

HUNTING

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R T A I L E R

March/April 2023 | Hide & Seek

**10 TRAIL
CAMERAS
TO CARRY**

STANDS
Don't Let Climbing
Prices Scare
Customers Away

**PIG
RIGS:**
Bring Home
the Bacon
With These
Setups

REPLACEABLE?
Work Smarter, Not Harder

**MUST-STOCK
BEAR
HUNTING GEAR**

FOXPRO
AMERICAN MADE GAME CALLS

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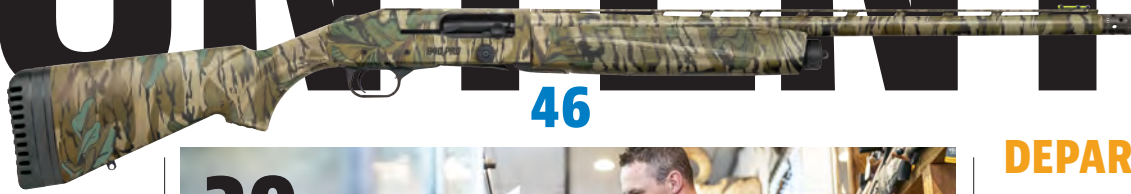
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MC312

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3"
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For 2023, FOXPRO will once again reshape the market with an all-new extensive line of products.

From top to bottom, everything has changed. All new entry level callers for the budget minded predator hunters. An all-new Flagship model with more advanced innovative features for those that demand nothing but the best. Our dedication to the market has been unmatched. Our commitment to our dealers has been unrivaled. And our promise to our customers to release nothing short of the highest quality, best sounding, and most innovative American Made products has been uncompromised.

Our new Flagship model, the X360 will revolutionize the market once again with industry leading innovative features and the most ultra-realistic sound and bring user experiences to the hunt like never before. Utilizing 3 XHD Speakers in a 7-speaker system, the X360 can produce an Advanced 360 24-bit sound with a dramatically improved frequency response range that triggers even the most call-shy predators. Over 20 kHz worth of sound! The new Advanced 360 FOXMotion feature moves your sound to different random speakers in a 360-degree directional ranges while increasing and decreasing volumes. Other features include a built-in weight scale, FOXFusion with 24 bit sounds, comes standard with 350 plus sounds and can store up to 2000 sounds. Plus, a music mode for bringing your music to life like never before. And so much more!

The new Prowler is an excellent choice for predator hunters on a budget. It's durable, compact, and comes standard with an all new remote control with a large Lcd screen. The new Hellcat series offers an all-in-one decoy and digital game call in a portable package. The X48 features the new TX2000 remote control, and now offers 24-bit sound quality AND FOXFusion in the same package, with all the same advanced features as the X360 (except Advanced 360 Sound) in a more portable package.

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SHOT Show Attendance Back to Pre-Covid Levels

The 45th Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show (SHOT Show) was held recently with more events and exhibit space than ever before. The show spanned January 17-20 at The Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum in Las Vegas, Nevada. Boasting pre-pandemic-level attendance with more than 52,000 industry professionals packing the 13.9 miles of aisles over four days eager to view new, innovative products used for target shooting, hunting, outdoor recreation and law enforcement.

This was the largest SHOT Show ever, marking the second year of expanded exhibit space at Caesars Forum, in addition to The Venetian

Expo. More than 2,500 companies displayed products and services in booths covering more than 816,000 net square feet and attracting attendees from 115 countries and all 50 states.

“This year is one of the best shows I’ve ever been a part of,” said Joe Bartozzi, NSSF president and CEO. “On behalf of NSSF, I’d like to thank all the attendees, exhibitors, media members and our guests this week for helping the industry to succeed and supporting NSSF’s mission.”

Preparations have begun for next year’s 46th SHOT Show in Las Vegas, Jan. 23-26, 2024.

Under Armour Appoints New CEO

Under Armour has hired Marriott International President Stephanie Linnartz as president and CEO and as a member of UA’s Board of Directors, effective Feb. 27, 2023.

“As a 25-year veteran of one of the world’s most respected global companies, we are thrilled to welcome Stephanie to the brand,” said Kevin Plank, Under Armour executive chair and brand chief. “She is a proven growth leader with a distinguished track record of brand strategy, omnichannel execution, talent acquisition and development,

and passion for driving best-in-class consumer connectivity, experience, and brand loyalty.”

Upon Linnartz joining the company, Colin Browne, who has worked as UA’s interim president and CEO since June 2022, will continue in a leadership role by resuming his position as chief operating officer.

Linnartz is a member of The Home Depot’s Board of Directors. She was named to the Forbes CEO Next 2021 list. She is also a member of the Fortune CEO Initiative.

BERSA Announces US Facility and Launches New Website

BERSA has launched a brand new website featuring the most popular BERSA products, plus the new American-made BAR15 rifles and BAR9 pistols.

The new website, bersa.com, offers customers a clean, modern, easy-to-navigate platform where the full pistol lineup is available and can easily be sorted by products, such as pistols, BAR, accessories, and BERSA merchandise. The

newly listed BAR products feature new AR-style rifles in .556 NATO, just announced, 300 Blackout; and new AR-style pistols in 9mm and one in .556 NATO.

“The BERSA brand is completely relevant for today’s consumers,” Rafael Del Valle, National Director of Sales for BERSA, said. “We are excited to bring a fresh look to our consummate product line online on our new website.”

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Follow These Steps To Avoid Frayed Feelings Among Coworkers

Everyone wants to have a “culture of nice” at their workplace. But sometimes difficult conversations are necessary to ensure a happy and productive workplace.

BY KEN WYSOCKY

Developing a workplace with a “culture of nice” sounds like a worthy goal for any organization. After all, who wants jerks for employees?

But a workplace that fosters such a culture also needs to ensure the “nice” factor doesn’t mask a hidden problem: Employees who act nice in order to avoid confronting colleagues with things they find offensive or that hamper their productivity. Instead, they just maintain their autopilot smiles and pretend everything is copacetic instead of confronting the issues head-on in a healthy, constructive manner.

By doing so, however, they improve the odds of increased stress and poor mental health as issues

fester. And small companies run the risk of higher turnover and decreased productivity as team relationships slowly unravel.

In short, a culture of niceness for the wrong reasons can actually derail organizational success, says Stacey Engle, president of Fierce Inc., a training company that teaches people how to have effective conversations that boost bottom lines.

If this kind of behavior and workplace culture is all too familiar, you’re not alone. A recent Fierce survey of 1,000 employees in the U.S. shows that 63% of respondents don’t share ideas, opinions or concerns for fear of being perceived as combative or uncooperative. Furthermore, eight out of 10 employees think it’s

important for colleagues to think they’re nice, the study reveals.

A NATURAL TENDENCY

Most people want to be liked. It’s human nature. From childhood on, we’re encouraged by parents and others to not say anything if we don’t have something nice to say. And more often than not, employees see what happens to colleagues who speak their minds and then suffer from adverse consequences, Engle notes.

“Most people aren’t encouraged to effectively address issues head-on,” she explains. “We tend to avoid difficult conversations or conversations that we frame in our own minds as difficult. But as more and more or-



organizations emphasize transparency and accountability, it forces people to face issues directly. ... So they need to be skilled at this.”

Those who lack the skills run the risk of upending their careers. How? Inability to meet project deadlines because you don't know how to have a healthy confrontation with a colleague whose poor work ethic is bogging things down, for example. And in doing so, you're only making yourself a victim of the situation instead of proactively trying to change it, Engle says.

In addition, organizations miss out on potential innovations and collaborations when people are afraid to voice opinions. Or they end up wasting substantial amounts of money on projects that have little chance of success, just because saner minds didn't feel comfortable voicing concerns.

Moreover, we tend to exaggerate in our own minds the possible negative effects of voicing concerns. The truth in many instances is that colleagues will feel relieved when you clear the air by healthily raising concerns about various things, Engle notes.

“As humans, we like to tell stories,” she explains. “So we're always telling stories in our head of what might happen (if we raise a concern), and we usually envision the worst outcome, which is a shame because almost all the time having these conversations enriches relationships.”

HEALTHY CONVERSATIONS

So how do we go about raising concerns in a healthy and nonthreatening way? First of all, it's all about context; it's important to frame the conversation as a joint exploration of a particular issue and how it affects things. “Think of it as really not confronting a person, but confronting an issue,” she says.

It's important to name the point of friction specifically — explain exactly what is bothering you and why it's an issue for you. Brevity and simplicity are critical. “People often avoid these conversations for a long



time, so by the time they do have them, they do what we call a ‘dump truck’ — rattle off 16 examples of the behavior in question,” she observes. “That’s very overwhelming.”

It's important to create a 60-second opening statement that clearly outlines the issue at hand, offers a brief example or two and explains the negative effects.

“The whole premise is that you only have 60 seconds before someone experiences a ‘flight-or-fight’ response,” Engle says. “Again, you need to view this as examining an issue side by side with the other person. And you need to be very intentional with the conversation.”

Like anything else, practice makes perfect. Also consider that reading the statement to yourself can be drastically different than actually saying it out loud. So it may help to read it aloud to a trusted friend or partner, Engle says.

It helps to schedule a specific time for such conversations; you want to be sure you're fully prepared, plus it's

not fair to catch someone completely off guard with a spur-of-the-moment conversation, she says.

There's always the possibility that the person you're talking with will get defensive. They may refute everything you say or blame it on something or someone else. “But you have to be able to hold the space and say, ‘This is what I experience,’” Engle advises.

“You may have to continually redirect the conversation,” she adds. “If the person gets overwhelmed or emotional, it's completely fine to either give him or her a moment or stop and schedule a follow-up meeting.”

WORKING TOWARD SOLUTIONS

If members of your team are fearful of the consequences of candor, they should focus on this: Any real change in outcomes — both personally and professionally — requires healthy conversations. And you enhance your chances of effecting that

change if you do it the right way at the right time, she notes.

“People make assumptions that things can't ever change,” she continues. “But unless someone tries, people — and companies — miss out on eliminating potentially damaging issues. In addition, lots of people leave jobs simply because they think something will never change.”

“If you don't do anything, it's likely everything stays the same,” Engle says. “And if what's happening right now isn't what you need to get where you want to go, you need to move the needle yourself.”

The irony is that when asked, most employees want colleagues to share any issues and concerns and work toward solutions. “Almost always, the answer is yes,” Engle says. “Yet we still avoid confrontations. We all need to keep in mind that we connect more deeply with people who level with us. And when that happens, it's even easier to talk about real issues and challenges.” **HR**





Ground Blinds

Help your customers with their ground game by stocking these three hunting blinds.

BY MARK CHESNUT

It wasn't that long ago that a hunter who chose to hunt from the ground would just sit quietly on a log, build a blind out of brush or even use sticks and camouflage fabric to conceal him or herself from the game animals she was pursuing. With the advent of ground blinds, however, hunting from the ground became much easier and more successful.

The first ground blinds to hit the market were pop-up blinds, and they were very well received. They were easy to carry in a backpack-type bag, set up quickly and kept the hunter dry and concealed within. However, they tended to be lightweight

enough that they would blow around a lot in a high wind, often leaked at the seams and, unless you studied the instructions carefully, were nearly impossible to put back in their carrying bag.

Then along came hub-style blinds, and everything changed. These blinds, while somewhat heavier, were also roomier, sturdier and easier to set up and take down. They took the ground hunter world by storm, and they still hold the vast majority of the market.

GROUND BLINDS VS. TREESTANDS

If a customer really wants to get

close to a deer, why not just use a treestand? That's a good question, as hunters have been killing deer from trees for decades. However, it's not always practical. Sometimes there's not an adequate tree in the area you choose to hunt. Also, ground blinds are safer, as hunters avoid climbing a ladder and climbing into their stand in the dark, and often climbing out and down the ladder also in the dark. More hunters are killed or seriously wounded each year from falls from treestands than from firearm accidents, and getting in and out of the stands is the most dangerous time.

Ground blinds also shine when

it comes to introducing a youngster to hunting. They conceal movement well, so a little tyke doesn't have to sit perfectly still and be miserable. They also break the wind and provide shelter from rain and snow, making them more comfortable than a tree stand in inclement weather. Plus, they're hell on turkeys, who are seldom hunted from a treestand because they have the irritating habit of looking up for predators.

Let's take a look at three good ground blinds that you might want to consider keeping in stock for your customers.



MUDDY TWIN PEAKS

Muddy Outdoors' mission is simple: "Deliver category-leading gear for the best value in the hunting industry." This new hub-style blind from Muddy does just that. It is equipped with two peaks to provide excellent structural integrity and more room than ever.

Like other Muddy blinds, it is constructed of water-resistant, heavy-duty 600 denier fabric with a blacked-out interior. It is very easy to transport in its carrying bag, and once a hunter finds that magical spot, it can be set up within seconds due to Muddy's quick-set hub system.

The blind's 180 degrees of abyss window netting, two back wall peak ports and two drop-down silent windows give ample opportunity to take the best shot possible. It's also quite spacious, making it perfect for hunting alongside a partner or taking a youngster or new hunter along to learn about the sport. The blind is 70 inches tall, making for a good standing bow shot for most hunters. And with an inside area of 58x58 inches, there is plenty of room for a couple of chairs (even three if you choose) and other hunting gear. At just under 20 pounds, it's even easy to tote to the woods.



XENEK SNIPER

Xenek designed its Sniper blind to be the best functioning and most durable ground blind on the market. And if they didn't hit that mark, they certainly come pretty close.

The Sniper maximizes shot opportunities while minimizing exposure of the hunter with the use of precision windows and strategically placed one-way vision panels on all four sides. It boasts a 300 denier polyester skin with black backing, and an adjustable precision window system with reversible covers and built-in accessory mount locations. For added durability, it has heavy-duty reinforcing cones at all wall corners to eliminate damage during setup and reinforced gussets at the window corners to prevent the fabric from tearing at stress points.

At 72x72 inches and a full 73 inches tall, this blind is great for those wanting to take a buddy along to film their adventure. And at just 21 pounds, it's still plenty easy to haul to your favorite spot in the woods or field.

PRIMAL WRAITH 270 DELUXE

The Wraith Deluxe is super lightweight at only 16 pounds, but it has all the room to comfortably hunt with a companion. This blind has a 58x58-inch footprint and boasts 72 inches of hub-to-hub shooting width, making it great for bowhunters. Add the three full-width horizontal shooting windows with see-through panels, and this is one your bowhunting customers might find perfect.

It's made of heavy 300 denier fabric with a blackout, water resistant interior. The silent slide windows are great for when game is up close and personal, and the see-through window panels make it easy for you to see your quarry without it seeing you. It also offers a full 270-degree shooting view, which gives hunters ample opportunity to take game coming from different directions.

The blind is super easy to set up, with the manufacturer saying setup and takedown can be accomplished in 60 seconds each. It's also easy to get back into the storage bag without a wrestling match. And with the included stakes and high-wind tie downs, the Wraith 270 Deluxe can hold up to just about anything Mother Nature throw your customers' way.





10 Trail Cameras: Take Your Shot at Higher Sales

Trail cam technology makes off-site scouting easier than ever, and these 10 models are sure to be hot sellers.

BY KEVIN REESE

George Shiras III was on to something when he captured his first wildlife image, three does, circa 1890, with what he referred to as a trap camera. By reputable accounts, Shiras began the endeavor in 1889; however, the general public wasn't in the know until *National Geographic* published 74 of Shiras' best images. Even by today's standards, many of the images were so pristine, it's hard to believe

they are nearly 120 years old!

Shiras published *Hunting Wild Life with Camera and Flashlight: A Record of 65 Years' Visits to the Woods and Waters of North America* in 1935. The book included over 950 wildlife images. Today, Shiras is regarded worldwide as the godfather of modern-day trail cameras. With the help of nearly a century of advancing technologies, trail cameras are much safer, eliminating

explosive illuminating techniques, and much easier to employ. Most of today's performance trail cameras offer high-resolution photography, infrared illumination for enhanced nighttime images, and high-definition video capabilities. Many also include wireless, including cellular, connectivity. At the same time and much to the boon of your retail customers, high-tech trail cameras have never been more affordable.

It's no secret. Considering technology, affordable price points and the benefits of such technology for wildlife observation and scouting in states where trail cameras are legal, there has never been a better time to buy. All that remains is offering trail cameras to your outdoor-enthusiast customers and advising them on the benefits of their use. This is where I come in to share 10 great trail camera models sure to capture more sales.



