

# HUNTING

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# RETAILER

November/December 2024 | Mid-Season Sales Push

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# Celebrating 75 Years of Rugged, Reliable Firearms®



In 2024, Ruger proudly celebrates 75 years of manufacturing rugged, reliable firearms. To commemorate this occasion, Ruger is proud to announce four 75th Anniversary Models, a Mark IV™ pistol, two different 10/22® rifles and an LCP® MAX, each representative of Ruger's storied past and bright future. These commemorative models are inspired by iconic Ruger products, and represent each of our three major manufacturing facilities.



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## Armasight Contractor

**T**he Armasight Contractor was designed to be the most intuitive thermal weapon sight available, with each unit built piece-by-piece and tested extensively by Armasight's team in Tempe, AZ. Too many feature-packed thermals on the market are designed with complicated controls, overloaded menus burying the tools you need, and unreliable software that fails you when you need it most. The Contractor offers a completely different experience, as it was designed and developed in the United States by a team with over a decade of experience in thermal imaging, incorporating feedback from professional hunters, military personnel, and civilians every step of the way. Armasight's ability to focus on the use of the product and incorporate feedback is unmatched by other companies that don't rely on American to design and develop their devices.

Hunters and shooters demand gear that's not only durable and reliable but also simple to use in the field. When you strip away the flashy gimmicks and focus on what truly matters, the field of options narrows considerably. That's where Armasight's Contractor Thermal Scopes come into play. Whether you're out hunting or in a tactical scenario, the last thing you need is gear that doesn't perform when it counts. Reliability is key, and Armasight understands that.

A standout feature of the Contractor Series is the intuitive turret system for controlling the sight. In the field, simplicity is crucial—especially when you're dealing with unpredictable conditions. The Contractor's turrets are

designed for easy operation, even with gloves on, ensuring that you can quickly and confidently make adjustments without hassle and without needing to work through complicated menus. Countless hours have gone into perfecting the design, software, and testing of these scopes to ensure they meet the highest standards.

Armasight's commitment to quality doesn't stop at the design stage. Every Contractor Thermal Scope is built in our Tempe, AZ facility, using top-tier components and undergoing rigorous testing. This dedication to excellence ensures that our products not only meet expectations but exceed them. When you choose Armasight, you're investing in gear that will stand the test of time, no matter what challenges you face.

Unlike many other thermal devices, all Armasight products, including the Contractor, receives regular firmware updates providing the user enhanced performance, image quality, and new features. These firmware updates are provided free of charge for the life of the product to registered owners, and mean when you purchase a Contractor, you're purchasing something that gets even better as you own it. We're constantly pushing the limits of what's possible to give our customers the best experience in the field. And if you ever need assistance, our expert support team is always ready to help.

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## Winchester Announces Waterfowl Ammunition Rebate

Winchester announces that for a limited time consumers can earn \$5.00 back for each box of Winchester Xpert Waterfowl loads purchased and earn \$7.00 back for each box of Winchester Blind Side 2 and Drylok loads purchased. Total maximum rebate amount is \$150.00 per household. The offer is valid on qualifying purchases made between October 1, 2024 – November 30, 2024.

Eligible brands:  
Xpert Waterfowl  
Blind Side 2

Drylok Super Steel

Customers can visit [Winchester.com](http://Winchester.com) to learn how to submit their rebate.

## Easton Shooters Sweep Olympics; 52 Years of Unbroken Summer Games Titles

A 52-year streak of Olympic success continued in Paris with Easton shooters capturing 30 of 30 medals awarded in the archery competition. Easton's X10 shaft once again captured every Summer Games title, cementing its place as the most successful individual piece of equipment in any Summer Games sport.

With an epic finals battle for the men's Gold Medal, the USA's Brady Ellison and Korea's Kim Woo-jin battled to the last millimeter, with both shooting a 10 in a tension-filled shoot-off. In the end, Kim won by a better of millimeters, with Ellison taking silver. Korea's Lee Woo-seok took the men's bronze.

Every medalist, and 123 shooters from 53 nations, used made-in-USA Easton X10 shafts.

## Marolina Outdoor Hires New CEO

Marolina Outdoor, the parent company of Huk Performance Fishing and Nomad Outdoor, recently announced the hiring of Nate Smith as chief executive officer.

Smith brings to Marolina 20 years of executive leadership and outstanding performance in consumer-branded omnichannel organizations in apparel, footwear and accessories. He has a proven track record of successfully building and repositioning brands and developing omnichannel retail

strategies.

Smith has held senior executive roles at brands such as Patagonia and Oakley and, most recently, was president at Boardriders, a holding company consisting of several large global brands, including Quiksilver, Billabong, Roxy, RVCA, DC Shoes, and Element Brand.

Earlier in his career, Smith received a B.S. in political science from the United States Naval Academy, and later went on to serve 10 years as a U.S. Navy SEAL, where

he worked in more than 25 countries. Smith also graduated with an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Edwin Lewis, chairman of Marolina's board of directors, said, "We are incredibly excited to have Nate join the Marolina team. The leadership skills he developed in service to this country, combined with his extensive experience working with iconic brands, makes Nate uniquely qualified to lead Marolina in the next phase of its growth."

"I am very excited to be joining Marolina Outdoor, a company with an amazingly talented team and a proven formula for success," Smith said. "As someone who appreciates the passionate communities, cultures and lifestyles the Huk and Nomad brands represent, I am eager to dive in with the team and develop a growth strategy that continues to exceed the performance apparel needs of fishing and hunting enthusiasts."

## Hydra Weaponry Expands

Hydra Weaponry, Maine's largest firearms employer, designers, and manufacturers of the truly modular MARCK-15 Hydra® Weapon System, is proud to announce its expansion into a new 20,000-square-foot facility. The addition of this second location will significantly increase production capacity, allowing Hydra Weaponry to meet the rising demand for its growing line of Modular Weapon Systems. This expansion marks a milestone in the company's ongoing growth and commitment to providing American-made firearms for shooters everywhere.

"We're excited to announce this new chapter for Hydra Weaponry. Our growth is a testament to the quality and craftsmanship that our customers have come to expect. As a descendant of Gwinn Firearms, Bushmaster Firearms, and Windham Weaponry, we carry a rich legacy, and this new facility will help us continue to raise the bar for firearms manufacturing in the USA," commented Mack Gwinn, III, owner of Hydra Weaponry.

For more information about Hydra Weaponry's product offerings or to take advantage of the sale, visit [www.hydraweaponry.com](http://www.hydraweaponry.com).

## Don't Miss the Archery Business Pavilion at SHOT Show 2025

The Archery Business Pavilion was a new — and successful — part of SHOT Show last year, and it promises to be even better in 2025.

In mid-February 2023, NSSF (National Shooting Sports Foundation) announced the creation of the Archery Business Pavilion, a new exhibit area for the archery industry at NSSF's annual SHOT Show. The Pavilion is an exciting collaboration between NSSF and Grand View Outdoors, a leading provider of outdoor content. (Hunting Retailer is part of the Grand View Outdoors family of brands.)

The 2025 SHOT Show will be held January 21-24, 2025.

The Pavilion, located in Caesars Forum, was a huge success in 2024, and it promises to be bigger and better in 2025. Be sure to stop by, and you can read more about it on page 32 of this issue.





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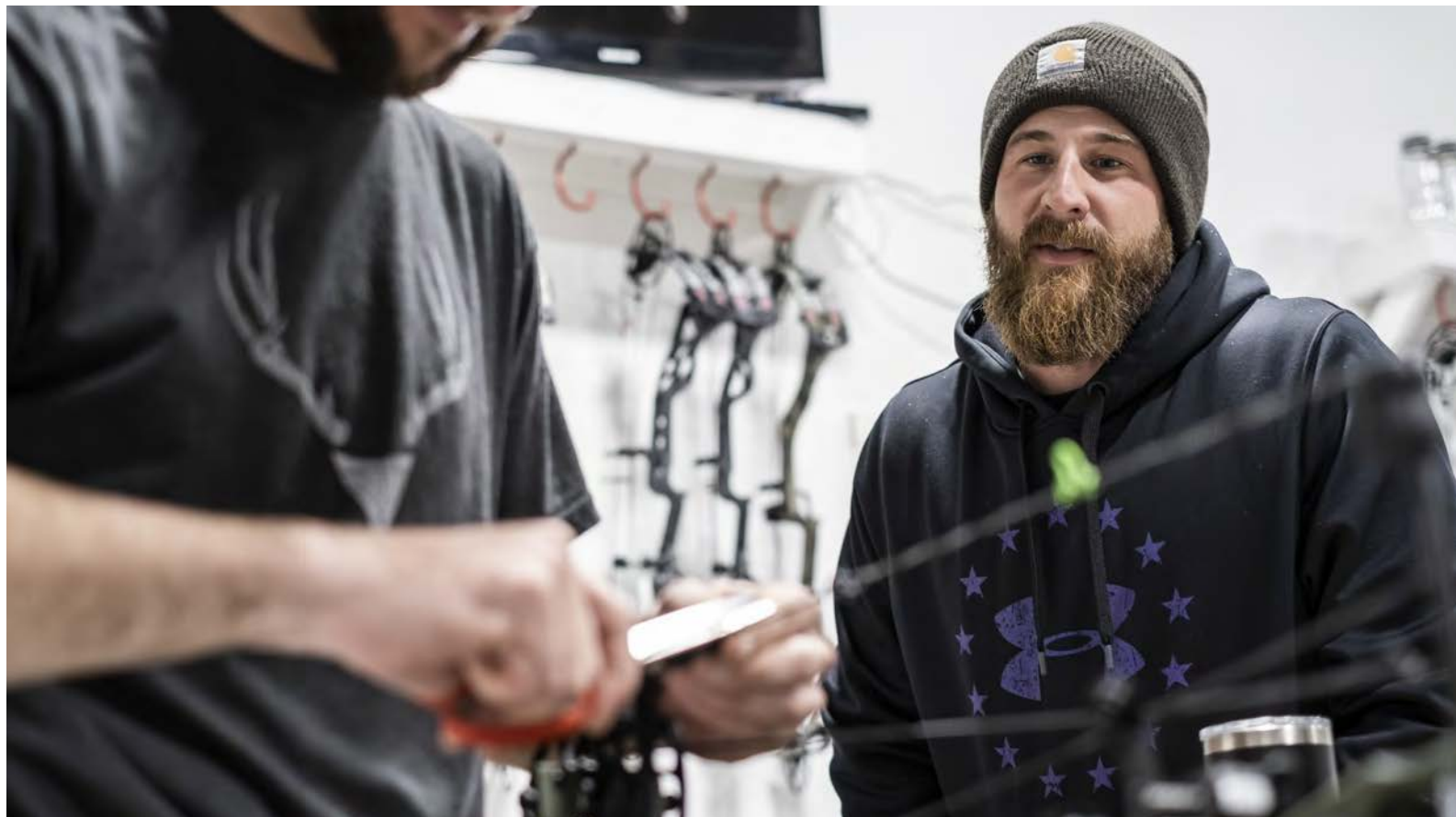
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# The Top 4 Strategies to Train Your New Employee



To develop a happy sales associate or other employee, simplify your approach to onboarding and follow lessons with hands-on learning.

