrs. Hill. “Regular and new customers should be able to find a business on Facebook or Instagram to see if the business is still open, how they have adjusted to social distancing measures, and what products and services are still available,” she said.

Mrs. Hill said business owners should ramp up their social media as more people stay at home.

“So many people will be on social media, and business owners should be proactive with offering quality content,” she said. “If your business closes or slows down, it is the ideal time to strategize, create content and expand your online offerings.”

What works? That, of course, depends on your own individual business model and marketplace. However, here are some proven concepts:

- Reach out to customers to see how they are doing. Look for opportunities to help people. Start conversations and build connections. People are craving human interaction.
- Has your storefront closed down or changed hours? Update that on Google and all of your social profiles, as well as creating a social media post about it. Keep this information current.
- Provide tips on projects that people can do at home with their families. For example, show them how to take care of their taxidermy mounts, properly sharpen knives, prepare new recipes with the game they already have in their freezers. I'm sure you can think of many more.
- Create interaction opportunities through a forum or chat by stimulating discussion about hunting and shooting-related topics. Here's a chance to discuss game laws, season and bag limits, weapons restrictions, public land access issues, which cartridges are best for what, etc. Topic options are virtually unlimited.
- With travel and social distancing restrictions possibly still in place and hunt budgets seriously impacted, hunters that routinely travel to hunt may begin looking for low-cost, close-to-home opportunities. How can you help find them?
- On the popular television sitcom *Last Man Standing*, Mike Baxter ends each show with a vlog (video blog). Can you produce your own vlog that is instructional and stimulates conver-

sation among customers while soft selling your store as the place to come for all things hunting in your market area?

- One reason a social media post should almost always create a situation where it encourages interaction and comments from people is because that works with the algorithms and pushes it higher up people's newsfeeds. Ask questions like, “What is your favorite feature of this product,” or “Tell us what bullet is best for deer,” or “Tag a friend who should try this.” Maybe do contests based on this interaction. Algorithms love Top 10 lists, for example.
- People will be looking for fun and entertaining content for distraction, so consider Instagram Stories, Facebook Live and YouTube. Running your own YouTube channel will definitely get you eyeballs.
- Be consistent. On Facebook, one to two posts a day gets consistent interaction but does not negatively affect the algorithms, but four posts a day will negatively affect the algorithms. Consistency also encourages people to come to your page every day.
- Avoid putting pricing in your posts. Pricing will get you reported to Facebook, or the algorithm will catch you. Instead, ask customers to message or email you directly for pricing information.
- Above all else, all content you post, whether it be words, pictures or video, needs to be high-quality stuff. The competition for people's attention is fierce, and if you throw up garbage just to post something, people will not only quit coming to your site, but will also start associating mediocrity with your brand.

“By building up a good relationship with your followers on social media throughout the pandemic, you will be in a better position to re-launch” once it starts to go away, Mrs. Hill said. That's a place all small businesses need to be. **HR**