SPYPOINT FLEX

Beginning with the Tiny-W more than a decade ago, Spypoint has maintained a strong foothold on the leading edge of trail camera innovation, and more than any other, has been my camera brand of choice for scouting and surveilling my personal hunting areas. While I appreciated the Tiny-W's wireless black box technology, the move to cellular years ago was a huge technological step forward in convenience – I was finally able to check cameras without disturbing my hunting ground. In today's market, Spypoint cameras have only improved, and my hunting spots are currently under the watchful eyes of a Link-S and the Flex.

As its name suggests, the Flex is designed specifically for greater flexibility, including Dual-Sim technology. Dual sim connects to the strongest cellular signal in the hunter's area for more reliable wireless connectivity. The Spypoint Flex also boasts GPS connectivity for accurate camera locations in Spypoint's mobile application mapping; multi-



ple camera modes, including photo, video, time-lapse and time-lapse+; .3-second trigger response time; 33mp high-resolution still photos; 1080p HD video with audio; wireless photo and video transmissions; 100-foot flash detection range; enhanced cellular antenna and remote firmware upgrades. Even better, at the Flex's exceptionally low price point, your customers are hard-pressed to find better bang for the bucks.
www.spypoint.com

TACTACAM REVEAL X-PRO

While my Tactacam action camera experience spans a couple years with great results, my exposure to the company's Reveal Trail Camera is relatively new. Still, the Reveal's trigger response, photo quality and overall reliability has been impressive. So much so that I was quite excited to see Tactacam's latest, greatest Reveal X-Pro hit the market. The Reveal has proven to be a great tool in my personal testing, so I am certain your hunters are in for a treat with the Reveal X-Pro.

Most importantly for night shots and perfect for surveillance of wildlife as well as "honest" people, the Tactacam Reveal X-Pro Trail Camera features a no-glow IR flash, undetectable by hunters, trespassers and wildlife. The Reveal X-Pro also features cellular connectivity based on carrier service (ATT and Verizon); adjustable nighttime illumination with a detection range of over 80 feet;



nearly 100-foot overall wildlife detection; less than .5-second trigger response; 16mp photo resolution and HD video; front-facing LCD screen for field-of-view alignment; built-in GPS; solar panel port; LED battery-level indicator and IP66 water-proof construction.
www.revealcellcam.com

WILDGAME INNOVATIONS ENCOUNTER 2.0

Founded in 2002 by Matt and Ryan Busbice, Wildgame Innovations had humble beginnings as a wildlife attractant company. Soon after establishing the company, the Busbice brothers began adding categories and links, including trail cameras. Although Plano Synergy acquired Wildgame Innovations in 2013, and GSM acquired Plano Synergy in 2021, trail camera innovation and offerings have continued to flourish with more robust corporate commitments to advancing technologies. In 2022, Wildgame Innovations continues to be recognized among industry-leading trail camera producers, and the brand's new Encounter 2.0 is a solid example that the company shows no signs of slowing down.

The Wildgame Innovations Encounter 2.0 Trail Camera features four 850nm infrared LEDs and Light-



sOut technology for high-resolution nighttime photos with an 80-foot detection range, ATT and Verizon cellular connectivity, sub .5-second trigger speed, 26mp still photos and 720p HD video without audio. The Encounter 2.0 is powered by eight AA batteries, includes a 12-volt port compatible with solar panels, comes with an adjustable tree strap and is cable-lock ready.
www.wildgameinnovations.com

MOULTRIE A-900I

Born of Dan Moultrie's desire to attract deer to his property in the late '70s and early '80s, Moultrie Feeders grew legs as the premier producer of broadcast feeders and soon after, 35mm trail cameras. With respect to trail cameras, Dan Moultrie was dedicated to evolving the company's film cameras to digital photography platforms and finally to cellular-connected camera solutions; in fact, Moultrie purportedly was the first to offer a cellular-serviced trail camera. Pradco, and EBSCO Industries company, acquired Moultrie Feeders in 2003; however, trail camera innovations continue to be a major focus, as seen in the company's latest system, the Moultrie A-900i, currently sold in a bundle format.

As a bundle offering, the Moultrie A-900i Trail Camera includes eight AA batteries, a 16GB Class 10 SD card and a tree strap. As tech specs go, the Moultrie A-900i features robust HD 30mp still images, 1280x720 video resolution,



24 850nm infrared LED lights with a 60-foot nighttime flash and detection range, .4-second trigger speed, single- and multi-shot modes, water-tight polymer body with Moultrie Pine Bark finish, 12-volt power port and ATT/Verizon Moultrie Mobile compatibility via a field modem (sold separately). Honestly, with a retail price point of \$100, your cost-conscious customers are likely to flock to a bundled camera solution like the A-900i.
www.moultriefeeders.com



COVERT CODE BLACK SELECT

Covert Scouting Cameras was founded in 2008 and acquired by one of the outdoor industry's fastest growing companies, Feradyne. With Feradyne's resulting support of the brand, Covert has consistently maintained solid footing among top industry trail camera innovators and shows no signs of letting up; in fact, while the brand isn't as well known as a couple of other camera manufacturers, Covert is a first-choice solution for countless seasoned-veteran hunters with demanding appetites for ultra-reliable, premium-performing scouting tools – the latest being Covert's Code Black Select Trail Camera.

Sure, as the name implies, the Covert Code Black Select Trail Camera comes at a bit higher price point than some of the other products in this roundup; however, considering the system's lengthy list of premium features, it's a hell of a bargain for any wildlife or hunting enthusiast and one truly deserving of retail shelf



space. The Code Black Select camera boasts 30mp still images, 4K HD video, .2-second trigger speed, GPS functionality, 100-foot flash range, 60-foot detection range, ATT/Verizon compatible 4G LTE universal cellular mode, invisible IR flash technology, single and turbo shot modes, 2-inch display and up to 32GB SD card compatibility. www.feradyne.com

CUDDEBACK CUDELINK IR CELL

With the industry's longest trail camera manufacturing run, over 33 years, Cuddeback remains the most recognizable trail camera brand in the outdoor industry and soared to the top of trail camera innovation with a .25-second trigger speed. While the Cuddeback vision actually began in 1984, the company has been exposing outdoor secrets via high-tech trail camera technologies since 1989 and continues to deliver cutting-edge trail camera systems today. Case in point, the CuddeLink Tracks line of cellular cameras.

Packed with the trail camera features Cuddeback users have come to expect, the CuddeLink Tracks uses the integration of dual external paddle antennas for superior LTE reception in fringe areas where other cameras might have spotty service. Tracks uses an advanced IR-cut image sensor for better image quality and reliability, and the 4D batteries offer long battery life. Customers can remotely adjust settings through a smartphone



app and access images through an app, email, text message or on-line web interface. Tracks can send emails and texts to up to five people. www.cuddeback.com

STEALTH CAM DS4K TRANSMIT

A GSM brand since its 2007 launch, Stealth Cam has been recognized as a leading trail camera evolution leader for the past 15 years. With the help of numerous patents and a complete-unit manufacturing approach, as opposed to camera production with arrays of mismatched parts, Stealth Cam perched as a leader in affordable trail cameras virtually from the beginning. A great example for retailers with years of trail camera inventory history is Stealth Cam's Wildview cameras – still Stealth Cam's most popular camera system. That said, the Stealth Cam DS4K Transmit is a far better example of where the company's trail camera innovation currently sits.

The Stealth Cam DS4K Transmit Trail Camera features 32mp still imaging, 4K UHD video at 30 fps with audio, .2-second trigger speed, 100-



foot detection and IR flash range, six 850nm IR LED lights, 1-9 burst mode options and ATT/Verizon cellular compatibility. The DS4K Transmit is powered by 12 AA batteries or the onboard 12-volt power port and is compatible with up to 128GB SD cards. www.stealthcam.com

BROWNING RECON FORCE 4K EDGE

Browning Trail Cameras hit the scene in 2013 with Range Ops, Recon Force and Spec Ops trail camera options, and in 2014, added Strike Force and Dark Ops. Browning continues to lengthen the list of trail camera product families, and the most recent Browning Recon Force 4k Edge Trail Camera has stirred some major industry buzz your customers should know about.

The Recon Force 4K Edge Trail Camera includes a 2-inch color display; 32mp still images; 4K UHD video at up to 60fps; adjustable .4 - .7-second trigger speed; .6-second recover time; adjustable infrared (IR) LED illuminated flash; adjustable 55- to 80-foot detection range; single, multi, rapid-fire and timelapse image options; programmable picture delay; battery meter; 1/4-20 tripod socket; integral metal tree bracket and a USB



port. The Recon 4K is powered by eight AA batteries or a 12-volt external power jack, and compatible with up to 512mb SDXC memory cards. Like a car ad, the Recon Force 4K Edge nearly has a too-much-to-list feature set, and your customers are going to love it! www.browningtrailcameras.com



RECONYX HF2XC HYPERFIRE 2 CELLULAR COVERT IR

Considered by many as the top-shelf trail camera producer, Reconyx has built a revered reputation for premium performance, reliability and customer service over the past 20 years. Launched in 2002, Reconyx trail cameras are made in the USA and backed by world-class service. The company's latest offering is a rock-solid trail camera solution sure to whet the appetites of your most demanding customers – the HF2XC Hyperfire 2 Cellular Covert IR.

As the latest Reconyx example of a top-of-the-line system, the HF2XC Hyperfire 2 Cellular Covert IR is a 4G LTE-enabled, ATT/Verizon compatible trail camera boasting a five-year warranty and the longest detection range in this roundup at 150 feet. Imaging specs are 1080p wide-screen or 3mp photos and 720 HD video with audio. Additional features



include a lightning-fast .25-second trigger speed, no-glow IR flash, single to RapidFire photo modes, timelapse and CodeLoc pass-code protection. The HF2XC Hyperfire 2 Cellular Covert IR camera is powered by 12 AA batteries for up to one year (approximately 5,000 images) or via solar-compatible 12-volt port. www.reconyx.com

SNYPER 4.8CG COMMANDER

The newest company in this roundup to enter the trail camera arena, Sniper Hunting Products, considers itself to be the most affordable cellular trail camera option in the industry. While Sniper cameras are definitely affordable, they don't skimp on features important (and convenient) for hunters. Sniper's latest model, the 4.8CG Commander, is a perfect representation of an affordable, premium-performance cellular trail camera.

The Sniper 4.8CG Commander boasts up to 24mp photos, 1920x1080 HD video, 5mp color CMOS sensor, 60 940nm IR LED lights with over 60-ft. detection range and ATT/T-Mobile cellular compatibility. The Sniper 4.8 CG is powered by eight AA batteries or a 12-volt port, stores photos on an SD card (not included) and includes tripod and strap mount compatibility.



www.sniperhuntingproducts.com

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Maximize Your Manufacturer Relationships

Manufacturers and their reps might have programs or deals that can make your store more profit — if you know how to work them.

A banner for Federal Premium Season. It features a close-up of a deer's head on the left and a hunter in orange gear on the right. The text reads: "IT'S FEDERAL SEASON" with the Federal Premium logo, and "THIS IS WHAT YOU LIVE FOR" below it. The website "FEDERALPREMIUM.COM" is at the bottom left.

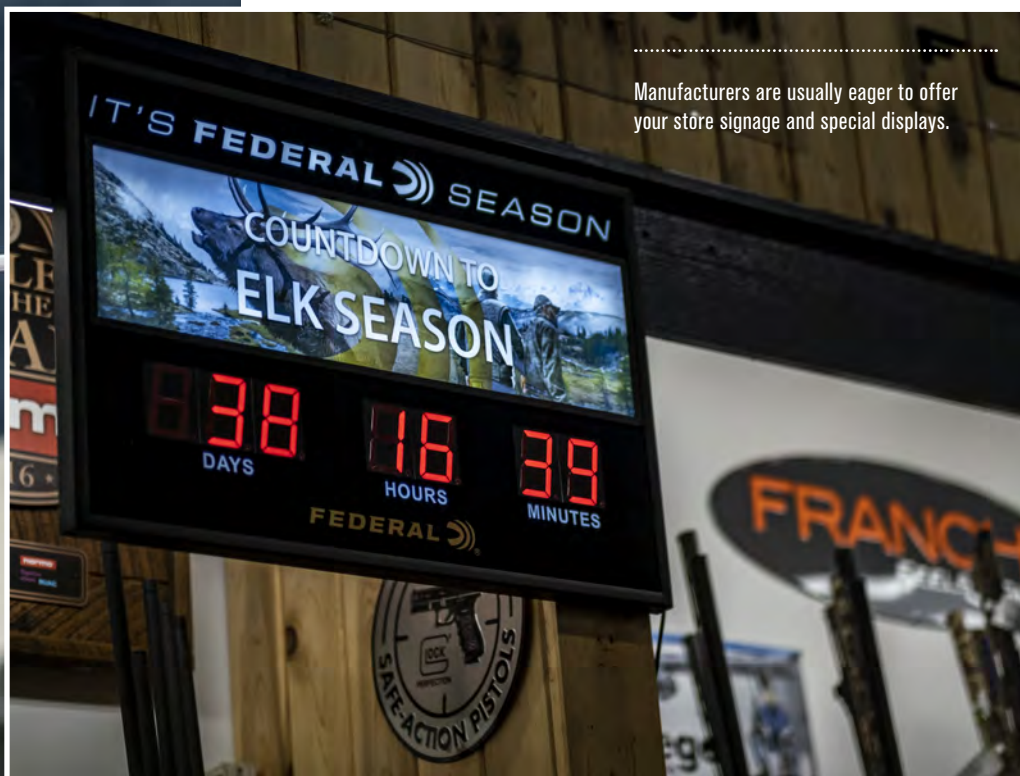
IT'S FEDERAL SEASON
THIS IS WHAT YOU LIVE FOR
FEDERALPREMIUM.COM

BY ACE LUCIANO

You hear the alert from the door of your business and look up from the inventory sheet you were going over for the third time. Through the door walks a representative from one of the sales rep groups that calls on your business. Some people react to this scenario with anxiety and stress, as nobody wants to be “sold.” The smart business person, though, not only welcomes a sales person’s visit, but realizes the great opportunities they offer to help them in their business.

Both manufacturers and manufacturers’ representatives are essential for practically every business. The key is to take advantage of the ways they can help you choose the right product assortments, help you sell the products they represent, and help you sell more of almost every product in your store. Here’s how.





Manufacturers are usually eager to offer your store signage and special displays.



MANUFACTURERS

Manufacturers produce the products that you carry. No matter how large or small, how expensive or inexpensive, everything in your building was made by a company that then sold it to someone else. It's in the best interest of the manufacturer to help you move product, as that means you will happily order and pay for more of it as well as be happy and satisfied with them and the products that they deliver to you.

Many people are not familiar, though, with all the ways that a manufacturer can help them in their business.

CO-OP ADVERTISING

Co-op advertising is a program where the manufacturer gives money or reimburses you at least a portion of your money when you piggyback their products along with your advertising. This can be things as simple as adding a logo to your flyers, billboards, newspaper and magazine advertisements, featuring their products in a paid commercial, or even something as simple as prominently placing their advertising displays in

your store. For some larger manufacturers, this number can be rather significant. It is worth your while to explore a possible co-op relationship with every manufacturer whose products you carry.

Although most companies have some sort of co-op program as part of their marketing budget, it might not be well advertised or promoted. Sometimes it is because they are saving some of that budget for very large customers or are looking to create market awareness for their own brand, or other times it is simply because they just might not do a good job letting retailers know the program exists.

Many of these programs work as a rebate on purchases. Typically, the manufacturer will offer a percentage of your total purchase to be used in an accrued account for co-op advertising funds. This is a win-win proposition, as the more products you buy, the more advertising dollars you get. The best use of manufacturer co-op dollars is obviously to help promote the sale of that vendor's brands inside your store. Often, manufacturers will have different





ads pre-made as a template for you to use. This can also help you offset costly advertising design or, in the case of a live commercial, the cost of filming and editing.

Beware that there are often restrictions on co-op ad dollars, such as a mandate that there are no competing brands in the advertising you are using co-op dollars for. Sometimes there aren't any restrictions. Make sure you know the rules of the game from the manufacturer you are working with before you spend the money on any advertising.