BY KATE ZABRISKIE

“I learned so much during orientation. It’s too bad I won’t use most of it for six months. I took some notes, but I’m sure I won’t remember half of what they told me to do.”

“I’m overwhelmed. I learned a new piece of equipment today. The person showing me what to do knew everything. The problem I had was the deep dives. He spent so much time on troubleshooting techniques. It was just too much for my first day.”

“I can follow the steps, but I have

no idea why I’m doing what I’m doing. I sort of feel like a trained monkey. I hope nothing goes wrong because I will have no clue how to fix it if something does.”

Despite the best efforts of hunting retailers, it’s not as easy as it looks to get the training equation right. You train too early, train too much, or make a host of other errors. While some of us learn from our mistakes, many practice a cycle of rinse and repeat, making the same blunders year after year. The good news is it doesn’t

have to be this way. With some careful planning and follow through, you can avoid new-employee training issues people will encounter again and again.

## **STRATEGY 1: KEEP TRAINING RELEVANT AND IMMEDIATELY APPLICABLE**

Countless onboarding programs attempt to teach everything a person would ever want to know or need to know about a job in the first few hours, days or weeks. The informa-







tion is important, but it has no immediate value. Subsequently, learners become overwhelmed, and then they don't have opportunities to apply or reinforce what they've learned for months or even years.

Good training designers know the value of careful pacing, and they practice just-in-time training when they can. Ask yourself, what does my learner need to be successful in the first day, the first week and the first month? Teach to those needs as much as possible, and save the more in-depth information for a more appropriate time. What do you need to prioritize?

### **STRATEGY 2: CONNECT TO WHY AGAIN AND AGAIN**

When people don't know why they are doing something, they don't understand the big picture. While they get the process at a surface level, their limited understanding potentially keeps them from following procedures later.

For example, say someone is learning how to use a print/copier/scanner/fax machine and part of the process is putting the guard up on the paper tray with jobs over 100 sheets. Without explaining why that's important to do, that learner might take it upon himself to skip that step back on the job. Only when papers are scattered all over the floor and have to be re-collated does the learning know the importance of raising the guard.

Great trainers make connections. They repeatedly explain why they're doing what they're doing, why procedures are written as they are, and so forth. Are you connecting the dots as well as you should, or could you do a better job?

### **STRATEGY 3: USE MULTIPLE CHANNELS TO CEMENT LEARNING**

I showed her how to do it, she did it, and now she's trained. Maybe that's true for the simple stuff, but for the

complex processes and procedures, multi-channel encoding reigns supreme.

For example, show learners in real time how to complete a process. Then do it again, while at the same time providing a narration track as the learner takes notes. Next, have the learner read aloud the notes she's taken. Finally, have the learner demonstrate the procedure.

The multi-channel approach allows learners to see, to hear, to write, to speak and to do whatever process they are learning. Depending on the learner, some senses may be more powerful than others. And in rare cases where there is no preference, repetition wins the day. What can you do differently to engage more senses?

### **STRATEGY 4: TEACH WITH REFERENCE TOOLS**

It's one thing to conquer a task during class or one-on-one job coaching, but it's entirely another to

reproduce those results on the job.

People who have mastered the training function know to develop and teach reference tools in addition to processes themselves.

Ask yourself what kinds of support you need to develop. Decide where you need to incorporate them in your training plans. Those who learn how to solve problems themselves are worth their weight in gold. In addition to strong productivity, these people are also usually happier and more motivated than those who don't have the tools to stand on their own feet.

### **HIT THE CLASSROOM**

Four strategies and none hard: Make training relevant, connecting to why, repeating information using different channels and incorporating the tools learners should use to solve problems back on the job. If done deliberately and with routine, you will almost certainly get a good result when your new employee hits the sales floor. **HR**





# 3 Gun Safes To Keep Your Firearms Secure

Not all gun safes are created equal, and there are a lot of options beyond the traditional, heavy multi-gun safes. Consider these options.



BY MARK CHESNUT

**G**un owners have an important responsibility to ensure that their guns are secure and can be used for no harm even when they are stored. And in the vast majority of instances, a quality gun safe yields the best method for storing an unused firearm safely and responsibly.

When most people think of gun safes, they think of the large, heavy, spacious vaults used by many gun owners, and many of those are indeed, fine storage units. When trying to sell the best safe for your customer's purposes, there are a number of things to consider. While we don't have space to look at every aspect a safe shopper should consider, we'll hit on a handful of high points.

One critical consideration is size, as gun safes can hold anywhere from a few to several dozen guns. If your customer purchases one that's too small, he'll likely have to purchase another one down the road. My advice is to suggest they buy one bigger

than they think they'll need — buy once, cry once. They'll likely eventually fill it up.

Type of firearms they plan to store is also an important consideration. The insides of some safes are made for mostly rifles and some pistols, while it is just the opposite with others. Know what your customer needs before you start the sales process.

Physical space is also important. If they have a huge area to put the safe in, exterior dimension isn't a limiting factor. But if they have a small corner, they'll probably want one with the smallest dimensions that can hold the number of guns they wish to store. If a safe shopper hasn't considered where he or she will be placing the safe, that decision should probably be made before continuing with the process.

Fire safety is another critical factor to consider. Safes are rated for minutes of fire safety and also degrees Fahrenheit. The higher the number on

each, the more fire protection your customer will have. Unfortunately, higher fire ratings tend to push safes out of the financial comfort zone of many shoppers.

Other important factors your customers should consider are the thickness of the steel, the locking mechanism used, whether it has a digital or mechanical lock, number and size of locking bolts, and whether or not the safe has interior lights and/or a humidifier built in.

Incidentally, there are many other options available nowadays aside from the conventional large, heavy gun safe. While those remain the standard, lighter modular safes and even small, handgun-specific safes have a place in the safe firearm storage arena.

For this column, we'll take a close look at one of each — a conventional safe, a modular safe and a handgun safe.







### SECUREIT AGILE 52 PRO

Newer-style modular safes are becoming increasingly popular these days. They are lighter, so can typically be moved by the owner. They can also be configured differently to meet the different needs of different gun owners, which is a good selling point.

One company that specializes in modular safes is Secureit, which makes lightweight safes of all sizes and configurations. The company's safes, gun cabinets and gun walls can be configured to meet just about anyone's safe storage needs.

The company's Agile 52 Pro is one of its best-sellers, with more than 50,000 sold. And one of the most attractive features is it ships flat and can be assembled anywhere. It has outside dimensions of 52 inches high, 20.25 inches wide and 15.25 inches deep, with a capacity of six long guns and a number of handguns. And for those who move frequently, the fact that it weighs only 105 pounds is a great selling point.

The six-button keypad also includes a capacitive fingerprint scanner for fast access via the code (up to three codes, three to 12 digits each) or the user's fingerprint. The keypad can be programmed to turn off the backlight, sound and even the biometric function should the owner choose to do so.

The Agile 52 Pro's CradleGrid back panel offers unlimited customization with no tools required. Pro Kit accessories include cradles and stock bases, storage bins, storage shelf and trays, and a door organizer.



### FORT KNOX MARQUISE

Fort Knox is a legendary name in gun safes, and units like the Marquis are a good reason why the company has such a stellar reputation. The Marquise, Fort Knox's standard home safe model, is crafted with an industry-leading 3/16-inch body. It comes standard with security and fire protection features that surpass most other home safes on the market. In fact, the Marquise features two firewalls, resulting in a fire protection rating of up to 120 minutes at 1,680 degrees Fahrenheit.

On the door of the Fort Knox Marquise 6024 home safe lies a S&G Group II manipulation-resistant lock, spy-proof and key lock dial protected by a drill stop hard plate with recessed multi-bearings. After the user dials in the correct combination, the door is opened with a turn of the five-spoke clutch drive handle, which is in gold, chrome or black chrome.

The smaller model, the Marquise 4026, has external dimensions of 40 inches high, 26 inches wide and 20 inches deep, yielding plenty of room for a good number of guns and other valuables. For those looking for a larger safe, the Marquise 6024 measures 60 inches high, 26 inches wide and 22 inches deep. The door edge steel thickness on both is 1/2 inch, and it has 11 solid steel locking bolts that are 1.5 inches in diameter.

Ft. Knox gives shoppers a lot of opportunities to customize their Marquise. They can select lock option, hardware color and configuration, trim color, interior fabric color and several other features.

### WRAPPING IT UP

Hopefully these three safes will give you an idea of what might be best to carry in your gun safe inventory. And hopefully they'll lead to a happy customer once the final sale is completed, since we all know that a happy customer is a repeat customer. **HR**



### HORNADY RAPID SAFE 2700KP

Many companies now make small handgun safes that use combination locks, biometric locks or even utilize both entry methods on the same safe. These safes are great for someone needing to store just a handgun or two, or who might want to take the safe along with them on their travels.

Hornady makes a great one called the RAPiD Safe. The 2700KP model has outside dimensions of 12.7x8.7x2.9 inches, and interior dimensions of 9x7.7x2.2 inches. It offers fast and dependable RFID entry activated by wristband, key fob or sticker that instantly opens the spring-assist lid. Up to five RFID tags can be programmed. It also allows convenient keypad access for those who prefer that secondary entry method using a user-programmed four- or six-digit code. And for those not impressed with the newest technology, it can even be opened with an old-fashioned key!

The exterior housing is made of thick 14-gauge steel with two internal hardened locking lugs. The safe exceeds ASTM International safety standards for child and pry resistance, lock strength, drop/pick/saw tests and hinge attack resistance. Additionally, the included cable allows the 2700KP to be secured in virtually any location, and the safe meets TSA requirements for handgun safety in checked luggage. In addition to the 2700KP detailed here, the Hornady RAPiD Safe line also includes a number of other sizes and configurations.



# 12 Big-Game Ammo Options to Hit Higher Sales

Stock the ammo your customers will be asking for this season — starting with these 12 options.

BY KEVIN REESE

One of my greatest joys (and frustrations) on the hunt is learning. Whether I kill or not, I learn; in fact, I often learn more in failure. Every takeaway I leave a failed hunt with, I bring back as a smarter, hungrier hunter. Of course, sometimes I learn from the mistakes of hunters around me. Those moments are always blessings since I do well to screw up adventures on my own. In one such case, I learned even seasoned veterans sometimes make rookie mistakes — or maybe the failure was the outright self-inflicted result of conscious, poor decision making.