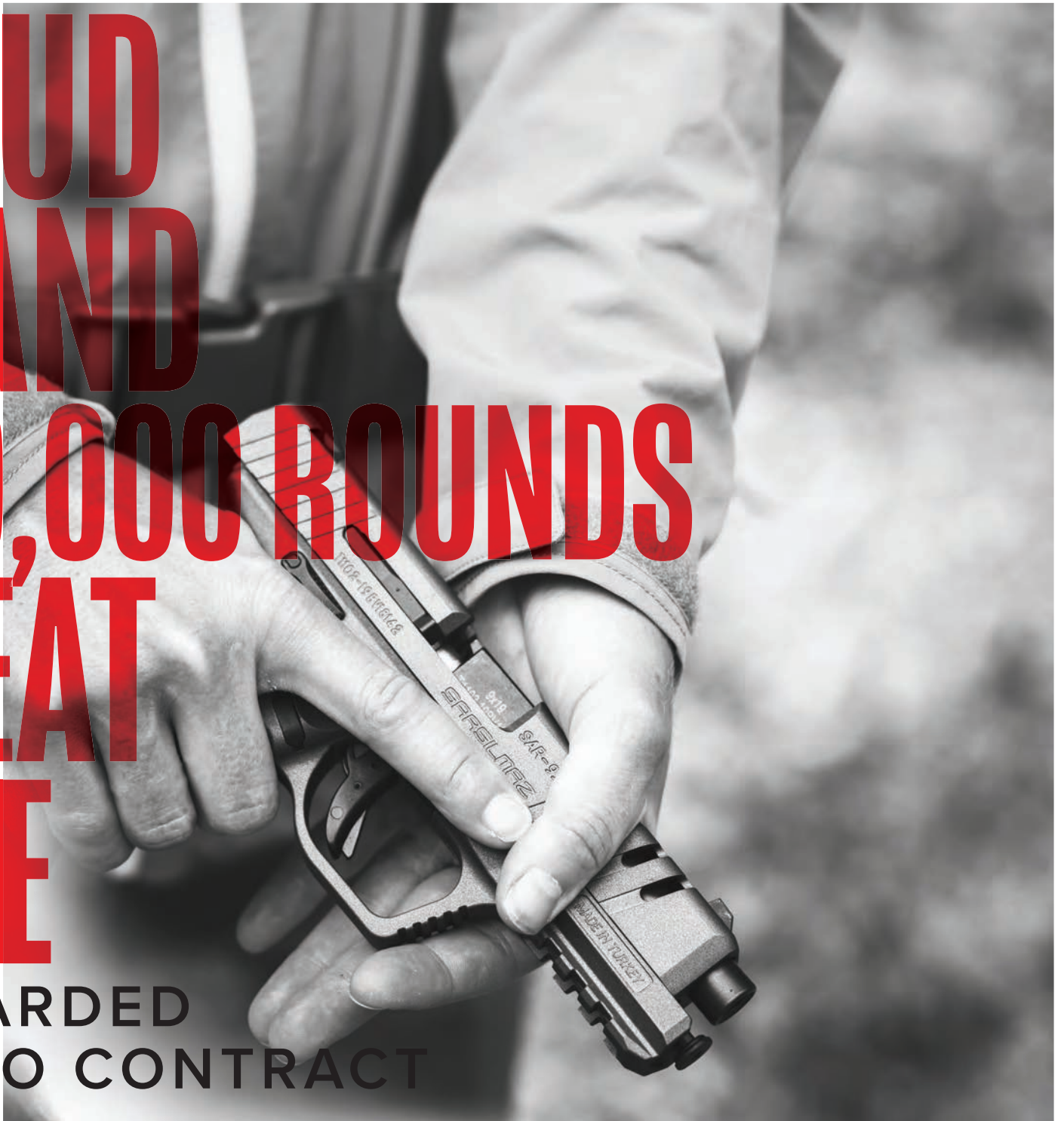
PRO STAFF

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.



**MUD
SAND
90,000 ROUNDS
HEAT
ICE**

**AWARDED
NATO CONTRACT**



SAR9



PROUDLY CARRIED BY
ELITE FORCES WORLDWIDE.
NOW AVAILABLE IN THE
UNITED STATES.

Made in Turkey
Imported by SAR USA
SARUSA.COM





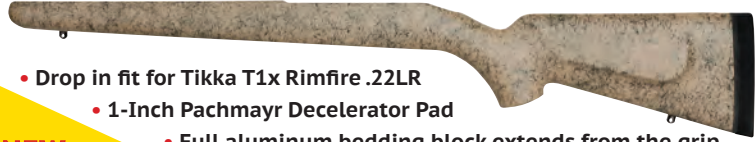
BELL AND CARLSON

THE ULTIMATE IN SYNTHETIC GUNSTOCKS

101 Allen Road • Dodge City, KS 67801 • Tel: 620-225-6688 • Fax: 620-225-9095

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

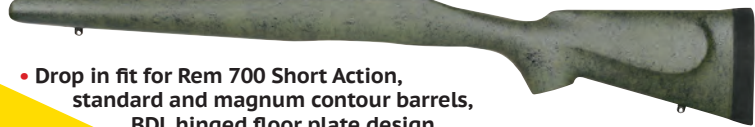


- Drop in fit for Howa Mini Action with factory detachable mag, heavy or sporter barrel contour
- Pachmayr Decelerator Pad
- Full length 6061-T6 aluminum bedding system

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!