WEBSITE PROMOTION

Every manufacturer has a website. The vast majority of them have the ability to search for a local retailer that sells their products. There are often opportunities to be featured at the top of this list for your area. Again, many times this is tied directly to your product spend. Sometimes, all it takes is a good relationship and a polite ask. If the manufacturer you are working with does not have this type of setup, it may be worth your while to work with them to create one, with you being one of the first. People

↑ Many companies offer co-op dollars if you use their products in your advertising, both in-store and in local radio, print, social media, online and television advertising.

remember people who help them. You being helpful to them and moving their product by making a suggestion to find local dealers can be helpful to them. A suggestion or proposition to have a dealer or distributor list can be many thousands of dollars in both their and your pockets.

BEING TOP-OF-MIND

One of the lesser known advantages to regularly working with your manufacturers is being top-of-mind for them. The more often you communicate, the better they know you, and the more your business stands out among the hundreds or even thousands that they work with. That is a good thing. When discretionary funds, time, products or offers become available, a manufacturer will first think of the people they know and like the best. By being someone who is proactively communicative and a good customer to them, many



↑ Working closely with manufacturer reps keeps you top-of-mind when they come across opportunities, and they're a good source of sales information.

.....
times the first person they think of will be you.

UTILIZING SALES REPRESENTATIVES EFFECTIVELY

Sales people generally get a bad rap. This is mostly because of sleazy sales people and sales techniques used by industries such as used car dealers, timeshare companies and, to an extent, many products for your home. In most of these cases, the joy of purchase is very quickly replaced

by the regret of buyer's remorse because people have been forced into a purchase or action that they don't really want.

The best sales people are a great partner for your business, and utilizing them properly can make you a great deal more money.

GET AN EDUCATION

Rather than looking at a salesperson's visit as an interruption in your day, take it as an opportunity to learn something from an expert in their field. There is a reason that sales is one of the highest paid professions in the world: It's not easy.

Representatives deal with long hours, many difficult customers, a





to offer necessary accessories like optics, bipods, or slings with a new rifle, socks with every pair of boots, and, of course, ammunition to everyone that purchases a firearm.

Another tremendous benefit is that with your newly acquired sales education, you will be less likely to be taken advantage of by one of the less scrupulous sales people that are out there. There aren't as many as there once were, but they are still out there. That alone makes those

workers to help their customers with various events. Any time you have something like a Black Friday sale, a fall hunting sale, New Year's, new gun promotion or similar, your sales representative and/or these additional pro-staff members can be deployed at your location to assist with handling increased customer flow and, perhaps most importantly, be a designated expert on their company's products. For example, someone may come in wanting "an inexpen-



↑ Take advantage of vendors and manufacturer reps who are willing to put on events, like classes or range days, at your facility.

meet or speak with (for at least a bit) every sales person that calls on me.

Pay attention to things like the way they approach you, how they ask questions, how it seems like you have arrived at a predetermined destination in their questioning and feel like it was your own conclusion that you got there, and especially how you sometimes wind up buying extra or additional things that you



few minutes of time taken to speak with them worth it.

HELP WITH INVENTORY

Many sales groups require their sales representatives or a contractor to take inventory of how much of their product is on the shelves and/or in stock at their customers' locations. This allows them to more effectively predict ahead of time what their customers may need in the future. Additionally, sales people work with a large number of customers and tend to know what sells the best, what sells for the highest margins, and, just as important, what products tend to lag on store shelves, whether that is during certain time periods, seasons or throughout the year.

STAFF YOUR EVENTS

Most sales organizations that work in the firearms and outdoor world employ a large staff of contract

↑ A close relationship with your sales groups can help you manage your inventory to your advantage.

sive riflescope," but after speaking with an expert sales person about the advantages of spending just a little more money on a certain higher-quality product (which is usually theirs), they tend to be convinced to do so. Remember the "education" we talked about previously? This can result in multiple product purchases or a larger single purchase than they otherwise would have made.

How you utilize your manufacturers and sales representatives that visit their business is ultimately up to you, but, as my father was often fond of saying both in and out of our several family businesses, "Many hands make light work," and, in this case, can mean a lot more time and money. **HR**

great deal of rejection, travel away from their homes and families, and even burnout. That's good news for you, though, because that means the people you are dealing with are likely at least some of the better sales people in the industry — especially if they have been around for a while.

How can they help you? Regardless of what you think your business is, your business is actually sales. Whether you provide products or services, your main business is to sell more of those products and services. Picking up tips and tricks from a master sales person will help you make more money. This is one of the reasons why, despite my often hectic and packed schedule, I try to

“Rather than looking at a salesperson’s visit as an interruption in your day, take it as an opportunity to learn something from an expert in their field.”

did not even realize you needed nor wanted. These types of tips and tricks can then be utilized in your own sales interactions and give you additional knowledge on things like effective marketing messages, advertising design, etc. You will also be more likely to train your employees



Don't Be Irreplaceable

If you have made yourself so important to your company that it can't survive without you, you have not created a lasting business — you've just created a big job for yourself.

BY JUDY KNEISZEL

No matter how profitable your company, how many employees you have, or your legal status, your business is — for all practical purposes — a sole proprietorship if no one else knows what you know or can do what you do.

You're a hands-on owner, and that's good. But what if for some unthinkable reason you couldn't be there tomorrow? Could your business carry on if something happened to you?

Or what if you just want to take your spouse to Hawaii for a month? Or take a week off to attend the SHOT Show in Las Vegas? Could you do it and come back to the same successful company you left?

Making yourself irreplaceable puts a huge burden on you and your family and could put your company in jeopardy. If no one else knows the ins and outs of your operation and the word "vacation" is not in your vocabulary, you're heading for burnout and you risk leaving your employees and customers stranded.

ARE YOU YOUR COMPANY?

When customers call, do they always ask for you, the owner, and refuse to deal with anyone else? And do you gladly serve these people yourself because you believe customers who are handled by the boss become more loyal to the company? This may result in loyal customers, but it means you have to devote all your time to daily problems that arise and

give these problems priority over long-term planning, which never seems to get done.

Decisions made on the fly as you handle daily operations are not based on any kind of in-depth thought about the situation. Simply put, if you are always putting out small fires, you don't have time to think about how to fireproof the building.

Making yourself replaceable by delegating daily tasks to others frees you up to do some long-range planning and permanent problem-solving. This will make the business run more smoothly whether you are there or not.

HOW TO BECOME REPLACEABLE

Much of the information a business owner needs day to day is stored in his or her head. To become replaceable, that information needs to be made accessible to others. Start by making a list of everything you did today. What information would another person need to complete those tasks to your satisfaction?

Do this for several days and you'll have enough information to create a written manual detailing how every one of your tasks is done. Make sure at least one person knows where this manual is stored and that it is to be referenced if something prevents you from being on the job. Include information about who is to do what in your absence. Clearly outline exactly





who is to be responsible for what.

This contingency manual should include instructions on logging into your computer, passwords, and the names and locations of important files. It may be useful to include a log of your daily routines so your stand-in knows what needs to be done and in what timeframe. Other information to consider sharing in the manual: the combination to the safe, company tax I.D. number, security system codes, location of extra keys, and names and phone numbers of support providers like your accountant, attorney, suppliers, bankers, insurance agent, etc.

You may want to make two copies of this manual — one to be used in case of an emergency that includes the more sensitive information mentioned above, and another more general version to be used for training purposes. Things will go a lot smoother during a crisis if others are already trained to do your jobs.

A MATTER OF TRUST

Making yourself replaceable is easier said than done, especially if you view your business as an extension of yourself. The first step is to consider who in your company shows leadership potential. The next step is actually giving them some responsibility.

If the person you've tapped to take over some of your duties hesitates or is reluctant to take over, tell the employee you've identified them as someone who can help you become replaceable. After assigning

one of your usual tasks to someone and carefully explaining what needs to be done, step back and let the person do it. Establish a standard of quality and set a reasonable deadline for accomplishing the task, but stop yourself from micromanaging unless you can clearly see that things are headed in a dangerous direction. Let them make mistakes. Be patient. Don't expect perfection right away. If they have different ways of doing things than you, try to accept it.

WORKING SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Delegating responsibility is a way of teaching people new skills, and eventually it can help reduce your workload. But don't just teach your employees tasks — try to develop their problem-solving skills so they can handle the unexpected in your absence. If an employee comes to you for help when a problem arises, resist the temptation to take over the job and do it yourself. Point out what the issues are, suggest possible solutions, and ask for your employee's ideas on solving the problem. Make it clear that you still expect the employee to handle the situation on his or her own.

A good start toward becoming replaceable is to simply step out of the way occasionally. Get away from the business for an afternoon, a day or even a week. Then you'll learn the secure feeling of having a more capable staff to keep the business up and running in case you can't be around to steer the ship. **HR**





Treestand Styles and Price Points

Showcase the right treestand to your customer based on their needs and their budget.

BY DAVID REARICK

Treestands come in many shapes and styles starting at basic, metal-seat 16-foot ladder stands and go all the way up to five-star resort-like portable housing. While all types accomplish the same task, choosing between the two ultimately comes down to two criteria: use case and price point. To better understand why the \$ treestand is more desirable to some hunters than the \$\$\$\$ treestand, sellers should understand how the buyer intends to use/hunt out of their purchase to help determine if buying one portable climbing treestand or five basic ladder stands will better serve their needs.



PORTABLE OPTIONS: TYPES

Portable options can be broken down into three main categories: climbing treestands, a combination of ladder sticks and a hang-on stand, and a more recent revival, tree saddles.

Climbing treestands come in many shapes and sizes, but the basic principle of their use remains the same. The vast majority of climbing treestands consist of two different components: a platform and a climbing aid that includes a seat. This type of treestand is considered the most portable, allowing hunters to simply put it on their back and trek into the woods with no specific location in mind. This type of treestand has its own risks/safety concerns, but modern climbing stands aren't anything like the old, somewhat haphazard versions of the '90s and, when deployed correctly, mitigate most safety risks.

The second type of portable treestand consists of ladder sticks, or screw-in steps when allowable/legal, and a hang-on treestand. While

many may consider these treestands fixed-position, the use of a treestand like Millennium's M100U Ultralite allows hunters to use on hang-on treestands in multiple locations. The M100U includes a quick-disconnect strap that includes a receiver that the treestand slides into. So, with the purchase of multiple receiver straps, hunters can place ladder sticks in multiple location and use one hang-on stand in every location. Instead of having to carry a bulky climber, they simply carry a lightweight hang-on into the woods.

Tree saddles, while not a new idea, have recently become popular. They consist of a saddle, tether and lineman belt, and a platform. This style of "treestand" is lightweight, very mobile, and adaptable to different tree types. If hunters have ever struggled finding the perfect straight tree for a climber or hang-on stand, tree saddles allow hunters to better adapt to available trees allowing the stand to be put in the right spot, rather than just the closest tree that will work.



PORTABLE OPTIONS: USE CASES

Portable treestands are perfect for hunters who hunt multiple locations and don't want to have the expense of owning 10-20 different ladder/permanent stands spread across two or three different farms. Additionally, even for those who have multiple permanent stands, having a portable option, especially a climber or saddle setup, allows them to adapt to changing deer patterns and movement quickly and efficiently, without creating a significant disturbance just to try out a new area.

PORTABLE STANDS: PROS AND CONS

Portable stands are a great option for hunters who desire mobility. When the deer vanish due to changes in food sources or pressure, hunters often need to adapt. Being mobile allows hunters to hunt different, new locations at will to try to relocate the buck they are after. The downfalls are they are less stealthy when trying to slip in close to a bedding or feeding area, as the setup required at the tree can be noisy. They can also be bulky, and for hunts that require long walks, it is easy to put on a sweat during the walk-in. In order of stealth and ease of use, portable hang-on stands rank first, tree saddles rank second, and climbing stands rank third, as they are the most cumbersome.

Of the three options, climbing stands and tree saddles are the most affordable, as hunters only need one setup for the entire season. Ladder sticks and a portable hang-on are a more expensive combination, but they allow hunters to purchase one hang-on stand and have multiple sets of ladder sticks to cover more area in different locations with ease. Additionally, compact sets of ladder sticks can be purchased, allowing the hunter to carry ladder sticks and a hang-on into new locations with ease.

→ Simple climbing sticks and ladders that lead up to a hang-on stand are a relatively affordable option for the hunter who won't be changing locations frequently.



FIXED-LOCATION STANDS: TYPES

Fixed-location stands can also be broken down into categories, but for different reasons. These categories include budget, comfort and deluxe. While all three serve the same purpose, the driving differences between them are price point, which may define the number of stands a hunter can afford, and comfort. They can also be purchased in one- or two-man variants and are perfect for mentoring a youth or new hunter.

“Treestands, and the comfort they offer, are only as good as the accessories that accompany them.”

Budget ladder stands are generally just bare-bones versions of higher-end treestands. A general description would be a simple metal ladder attached to a small platform with a rigid, metal seat equipped with a thin foam pad. For hunters who want to cover a lot of ground and slip in and out of a spot with minimal disruption, they are easy to get in and out with nothing to set-up, attach, or otherwise make noise when the hunter climbs into them. They are also cheap, so owning several of this style of treestand is not out of the question.

Comfort-level treestands are a step up from budget ladder stands. These stands expand upon the ease of use associated with budget ladder stands but include many features that make long sits much more tolerable. Upgraded features include over-sized sling/padded seats, a foot-rest, expanded platform, gun rail, and sometimes even an enclosure to keep hunters out of the weather. These stands are generally two to three times the price of the more basic budget options, so if a hunter has



a budget to set up a new deer lease, they could get half to one-third as many comfort treestands as they could budget versions. Understanding the intention of the purchase will go a long way to balancing features against a volume purchase.

Deluxe treestands are probably better known as shooting houses. A stand like Millenium's Buck Hut tower stand combines an elevated platform with a complete enclosure or blind, for maximum concealment and comfort. These stands are best used in known hunting locations, as they are not portable, and best built on-site during installation. While they can be moved, it isn't without a lot of effort and the help of a few friends. They generally have multiple windows/shooting ports and plenty of room to spread out gear, and they can even be used with a portable heater to help stave off the cold.

FIXED-LOCATION STANDS: USE CASES

All three of these categories of fixed-position treestands serve the same purpose; however, their increasing levels of comfort offer benefits for all-day sits, like during the rut or on opening day of rifle season. In instances where a hunter plans to hunt in a legacy or well-known travel corridor for many seasons, placing a comfort or deluxe style of treestand/shooting house in the location will help reduce fatigue and, in the case of a shooting house, can even help keep the hunter out of the elements. When hunting with youth, deluxe stands can be the difference between hunting a few hours in the morning and hanging out all day waiting for mid-day action.

FIXED-LOCATION STANDS: PROS AND CONS

Fixed-location stands are easy to use once hung. They allow hunters to stealthily enter and exit their hunting area, and they are safe to use. When

→ Don't forget the accessories, including safety harnesses, bow ropes, umbrellas, bow hangers and climbing aids.



equipped with a shooting rail, these stands offer an added level of safety and a steady platform for taking shots with a rifle or crossbow. They also provide an increasing level of comfort as you increase price point and have many features that aren't found on portable options, like enclosures and seating for two people.

The downside to these stands is that they are cumbersome to move through the woods, require multiple people to set up, and are difficult to hide. Additionally, when equipped with a shooting rail, use with a conventional vertical bow is difficult if not impossible. As the name implies, they are also used in a fixed location, so if a hunter intends to hunt multiple locations, they must buy more than one stand to cover the entire hunting area, increasing costs.

ADD-ON ACCESSORIES

In addition to selling treestands, sellers shouldn't overlook the need for accessories. These accessories include items like bow ropes, safety harnesses/lines, blinds/enclosures, tree umbrellas, and typical bow hangers, etc. Treestands, and the comfort they offer, are only as good as the accessories that accompany them. Outfitting your buyer with not only the treestand they need but also the accessories that make it functional is a good way to increase your bottom line and ensure a satisfied customer.

To find the treestand that best suits your customer and make the sale, make sure you understand their needs and how they like to hunt. Knowing these factors will allow you to guide them into the right style of treestand right off the bat, and then allow price point and features to help narrow down their selection. If a hunter wants to hunt multiple locations but has a budget of a few hundred dollars, a climbing stand or tree saddle may be the most appropriate choice. If a hunter values safety and ease of use at the forefront, fixed-position stands are best, and the level of treestand purchased will be commensurate with the number of stands that they need and budget they have to spend on them. **HR**





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GEAR FOR

BLACK BEAR

HUNTERS

Bear hunters, whether spring or fall, need specific gear depending on how they'll be hunting.