Late on a brisk Montana morning in the Gallatin Mountains, my brother-in-law and I had trekked miles at a mild altitude of roughly 4,000 feet, but in freezing temps dipping south of 10 below zero. The hunt had been tough, so I was elated when we arrived at a clearing with elk grazing no more than a couple hundred yards to our front. Armed with only a deer tag, I was of no help; however, the setting was perfect for my brother-in-law, a Montana resident with a bull elk tag burning a hole in his pocket. He crept forward and dropped to his knee behind a pine tree while I stayed back to watch through a low-power binocular.

With careful aim, he flipped the rifle's safety off and squeezed the trigger. Silence shattered, I watched the impact on the bull's shoulder. Oddly enough, a small quarter-size piece of flesh appeared to shear off on impact. The bull

## FEDERAL PREMIUM .243 WIN. FUSION 95 GRAIN

Perfect for deer and feral hogs, Federal Premium Fusion bullets feature a molecularly bonded copper jacket, pressure-formed core and soft-point bullet design for optimum weight retention, large wound channels and enhanced accuracy. Considering that .243 Winchester is one of the most popular cartridges among whitetail deer hunters, especially for youth hunters, Federal's Fusion .243 Win. 95-grain cartridge is a solid choice for retail shelf space. Fusion 95-grain .243 bullet specs include muzzle velocity of 2,980 fps, 1,873 ft./lbs. of muzzle energy and a G1 ballistic coefficient of .376.

[www.federalpremium.com](http://www.federalpremium.com)



leapt and ran over a ridge, relatively uninjured — no limp, no labored gait, nothing. Unfortunately, aside from a small quarter-size tuft of hair (what I had seen fall off) there was no blood at all. Even so, we followed the bull's tracks over the ridge and through the forest for more than five miles without so much as a speck of blood, just hoof tracks punching through snow and down into the mud underneath.

When we finally ended the track and chatted about his shot, he brought up his ammo. In a hurry, he stated he had grabbed what was quickly accessible, open-tip match bullets. While his thoughts circled around “That’s a bummer,” mine were quite a bit more charged — “He wasn’t even using hunting ammo!” I was pretty upset.

As seasoned hunters in retail positions, you have unique opportunities to guide customers into good cartridge choices by stocking the right ammo and being prepared to impart helpful knowledge. Education and experience can certainly help with the latter. For ammo choices, consider stocking this dirty-dozen list of proven cartridges to hit higher sales.

## HORNADY 6.5 CREEDMOOR AMERICAN WHITETAIL 129 GRAIN

Developed for Hornady Ammunition in 2007 by Hornady ballistician David Emary and Dennis Demille, VP of product development at Creedmoor Sports, the 6.5 Creedmoor has become exceptionally popular among hunters for antelope, deer, hogs and black bear. Some hunting ammo like Hornady's 143-grain ELD-X even produce great target-shooting results out to 1,500 yards; however, my personal hunting favorite in this caliber is Hornady's 129-grain American Whitetail. The 6.5 Creedmoor's field performance is solid, most definitely including American Whitetail, and it is the most affordable in this ammo roundup! Hornady's American Whitetail 129-grain 6.5 Creedmoor ammo utilizes an Interlock bullet with inner grooves and a tapered jacket designed specifically for controlled expansion. The unique combination of a single-piece core, cannellure and Interlock ring provides impressive mass and energy retention vital to penetration and large wound channels. Specs include .2820 fps muzzle velocity, 2,277 ft./lbs. muzzle energy and .445 G1 ballistic coefficient. [www.hornady.com](http://www.hornady.com)





### WINCHESTER .270 WIN. EXPEDITION BIG GAME 140 GRAIN

Iconic outdoor writer Jack O'Connor once quipped, "If the hunter does his part, the .270 will not let him down." As O'Connor mentions through five decades of outdoor writing, .270 Winchester is tough to beat for game animals ranging from antelope, deer and hogs to mountain goats and black bear. Of the cartridge's many evolutions, Winchester's Expedition Big Game 140-grain is a personal favorite.

Ballistic performances at longer distances and impressive wound channels I have personally witnessed in the field make me (and countless others) a fan.

Expedition Big Game ammo employs an Accubond

(bonded lead alloy core) polymer-tipped bullet and Lubalox black-oxide coating for enhanced weight retention, deep penetration and controlled expansion. Winchester's .270 Expedition Big Game 140-grain ammo boasts 2,950 fps muzzle velocity, 2,705 ft./lbs. muzzle energy and G1 ballistic coefficient of .472. [www.winchester.com](http://www.winchester.com)



### HORNADY 7MM PRC PRECISION HUNTER ELD-X 175 GRAIN

Introduced by Hornady in 2022, the 7mm PRC (Precision Rifle Cartridge) took the long-range shooting and hunting communities by storm and is sure to help both niche shooters make memories for decades to come. As a .284, it sits perfectly between Hornady's two other PRC cartridges (6.5 and 300) and offers quite a comfortable recoil impulse, reportedly (by Hornady) 30% less than that of the 300 PRC. Of course, the combination of a magnum cartridge and heavier bullets (in this case, the 175 grain) make the 7mm PRC a smart choice for big game throughout North America and many of Africa's mid- to large-size game species. Aside from the ultra-common long-action case diameter of .532, making it an easy conversion project for numerous rifle platforms, Hornady's Precision Hunter ELD-X

ammo boasts a polymer-tipped "Extremely Low Drag—eXpanding" (ELD-X) bullet designed for match-type ballistic performance, exceptional weight and energy retention, and exceptionally devastating wound channels. As a long-range shooter and hunter employing the 7mm PRC, my two cents is simply that your customers would be hard-pressed to find a better all-around big-game hunting cartridge. Hornady reports ballistic specs at 3,000 fps muzzle velocity, 3,497 ft./lbs. of muzzle energy and this roundup's highest G1 ballistic coefficient of .689.



### REMINGTON 7MM REM. MAG. CORE-LOKT 175 GRAIN

One of the popular big-game hunting cartridges for more than 60 years, Remington's 7mm Magnum was first introduced in 1962 alongside the company's Model 700 rifle. Built on a belted .375 H&H parent case, the 7mm Remington Magnum is popular with deer, bear and elk hunters. Among Remington's most popular cartridges, Core-Lokt soft-point bullets are constructed of a copper jacket "locked" to a solid lead core for better-controlled expansion and enhanced retention of mass and energy for deeper penetration. Remington 7mm Magnum Core-Lokt 175-grain bullets boast 2,860 fps muzzle velocity, muzzle energy of 3,178 ft./lbs. and a G1 ballistic coefficient of .427.

[www.remington.com](http://www.remington.com)

### WINCHESTER .30-30 WIN. DEER SEASON XP 150 GRAIN

What could be better than the most popular cartridge in American deer-hunting history, produced by the most iconic firearm and ammunition brand in American history? That cartridge evolved to the same company's Deer Season XP series ammunition. While Winchester's .30-30 cartridge has been around for since 1895 — first developed for the brand's historic Model 94 Lever-Action Rifle — nearly 130 years of innovation have ensured the cartridge remains relevant as a premier choice for America's deer hunters for the foreseeable future, especially hunters with an affinity for lever guns. Deer Season XP bullets feature a unique combination of streamlined bullet design and oversized polymer tip for enhanced ballistic performance, tapered profile and contoured jacket for deeper penetration and terminal energy, and accelerated expansion for larger wound channels. Reported specs for this cartridge are 2,390 fps muzzle velocity, 1,902 ft./lbs. muzzle energy and G1 ballistic coefficient of .215 — not bad at all for a round-nose bullet.



**BARNES .308 WIN. VOR-TX 168 GRAIN**

In the fan favorite mix with the likes of .270 Win. and .30-30, Winchester's .308 centerfire cartridge is one of the most popular hunting cartridges in the nation; of course, it had earned quite a legacy-reputation on battlefields worldwide, too. In short, the .308 Win. has nothing to prove to American hunters and is an excellent choice for hunting hogs, deer, bear and elk. A personal favorite .308 Win. hunting cartridge is Barnes' Vor-Tx 168-grain variant. Barnes Vor-Tx cartridges employ a TTSX (Tipped Triple-Shock X). Barnes TTSX bullets are polymer tipped and constructed completely of copper for enhanced accuracy, optimum weight retention, large wound channels and devastating terminal energy. Barnes .308 Win. Vor-Tx 168-grain cartridge muzzle velocity and energy are 2,700 fps and 2,720 ft./lbs., and reported G1 ballistic coefficient is .470. [www.barnesbullets.com](http://www.barnesbullets.com)

**BERGER .300 WIN. MAG. CLASSIC HUNTER 185 GRAIN**

Like the 7mm Rem. Mag., the .300 Win. Mag. takes its parent case from the .375 H&H and performs respectfully clear out to 1,800 yards. It was developed in 1962 to replace the .300 H&H. Perfect for hunting any larger game animal inhabiting North America, the .300 Win. Mag. is also well suited for the lion's share of Africa's plains game. Building on Berger's reputation as a top-shelf, match-performance bullet — yes, including hunting-specific offerings — your big-game-chasing customers are choosing wisely if they are asking for this cartridge. The Berger .300 Win. Mag. The magic of Berger's 185-grain Classic Hunter lies in the bullet's thin J4 Hunting Jacket. The bullet's thinner copper jacket produces deeper penetration, rapid expansion, excessive wound channels and devastating hydrostatic shock. Ballistic specs include 3,079 muzzle velocity, 3,895 muzzle energy and G1 ballistic coefficient of .533. [www.bergerbullets.com](http://www.bergerbullets.com)

**FEDERAL PREMIUM .30-06 SPRINGFIELD NOSLER PARTITION 165 GRAIN**

Proudly woven into the fabric of US History, the .30-06 grew legs in 1906 as an up-graded cartridge for Springfield's Model 1903 rifle; of course, it also became the belt-fed cartridge feeding Browning M1919 machine guns and M1 Garand service rifles. As such, the .30-06 has built quite a battlefield reputation through scores of U.S. campaigns and engagements. As often the case, what's good for a battlefield is good for hunters (consider 5.56, .308 and others). For nearly 120 years, hunters have put the .30-06 to work hunting big game. Today's evolution of the .30-06 Springfield makes it a great big-game hunting choice for species like antelope, hogs, deer, bear, elk and, yes, moose! A top choice for .30-06 fans is Federal Premium's Nosler Partition 165-grain offering. Nosler partition bullets have enjoyed countless seasoned-hunter accolades through decades of outdoor pursuits and were used in Federal Premium's first load. Aptly name, Nosler's lead-core partitioned bullets mushroom at the head (for a larger wound channel) and remain intact in the rear for energy retention, resulting in deeper penetration. Ballistic specs are reported as 2,830 fps muzzle velocity, 2,934 ft./lbs. of muzzle energy and a .409 G1 ballistic coefficient.