BY MIKE DICKERSON

If you're not catering to black bear hunters, you might be missing out on a significant chunk of revenue. Black bears are one of the most popular big-game species in North America, and it's easy to understand why. Estimates of the black bear population range as high as 900,000, making them the most populous bear species in the world, and they are one of the most widely distributed game animals in North America. While they are predominantly a creature of the coniferous and hardwood forests, black bears are very adaptable and can make a living in habitats ranging from chaparral and desert to swamps and tundra. Their range is expanding in many areas where they were once extirpated.

Given their broad distribution, and the fact that many areas have both spring and fall hunting seasons for black bears, the gear most desired by hunters depends on three factors: where the bears are being hunted, how they are being hunted and what conditions they're being hunted in. Weather can run the gamut from snowy and frigid to rainy or hot, and the needs of the spot-and-stalk hunter differ from the needs of hunters pursuing bears behind hounds or those hunting bears from treestands over bait. I've taken some big bears using all three methods and offer these suggestions to ensure you're stocking the gear bear hunters want.

RIFLES

Bolt-action rifles are by far the most popular rifles for hunting black bears, and they're available at a wide range of price points. For customers on a tight budget, popular choices include standard versions of rifles like the Ruger American, Savage Axis, Winchester XPR, Franchi Momentum, Thompson/Center Compass II and others. One of the best rifles in this category is the Nosler Model 21. I used one last year, chambered in 308 Win., to take two giant black bears in northern Alberta. Some of these budget rifles are offered in more re-

600, Bergara and Browning X-Bolt rifle lines also fit in this price category, as do some of the basic Ruger Hawkeyes and Winchester Model 70 guns.

Customers willing to pay for the best will gravitate toward rifles like Weatherby Mark V, Bergara Canyon, Christensen Ridgeline, Nosler Model 21 and Benelli Lupo, along with high-end versions of the Browning X-Bolt, Seekins Havak, Winchester Model 70 and others.

Lever-action rifles are also popular with those who are hunting bears at close range over bait or behind

↑ Customers willing to pay for the best will gravitate toward high-end rifles like the new Nosler Model 21 rifle.

hounds. The most popular lever guns include a host of models from Winchester and Henry as well as the Browning BLR. Ruger has resurrected the Marlin 1895 and has, by all accounts, improved the quality of the rifle. Initial chambering is in 45-70 Govt., which will definitely do the job on black bears at reasonable range.

Good choices for your hunters in mid-priced rifles include the Weatherby Vanguard, Mauser M18, Savage 110, Tikka T3X, Kimber Hunter, Christensen Mesa and Howa 1500. Some basic-level models in the CZ

hounds. The most popular lever guns include a host of models from Winchester and Henry as well as the Browning BLR. Ruger has resurrected the Marlin 1895 and has, by all accounts, improved the quality of the rifle. Initial chambering is in 45-70 Govt., which will definitely do the job on black bears at reasonable range.





↑ The newest version of the Browning X-Bolt Speed rifle is a good choice in the mid-priced category for hunting black bears.

AMMUNITION

Experienced bear hunters likely already have a favorite cartridge for, but first-time bear hunters often make the mistake of assuming they need one of the big magnums, which many people can't shoot well due to the heavy recoil. Black bears are not that hard to kill, and most hunters would be better served using many of the same cartridges commonly used for deer. The popular and mild-recoiling 6.5 Creedmoor will take black bears with properly placed shots, but it is not my first choice. More potent options include the .270 Win., .280 Rem., .280 Ackley Improved, 7mm-08 Rem., .308 Win., .30-06 Springfield, .300 WSM, .300 Win. Mag., .338 Federal and the straight-walled 350 Legend. Of the bunch, the best all-purpose black bear cartridge in my view is the .308 Win., which checks all the boxes in terms of potency, range, mild recoil, accuracy, wide ammo availability and suitability for all types of rifle actions.

Those who prefer the extra punch of the magnums and can tolerate their recoil will lean toward rounds like the .300 Win. Mag. and 7mm Rem. Mag., along with some of the proprietary Weatherby and Nosler cartridges. For those hunting bears



↑ A wide range of cartridges are popular for hunting black bears. Shown are, left to right, .308 Win., .270 Win., .280 Ackley Improved, .30-06 Springfield, .300 Win. Mag. and .338 Win. Mag. The big magnums aren't needed for black bears, but some hunters prefer them.

at close range or in thick woods with lever-action rifles, popular choices include rounds like the .30-30 Win., .444 Marlin and .45-70 Govt.

A more important consideration than the cartridge is the bullet it uses. Cup-and-core bullets have been killing bears since these bullets were invented, but hunters would be better served using premium bullets designed to expand and penetrate deeply while holding together. Proven performers include the Nosler AccuBond and Partition bullets, along with the Swift A-Frame, Hor-

→ This Mossberg Patriot, which the author used last year to take two massive black bears just 30 minutes apart, is an excellent option in the affordable rifle category.

nady InterLock, Norma Bondstrike, Winchester Power Max Bonded and Remington Core-Lokt, as well as Federal's Trophy Bonded Tip and the new Terminal Ascent bullets. Monolithic bullets like the Barnes Tipped TSX all-copper bullet are also good choices, especially for those who prefer shoulder shots versus heart/lung shots.

HUNTING CLOTHING

Weather conditions can vary greatly depending on where bears are hunted during spring and fall seasons. I have hunted bears wearing a T-shirt and light pants, and I've hunted them bundled up like an Arctic explorer. The trend in hunting apparel in recent years has been toward lighter, layered, high-performance fabrics and away from the bulky clothing of the past. Leaders in the high-performance category include brands like Sitka and Kuiu. They make warm, lightweight clothes that will stand up to anything nature throws at them, but their products are priced out of reach for many hunters.

More affordable brands include First Lite, Kryptek, Mossy Oak,



Pnuma and King's, among others. One solid brand in this category I've field tested during the last couple of years is True Timber, which offers clothing for every season and region without requiring hunters to spend their entire budget on one piece of clothing. Examples of the newest offerings from True Timber are the Pulse Soft Shell series, designed for hunters on the move, and the Pulse Adrenaline TrueSuede Down series, which will keep hunters warm on stand.

While younger hunters often order hunting clothing online, experienced hunters may want to try clothes on before they buy, and

their style of hunting. Important considerations, besides a comfortable fit, include boot height, weight, sole traction, amount of insulation and waterproof construction. Whether your hunters need mud boots or lightweight hikers for stalking, there's a boot that fills the bill. Top brands include Danner, Rocky, Lacrosse, Irish Setter, Kenetrek and Guide Gear, to name a few. This is a very competitive category, and boot makers are constantly working to improve products. Danner, for example, has just introduced an upgraded, fifth generation of the Pronghorn boot,



they appreciate one-stop shopping that covers everything they need, from base layers, shirts and pants to gloves, wind-proof outerwear and rain gear. Don't overlook gaiters for hunters venturing out in areas that may still experience significant snowfall in spring or fall.

Good boots are a must, and this is one area where hunters often have tremendous brand loyalty. They buy the same brand and model repeatedly because the boot has worked well for them for many years, and I'm no exception. My favorite boot made mostly of leather is the Danner Pronghorn, but hunters have many options now in boots specialized for

↑ Good boots are essential for bear hunters. Danner has just introduced an upgraded, fifth generation of the popular Pronghorn boot.

and Lacrosse has just introduced a new all-purpose hunting boot, called the Ursa MS, following five years of design and testing.

SPECIALTY ITEMS

Hunting bears behind hounds is a specialized form of hunting that requires some specialized gear. If houndsmen are among your clients, their most important tools are dog-tracking systems employing collars that communicate with receivers



↑ One of the most popular tracking systems for bear hounds is the Garmin TT 15X collar and a Garmin Alpha 200 receiver.



↑ Those who hunt bears over bait often augment their own bait concoctions with commercially produced scents and attractants to draw bears within range. One that gets high marks from hunters is the Northwoods Bear Products' Gold Rush attractant.

to follow and locate dogs. GPS systems have gained favor over older radio telemetry systems, which are less precise but may have a bit more range. Some houndsmen use both.

One of the most popular tracking systems is the Garmin TT 15X collar paired with a Garmin Alpha 200 receiver. The TT 15X tracking collar has a high-sensitivity GPS and GLONASS receiver. Rugged and water-resistant, the collar has up to 80 hours of battery life and features audible tone and vibration when used with a compatible tracking handheld. It even has remotely activated LED lights to help keep track

of a dog in the dark. The newest version of the Alpha receiver, called the Alpha 200i, provides two-way text messaging, location sharing and the ability to trigger an interactive SOS message if hunters need help in areas without cell coverage.

One houndsman I know gets about six miles of range with the Garmin TT 15X and Alpha 200 receiver in the thick woods of Maine, using an after-market extended-range antenna, while another in Nevada gets up to 15 miles of range with a standard antenna in more open country.

Other specialty items favored by houndsmen include a first aid kit for dogs and a potent handgun. Many prefer chest holsters because they need their hands free to handle multiple dogs.

“Other specialty items favored by houndsmen include a first aid kit for dogs and a potent handgun.”

Another important consideration, for those who hunt bears from treestands or ground blinds overlooking bait stations (where legal), is the best bait to draw bears within range. Black bears will eat just about anything, and many guides and hunters prefer to make their own bait concoctions. I've seen everything used from doughnuts, pastries and cake icing to fryer grease, trail mix, granola, cookie dough and beaver carcasses.

In addition to these do-it-yourself baits, there are quite a few commercially made bear attractants, in the form of liquids and powders, from companies like Moultrie, Northwoods Bear Products and Wildlife Research. These come in a wide variety of scents or flavors, including bacon, anise, cherry and butterscotch. These products sometimes get mixed



reviews from hunters because not all bait stations are ideally located or set up, but some attractants get consistently high marks from hunters. One of the most popular is Northwoods Bear Products' Gold Rush, an attractant that is typically used by adding one or two ounces to five gallons of fryer grease.

OTHER ESSENTIALS

In some areas, ticks and mosquitoes can be a major annoyance and present a significant health hazard in the form of insect-borne diseases. Spray-on insect repellants are a must-have item for still hunters in some locations. For those hunting from stands, portable fuel-powered repellents, like the Thermacell MR300F and MR450 armored portable mosquito repellents, are good options. These units, which need no batteries, create a 15-foot zone of protection using 12-hour fuel cartridges that emit a scent-free repellent.



↑ In some areas, those hunting bears from stands must contend with swarms of mosquitos. Good protection is afforded by the Thermacell MR300F, which creates a 15-foot zone of protection using 12-hour fuel cartridges that emit a scent-free repellent.

Sharp optics are especially important. Black bears are one of the most difficult animals in North America to judge accurately in the field, and in some areas, only boars may be taken, so good binoculars are essential. Spot-and-stalk hunters may need powerful spotting scopes. Stand hunters need riflescopes that deliver a clear image in low light because bears often come to bait stations late in the day. Scopes with illuminated reticles are also a good idea, since a black reticle against a black bear doesn't always provide the best aiming solution.

Other essential gear can be much the same as used on other big game hunts in North America. For do-it-yourself hunters, this may include a full range of camping gear. Packs and game bags may be needed for packing out meat, skulls and hides. Flashlights and headlamps should be on every hunter's list, along with skinning knives, caping knives and butchering tools.

Finally, it's a good idea to offer your hunters a range of safety gear. Black bear hunting is not without risk. They are generally less aggressive than grizzlies, but a high percentage of attacks by black bears are purely predatory in nature. The strongest human is no match for even an average-sized black bear, and careless hunters following up a wounded bear can easily get into trouble.

That's why it's a good idea to offer hunters first aid kits (with tourniquets) and other safety gear. In areas where cell phone coverage might not exist, hunters might want to carry a personal locator beacon or a satellite phone. These items aren't needed for many black bear hunts, but for hunters who routinely venture into truly remote areas, they can be life savers.

Not all regions have significant numbers of bear hunters, but if you're serving hunters in areas that do, stocking the right gear can mean profits in your pocket. **HR**

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HOWA MINI-ACTION YOUTH

CALIBERS	350 LEGEND	7.62X39
BARREL LENGTH	16.25" THREADED	20" THREADED
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HOWA 1500 YOUTH HOGUE STOCK

CALIBERS	.243	.308
BARREL LENGTH	22"	22"
FEATURES	STD. SRD MAGAZINE SUB MOA GUARANTEE HACT 2-STAGE TRIGGER LIFETIME WARRANTY	STD. SRD MAGAZINE SUB MOA GUARANTEE HACT 2-STAGE TRIGGER LIFETIME WARRANTY
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Pig Rigs: 10 Rifles to Fatten Retail Sales



Hard-core hog hunters want dedicated pig rifles, and these 10 options rank at the top of the list.

BY KEVIN REESE

Hog hunting is my passion. For more than 20 years, I have filled my freezer with pork chops, ham steaks and breakfast sausage, and exhilaration of the hunt, whether big-game hunting style or eradication mode to mitigate the hundreds of millions of dollars in damage from this invasive species, never wanes. Those who know me understand my addiction. I'm ready

to hunt day or night, weekdays or weekends, all year long. More importantly, with respect to the war we wage on feral hogs across the U.S., I'm not alone. Hog hunting, day and night, has exploded across the country, but so has the feral pig population. Wildlife biologists estimate the U.S. population at over 6 million. Here in Texas, total damage estimates are over \$400 million annually, with

over 50 million in crop damage. Feral hogs can breed up to twice per year with an average 1:1 boar to sow ratio and are now reported in at least 39 states and four Canadian provinces. Here in Texas, biologists suggest we must eliminate up to 70 percent of the pig population to simply keep numbers at bay. That's a tall order, but one an increasing number of hunters are anxious to take up.

What does this mean for retailers? It means quite an upward trend in the sale of rifles perfectly suited for hog hunting — pig rigs, as I call them — with enough horsepower to do the job efficiently. Leaning on countless kills over 20 years of pursuits, here are 10 hog hunting rifles worth their weight in bacon and worthy of your retail inventory.



BRENTON USA SCOUT 18 FIXED (.450 BUSHMASTER)

For those who know my work, I have long advocated for the AR platform as a rock-solid hunting platform, and Brenton USA agrees; in fact, their entire business model is centered upon ARs as hunting rifles. Founded in 2014, Brenton grew legs from frustration with tactical-inspired-only systems and homed in on premium hunting-specific design elements with the company's Hunter-Spec components (as opposed to "low-bid" mil-spec). Every component of a Brenton USA AR modern sporting rifle is premised on the hunter's lifestyle, and cartridge offerings have expanded to cover every big game species in North America.

For hogs, the Brenton USA Scout 18 Fixed Rifle is a phenomenal setup. The Scout 18 is a popular offering within Brenton's Pursuit line and, according to owner, Bart

Brenton, it "represents the heart and soul" of his company. The Scout 18 boasts 7075-T6 aluminum upper and lower receivers; Realfeel G10 PolyCore handguard; 1416R stainless-steel, boron-nitride coated, 18-inch barrel; NiB coated bolt carrier group; Magpul MOE fixed stock; proprietary BT1 adjustable trigger (3.5 to 6.5 pounds) and a Hogue all-weather grip. While my favorite Brenton USA Scout rifle is the .450 Bushmaster, other great hog-hunting calibers include 350 Legend, 300 HAM'R, 300 Blackout, 6.8 SPC II, 6.5 Grendel and 6mm ARC. All Brenton Scout rifles include a magazine, branded soft-sided case and premium 10G Marblekote finish in Harvest, Autumn, Foliage, Midnight or Snow pattern. www.brentonusa.com





WILSON COMBAT TACTICAL HUNTER WC-15 (300 HAM'R)

With countless fallen feral hogs under my belt, I can honestly say the 300 HAM'R is one of my top caliber choices, and nobody builds them better than Wilson Combat; of course, the 300 HAM'R was developed by Bill Wilson, so the hat-tip certainly makes sense. Effectively a .223 Remington necked up to a .308 Winchester and definitely superior to the popular 300 Blackout, the 300 HAM'R is quite a bacon maker. My personal experiences with 130-grain Speer Hot-Cor resulted in over 2,500 fps muzzle velocity and a truck load of hogs.