**HORNADY 300 PRC OUTFITTER 190 GRAIN**

Developed from a .375 Ruger parent case, Hornady's 300 PRC was unveiled in 2018 and in just six short years has taken its rightful place as a trusted, immensely popular big-game hunting cartridge. Without question, the 300 PRC is a perfect choice for hunting deer, bear, elk, moose and Africa's plains game, as well as most of the region's thicker-skinned, heavier-boned animals, even at extended distances. For hunting, one of the most popular 300 PRC variants is Hornady's Outfitter 190-grain offering. The Outfitter boasts a "watertight" nickel-plated case and advanced, monolithic CX (Copper alloy eXpanding). The results are truly impressive match-type flight, enhanced long-range accuracy, weight retention, rapid expansion, deeper penetration and devastating wound channels. Sure, your customers are going to feel a tad more recoil, but it is a great trade-off for an industry-leading do-it-all hunting cartridge. The 300 PRC Outfitter's specs are 3,000 fps muzzle velocity, 3,798 muzzle energy and .575 G1 ballistic coefficient.





### NORMA .338 WIN. MAG. ORYX 230 GRAIN

Developed by Winchester in 1958, along with several other magnum cartridges, the .338 Win. Mag. is a big-game hunter's dream. Designed from a shortened .375 H&H parent case and necked down to a .338 bullet, the cartridge is more than capable of taking any animal in North America at extended distances — say 500 yards or more. Of course, true to Norma's epic legacy and brand reputation, the company has refined this beefed-up hunting cartridge for the Oryx line, offering it in hard-hitting 230 grain iteration. The Norma .338 Win. Oryx features an advanced-bonded 230-grain bullet designed to produce efficient weight retention for deep-penetration and hard-hitting terminal energy, as well as optimum expansion for larger wound channels. [www.normausa.com](http://www.normausa.com)



### NOSLER .375 H&H MAGNUM TROPHY GRADE SAFARI 300 GRAIN

The granddaddy of them all, at least in this big-game ammo roundup, the .375 H&H Magnums case is actually the parent case for a number of suggested cartridges in this roundup. That is by design, considering it is an iconic big-game cartridge well suited for all of North America's huntable species and is a major contender for Africa's most dangerous game. To be sure, I cannot think of any animals on any continent safe from the terminal energy of the .375 H&H Magnum. Considering Nosler's .375 H&H Magnum Trophy Grade Safari offering, big-game hunters get the best of all worlds — Nosler's famed partition bullet; enhanced, match-type accuracy; rapid, controlled expansion; efficient weight retention and dramatic wounds. Big, heavy and hard-hitting, the .375 H&H still delivers the down-right-there ballistic goods with muzzle velocity standing at 2,450 fps, muzzle energy at 3,997 ft./lbs. and .398 G1 ballistic coefficient. [www.nosler.com](http://www.nosler.com)



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# Surviving Today's Bankruptcy Upswing

If worse comes to worst, you should know the options regarding bankruptcy.

BY MARK E. BATTERSBY

**D**uring 2023, there was a dramatic uptick in bankruptcies in every industry, according to Epiq Bankruptcy Solutions LLC, a provider of bankruptcy data and case management services. Although the increase is most noticeable among large businesses, every hunting-industry retailer struggling with excessive business debt should consider the many options of small business bankruptcy.

Not always a bad thing, bankruptcy is a legal process available to a hunting-industry retailer — or its owner — unable to pay their debts. With a business bankruptcy, a business's debts are eliminated or a repayment plan adopted. Creditors receive a portion of debt repayment through the debtor's available assets.

Although bankruptcy has the potential to wipe out all of the business's debts, not all debts are eligible to be forgiven through bankruptcy. Debts still owed after successfully filing for bankruptcy include tax claims.

## THE PROCESS

Federal courts handle bankruptcies, meaning a hunting-industry retailer owner must file a petition with their local federal bankruptcy court. The petition asks for information such as debt amounts, number of creditors, assets and liabilities, income and expenses as well as contracts and leases. Once the petition is filed, an automatic stay is issued, requiring creditors to cease their collection efforts.







Photo: John Hafner



The type of bankruptcy chosen and the legal structure of the business affect what happens after filing. While some business debts may be dismissed, the operation's owner, partner or shareholder's personal assets could be at risk.

Bankruptcy types for small businesses include:

- \* Chapter 7, which uses liquidation to handle a failing business. Filing under Chapter 7 means the business must close and, depending on the business's structure, the business assets must be forfeited.

- \* Chapter 11 bankruptcy employs reorganization to manage a troubled or failing business. With Chapter 11, the business continues to run under the terms of the bankruptcy. The process reorganizes the hunting-industry retailer's debts to allow smaller payments to creditors. Of course, the operation must have enough incoming cash to make those new payments.

- \* Chapter 13 is a reorganizing option available only to individuals, including sole proprietors. Chapter 13 works similarly to Chapter 11, with the continued operation of the business as it pays its creditors. Chapter 13 wipes out only the sole proprietor's personal liability for business debts — not the business itself.

### THE SMALL BUSINESS REORGANIZATION ACT

In August 2019, the Small Business Reorganization Act enacted a new Subchapter V of Chapter 11 bankruptcies. Designed to make bankruptcy more accessible to small businesses, Subchapter V condenses the process and limits the costs normally associated with filing Chapter 11. Subchapter V is available to any person engaged in a commercial business activity (other than ownership of single asset real estate) with debt



(both secured and non-secured) not exceeding \$7,500,000.

The Subchapter V bankruptcy can only be filed by the debtor, as opposed to an "ordinary" Chapter 11, where creditors are permitted to file competing plans. What's more, with Subchapter V, a hunting-industry retailer can file a bankruptcy plan that is subject to court approval — without the need for debtors to approve the plan.

### REAPING BANKRUPTCY BENEFITS

No one wants or plans to file for bankruptcy, but it can offer the owners of struggling small businesses a chance to stay afloat. While not every business entity can file, or benefit from, each bankruptcy type, there are a number of general benefits, including:

- \* Extra time to reorganize. A temporary breather from debt payments and/or renegotiated contracts might

be all that the hunting-industry retailer needs to turn itself around or survive the current economic crises.

- \* A competitive advantage. The ability to temporarily suspend the operation's debt-service obligations, pay only a portion of some current debts and dismiss signed contracts can result in a more efficient operation than that of any competitors.

- \* Decreased personal risk. Simply shutting the doors of the business doesn't stop its expenses. Mortgage, rent, insurance, property taxes, security and maintenance costs and other expenses called "carrying costs" will continue after closure. If the operation's owner is personally liable for any or all of the business's debts, he or she might lose their savings and/or home. Filing for bankruptcy will, at least under Chapter 7, formally end the business, stop bills from accruing and end many personal obligations.

- \* If a business continues to lose money, a bankruptcy can stop the

outflow of cash for which an owner, partner or shareholder might be personally liable.

### CAVEATS

Creditors do have rights, fortunately. For example, with the exception of bankruptcies filed under Subchapter V of Chapter 11 bankruptcies, creditors are entitled to share in any distribution from the bankruptcy estate, usually depending on the priority of their claim. Under the reformed bankruptcy laws, creditors also have the right to be heard in court regarding the payment plan and the liquidation of the debtor's non-exempt assets and payments from the assets of the estate.

Even more importantly, a creditor has the right to challenge a debtor's right to a discharge or to discharge the debt owed the creditor. In other words, creditors can voice their opinions about debts that might or might not be forgiven. They can also argue





about assets that, perhaps, should have been included in the bankruptcy estate.

Although the idea of wiping out business and/or personal debts can be tempting, declaring bankruptcy doesn't wipe out all debts. In fact, it is not uncommon for the owners of many small businesses to pledge their personal assets, including the equity in their homes, as security for a business loan. Filing for bankruptcy may allow them to protect the home equity or other pledged personal assets from creditors — but not always.

Owners of limited liability compa-

the hook for the debts of their business only where there are no personal guarantees. In addition, bankruptcy will also make it more difficult to borrow in the future. And, don't forget the expense. Filing fees, attorney costs and more can add up.

### WHEN THE SHOE IS ON THE OTHER FOOT

Beware! Even the best customers of a hunting-industry retail business can suddenly become deadbeats. How those slow- or no-pay customers are dealt with can determine whether the retailer will have the cash flow needed



nies and S corporations may also be liable for some debts. If, for instance, the owner of an LLC or corporation personally guaranteed a specific business debt, he or she may be liable for that debt.

What's more, in most bankruptcies, including Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases, the owners of LLC and S corporation entities are personally off

to sustain its operations. Indeed, the fate of every business depends on how customer credit is handled.

As mentioned, the federal bankruptcy laws have long provided a safe harbor for troubled businesses to reorganize, refinance and begin the turnaround to profitability free from pressure by their creditors. Now, new bankruptcy laws severely reduce that



safe harbor while at the same time making it more difficult for every hunting-industry retailer to deal with suppliers and customers that are in, or about to enter, bankruptcy.

When it comes to dealing with a customer or supplier after discovering they are bankrupt, the hunting-industry retailer should immediately cease any collection action. This automatic stay is designed to protect the debtor and his property from all forms of collection during the bankruptcy. Naturally, when a notice of the bankruptcy is received, proof of a claim should be promptly filed with the court. And, keep in mind that deadlines are strictly enforced in bankruptcy cases.

So-called "secured creditors" are at the top of the payback list and have specific rights to the property that is the collateral for their claim. Secured creditors also have the best chance of getting relief from the automatic stay or "adequate protection payments" to prevent a decline in the equity available to secure their claim.

All too often, when a bankruptcy notice is received, the assumption is made that there are neither rights nor alternatives when it comes to the

claim of the hunting-industry retailer. Fortunately, creditors do have rights, even with bankruptcies filed under Subchapter V of Chapter 11.

If any business owner or manager is aware of a customer's bankruptcy, even informally, it must act to preserve its rights. Most courts hold that a debtor with actual knowledge of the case, however obtained, will be bound by the deadlines for filing objections to debt discharges and for filing claims.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

No small business owner wants to fail, and regardless of the spin put on it, bankruptcy is a failure. However, despite its negative connotation, filing for bankruptcy may be the best course of action for any debt-ridden or troubled hunting-industry retailer — or its owner — to take. Bankruptcy can provide breathing room to reorganize and create a plan to move forward to profitability, or it can stop the bleeding that might lead to the seizure of the operation's owner or shareholder's personal assets. Obviously, regardless of which side of the troubled business you are on, professional help is both needed and recommended. **HR**



# Revolutionize Recruitment by Turning Ex-Employees Into Brand Ambassadors

Some of your best recruiters and brand ambassadors no longer work at your company.

BY KEN WYSOCKY







Photo: John Hafner





In the seemingly never-ending struggle to find quality employees in a tight and competitive labor market, organizations can wield a low-cost and effective — perhaps even surprising — secret weapon: former employees.

As counterintuitive as it may seem, increasing numbers of companies are establishing formal programs aimed at retaining relationships with ex-employees. Even though they're no longer part of the team, keeping in touch with them can help build companies' brands by creating a band of external ambassadors, says Matthew Call, a professor of management at the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University.

These alumni networks can also generate quality job candidate referrals, maintain access to departed institutional knowledge and even provide channels to new customers that

previously were inaccessible, he says.

"The need to leverage the power of former employees has grown on the heels of the 'Great Resignation' because there's this hyper talent war going on," Call says. "More and more companies are realizing that employees don't have a sense of loyalty anymore, so they're trying to up their games and make use of this revolving door of turnover. I think this trend is gaining traction nationwide as companies begin to understand the benefits."

The advent of job-search websites such as [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com) and [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com) make it even more important to stay in touch with ex-employees. Why? They provide a forum for people to post reviews of companies they either work for or have worked for, and job hunters read those reviews in just the same way that Amazon customers read

***"More and more companies are realizing that employees don't have a sense of loyalty anymore, so they're trying to up their games and make use of this revolving door of turnover..."***

product reviews to make purchase decisions.

"This shows how ex-employees can either build or hurt your company's brand," Call says. "I can't verify this, but I've heard that something like half of the reviews on Glassdoor come from ex-employees. And data shows that companies that focus on alumni networks get better reviews on Glassdoor."

Furthermore, some ex-employees might even find the grass isn't greener on the other side of the proverbial fence and become so-called "boomer-

ang" employees who return to their former employers, notes Call, who's researched the issue for about seven years.

"Ex-employees are a good place to start when looking for talent because you know them and they know you, so there's much less uncertainty involved," he says.

#### **BUILDING A NETWORK**

These programs can take several forms. It could be something as simple as keeping a database of former employees and their contact infor-







mation and sending them periodic newsletters. Or companies could establish virtual communities on social media platforms such as Facebook or LinkedIn to keep ex-employees in the loop about company doings.

Some companies even hire firms to manage these groups of ex-employees, Call says.

If companies handle things on their own, it's typically a human resources function. Some companies dedicate a human resources employee to supervise these networks; platforms such as Hivebrite, PeoplePath and EnterpriseAlumni can help them manage and engage alumni.

Other strategies include inviting former employees to company functions (think holiday parties, for instance), invite former employees who've become stars in their respective fields to come back and speak about their accomplishments

or simply celebrate the departures of valued employees, Call says.

And when onboarding new employees, it's important to tell them about the alumni network to reinforce a one-for-all, all-for-one mentality, he says.

"You need to embed this in your culture — give employees the sense that they're part of an extended family that's still respected even after people leave. It also shows them that your organization sees employees as people, not merely human capital. It sends an interesting message that former employees still are valued instead of shunned."

That, in turn, can reduce turnover because it builds mutual respect between organizations and employees.

#### **TRAINING IS CRITICAL**

Managers also need to receive proper training so they don't undermine

alumni programs. They shouldn't send mixed signals about or disparage former employees and need to learn how to react when an employee resigns, for example.

Those are the kinds of critical moments that can determine if a departing employee will become a good resource, and role-playing can be very helpful in training, Call says.

Some companies even go so far as to link formal and informal incentives for managers to metrics, such as how many former employees participate in alumni networks, how many former employees rejoin the company or how departing employ-

ees don't want to include them in your alumni network.

"There's one assumption built into all of this, and that is you want to maintain relationships only with regrettable-turnover employees — someone you didn't fire. Sometimes you have to let good people go because of downsizing or reorganizations, but you still want to stay in touch with them."

Moreover, sometimes employees are required to sign nondisclosure or no-compete agreements that can make it more difficult to sustain relationships. In addition, maintaining relationships with some employees,



ees rate their exit interviews.

Of course, there are downsides to alumni networks, too. For example, companies that employ celebratory rituals when employees leave make it easier, on some level, for other employees to leave. And alumni networks and functions can provide bitter ex-employees opportunities to poach other employees or glean proprietary business intel, Call says.

#### **BE JUDICIOUS**

Which raises another point: If employees are fired for poor performance or behavior, you probably

such as workers at big-box retailers, may not be as beneficial as others, Call adds.

In the end, however, organizations must treat employees well and create a culture of mutual respect and trust in order to most effectively leverage the power of ex-employees.

"If you start an alumni group and managers still treat employees like trash, it's just not going to be effective," Call says. "You have to have the right culture, the right incentives for managers and so forth. You can't just set up an email group and expect good things to happen." **HR**





# Top Accessories to Boost Your Bottom Line

It's not all about guns and ammo. There's serious money to be made in the small stuff.

BY ACE LUCIANO

If you've been in the business of outdoor, hunting, and/or shooting gear, you already know that the key to success isn't always about just selling the latest rifles or bows. Sure, those big-ticket items are what bring many customers through your door, but it's often accessories — the little things that often get overlooked but are relatively easily sold — that can really boost your bottom line.

The big question is, what accessories should you be focusing on? Offering the right accessories can make all the difference in your store's profitability. Let's talk about some of the top accessories that can help you not only meet, but exceed your sales goals.







### SCOPES AND RED-DOTS

Optics are an essential part of any hunter or shooter's gear assortment. Scopes, binoculars and rangefinders don't just improve accuracy — they can completely transform the shooting experience. When you stock high-quality optics from trusted brands, you're not just selling a product; you're often selling that customer years of confidence.

Practically every rifle and many of the pistols that go out the door need a quality optic to go with them — whether that's a magnified scope or a red-dot.

If there's one name in the optics world that every hunter and shooter knows, it's Leupold. They've built an almost 120-year reputation for making some of the most rugged, reliable and high-performing scopes on the market.

Burrís is another heavy hitter in the optics game. If you haven't given them a serious look lately, you're missing out on some real innovation and bang for the buck. The new Burrís Veracity PH isn't just a scope — it's a piece of advanced technology that's designed to easily make every shot as precise as possible, without the need for math or ballistics tables. What's really innovative about the Veracity PH is its built-in digital inclinometer, which measures the angle to the target and adjusts hold-over calculations on the fly. It gets even better when you pair it with the



Burrís rangefinder and their Burrís Connect app. This setup allows hunters to input environmental data like wind speed and temperature directly into the app, ensuring that when your customer pulls the trigger, the shot is as accurate as possible.

For those who might lean more toward tactical shooting, the EOTech Vudu series can be a fantastic choice, and it comes with huge potential in the big-game hunting market. The

Vudu scopes are built like tanks, offering both short and long-range options that deliver precision and durability in spades. Whether your customers are navigating tight quarters or lining up a shot from a distance, the Vudu line has them covered. The new Vudu X line is specifically made as a more affordable option geared toward hunters.

Not everyone wants to drop big bucks on a scope, though, and that's where products from CVLIFE can fit into your assortment. Their scopes and red-dots are popular among entry-level hunters and shooters who are looking for solid performance without breaking the bank. The lower end of CVLIFE products might not have all of the advanced features of higher-end brands, (though you might be surprised) but they offer reliability and accuracy at a price that's

↑ Of course, optics are a great add-on. Remind buyers of the old adage that they're better off to spend as much on their glass as they did on their gun.

hard to beat.

Finally, Riton Optics is a brand that's been making some big waves lately. Riton scopes are known for being affordable and incredibly durable. The good news for you and your business is that Riton does this while still maintaining a healthy margin for the retailer.

### NON-SHOOTING OPTICS

Every hunter needs a good pair of binoculars. Binoculars that have clear images and lightweight design can be rather expensive — but not always. In addition to the companies

***“Practically every rifle and many of the pistols that go out the door need a quality optic to go with them — whether that's a magnified scope or a red-dot.”***





named above, look to brands like Swarovski, Zeiss and Meopta for your highest-end customers and German Precision Optics (GPO), Vortex, Nikon and Athlon for the widest range of price vs. quality.

Rangefinders are another essential tool that no hunter or shooter should be without, as knowing the distance to your target can be the difference between a successful finish to the hunt of a lifetime and a miss or, worse, a wounded animal. Leupold, Swarovski, Vortex, Burris, Sig, Bush-

→ Aside from optics, don't forget range accessories like bags, rests, chronographs, benches and more.



↑ Nearly every hunter needs a rangefinder at some point. Some binoculars include rangefinding functions, but carry separate, less expensive stand-alone units as well.

nell and many others offer a wide range of choices in rangefinders.

Some companies even offer the combination of a rangefinder in the binoculars. GPO's RANGEGUIDE 10x50 is an impressive optic at a mid-range price that should appeal to every serious hunter.

#### ONE TO RULE THEM ALL...

Serious hunters and shooters need to know the ballistics of their rifle and load in order to maintain accuracy on those way-out-there shots.

That used to mean setting up a sometimes cumbersome chronograph requiring them to shoot through two different diffusers in order to calculate velocity. If the device wasn't set up level, the velocity measurement could be affected. Plus, they have to make sure they don't shoot the device itself!

The new Garmin Xero C1 Pro isn't just any chronograph — it's a comprehensive ballistics calculator that can seriously up your customers' game and fit in their pocket. This device does more than measure veloc-

ity, though. It integrates seamlessly with both the Garmin app AND the Garmin Tactix 7 Pro Ballistics watch, calculating windage, elevation and angle to provide real-time shooting data directly to the user's wrist. It's like having a personal ballistics expert on hand for every shot, ensuring that your customers are always dialed in.

The Xero isn't just limited to rifles and pistols, though. It also works with air rifles, bows and even airsoft guns.

#### MULTITOOLS

Multitools are versatile, compact gadgets that every outdoor enthusiast needs to carry. They're the Swiss Army knives of the modern era, packed with functions that range from grabbing, cutting and sawing to screwing and opening bottles. If you're not stocking multitools in your store, you're missing out on an essential product that practically sells itself. One of the best on the market is the Gerber Center-Drive. This multitool isn't just a collection of random tools thrown together — it's a thought-



fully designed piece of equipment that really works in the field. The Center-Drive is named for its unique center-axis driver, which aligns like a real screwdriver. This might not sound like a big deal, but it gives users more torque and rotation, making it feel like they're using a full-sized tool. The Gerber Center-Drive also includes a full-size blade, spring-loaded pliers, and a magnetic bit set. It's incredibly functional and easy to use, making it a must-have for any hunter or shooter who needs reliable tools in the field.