Wilson Combat's Tactical Hunter WC-15 features lightweight billet receivers; 12.6-inch M-Lock Rail with rail covers; Wilson Combat/BCM Starburst Gunfighter grip; Rogers/Wilson Super-Stoc stock; Wilson Combat/BCM Starburst Trigger; 18-inch fluted, threaded, match-grade barrel; nickel-boron coated bolt carrier group and an Armor-Tuff finish. Customers looking for a blistering fast, hard-hitting cartridge from a premium, tactical-inspired modern sporting rifle need not look further.

www.wilsoncombat.com



LWRCI SIX8-A5 RAZORBACK II (6.8 SPC II)

The 6.8 SPC isn't dead. I'll say it louder for the people in the back — the 6.8 SPC isn't dead! It remains one of my all-time favorite hog-hunting cartridges, and the LWRCI Six8-A5 Razorback II piston-driven semiautomatic modern sporting rifle, chambered in 6.8 SPC II, rests at the top of the pig rigs offered in that cartridge.

Along with the Six8-A5 Razorback II's smooth-running, ridiculously clean-operating piston system, the rifle boasts a two-position gas block for incredibly reliable suppressed and non-suppressed cycling. As the owner of a Razorback II, I have yet to

experience a misfeed. The LWRCI Six8-A5 Razorback II features a cold-hammer-forged, NiCorr-treated, spiral fluted, heavy profile barrel; forged Type III hard-coat anodized receivers and handguard with Cerakote finish; ambidextrous charging handle and lower receiver controls; compact stock with QD sling mount; Magpul MOE+ Grip; 12-inch scalloped top rail and a specially designed Magpul P-Mag magazine. In our get-what-you-pay-for world, your discriminating hog hunters won't be disappointed.

www.lwrci.com



PRIMARY WEAPON SYSTEMS MK218 MOD 1-M (.308 WINCHESTER)

What could be better than an affordably priced, perfectly reliable, premium-performing, long-stroke piston-driven pig rig? Nothing comes to mind, and Primary Weapon Systems (PWS) rules this niche roost. I own a MK218 Mod 1-M .308 Winchester and could sing its praises for as long as anybody cares to hear or read them. Like others, I have yet to experience a malfunction with the MK218. The combination of PWS' easy-to-adjust three-position gas system and proprietary long-stroke piston cycling not only results in comfortable, reliable cycling, it's incredibly clean running — meaning less cleanings, an enormous benefit when shooting suppressed.

The Primary Weapon Systems MK218 Mod 1-M Rifle boasts forged T6 7075 aluminum upper and lower receivers, 18-inch match-grade barrel, PWS PRC 30 muzzle brake, PWS M-LOK 15.2-inch handguard, ambidextrous Radian Raptor charging handle, Bravo Company USA buttstock and pistol grip, and enhanced H2 buffer system. If your hog-hunting patrons are after an affordable, reliable, piston-driven AR that shoots like a top-dollar pig rig, I have yet to find a better option. PWS is well worth your inventory space. www.primaryweapons.com





F-1 FIREARMS UDR-15 (300 BLACKOUT OR 7.62X39)

When it comes to light weight, aggressive styling, premium gas-impingement performance, surgical accuracy and precision manufacturing, F-1 Firearms checks all the boxes. Of course, the company also is well known for its lengthy list of jaw-dropping, unapologetic matte and high-polish anodized and Cerakote finishes. The boon with F-1 looks, speaking from experience, is that they shoot as good as they look, and while F-1 shooters are used to paying a premium, the company's UDR-15 is a perfect mid-grade option still delivering big on premium shooting experiences. With F-1's reputation for reliability, combined the UDR-15's cartridge offerings in popular 300 Blackout

or 7.62x39 hog hunting calibers, the rifle is a perfect choice for demanding hunters. The F-1 Firearms UDR-15-3G Rifle features UDR Style 2 receivers, skeletonized M-LOK handguard, scalloped picatinny rail, match-grade 16-inch barrel, black-nitride bolt carrier group and proprietary F-1 Firearms muzzle brake. Of course, your customers also have customized stock, handguard, grip, trigger, bolt carrier group, compensator and finish options. While customized combinations seem endless, as a retailer, you can't go wrong with offering hunters the standard UDR-15-3G system. [f1firearms.com](http://www.f1firearms.com)



CBC INDUSTRIES 618G (6.5 GRENDDEL)

Several years ago I was asked to design a hog hunting rifle for CBD Industries — the result was the CY6 chambered in 6.5 Grendel. The most recent iteration, an update to the CY6, is CBC's 618G, still chambered in 6.5 Grendel. A hog-hunting favorite, the 6.5 Grendel offers phenomenal ballistic performance and terminal energy at greater distances. In short, the cartridge is great for hog hunting as well as long-range shooting from the AR-15's lighter-weight, more compact system. The combination also makes

the rifle a perfect option for hog hunters faced with long stalks over open crop fields. The CBC 618G features forged receivers, 15-inch M-LOK handguard, Tanker muzzle brake, Ergo Grip, Adaptive buttstock and an 18-inch barrel. For the record, my previous testing of the CY6 resulted in ½-MOA grouping. Your customers are hard-pressed to find a more reliable, more accurate hog hunting rifle at CBC's price point. www.cbcpfa.com



MARLIN MODEL 1895 SBL LEVER ACTION (.45-70 GOVERNMENT)

More than 20 years ago, my hog hunting adventures began with a Marlin lever-action rifle in my hands and a Ruger Vaquero .45LC on my hip. The times may have changed since then, but the effectiveness of lever-action rifles on feral hogs has not; it remains quite an efficient and popular tool of the trade and continues to warm a soft spot in my aging hunter's heart. Of course, I have traded my red-dot sight in for a thermal riflescope so I can chase them when they are most active, but that is a topic for another day.

A great lever-action choice for today's hog hunter is the Ruger-made Marlin Model 1895 SBL chambered in the boar-anchoring .45-70 Government cartridge. The Marlin Model 1895 SBL Lever Action Rifle includes a richly finished, gray, wood-laminate, checkered stock and forend; nickel-plated, spiral-fluted bolt; 6+1 cartridge capacity; threaded 19.1-inch, cold hammer-forged, polished stainless-steel barrel; tritium fiber-optic front sight; adjustable ghost ring rear sight and picatinny scope base. While the Model 1895 SBL is a traditionally styled nod to the iconic original, it's a quite an upgrade to the hog-hunting lever action I carried years ago. www.marlinfirearms.com





HENRY LEVER ACTION X (.30-30 WINCHESTER)

If .45-70 is more than your hog hunters are looking for, the Henry Lever Action X .30-30 Winchester also is a top lever-action choice. No less impressive than the aforementioned .45-70, the Henry Lever Action X model's chambering in .30-30 does mitigate recoil without sacrificing much in its capability of putting pork chops on the dinner table. Even better, the tactical-inspired lever action, complete with a black synthetic stock, is ready to handle the tough dirt work often facing hard-core hog hunters —

synthetic stocks are built for scratches.

The Henry Lever Action X features a 21.375-inch round blued steel barrel with 5/8-24 threading, tube magazine, adjustable fiber-optic rear sight, fixed fiber-optic front sight, transfer-bar safety, large loop lever, rubber recoil pad, sling swivel studs and Weaver 63B scope mount. www.henryusa.com



BERGARA B-14 WILDERNESS RIDGE BOLT ACTION (6.5 CREEDMOOR OR .308 WINCHESTER)

America's pigs tear up more than crop fields. The territory they cover can include high elevations and marshy bottomlands, and hunting conditions can be downright rugged. Even on flat ground, considering long stalks, the last thing I, or any hog hunter, wants to carry is a heavy rifle. At the same time, many hunters have an affinity for bolt-action hunting rifles. For those hard-core hunters, the Bergara B-14 Wilderness Ridge Rifle is a rock-solid choice.

Bergara barrels are world-renowned. Hunters and recreational shooters alike know they are getting precision accuracy in any Bergara platform; however, the B-14

Wilderness Ridge Rifle offers hunters quite a bit more than just great grouping. The B-14 Wilderness Ridge Rifle features a synthetic stock with Soft-Touch finish, Bergara performance trigger, No. 5 Bergara barrel with Sniper Gray Cerakote finish and 5/8-24 threading, multi-ported Omni Muzzle Brake reportedly with 35% felt-recoil reduction, single-piece B-14 two-lug action and hand-painted camouflage stock. Great for hog hunters, the B-14 Wilderness Ridge is available in 6.5 Creedmoor and .308 Winchester in shorter 18-inch barrel configurations, as well as other calibers and longer barrels.

www.bergara.online.us



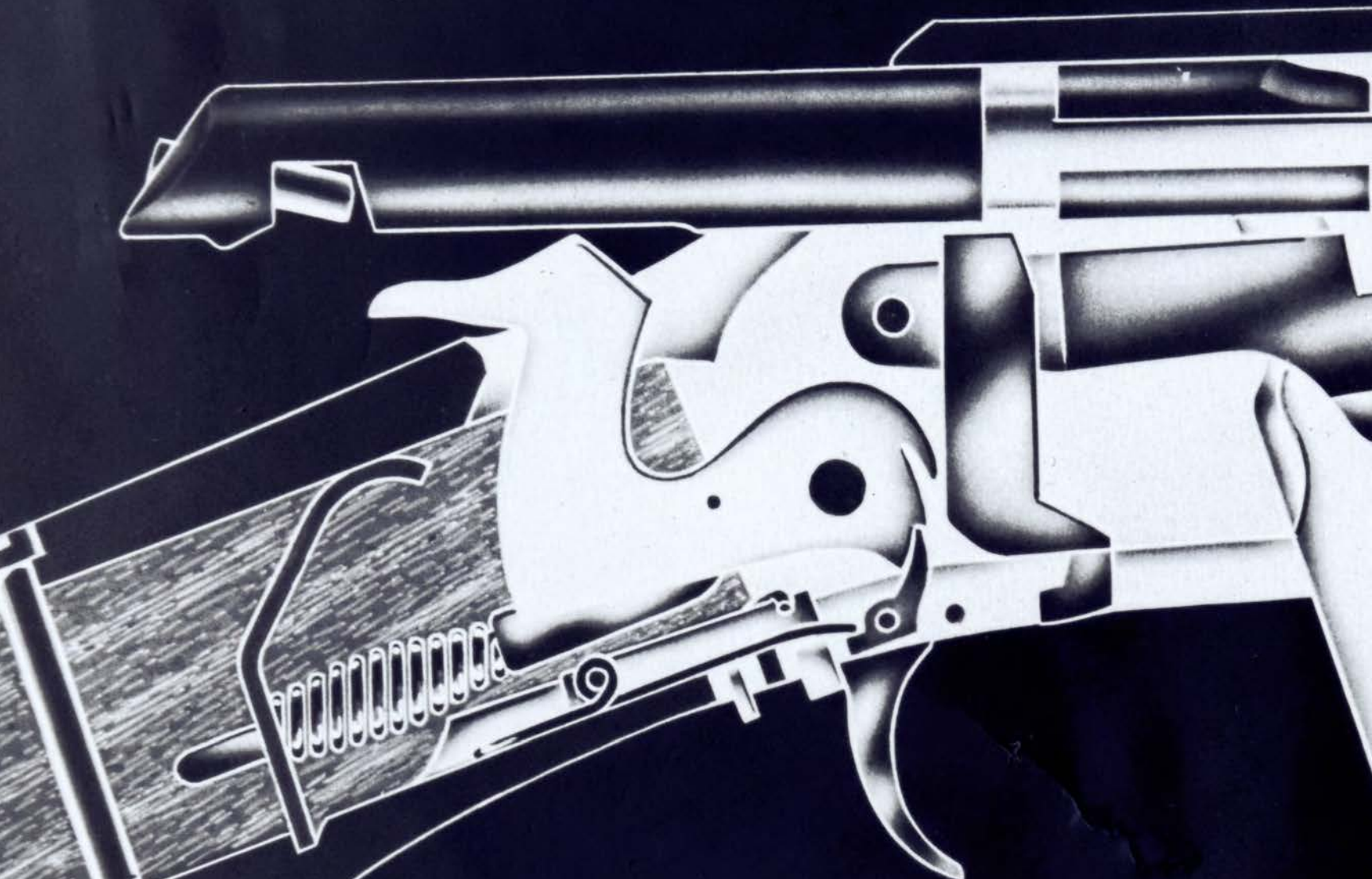
SAVAGE IMPULSE HOG HUNTER (MULTIPLE .30 CALIBERS)

Savage has a long, storied history of manufacturing quality firearms, 128 years to be exact; in fact, the Model 110 has the esteemed privilege of being the oldest consistently produced bolt-action system in the U.S., with nearly 65 years of quality Model 110 manufacturing under their belt. Yes, Savage knows how to build quality bolt-action rifles, and the Savage Impulse Hog Hunter definitely ranks among my top choices.

The Savage Impulse Hog Hunter is a straight-pull rifle boasting an olive-drab (OD)

green AccuStock, with AccuFit adjustability; adjustable AccuTrigger; matte black aluminum receiver; 18-, 20- or 2-4-inch carbon-steel barrel (depending on caliber choice); detachable box magazine and an integral 20-MOA scope base. Caliber options are .308 Winchester, .30-06 Springfield, .300 Winchester Magnum and 6.5 Creedmoor. For size and weight, I would opt for the .308 Winchester with an 18-inch barrel, but this can be subjective — I prefer compact pig rigs. Still, you have enough options to satisfy any bolt-gun hunter who crosses your retail threshold. www.savagearms.com HR

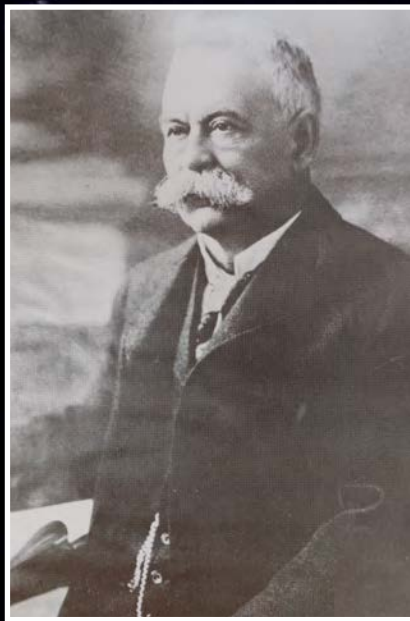
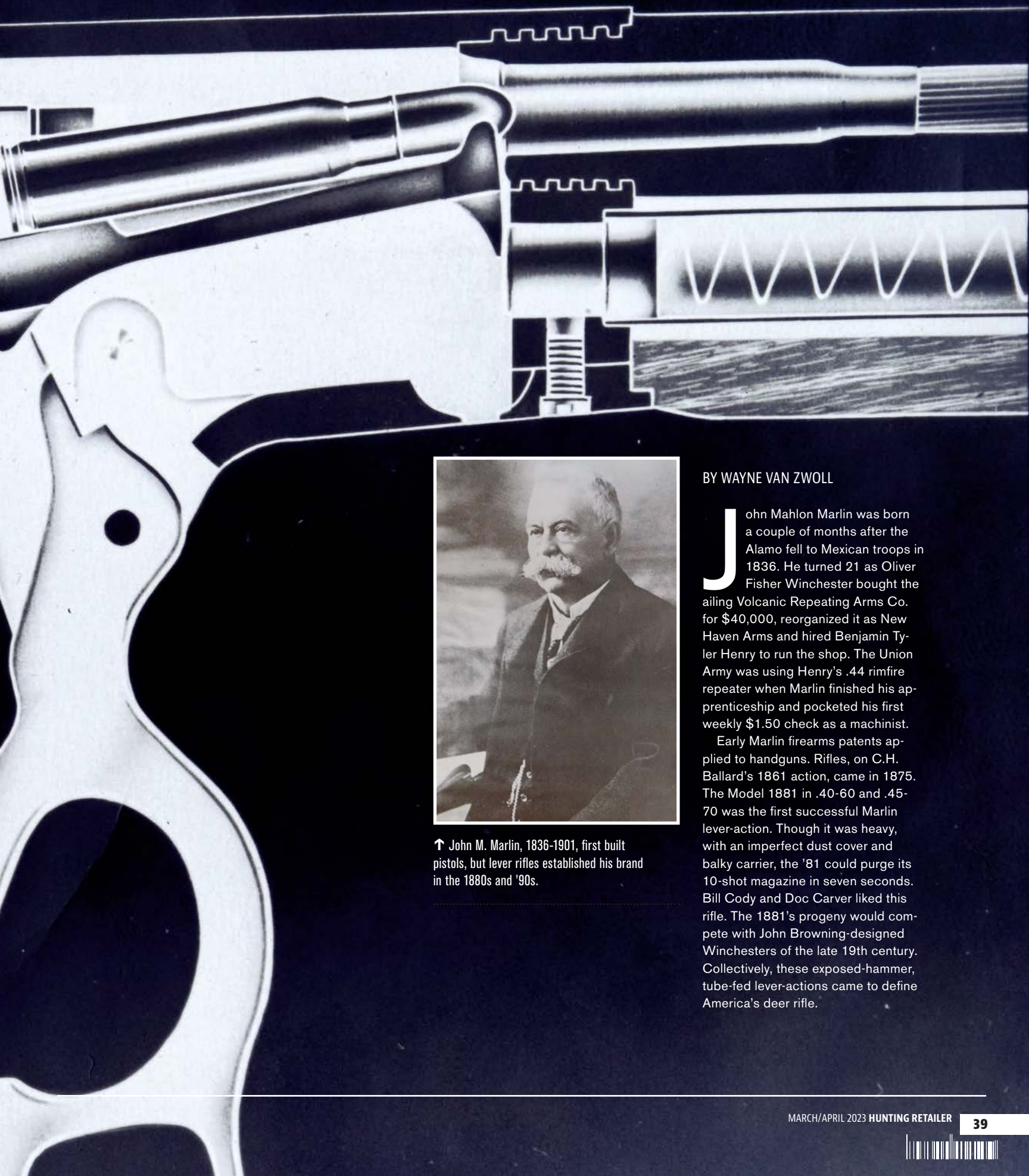




Where Does Marlin Go Now?