Another solid option is the Leatherman Wave Plus. This multitool is a favorite for good reason — it's got 18 different tools packed into a sleek, durable design. From needle-nose pliers and wire cutters to a knife and a saw, the Wave Plus has just about everything an outdoor enthusiast could need. And with its stainless steel construction and a 25-year warranty, it's built to last. Whether your customers are cutting through a tough piece of rope or fixing gear on the fly, the Wave Plus is up to the task.

**PROTECTIVE GEAR**

When it comes to protecting valuable equipment, hunters and shooters often need gear that's as tough as they are. The Sentry Armadillo rifle cover is a great example of protective

gear done right. This cover is made from a water-resistant material that keeps rifles safe from rain, dirt, and scratches. It's designed to fit most rifles, making it a versatile option for



↑ Lockable gun cases are essential for air travel.

your customers. The Armadillo isn't just about protection, though — it's about convenience. The cover is easy to put on and take off, which means hunters can quickly access their rifles when it's time to take a shot, and because it's lightweight and compact, it doesn't add unnecessary bulk to their gear.

For those who travel, an airline-approved, lockable gun case is a must-have. The Negrini Double Scoped Rifle Case is one of the best options out there, especially for hunters who need to transport multiple firearms. This case is incredibly strong, thanks to its double-wall construction, which provides maximum protection against bumps and drops. Inside, the case is both plush and secure, ensuring that rifles stay in perfect condition during transit. And with secure integrated combination locks, your customers can have peace of mind knowing that

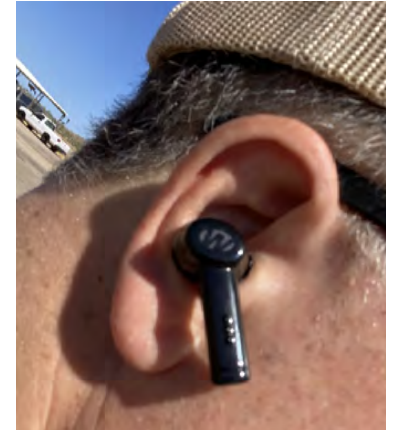


↑ Negrini Double Scoped Rifle Case



↑ Sentry Armadillo Rifle Cover

their firearms are safe, even when they're not around.



↑ Electronic hearing protection always sells well.

**HEARING PROTECTION**

For many years, hunters had a choice to make: hear the game they were pursuing, the tone and pitch of their calls, and the instructions from other hunters in their party, OR protect their hearing. Now they can have BOTH.

Electronic hearing protection has become a must-have for hunters and shooters who want to safeguard their hearing while staying aware of their surroundings. Traditional ear protection often muffles crucial sounds and voice commands from your hunting party, but electronic options can eliminate that challenge. Electronic muffs have been around for a while, with a common one today being the Walker's RAZOR series. Now, less-obtrusive earbud options like Grizzly Ears and Walker's Disrupter Bluetooth ear protection are designed to protect your hearing while enhancing situational awareness, the sounds of game in the field, and, perhaps most importantly, voices in the field and on the range. Both come with bluetooth technol-







↑ Hearing pro has gotten sophisticated, but the old standbys still sell, too.

ogy to connect to your customer's smart phone or other bluetooth device with excellent sound quality and clarity.

### KNIVES

No hunter or shooter's kit is complete without a good knife. Whether it's for field-dressing game, cutting rope, or any number of other tasks, a sharp, reliable knife is indispensable. The Benchmade Tagged Out Carbon Fiber Knife is one of those tools that your customers will wonder how they ever lived without. This knife is all about performance. It's lightweight,

thanks to its carbon fiber construction, but don't let that fool you — it's also incredibly strong and durable. The blade is razor-sharp, designed to handle everything from delicate cuts to tougher jobs. For hunters who need a reliable cutting tool that won't weigh them down, the Benchmade Tagged Out is an ideal choice.

### SMARTWATCHES

One Father's Day years ago, I received a Timex watch with a built-in compass. It was amazingly useful in the field, and I went through three or four bands and batteries over almost 15 years before it finally gave up the ghost. Today, high-tech smartwatches are quickly becoming a must-have accessory for hunters. Offering a range of features that go far beyond just telling time, they are often an easy upsell to the right customer. From GPS navigation, health and sleep monitoring, taking and making phone calls and sending texts to advanced ballistics calculations, these watches are packed with technology that can make a real difference in and out of the field.

If you're not already stocking smartwatches, now's the time to start — they're a growing market with a lot of potential.

*"If you're not already stocking smartwatches, now's the time to start — they're a growing market with a lot of potential."*



↑ Socks are high-ticket items these days, and for good reason — comfortable feet can make or break a hunt.

The Garmin Tactix 7 Pro Ballistics is a prime example of what a smartwatch can do for a hunter or shooter. This isn't just a watch — it's a full-on tactical tool. It's got built-in GPS, which is great for navigating remote areas or even finding your vehicle in the after-concert parking lot, and it's also equipped with advanced ballistics software that provides real-time shooting data. One of its standout features is solar charging, which extends battery life significantly. This is a huge advantage for hunters who spend long days in the field and can't always stop to recharge their gear.

When paired with the Garmin Xero C1 Pro rangefinder, the Tactix 7 Pro becomes even more powerful. The watch receives real-time data from the rangefinder, including

windage, elevation and range, directly to the user's wrist. This kind of integration makes it easier than ever to take accurate shots.

Another smartwatch worth considering is the Amazfit T-Rex Pro. While it might not have all the advanced features of the Garmin Tactix, it's still a solid choice for outdoor enthusiasts. The T-Rex Pro is rugged and durable, designed to withstand tough conditions. It's equipped with GPS, and it's priced more affordably, making it accessible to a wider range of customers. For those who want the benefits of a smart, GPS-enabled watch without the higher price tag, the T-Rex Pro is a great option.

By stocking these and other top accessories, you're not just offering products — you're providing solutions that make your customers' outdoor experiences better. From the low-light performance of a Leupold hunting scope to the versatility of a Gerber multitool and the advanced features of a Garmin smartwatch, these accessories are all about enhancing your customers' experience in the field by offering performance, protection and convenience. These accessories aren't just add-ons — they're essential tools that every outdoor enthusiast needs. By introducing them to your customers, you can not only boost your bottom line, but also build amazing customer loyalty, ensuring that your store remains the go-to shop for all things hunting and shooting. **HR**



↑ Benchmade Tagged Out Carbon Fiber









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**archery**  
BUSINESS



# THE ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION AT SHOT SHOW IN 2025

The Archery Business Pavilion was a new — and successful — part of SHOT Show last year, and it promises to be even better in 2025.

BY ARCHERY BUSINESS STAFF

In mid-February 2023, NSSF (National Shooting Sports Foundation) announced the creation of the Archery Business Pavilion, a new exhibit area for the archery industry at NSSF's annual SHOT Show. The Pavilion is an exciting collaboration between NSSF and Grand View Outdoors, a leading provider of outdoor content. (Archery Business and Bowhunting World magazines are part of the Grand View Outdoors family of brands.)

Fast-forward to January 2024 — and specifically the 46th SHOT Show, which set new benchmarks for industry innovation, collaboration and engagement. With an expanded show floor, a record-high number of exhibitors, and an array of new

features and networking opportunities, the 2024 SHOT Show in Las Vegas, Nevada, was the largest to date. More than 55,400 industry professionals packed the 13.9 miles of aisles over four days at The Venetian Expo and Caesars Forum — including the Archery Business Pavilion — eager to view new, innovative products used for hunting, shooting and outdoor recreation.

"The energy on the SHOT Show floor in 2024 was off the charts," said Chris Dolnack, SVP & Chief Customer Officer for the NSSF. "The feedback we've received from our exhibitors and attendees has been amazing, and we can't thank them all enough for helping us make the show what it is: the greatest trade show in the world."









**2024 ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION TAKEAWAYS**

The 2024 Archery Business Pavilion (located in Caesars Forum) featured exhibits from leading manufacturers and suppliers in the archery industry. The new area of the show provided a focused environment for archery retailers and industry professionals to explore the latest trends, products, and business opportunities in the archery sector. So, what was the feedback from 2024?

"I spent a good amount of my time each day in the Archery Business Pavilion," said Archery Business Editor Dave Maas. "Of course, because I have 'skin the game,' I wanted the new space to be a success. I must say I was impressed. The NSSF team did an outstanding job of making it easy for Show goers to find the new Pavilion. The space was clearly marked on the SHOT Show overview map, and special lime-green carpet runways (think shortcut) across the floors of Levels 1 and 2 in the Venetian Expo (the two main exhibit spaces) helped direct traffic to the SHOT Bridge, the path to Caesars Forum and the Pavilion. NSSF even had Show workers standing with signs directing people to the SHOT Bridge and the Pavilion; nice!

"The Pavilion space itself was big and bright, in a word — outstanding. In my opinion, traffic in the Pavilion was good. Yes, it would take a bit to get busy in the mornings, but I attribute that to the fact the Pavilion and all other booths in Caesars Forum are a bit of a hike from the SHOT Show entrances."

**LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025**

The 2025 Archery Business Pavilion will feature exhibits from leading manufacturers and suppliers in the archery industry, offering attendees the opportunity to see and experience the latest in archery technology and products. Looking ahead to the next SHOT Show, here are thoughts from some industry veterans regarding the Pavilion:



**DERRICK NAWROCKI — PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER, GRAND VIEW OUTDOORS**

"Momentum continues to build in year two of the Archery Business Pavilion at SHOT Show, and we've seen the addition of significant exhibitors, including Tomorrow Resources Inc., the parent company of power brands like T.R.U. Ball and AXCEL Archery; FL Outdoors, whose brands include Swhacker, C'Mere Deer, TAC Vanes, and Steel Force Broadheads; and an outdoor-focused cooler brand, Canyon Coolers. This in addition to Summit Outdoors, which is coming back, along with Moultrie Mobile, which is doubling the size of its Pavilion booth footprint.

"When you run the numbers provided by the NSSF, there are 18,000 buyers moving around the SHOT Show, which is phenomenal, but for the Archery Business Pavilion, we know nearly 5,000 of



those are actively buying and interested in the archery and hunting category. So, the SHOT Show is not only delivering an impressive number of overall buyers

— not seen at any other industry B2B show — but also a significant number of the right buyers for the exhibitors in the Archery Business Pavilion.





"It is worth mentioning that many of the traditional and more modern firearms shop retailers, who are looking to expand their existing inventory with categories in the hunting, archery and general outdoor markets, are now able to see that segment in one area, which is one of the goals of this space — helping to make the SHOT Show as efficient and convenient as possible for buyers. I am very confident that by the time SHOT Show opens its doors for the 2025 show, the Archery Business Pavilion will have added quite a few solid exhibitors to the room."

**CHRIS DOLNACK — SVP & CHIEF CUSTOMER OFFICER, NSSF**

"Since the 2022 SHOT Show, our post-show surveys revealed that 24% of the retail buyers had an interest in the archery and bowhunting category, and the growth in the Archery Business Pavilion reflects that growing interest. More traditional firearm retailers are looking to expand their offerings, and there is a lot of cross-over between archery hunters and firearm hunters. And in many cases, those retailers are 10-15 years younger than those who are not interested in the archery and bowhunting space. Any way you slice it, nearly 5,000 retail buyers who are attending the 2025 SHOT Show will be looking for information with intent to purchase, and to build long-term relationships with archery exhibitors."



**BENJAMIN SUMMERS — VICE PRESIDENT, T.R.U. BALL/AXCEL ARCHERY**

"T.R.U. Ball/AXCEL Archery is excited to be exhibiting in the Archery Pavilion of the SHOT Show for the first time in company history! We are proud to bring another premier brand of archery

equipment to SHOT, and look forward to growing together and making archery and bowhunting better! We will have several new hunting and tournament releases, sights, scopes and stabilizers available for what will be many people's first opportunity to see them in-person!"



**JASON COSTELLO — CEO/FOUNDER, CANYON COOLERS**

"SHOT Show has always been an incredible opportunity to connect with the outdoor community, and we're excited about the continued growth of the Archery Business Pavilion. Archery



is quite literally the tip of the spear in the hunting industry, and their passion for all things hunting and using only the best of gear really set the table for Canyon Coolers to build its fanbase amongst a discerning and loyal group of retailers. At Canyon Coolers, the Pavilion is the perfect platform to showcase the latest innovations in outdoor gear, such as our all new 75- and 85-quart coolers, which are designed specifically for hunters who need gear that can withstand the most rugged backcountry conditions. We're confident this year's Pavilion will help us build even stronger relationships with the hunting retail community."



**CINDY TEAGUE — NATIONAL SALES DIRECTOR, SUMMIT OUTDOORS (SHADOW HUNTER, GHOSTBLIND)**

"There is no one event in the country that brings hunting enthusiasts together like the SHOT Show! Summit Outdoors has had the honor of bringing groundbreaking innovations to the SHOT Show community, starting with the Shadow Hunter hard-sided hunting blind. We look forward to introducing new advancements at the show, reinforcing our strong connection to SHOT."



"This year's attendees will get a first look at the unparalleled portable concealment offered by GhostBlind's full 2025 product line, and the made in the USA Elevators Steel Tower & Platform Stair System. SHOT Show has been instrumental in our continued success. We look forward to forging ahead together at the 2025 show!"



**CHRIS JAMES — GENERAL MANAGER OF ARCHERY, FERADYNE**

"FeraDyne is excited to be at the SHOT Show again in 2025. We always seem to find new business opportunities there."

**ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION SPECIFICS**

It will be located within the upcoming SHOT Show in Las Vegas, Nevada, from Jan. 21 through Jan. 24, 2025. You'll find the Pavilion in Caesars Forum in the Academy Ballroom.

Any manufacturer of outdoor, hunting and archery-related products can exhibit in the Pavilion.

Exhibit space is limited; first come, first served. Those who exhibit in 2025 will have first choice for space for 2026.

The Archery Business team, including editors and key staff, will be in the Pavilion working on best ways to cover and promote companies that exhibit.

Additional coverage about the Pavilion will appear in SHOT Daily during the show and within the pages of other B2B brands such as Archery Business, Hunting Retailer and Shooting Sports Retailer as we get closer to SHOT Show.

**BOOKING YOUR SPACE**

Preparations have already begun for next year's 47th SHOT Show, January 21-24, 2025, in Las Vegas. To learn more about exhibiting in the Archery Business Pavilion, visit [www.SHOTShow.org/archeryexhibit](http://www.SHOTShow.org/archeryexhibit). Note: Booth space will not be final until this application is completed and the initial deposit is made. **HR**





# Through the Customer's Eyes

When the author began his search for an e-collar for his hunting dog, he had very little knowledge of what he needed. His shopping experience can shed valuable light on how a new customer researches and finds the right collar.

BY MARK OLIS

**W**hen I was a teenager, our neighbor gave us a 2-year-old mountain feist dog because they were moving across the country and didn't want to move the dog, too. I was thrilled, because Daisy and I had bonded a year earlier, and we had become best friends. She would come down to my house in the mornings and we would hit the woods in search of adventure. Daisy would tree gray squirrels on our outings, so I began hunting with her. She was a joy to go into the woods with. Fast forward nearly 30 years and my family and I were in search of a new pup. The year before, our beloved cocker spaniel had passed, and I was able to talk my wife into letting us get a mountain feist as the family pet. Selfishly, I craved hunting squirrels with a feist again, just like I did all those years ago.

In November of 2022, I picked up our 5-week-old pup, Dixie, and brought her home to surprise

the kids. Our family fell in love with the spunky little feist, and I immediately started taking her into the woods with me. Throughout her first winter, spring and summer, I frequently introduced her to squirrels and rewarded her when she would tree them. In early September of 2023, squirrel season opened in my home state of Alabama, so we hit the woods. We got two squirrels that first morning, and I felt like a kid all over again. Each time I took Dixie squirrel hunting, she began to range farther and farther from me. This behavior was ideal so she could tree the squirrels and let me know with her barks where she was. This worked great, but later in the mornings when it was time to go, or even late in the evenings, she didn't always want to come back to me, and I spent a lot of time looking for her. I knew it was time to get a tracking collar, but that was all I knew. This was the start of my search for the ideal e-collar.







**WHAT'S AN E-COLLAR?**

E-collar is short for an electric collar. These wireless devices are used for behavioral training and tracking of hunting dogs and pets as well. Depending on the features of each collar, a handler can track or train the dog with the collar and a hand-held device. A training e-collar has tone, vibration, and electrical stimulation at the controls. The breed of dog and more importantly the type of hunting you will be doing will guide you to a specific dog collar.

**Tracking Collar:** Dogs used to hunt bears, lions, raccoons, rabbits, squirrels and more need a tracking collar. These hounds will run far from the release point and handler, so tracking them on a hand-held device is a must.

**Training Collar:** Waterfowl hunting dogs and upland game bird dogs are typically trained with this style of e-collar. These collars communicate directly with the hand-held device so that the handler can trigger an electrical, vibration or audible stimulation to get the dog's attention and give commands.

**WHICH COLLAR?**

Because my dog would leave my side and take off over holler and swamp

*"I visited a couple of local stores that carried e-collars, but there was no one in-store to offer any meaningful advice. ... I still didn't know what I needed."*



↑ The author's dog, Dixie, modeling her Garmin TT25 collar, which pairs well with the Alpha 300i handheld.

to find a squirrel, I needed to be able to track her. A tracking collar was a must, but I wasn't sure what options were available. So, like any good researcher, I hit up Google.

When you don't know much about a topic, it's easy to get information overload. I quickly found out there are a lot of e-collars out there, and some companies are good at marketing and search engine optimization (SEO), so they pop up at the top of the search list even if it's not what I need. I had to filter through a few of these to find what I was looking for. I also visited a couple of local stores that carried e-collars, but there was no one in-store to offer any meaningful advice. Next, I joined several Facebook groups dedicated to treeing feist. This was a great option because I was able to directly ask a lot of houndsmen what they use and prefer. Nearly all of them suggested some form of Garmin tracking collars. With numerous models and features to choose from, I still didn't know what I needed.

**VIDEO REVIEWS WORK**

Once I started searching for Garmin e-collars, I quickly noticed several in-depth video reviews. Most of the good videos were either published by large dog kennels or online stores that cater to houndsmen. These reviews would go into detail on the features of each collar and why a user would need or want that feature. Bat-

intelligently explain the features that were most needed by a handler.

**THE WINNING COLLAR**

While attending the 2024 SHOT Show, I made sure to go by Garmin's booth to talk about e-collars with Garmin's Mark Zepp. Zepp is a houndsman and knows e-collars backwards and forward. He walked me through the product lineup, especially the new tracking and training setups. The new Garmin Alpha 300 and 300i handheld paired with their new TT25 dog collar were all the rage.

The Alpha 300 and 300i handheld is the powerhouse of the system. Both models have the same features, except the 300i features inReach satellite technology, which allows you to send an interactive SOS message and keep in touch and exchange text messages with friends and family where cell service doesn't exist. You can also track your location and share it with those at home or out in the



tery life, tracking distance, the collar and the handheld unit were most discussed in reviews. The reason these reviews worked for me is because the person in the video explaining the collar is an end-user of the product — a guy who hunts with dogs and uses the product. They were able to

field. The 300i costs \$50 more than the Alpha 300 handheld, but for the small price, the inReach is great insurance in case of an emergency in remote country. The inReach service does require a monthly or annual subscription that you must have prior to using this feature, but you can





cancel anytime. This service is not required when using the system for tracking and training your dog.

The first thing I noticed when using the Alpha 300i was the bright 3.5-inch LED screen. With touchscreen technology, the handheld feels and operates like a smartphone. While I only hunt with one dog, the Alpha can track up to 20 collars at once. The 300i features a replaceable and rechargeable lithium-ion battery that will run the unit for up to 55 hours.

While the Alpha 300i comes preloaded with TopoActive Maps, there are endless additional maps available via subscription through the Outdoor Maps+ app. Satellite maps are available free via the TopoActive Maps app, but they must be downloaded while connected to Wi-Fi. With 16GB of internal storage, there's plenty of room for additional map downloads. However, the Alpha 300i also accepts Micro SD cards for even more detailed mapping. The Alpha 300 and 300i are loaded with way more features than I've utilized. Tracking and training are the features I use 99% of the time. The real magic happens when the handheld is paired with the new TT25 tracking/training collar.

Garmin's TT25 collar is customizable for large and small dogs. It comes fitted with a longer Flex Band for larger breeds, but an additional Zero Length Flex Band is available and is easily swapped out with a small screwdriver in a few minutes. I went with the Zero Length band because my mountain feist is a smaller breed, less than 20 pounds. The TT25 has three levels of stimulation for training: an audible tone (beep sound), vibration and shock stimulation. I was amazed at how quickly my dog followed the stimulation commands. Within two days of working with mostly tone and vibration, she would



come back to me immediately or listen to my verbal commands much better. Think of the shock stimulation as the last resort if the dog hasn't obeyed tone and vibration. While the TT25 has 16 levels of shock stimulation, I haven't gone above level four. When training your dog with the stimulation, you want to start with a low level and work up incrementally until the dog notices the effect. If the

dog yelps from the stimulation, it's too much. My dog Dixie now comes back or stops the activity I don't want her doing with just a tone beep. If she hasn't responded to several beeps then I'll use the vibration mode. At this point, she now comes running back to my position without needing the shock stimulation.