Sturm, Ruger aimed to restore Marlin's old-time quality in new lever rifles. They're on task, but it'll take time.





↑ John M. Marlin, 1836-1901, first built pistols, but lever rifles established his brand in the 1880s and '90s.

BY WAYNE VAN ZWOLL

John Mahlon Marlin was born a couple of months after the Alamo fell to Mexican troops in 1836. He turned 21 as Oliver Fisher Winchester bought the ailing Volcanic Repeating Arms Co. for \$40,000, reorganized it as New Haven Arms and hired Benjamin Tyler Henry to run the shop. The Union Army was using Henry's .44 rimfire repeater when Marlin finished his apprenticeship and pocketed his first weekly \$1.50 check as a machinist.

Early Marlin firearms patents applied to handguns. Rifles, on C.H. Ballard's 1861 action, came in 1875. The Model 1881 in .40-60 and .45-70 was the first successful Marlin lever-action. Though it was heavy, with an imperfect dust cover and balky carrier, the '81 could purge its 10-shot magazine in seven seconds. Bill Cody and Doc Carver liked this rifle. The 1881's progeny would compete with John Browning-designed Winchester of the late 19th century. Collectively, these exposed-hammer, tube-fed lever-actions came to define America's deer rifle.



The newest Marlin, arriving 140 years after the 1881's debut, is manufactured by Sturm, Ruger.

Marlin manufacture of its popular lever rifles ended in December 2007, when the company was acquired by Remington Arms and folded into The Freedom Group, an investment consortium. Two years after shuttering Marlin's H&R plant in Gardner, Massachusetts, in 2008, Remington closed the company's main operation in North Haven, Connecticut. Production of Marlin rifles moved to Remington's factory in Ilion, New York. Alas, quality did not match that of original Marlins. Explained a Remington foreman: "North Haven's machinery was aging, some of it worn out. It was hard to move and reinstall. It had been nursed along by skilled workers who'd learned to bring the best from it, but only a few of those veterans moved to Ilion. Also, Remington had no history with lever rifles. Our learning curve was steep."

In July 2020, Remington filed for its second Chapter 11 bankruptcy in as many months. After an Alabama court approved the sale of Remington's non-Marlin firearms business to the Roundhill Group for \$13 million, Ruger bought Marlin for \$28.3 million.

Ruger CEO Chris Kilroy and VP Mickey Wilson had visited Ilion before the 2020 auction. Their aim was to move the Marlin operation, then employ Ruger's manufacturing methods to build traditional Marlin rifles to higher quality standards. They had to act swiftly, to beat winter's blast. Ruger engineers hurried to plan the extraction of 40,000-pound loads and take the measure of tooling to prepare a manufacturing cell for Marlin at Ruger's Mayodan, North Carolina, plant 650 miles away.

In November, Darryl Freeman, facilities chief at Mayodan, kept decommissioning crews on task overtime to complete a two-month job in one. They loaded the last of 150 tractor-trailers December 9, as snow came to Ilion. The haul included 450-odd pallets of unfinished



↑ Ruger's SBL (stainless, big-loop) rendition of Marlin's 1895 shows clean machining and fine fit and finish.

and out-of-spec parts. Marlin's new home would be a 105x180-foot block designed to bring parts in a compact loop through 53 manufacturing steps. Materials would be fed and people stationed to make efficient use of space and motion.

Bruce Rozum, who I'd met when he'd headed R&D at Marlin, was now chief engineer at Ruger's Newport, New Hampshire, facility. On the Marlin project, he used auto-CAD drawings from North Haven to design CNC tolerances of .002 into a rifle developed 125 years ago!

A HISTORY OF MARLIN FIREARMS

The talented engineer that gave Marlin its original market foothold was Lewis Hepburn. Born in 1832, he built muzzleloading rifles from 1855 until 1871, when Remington hired him. A fine marksman, he fired with the first Creedmoor team, which famously beat Ireland's best marksmen in 1874. Remington's 1886 financial crisis sent him to Marlin, where his genius became evident in models of 1888, 1889, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895 and 1897. In January, 1910, Hepburn fell on ice. Bedridden with a broken hip, he failed to recover, passing in August 1914, as

Europe went to war.

Brisk demand for lightweight rifles prospered Marlin's Model 1888 in .32-20, .38-40 and .44-40. But fewer than 5,000 were built before it sired the Model 1889, Marlin's first side-ejecting rifle. Saddle-ring 1889 carbines in .44-40 sold especially well in the frontier West.

The Model 1891 was Marlin's first rimfire lever rifle. Exhibitions by

Annie Oakley gave this .22 a boost. A .32 version, circa 1892, cycled .32 centerfire rounds with a change of the firing pin. The similar Model 1892 was listed from 1896 until 1915.

Marlin Models 1893, 1894 and 1895 were larger versions of the 1892. The 1893 came in .32-40 and .38-55. Stouter lock-up and a two-piece firing pin distinguished it



↑ The author installed a Meopta Optika 5 2-10x42 scope on the rail, without removing the ghost ring sight.



↑ SBL internal parts are tumbled to ensure slick, uniform engaging surfaces and smooth (not loose) cycling.

from the 1889. (At a starting price of \$13, it sold for \$5 less!) Model 1893s competed with Winchester 1894s and stayed in production until the Great War. The '93 returned in 1922, adding the .30-30 and .32 Special to its cartridge roster.

Marlin's Model 1895 was essentially an 1893 for bigger cases. First in .38-56, .40-65, .45-70 and .45-90, it added the .40-70 in 1897, the .33 Winchester in 1912. Price: \$22, plus \$3.50 for the take-down version. A short-action Model 1894 came in .25-20, .32-20, .38-40 and .44-40. To spur sales in a sluggish 1901 market, Marlin cut its price to \$10.40! A Model 1897 .22 take-down rifle followed.

After John M. Marlin died in 1901, sons Mahlon and John Howard took the company reins. Carl Gustaf Swabilus was then designing guns for Marlin. This Swedish immigrant arrived stateside in 1896 at age 17. He climbed Marlin's ladder quickly to become chief engineer. Before his death in '48,





Swebilius also worked at Winchester and bought the defunct Hartford Arms Co. to produce High Standard pistols.

In July 1921, Marlin Firearms Corp. was formed in Delaware. Its first catalog (in '22) announced the Model 39 at \$26.50. A follow-on to the 1897, this .22 rimfire and its progeny, the 39A (in 1939 with coil mainspring, round barrel, beefier forend) would later boast the longest production record of any .22!

Back taxes, mortgage and reorganization costs, with tepid post-war demand, weighed heavily on Marlin. A foreclosure judgment in 1924 went to Charles and Lillian Haskell, who sold all property and obligations to Yale-educated attorney Frank Kenna for \$1. Kenna was 52 in 1926 when he established the Marlin Firearms Co.

Depression throttled firearms development in the early '30s, but improvements to Marlin's 1893 in 1936 yielded the Model 1936, soon renamed the Model 36. In 1948, a

↑ The author found the comb too low. This pad put his eye high enough for the supplied sights and a scope.

year after Frank Kenna died and son Roger became company president, the Model 36 sired the Model 336. At \$74, it became a top-selling deer rifle. In 1953, Micro-Groove rifling, ironed in with a tungsten carbide button, replaced its Ballard cut rifling. Most popular in .30-30, the 336 also thrived in .32 Special and .35 Remington. In .219 Zipper, it

**“Customers want
Marlins; Ruger
has committed to
building them. The
right way.”
— Mark Gurney**



↑ Threading puts the front sight and magazine cap behind the muzzle. No band.

struggled. Only 3,230 Zippers were made before the chambering was dropped in '59.

In 1969, Marlin operations moved to North Haven. A new Model 1895 followed, with cut rifling for cast bullets. Marlin added a hammer-blocking cross-bolt safety on all its centerfire lever rifles. Cut checkering appeared in 1994. The century ended with a number of new sub-models and chamberings in Marlin's lever-action line.

REINTRODUCING MARLIN

Ruger's reintroduction of Marlins started with the 1895, said Product Manager Eric Lundgren, "because we saw surging interest in the .45-70. And ours would be the only stainless lever rifle for that cartridge." Mark Gurney, who appraises me of all things Ruger, agreed. "The .45-70's big-bullet punch appeals to hunters of traditional bent, and has a century-long link to close-cover hunts with lever-actions."

On schedule, the first Marlin from Mayodan, serial number RM0001001, was boxed September 30, 2021. In due time, a sample reached me. While its profile is unmistakably Marlin, the SBL (stainless, big loop) differs in several ways from its forebears. A gray laminate stock cradles the steel. A Picatinny rail anchors

an adjustable ghost ring rear sight and runs 7 inches up the 19-inch barrel. The front sight, also by HiViz, is a thick blade holding a tritium-ringed fiber-optic rod. An over-size lever welcomes big hands. The six-shot magazine is dove-tailed to the barrel behind a muzzle threaded 11/16x24.

The capped forend (with swivel stud) has been slimmed slightly. Clean, generous point-pattern checkering on the grip and around the forend keeps you in control. Comb fluting, absent on "Remington Marlins," is crisp and even, as on originals. A fluted, nicked bolt and a red center in the Marlin bull's-eye on



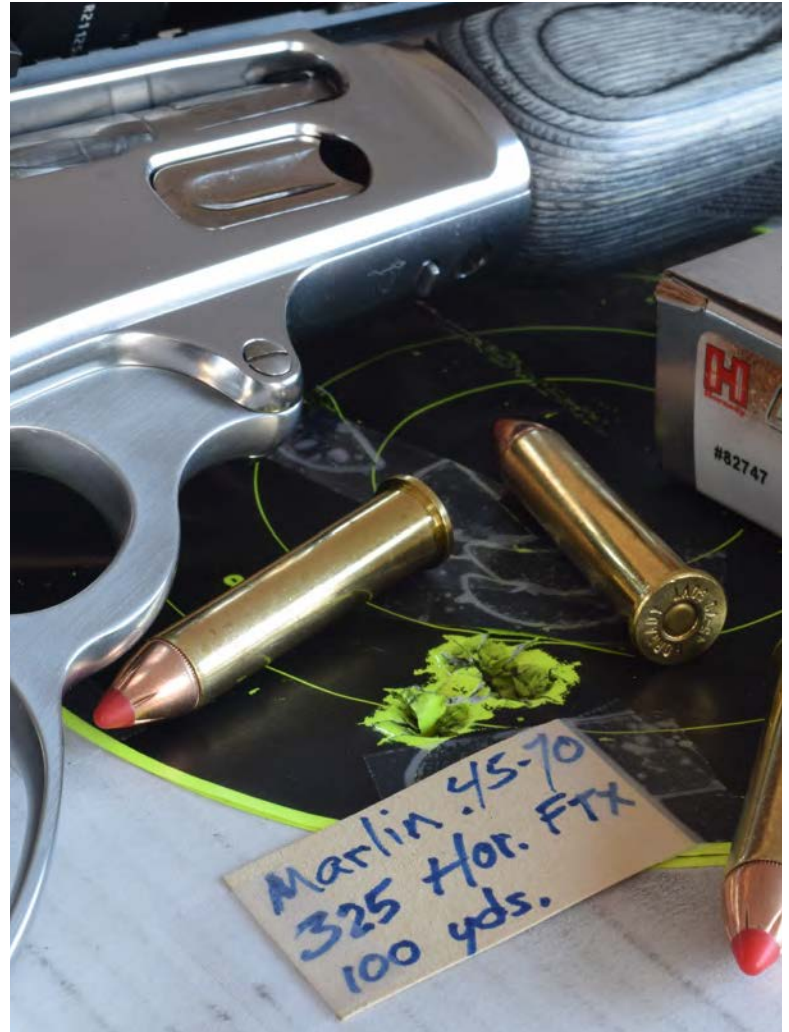
the buttstock's belly are fresh. Instead of a grip cap, there's a laser-engraved horse-and-rider image from Frederick Remington's 1890 painting, "Danger Ahead" (Marlin's logo since 1900).

Accuracy tests require better aim than can be achieved with the iron sights I favor on lever rifles, so I affixed a Meopta Optika5 2-10x42 scope in rings that just allowed the tube to clear the aperture sight. For me, the SBL's comb is too low even for irons, and the scope lifted sight-line 3/4 inch. A cheek pad from the FTW Ranch was a perfect fix.

Hornady 325-grain FTXs at 2,000 fps, Remington 300-grain semi-jacketed hollow-points at 1,900 and Black Hills 325-grain Honey Badgers at 1,775 fly flatter and hit harder than do 405-grain flat-noses held to 1,300 fps, per blackpowder loads. In my experience, they're more accurate, too. The SBL wowed me by hurling FTXs into a 3/4-inch cloverleaf at 100 yards! Groups from the SJHPs



↑ Federal .45-70 HammerDown loads feed the SBL. Ruger plans more chamberings in other Marlin's.



↑ Averaging just over an inch with three types of ammo, this SBL shot Hornady loads into 3/4 inch.

and Honey Badgers averaged 1½ inches. Feeding and ejection were faultless. The black 1-inch recoil pad mitigated recoil.

The new Marlin's action opens and shuts crisply, and cycles silkily. Mark pointed out that CNC machining reduces tolerance "stacks," limiting "slop and rattle" in an action. Internal SBL components are tumbled to ensure slick, uniform engaging surfaces. Parts fit so well, I'm told, Ruger assembles this rifle without hammers, files or manual screwdrivers. Wood and steel are mated snugly.

Chris Killoy has emphasized that Ruger will continue to put quality over quantity as new models and

chamberings come to the Marlin line. Mark cautioned that supply chain constraints affect production of "legacy firearms" (Ruger No. 1 rifles and Redhawk revolvers, for instance, but also Marlin's) more than they do, say, polymer pistols. Sourcing specialty steels used in small quantities can also throttle output.

"More Marlin's are coming," Mark assured me. "Model 336s are in the works, and 1894s should ship from the Mayodan factory by year's end [when this was written in late 2022]. Customers want Marlin's; Ruger has committed to building them. The right way." **HR**

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Study Shows Target Shooters, Hunters Choose MSRs

For all the political rhetoric, it remains a fact that the AR-15 and other modern sporting rifles are a top firearm of choice for hunters.

NSSF
The Firearm Industry
Trade Association

BY LARRY KEANE

The time has come for gun control politicians to pack up the worn-out line that “no one needs an AR-15 to hunt deer.”

Turns out, recreational target shooters and hunters do want Modern Sporting Rifles (MSRs). That’s the family of AR-platform [semiautomatic] rifles that come in many calibers. According to the 2022 Ammunition Consumption Study by Winchester Ammunition, more than half of recreational shooters firing a centerfire rifle used an MSR. Of those who hunted, 40 percent chose the MSR as their firearm of choice.

Winchester Ammunition conducted a survey of 1,600 hunters and recreational shooters in the first quarter of 2022 to better learn which firearm recreational shooters and hunters were using. Turns out the most popular selling centerfire rifle in America is the rifle of choice.

That might come as a surprise for

Capitol Hill lawmakers, especially for the 217 Members of Congress who voted to ban MSRs and some semiautomatic shotguns and handguns when they passed H.R. 1808, the Assault Weapons Ban of 2022. The argument made that MSRs serve no practical purpose for hunting is false.

IT WILL HUNT

Currently, 10 states restrict hunting with .223 or 5.56mm. Three of those states only allow shotguns, or straight-wall cartridges. New Jersey has an outright ban on MSRs. Even those states with caliber restrictions allow for MSRs that fire larger calibers. It’s not just deer, though, and not all in Washington, D.C., buy the line that AR-15s aren’t good for hunting.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) defended using an MSR for hunting hogs when asked by Vice News.

“I’m law abiding, I’ve never done anything, I use it to kill feral pigs,” Sen. Cassidy said in a People Magazine report questioning lawmakers why Americans choose this rifle in the wake of the tragedy in Uvalde, Texas. “The action of a criminal deprives me of my right,” he added about proposed bans.

U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) told CNN, “In my state, they use them to shoot prairie dogs and, you know, other types of varmints. And so I think there are legitimate reasons why people would want to have them.”

That might not mean much to then-Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) who held hearings to castigate MSR manufacturers. Nor would it earn consideration from then-Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) who ushered the bill through the U.S. House of Representatives to ban MSRs. No one ex-

pected former Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) to recognize the utility from her gated San Francisco estate. South Dakotans, however, see it differently. Controlling varmints and predators is a necessity to ranchers.

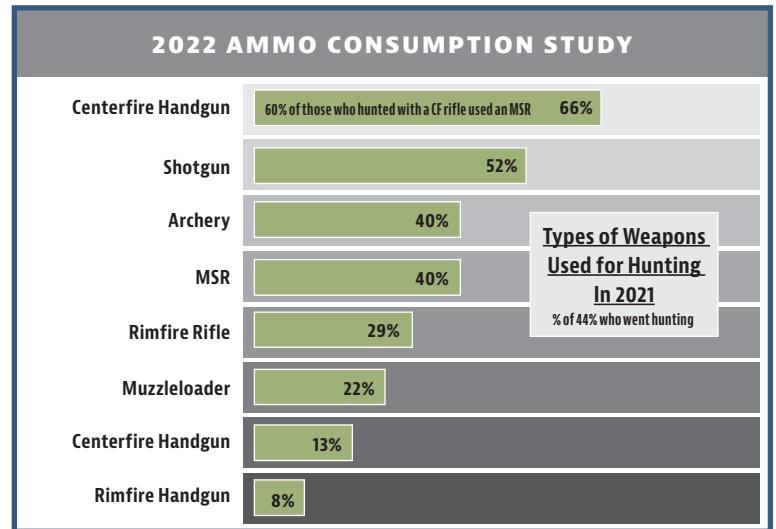
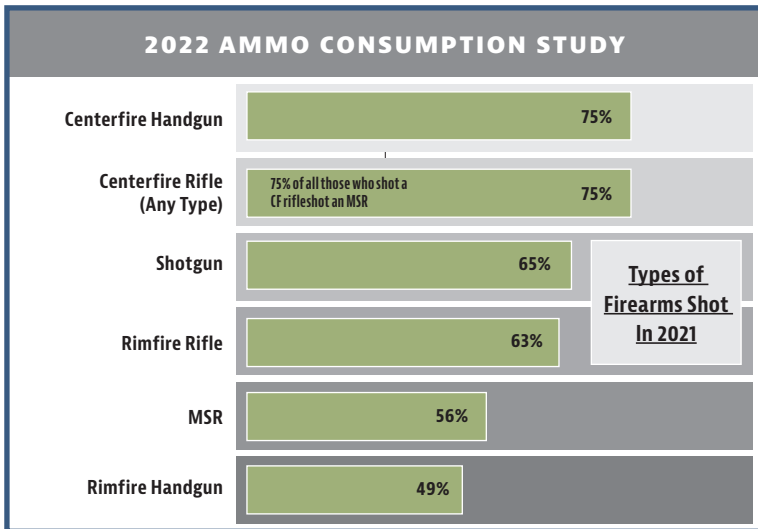
Congressman Ken Buck (R-Colo.) would agree. He said of the AR-15, “It is the gun of choice for killing a fox, it is a gun that you control predators on your ranch, on your farm, on your property.”

The news that recreational target shooters and hunters are turning to the MSR as the rifle of choice is hardly a surprise to the firearm industry, recreational target shooters or hunters.

BUILT BETTER

Jordan Sillars, writing for MeatEater, the hunting brand made famous by Steve Rinella, who hosts a Netflix series by the same name, listed off the pros and cons of hunting with





MSRs. Among the many reasons for hunters to consider the rifle are the fact that it is semiautomatic, has low recoil that allows for quick follow-up shots, offers modularity and customizable options, and it is lightweight and maneuverable. That's important for hunters, whether they're hunting from a box blind on a weekend or trekking into off-grid public lands.

Even when it comes to the .223/5.56mm cartridge, Sillars wrote in another piece that today's modern ammunition deserves a second look where it's legal for those who think it is diminutive.

"Bullet design has come a long way since your granddaddy decided a whitetail gun was .30-06 or bust," he wrote.

In fact, Rinella, who normally hunts with large-caliber bolt-action rifles, said time shooting the MSR helped him improve marksmanship. "Without the distraction of getting my molars loosened, and thanks to steady repetition, I was able to learn a thing or two about bad habits that I wasn't even aware of," he said.

Politicians railing against MSRs

might argue that recreational target shooters and hunters could use other rifles to do the same thing. The numbers, though, don't lie. The MSR is filling their need — and the Second Amendment gives them the right to choose the firearm that meets their needs. It is not for the government to decide. **HR**

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HUNTING RETAILER GEAR ROUNDUP

Turkey Guns and Ammo

The marriage of a special-purpose scattergun and dynamic ammunition ensures success in the turkey woods — and a two-tier sales opportunity for savvy retailers.

BY GORDY KRAHN

Modern-day scattergun enthusiasts prefer special-purpose shotguns tailor made for the task at hand, and nowhere is this more prevalent than in the spring turkey woods. Today's turkey hunter is a specialist when it comes to firepower. If you were asked to describe the attributes that make up the perfect turkey shotgun, they'd most likely include a synthetic camo or flat black stock and forend for du-

rability and stealth; a short barrel for maneuverability; a reliable, smooth action for quick follow-up shots; sling swivel studs for easy transport and fiber-optic sights for rapid target acquisition.

And this is good news for shooting sports retailers — not only do consumers typically own several shotguns, in the case of turkey guns there are all the aftermarket add-ons available that increase sales potential.

This is a real advantage for dealers — to encourage additional sales by stocking a wide variety of aftermarket products. These might include optics and red-dot sights, turkey-centric chokes, recoil pads, slings and more.

And speaking of cross sales, be mindful that all turkey hunters — whether they're shooting a brand-new autoloader or Grandpa's ancient Long Tom — need to stuff it with quality ammunition to get optimal

results. And that leads us to another factor — and sales opportunity. It's important that turkey hunters — like rifle hunters — experiment with various loads to find the one that performs best in their shotgun. And that's why it's important for retailers to keep a variety on hand. And remember, there's also brand loyalty. If you don't have the "right" brand, customer's will likely take their business elsewhere.



1. AMERICAN TACTICAL CAVALRY SHOTGUN

Available in 12- and 20-gauge and .410-bore and chambered for 3-inch shotshells the Cavalry Turkey over/under shotgun from American Tactical (\$699.96) is a lethal turkey taker take comes with a moderate price tag — dressed head to toe in Mossy Oak camo. It features a fiber-optic front sight, high-grade aluminum receiver — drilled and tapped receiver for a Weaver base system 417T — and single selective trigger. The Cavalry has stacked 22-inch barrels and comes with a pair of XXFull choke tubes. www.americantactical.us

2. BENELLI NOVA TURKEY PUMP SHOTGUN

The Benelli Nova 20-gauge Turkey pump-action shotgun (\$559) is suited for hunters who desire a lighter, lower-recoil alternative to the traditional 12-gauge turkey gun. It comes chambered for 2 3/4- and 3-inch shotshells and features a 24-inch barrel with included improved cylinder, modified and full chokes. With its 24-inch barrel length and easy-carry 6.5-pound weight, the Nova Turkey 20-gauge features a unitized receiver and stock design. It comprises a skeletonized steel frame and overmolded polymer for maximum rigidity and operational simplicity. An aggressively ribbed and ergonomically contoured forend provides exceptional grip, and a full-length ribbed barrel terminates with a high-visibility red-bar front sight for quick sight picture acquisition in the early morning light. It comes with a full-coverage Mossy Oak Bottomland camo finish. www.benelliusa.com





3. EAA/AKKAR CHURCHILL 220 GOBBLER

The EAA/Akkaar Churchill 220 Gobbler 20-gauge shotgun (\$689/Both models) is built ready to rock America's favorite game bird. This semi-auto shotgun with an aluminum receiver and vented rib barrel is optics ready for pin-point precision when a gobbler answers the call. The 220 Gobbler has an optics rail cut into the receiver, lowering the optics for quick target acquisition and sure optics mounting. The loading port and controls are enhanced for easier use with gloves and stock inserts adjust for length of pull. The smooth cycling action allows for quicker target reacquisition and minimizes felt recoil for a swift follow-up shot. The Churchill 220 is available in Full Size and Youth models.

www.eaacorp.com

4. FRANCHI AFFINITY 3 TURKEY ELITE SHOTGUN

The Affinity 3 Turkey Elite 12-gauge inertia-driven autoloading shotgun (\$1,349) is optimized for avid turkey hunters, equipped with a Steadygrip stock and 24-inch barrel with a shrouded dual-color Truglo fiber-optic front sight for hunting in heavy cover. It comes dressed in Optifade Subalpine camo with a Midnight Bronze Cerakote finish on the receiver and barrel to provide superior concealment in the woods and a TSA recoil pad that reduces up to 50 percent of felt recoil. Patterning to lengthen the forcing cone and added Rhino extended turkey choke tubes (Long and Extra Long Range) ensure consistent, tight and lethal shot patterns, and a Picatinny rail atop the receiver can be used to mount optics. Chambered for use with 2 3/4- and 3-inch shotshells. www.franchiusa.com

5. MOSSBERG 940 PRO TURKEY SHOTGUN

In 2020, Mossberg launched the 940 Pro family of 12-gauge autoloading shotguns. Now joining this line of high-performance shotguns is the 940 Pro Turkey (\$1,120), an optics-ready package featuring a choice of 24 or 18.5-inch barrel lengths, HIVIZ CompSight fiber-optic sights, Mossberg X-Factor ported choke tube and full camo coverage in Mossy Oak Greenleaf. At the core of the 940 Pro platform is a durable gas system that can run up to 1,500 rounds before cleaning and is compatible with factory-manufactured 2 3/4- and 3-inch shotshells. Performance-driven features include oversized, beveled loading port with redesigned elevator and shell catch for efficient and pinch-free loading. Other features include a slim-profile forend, user-configurable stock and oversized charging handle and bolt release button. www.mossberg.com

6. SAVAGE 301 .410 THUMBHOLE TURKEY SHOTGUN

With a 26-inch chrome alloy steel matt black barrel that's optimized for heavy-weight TSS turkey loads, the Savage single-shot 301 .410-bore shotgun (\$248) produces lethal patterns while generating minimal recoil. Its single-shot, break-action design is simple and efficient to use and incredibly reliable. Paired with a removable one-piece rail and rugged synthetic olive drab thumb-hole stock with an ambidextrous cheek riser, the Savage 301 also features swivel studs on the stock and forend, extra-full choke, manual hammer blocking safety and recoil pad. Length of pull is 13.75 inches. www.savagearms.com

7. ZANDERS EXCLUSIVE TRISTAR VIPER G2 TURKEY GUN

The TriStar Viper G2 Turkey gun (\$685) is gas operated and shoots both 2 3/4- and 3-inch shotshells interchangeably. It has a pistol grip stock with over-molded handle for enhanced grip and comfort and is drilled and tapped for a Picatinny rail (included but not installed). Its removable choke system uses Beretta/Benelli Mobile threads and includes four choke tubes (IC, M, F and Extended Turkey), choke box and choke

wrench. It is available in 12- and 20-gauge and .410-bore and has a five-round magazine with a shot plug included. Other features include a fiber-optic sight, chrome-lined chamber and barrel, vented rib with matted sight plane, manual E-Z load magazine cut-off and swivel studs. www.gzanders.com





APEX AMMUNITION TURKEY TSS SHOTSHELLS

Apex Ammunition, makers of premium handloaded ultra-high-density Tungsten Super Shot (TSS) shotshells, has added Turkey TSS loads (\$39.99-\$70.99/Box of five/10- through 28-gauge; \$58.99/Box of 10/.410 bore) to its extensive product line. Designed for maximum penetration at extended ranges, they are available in 10-, 12-, 16-, 20- and 28-gauge and .410-bore options in a variety of shot sizes, shell lengths and shot blends. Handloaded for the ultimate in consistency and quality control, the density of Apex TSS at 18.1g/cc allows the use of smaller shot sizes and larger payloads, which means more pellets on target and maximum downrange energy. www.apexmunition.com



HEVI-SHOT HEVI-18 TSS TURKEY LOADS

HEVI-Shot goes ultra-dense with HEVI-18 TSS turkey loads (\$49.99-\$64.99/Box of five), with high pellet counts and downrange lethality. The 18g/cc density pellets allow for smaller shot and higher pellet counts for the ultimate in long-range lethality. HEVI-Shot achieves incredibly tight patterns thanks to its unique, friction-free, sealed-in-the-shell spherical buffer. With HEVI-18 being 48% denser than lead, shooters can drop down three shot sizes for similar downrange lethality when compared to lead turkey loads. This means instead of shooting No. 4 or 6 lead loads, hunters can shoot shot size Nos. 7 or 9 TSS, thus taking advantage of higher pellet counts. Available in 12-, 20- and 28-gauge options. www.hevishot.com



RIO AMMO ROYAL TURKEY

RIO Ammunition has a long history of producing affordable top of the line ammunition for hunters and shooters from their plant in Marshall Texas. Based on that tradition, the Rio Ammo Royal Turkey copper-plated lead 12-gauge No. 4 shotshell was developed specifically for turkey hunters — to give them first-shot efficiency and incredible stopping power. With a muzzle velocity of 1,250 fps and loaded with 1.75 ounces of shot, this 3-inch powerhouse ensures maximum penetration and speed for devastating terminal performance. www.rioammo.com



FEDERAL REDUCED RECOIL HEAVYWEIGHT TSS

Federal Ammunition's Reduced Recoil Heavyweight TSS Turkey 2 3/4-inch 20-gauge shotshell (\$63.99/Box of five) is packed with No. 9 shot for tight patterning and deep penetrating performance. With this load, turkey hunters get the benefit of an 18gm/cc density pellet design that is 22 percent higher than standard tungsten and 56 percent denser than lead. The result is increased energy and high velocities at extreme range. Its rear braking FliteControl Flex wad performs flawlessly through ported and standard turkey chokes for the most consistent, deadly patterns possible. To protect barrels from direct contact with the extra-hard pellets, the shotshell design features a full-length wad. www.federalpremium.com



REMINGTON PREMIER TSS TURKEY LOADS

Available in 12-gauge, 20-gauge and .410-bore, Remington's Premier TSS Turkey loads (\$45.99-\$68.99/Box of five) are the company's deadliest gobbler getters. Tungsten Super Shot density makes smaller shot sizes viable and increases pellet counts when compared to lead pellets of comparable weight. In fact, the 18g/cc TSS blend is 22% denser than standard tungsten and over 55% denser than lead. This means smaller shot sizes can be used for increased pellet counts and denser patterns while generating the energy and velocity of larger lead shot — delivering increased range and more smackdown power. Its exclusive new Remington R top-wad ensures consistent patterns, and carefully selected propellants and primers produce optimal velocity. www.remington.com



FIOCCHI GOLDEN TURKEY TSS

Fiocchi has expanded its Golden series line of hunting shotshells with the introduction of the Golden Turkey TSS with deep-penetrating performance at long range and incredibly dense shot patterns. As with all Fiocchi high-quality shotshells, Golden Turkey TSS uses precision-manufactured hulls and wads combined with premium primers and carefully selected powder to achieve predictable and dependable results. Blended with premium 18g/cc tungsten shot, Fiocchi Golden Turkey TSS delivers the accuracy and terminal performance needed to drop the toughest toms in the most challenging conditions. It is currently available in 12-gauge, 3-inch, Nos. 7 and 9 shot; 20-gauge, 3-inch, No. 9 shot; and .410 bore, 3-inch, No. 9 shot. www.fiocchiusa.com



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BY GORDY KRAHN

HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS



HAWKE OPTICS FRONTIER LRF BINOCULARS

New for 2023, Hawke Frontier LRF binoculars use high light transmission optics and a red-colored OLED for clear target display. Available in 8x42mm and 10x42mm models, they feature water repellent lens coatings and fully multicoated lenses to produce sharp images with true colors. The Frontier LRF features range-finding modes that include Distance, Rain, Hunt, Near, Horizontal Distance and Angle and display brightness can be manually adjusted between six levels. A power save mode automatically turns the display off after 15 seconds of no operation. Frontier LRF binoculars are waterproof to IPX7 and accurate to ± 1 yard and ranges from 11 to 2,515 yards. They come with a MOLLE system and adjustable binocular harness pack. MSRP: \$1,329/8x42mm; \$1,439/10x42mm

www.hawkeoptics.com



BUSHNELL CELLUCORE LIVE CELLULAR TRAIL CAMERA

Bushnell's new CelluCORE Live is a feature-rich trail camera with Dual SIM cellular connectivity and live streaming video on demand so users can check in on their property no matter what time it is and no matter where they are, automatically connecting to the strongest network signal available. This means it connects, receives and sorts high-quality photos and video faster. The CelluCORE Live also features an optimized antenna for better signal transmission, high output No Glow IR LEDs for 100-foot night range and extended battery life, as well as image sorting by weather, wind, moon phase and more. Data plans are available starting at \$9.99 per month, and purchasers of the CelluCORE Live get their first 30 days free. MAP: \$299.99

www.bushnell.com



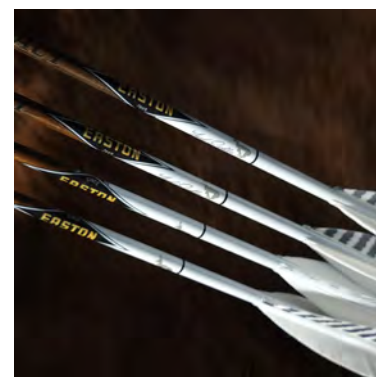
MOSSBERG 500 TURKEY OPTICS-READY .410 BORE SHOTGUN

Mossberg's 500 pump-action optics-ready .410-bore shotgun features full Mossy Oak Greenleaf camo coverage and comes with a 24-inch vent rib, AccuChoke-compatible barrel chambered for 3-inch shotshells. Design features include non-binding twin action bars, dual extractors, a positive steel-to-steel lock-up, anti-jam elevator, anodized aluminum receiver and a universally recognized, ambidextrous top-mounted safety. This optics-ready turkey gun comes standard with an extended X-Full choke tube, fiber-optic front sight, drilled and tapped receiver, sling swivel studs, 5+1 shell capacity and installed cover plate for when a mounted optic is not used. Just add a microdot sight via the provided receiver cut to this fun-to-shoot pump action and let the turkeys beware. MSRP: \$644 www.mossberg.com



ANTLER KING TROPHY DEER BLOCK

A highly palatable, long-range attractant, the 20-pound Trophy Deer Block from Antler King is designed to attract deer and give them the protein and fat they need to stay healthy. Featuring sweet apple flavoring, this year-round attractant is ideal for placing in front of game cameras, along trails, around hunting sites, by established mineral sites and near any other areas frequented by deer. Users should check local and state regulations regarding whether it's legal to feed deer and other wildlife in their area. MSRP: \$24.99/20-pound block www.antlerking.com



EASTON 5MM LEGACY FRED EICHLER SIGNATURE ARROW

Easton has partnered with renowned bowhunter Fred Eichler to create the new 5mm Carbon Legacy Fred Eichler Signature Edition arrow, which combines an exotic, dark teakwood finish, high-visibility white dip and hand feather fletched craftsmanship. These features marry well with the Easton-engineered 5mm carbon shaft to optimize in-the-field performance for today's traditional archers. Five spine weights, from 340 to 700 to match any traditional bow shooter's custom tune, finger-friendly nocks and 4-inch left-helical natural turkey feather fletching provides accurate arrow flight, delivering impressive terminal results on game. HIT components and Easton 5mm X nocks are included. www.eastonarchery.com



CHRISTENSEN ARMS MODERN HUNTING RIFLE

Whether on that once-in-a-lifetime hunt or ringing steel at the range, the Modern Hunting Rifle from Christensen Arms was created to meet the unique requirements of every shooter and situation. Built upon an aluminum mini chassis with V-block bedding, the MHR offers the accuracy potential of a chassis rifle while providing the ergonomics of a hunting rifle with complete modularity. The all-new carbon fiber FFT stock, forearm and grips can all be customized to fit any shooter or shooting position. Features include a Sporter 416R stainless-steel aerograde carbon fiber wrapped barrel, custom machined receiver, 7075 aluminum billet chassis, interchangeable grip modules, custom TriggerTech trigger, adjustable cheek riser and length of pull (spacers) and much more. MSRP: Starting at \$3,499.99 www.christensenarms.com





SAVAGE ARMS 110 CARBON PREDATOR RIFLE

Savage Arms' newest member of the iconic Model 110 bolt-action rifle family, the 110 Carbon Predator, is built to withstand the elements and perform when it matters most. Weighing in at 6.5 pounds and sporting a user adjustable AccuTrigger (1.5 to 4 pounds) and a crisp, matte black carbon steel receiver, the 110 Carbon Predator provides the performance needed for turning the hunter into the hunted. Other features include a granite textured stock using AccuStock with AccuFit technology, AICS detachable box magazine, carbon fiber wrapped Proof Research stainless-steel cut rifled barrel with threaded muzzle, two sling swivel studs and two-piece Weaver-style bases. MSRP: \$1,695 www.savagearms.com



ALPS OUTDOORZ DEADQUIET SHIELD BINO HARNESS

The DeadQuiet Shield bino harness from Alps Outdoorz utilizes a proprietary fabric that not only protects expensive optics from weather and other environmental hazards but is also quiet in operation. Its layered DeadQuiet fabric consists of a fleece exterior that deadens the sound of contact with hands, brush, clothing, etc., and an inside layer of rugged suede offers silent retrieval and replacement of binoculars and stands up to years of hard use. Sandwiched between these layers is a waterproof membrane that keeps binos dry and protected. MOLLE webbing is integrated into both sides of the harness so left- and right-handed archers can conveniently position a rangefinder, call or other gear items within easy reach. MSRP: \$49.99 www.alpsoutdoorz.com



SMITH'S EDGESPORT 6-INCH FOLDING BONE SAW

The real work begins at the conclusion of a successful backcountry hunt, when a harvested big-game animal needs to be processed in the field and transported out. The packable, lightweight Smith's Consumer Products EdgeSport 6-inch Folding Bone Saw was designed to meet this challenge in the most extreme environments — its 6-inch stainless-steel saw blade cutting smoothly through bone and holding its edge. Its sturdy lock-back handle design secures the blade in a working position and a durable, TPE non-slip handle helps promote safe use in the field, especially in rain or snow. Smith's EdgeSport 6-inch Folding Bone Saw has a 7-inch folded length and tether-ready lanyard hole. It is protected by a limited lifetime warranty. MSRP: \$28.99 www.smithsproducts.com

APEX AMMUNITION MOSSY OAK GREEN-LEAF TURKEY TSS BLEND SHOTSHELLS

Available in 3-inch 12-gauge 2.25-ounce and 3-inch 20-gauge 1.625-ounce loads,

Apex's Mossy Oak Greenleaf Turkey TSS blend premium duplex shotshells feature a combination of No. 9 and No. 10 TSS, delivering a payload of 1,096 pellets in the 12-gauge and 774 pellets in the 20-gauge offerings. With a density of 18.1 grams per cubic centimeter, these Apex tungsten super shot loads hit with devastating energy, and each meticulously handloaded shell features clean-burning powder and Apex's one-piece tungsten-grade wad system engineered to deliver the tightest patterns possible and maximum barrel protection.

Designed for maximum penetration at extended ranges, Apex Turkey TSS loads are available in multiple gauges in a variety of shot sizes, shell lengths and blends. MSRP: \$49.99/20-gauge; \$62.99/12-gauge/Box of five. www.apexammunition.com



BARNETT VORTEX YOUTH COMPOUND BOW

Bowhunting success starts with a good shooting foundation, and for young hunters that means a bow suited to their size and strength. With a customizable draw weight from 19 to 45 pounds (with 60- to 70-percent let-off), 7-inch brace height and draw length from 22 to 27-inches, the compact Vortex Compound youth bow from Barnett — 28 inches axle-to-axle — grows with the teenage hunter's needs. This versatile bow is outfitted with all the features young hunters need as they get serious about bowhunting and looks the part in a newly updated Mossy Oak Break-Up Country wrap. This right-hand bow features a three-pin fiber-optic sight, capture arrow rest, three 28-inch aluminum arrows and a three-arrow quiver. MSRP: \$229.99 www.barnettcrossbows.com



MAVERICK BOONER 6-PANEL HUNTING BLIND

Providing 360-degree views, the Booner 6-Panel blind from Maverick Hunting eliminates blind spots and gives hunters an edge. Its spacious hexagon-shaped design measures 87 x 82 inches wide and 75 inches tall for plenty of room for gear and even a hunting buddy. Available in three different window configurations — all horizontal, all vertical or a combination of both — with clear or tinted plexiglass windows, the Booner 6-Panel blind is designed for hunter customization. Pre-drilled holes make assembly easy, and rain-tight seams and an overhanging roof mean the weatherproof blind can stay outside year-round. An improved door support prevents sagging, while enhanced ribbing adds long-lasting rigidity. The vacuum-formed high-density polyethylene construction is extremely durable, UV-stabilized and paintable. MSRP: \$1,299.99-\$1,399.99 www.maverickhunting.com



The Important Corner Crossing Lawsuit

A trial set for this summer could have massive implications in the conflict over public land access.

BY BOB ROBB

In the fall of 2021, four non-resident hunters from Missouri wanted to access public land in Wyoming that heretofore had been off-limits to the general public due to the fact that two tracts of private land met at a corner, theoretically blocking the public from crossing the private land holdings without permission. To do so without trespassing, they built an A-frame ladder across the fenced intersection where the four parcels met — two private property, two public — so that when they climbed up and down the ladder, they would never set foot on the private land. They were subsequently accused of trespassing on Iron Bar Ranch land near Elk Mountain; a Carbon County jury later found them innocent of the charges. However, Iron Bar Holdings LLC and its owner, North Carolinian Fred Eshelman, filed a civil lawsuit claiming the four had violated the ranch's air space, thereby diminishing his property value, claiming damages of between \$3.1 million and \$7.75 million. The 22,042-acre ranch was appraised at \$31.31 million in 2017.

The trial is set to begin June 26, 2023, in Casper, Wyoming. And it is one of the most consequential trials concerning the rights of the general public — not just hunters — to access and enjoy lands we all own to occur in my 71 years on this earth. onX maps researched the corner-crossing issue and found that there are 8.3 million acres of corner-locked public lands, with 27,120 land-locking corners in the Western states. Also, there are no laws on the books that make corner-crossing illegal.

These “corners” were created generations ago, when most of the land in the Western U.S. was mapped and platted based on square, 640-acre sections arranged in neat rows

and columns, a system known as the Public Land Survey System. In this system, four tracts of land meet at a single corner point with four 90-degree angles. As land was doled out to homesteaders and the newly formed states, a complex patchwork of ownership formed. And while over generations properties were combined or split, some tracts were transformed into every imaginable shape. However, the underlying square, 640-acre section, can still be found all over the West.

Why this issue is so important was highlighted in briefs related to the case in federal District Court by the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and Backcountry Hunter & Anglers. Both groups realize the outcome could have sweeping implications for Wyoming's (and the nation's) land access and trespass policy.

The case revolves around whether or not landowners own not just the land, but also the airspace above that land. To “corner jump,” people must put at least some part of their bodies in the air above the private property. In their brief, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers contends that the public has been unjustly locked out of millions of acres of federal public land across Wyoming and the West. Their brief states that “A private landowner with half the ownership of a corner does not have a veto over access by the owner of the other half of the corner — namely the federal government — and by extension, the people of the United States.”

Wyoming Stock Growers As-

sociation disagrees, believing that “checkerboard” land grants by Congress came with no implied public access, their primary purpose being to reserve such things as mineral and transportation rights for the government. Their brief states that “These reservations make it clear that Congress was well aware of its ability to reserve necessary rights in granted lands. However, Congress did not reserve any rights for public access in the ‘checkerboard lands’ in western states. Consequently, the agencies who administer these lands have long cautioned members of the public against crossing private lands to access federal lands.”

Here's what it's really all about. In many cases, landowners have for generations assumed that public lands adjacent to their own private holdings were theirs by default. The cat was let out of the bag when the plaintiffs in this case claimed that allowing corner-crossing access to the public land adjacent to the Iron Bar Ranch would diminish the ranch's value by up to 25 percent. “[This disclosure] says things that have been unsaid for a long time,” Land Tawney, president and CEO of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, told MeatEater's Jordan Sillars in a September 2022 interview. “What they are saying is that they have the sole right to that public land and that if we the people have access to it, that diminishes the value of their ranch. That has not been said publicly, really ever.”

Surveys of hunters show that one of the main reasons they give the

game up is because they can't find a place to hunt at reasonable cost. Not allowing hunters (and anglers, hikers, backpackers, bird watchers, and other outdoor enthusiasts) access to millions of acres of public land — that all Americans own together — will not help. At the same time, hunters and other outdoorsmen need to be respectful of private property rights.

“In these situations, access proponents believe it should be legal for hunters to step from one of these parcels to the other,” MeatEater Founder Steven Rinella said. “If the intersections were properly marked and step ladders installed, you could step from one to the other without ever placing yourself on private property. Invariably, the folks who hate the idea of corner crossing are the people who enjoy private access to those public lands. As is, they can block public access through the dubious concern that someone's shoulders would theoretically be in their ‘airspace’ for a fraction of a second.” And as Land Tawney told Jordan Sillars, “Let's figure out how we can work with hunters and anglers to access public land without treading on private land. Nobody wants to willfully trespass on private land or cause impacts to that land. Without private landowners who are good stewards, we wouldn't have the populations we have today. At the same time, let's recognize that they don't own our public land. We have to have access to it.”

What's your take? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com and let me know, **HR**

PRO STAFF

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



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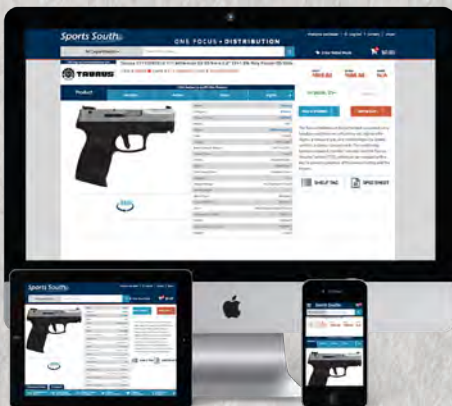
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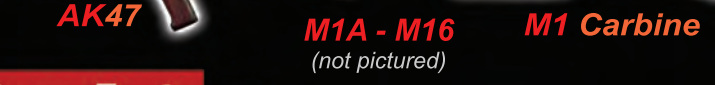
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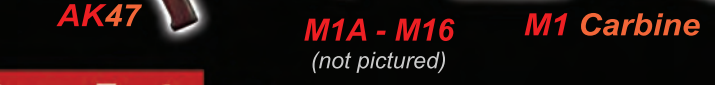
M1 Garand



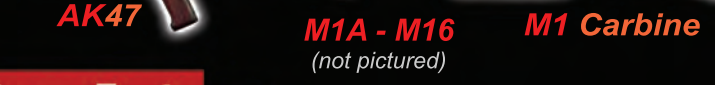
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