The collar is fitted with GPS to track the dog's location up to 9 miles

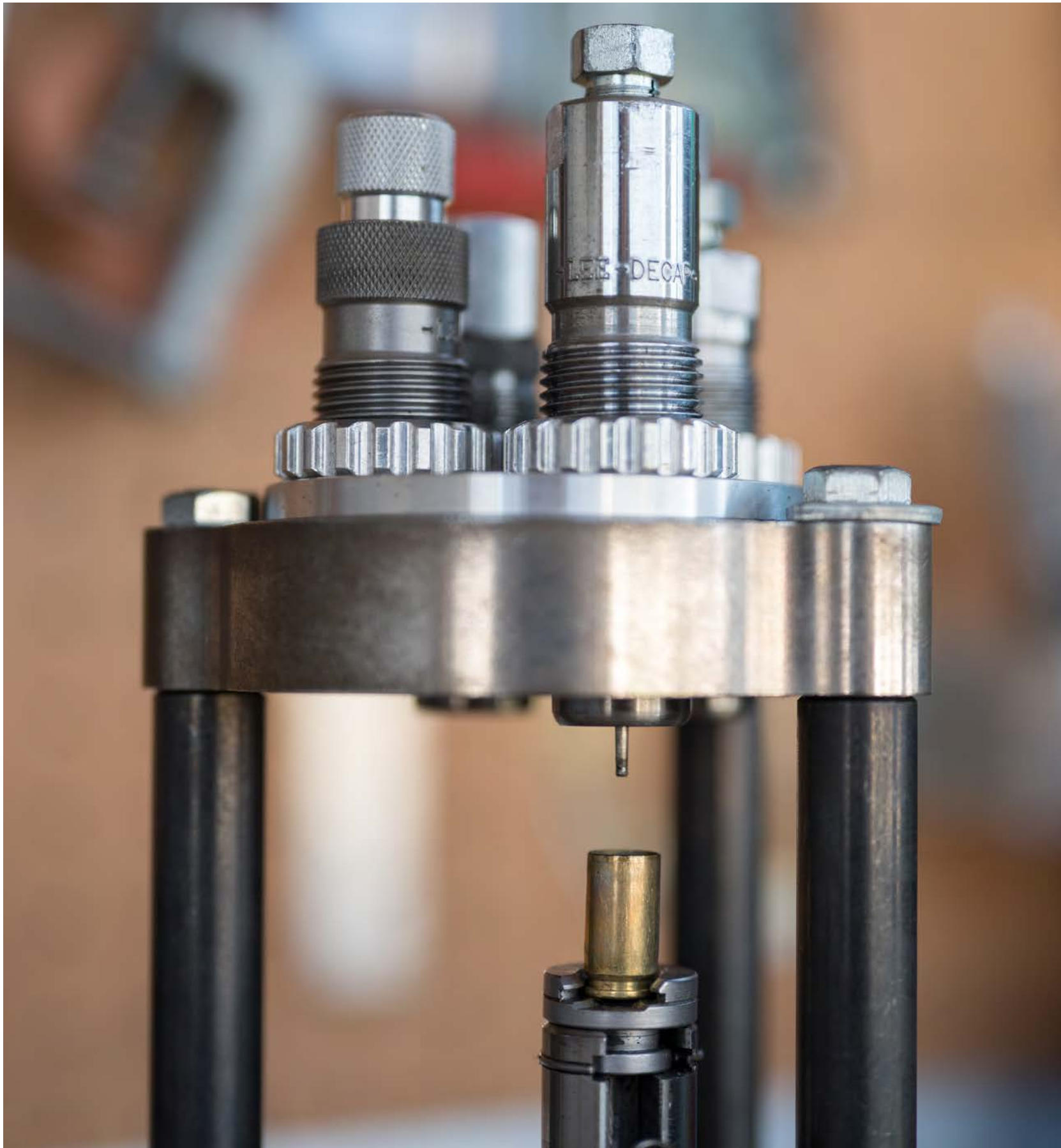
away, while the radio antenna receives the training commands. The removable and rechargeable lithium-ion battery will last for up to 84 hours depending on the settings used, and there is an extended battery pack for up to 136 hours. The collar features customizable LED lights on the front to see your dog in low-light conditions. You can choose different colors, to make tracking multiple dogs easier.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

I've been using the Alpha 300i and TT25 collar for five months now and I've been blown away at how quickly my dog learned to obey the training commands. I jokingly call her robo dog when she has her collar on, because I can let her run through our wooded backyard and tree squirrels every day for training while easily keeping her from going into the neighbor's property. I love the map and compass screens on the Alpha 300i when tracking my dog as well. With the ability to not only command Dixie but also track her, I feel more prepared for this upcoming hunting season than ever before. I honestly don't know how I got along without an e-collar before, and that is the message retailers need to tell dog owners everywhere. A quality e-collar not only protects your pet from danger but gives the owner piece of mind, too.

However, the only way to communicate this to the customer is by knowing what you're talking about. You must know the product line and how it works and use it. Customers who are looking for e-collars are looking for good information and guidance. I was diligent in my research, but not all customers want to shop that way. You'll want to be able to serve that customer before they go somewhere else for the knowledge and purchase. **HR**







# Reloading Basics

Is your sales team knowledgeable enough about reloading to help guide customers who are looking to buy?

BY DAVID REARICK

**W**ith rising ammunition costs and shortages, many individuals are taking up reloading to supply them with highly accurate and customizable ammunition on their terms. For most newbie reloaders, knowing where to start is the hardest part. If you are a retailer who stocks a full line of reloading equipment and supplies, buyers will look to your sales team for recommendations and to extract their knowledge. Even if they don't personally reload, having a grasp of the necessities and upgrades will help ensure that the buyer gets what they need and that your team makes the sale.

## RELOADING KITS

The easiest starting point for beginner reloaders is to buy a basic kit, available from manufacturers like RCBS, Hornady, Lyman and others. As the term "kit" implies, they include almost everything you need to reload ammunition, but with the most basic, entry-level components. Most kits include a press, reloading manual, powder measuring device/scale, priming components, and general hand tools like pocket cleaners, chamfers, etc. For some reloaders, this may be all they ever need, other than caliber-specific dies and shell holders. For other reloaders, this is simply a good starting point that allows them to upgrade over time as their needs change.

In addition to basic kits, some manufacturers offer more advanced kits that include digital scales, powder dispensers, and other more advanced and convenient components. The one caveat to all kits is they don't leave any room for individual choice, and in some cases, components of the kit are quickly swapped out, diminishing the value of the kit and any savings. This is especially true for new reloaders that don't know what they are getting into but quickly find that using a manual scale is slow, tedious and sometimes frustrating.

## RELOADING MANUAL(S)

Every reloader needs a manual, both to find appropriate load data and to provide a step-by-step guide to the process of reloading. The thing about reloading manuals is that one is generally never enough. Many of these books are produced by manufacturers of bullets, like Hornady and Nosler. Both books are excellent, but they also contain load data that is specific — you guessed it — to the bullets they manufacture. If buyers would like a more agnostic manual/book, they can check out Lee or Lyman manuals for less manufacturer/bullet-specific load data and a great reloading resource.

## PRESSES AND DIES

The great news about presses and dies is that, for more than 95% of the available dies and presses, they

photos: istock



all play nicely with each other. This means that RCBS dies will work in a Hornady press and Lyman dies will work in RCBS press, etc. There are a few exceptions, but those generally only occur with custom components.

Die sets consist of either two or three dies. For most rifle calibers, you will get a sizing die and bullet-seating die with each set. For straight wall and handgun cartridges, each set will typically include three dies, including a sizing die, expander die and crimping die.

In terms of selecting a press, there are multiple types of reloading presses: single-stage, turret and progressive. Each press type has specific advantages and disadvantages, mainly based on either their precision or speed.

Single-stage presses are the most common. This style of press loads

*“Every reloader needs a manual, both to find appropriate load data and to provide a step-by-step guide to the process of reloading.”*

one round at a time, and holds only one die at a time, requiring sizing and seating to be done separately and after a die swap, usually as a batch process. These presses generally require priming and powder charging to be done prior to putting the case into the press. Consequently, this style of press is the slowest, but also most common press used for reloading rifle cartridges due to their rigidity and precision.

Turret presses have a top turret that can hold multiple dies at the same time and be indexed accordingly. This setup greatly improves throughput, as users can switch from a sizing die to a seating die with a simple turn of the turret. This is especially helpful for reloading handguns or other cartridges that require a three-die set. Nothing comes for free, and turret presses are generally not regarded to be as strong as a single-stage press, sometimes leading to issues with precision and repeatability. They also only process one round at a time, so speed increases are marginal, unless one cartridge type is being reloading repeatedly.

Progressive presses are generally used by handgun reloaders or for .223 ammunition. This style of press can complete one round per pull of the lever doing everything from automatically loading cases, priming the case, charging the case, and seating

the bullet. There are different options on this style of press that are manufacturer-specific with varying levels of automation. Like the turret, these are generally not as high-precision as a cartridge loaded on the single-stage press, due to the moving parts; however, for most reloaders, they are more than accurate enough.

Note\* - Always remember that each press requires a shell holder, and these are often not interchangeable. If your customer has an RCBS press, they should buy an RCBS shell holder. While some manufacturers' shell holders interchange, it is always better to buy the shell holder made by the same manufacturer as the press, to ensure compatibility.

**ELECTRONIC/AUTOMATED EQUIPMENT**

The great thing about technology is that it can make routine and mundane processes easier and, in some cases, more accurate. For instance, RCBS makes electronic components, including everything from a prep system called the Brass Boss that cleans, chamfers and preps cases for reloading to programmable powder dispensers that accurately dispense



the exact amount of powder required. This type of equipment is sometimes considered a luxury by reloaders who only reload a few hundred rounds a year, but I expect that these same persons also prefer to automate part of their processing, as measuring out powder with a balance scale is both cumbersome and time consuming.

Different types of automated and electronic reloading equipment are available from many manufacturers, but if I had to recommend one piece of upgraded equipment to a reloader, it would be, hands down, an electronic powder dispenser with scale.







The RCBS Chagemaster, Lyman Gen 6, or Hornady Auto Charge Pro are all great choices that increase the speed of reloading throughput while also providing higher precision and repeatability.

#### CASE TRIMMERS

A simple, yet extremely important tool, case trimmers do exactly what their name implies: trim brass cases. This tool is not generally found in a kit, so it is often overlooked. While most cases do not need trimmed every time they are reloaded, after a couple cycles of reloading and firing, a case will stretch and become longer than the recommended maximum length. When this happens, a case trimmer is used to shave off brass from the cartridge neck. All manufacturers make comparable units, but it is important to remember that you need to have a shell holder/plate that matches the brand of the case trimmer. For instance, if you have a

Hornady case trimmer, you should have a caliber-matched Hornady shell holder/plate. It is important to note that case trimmers don't use the same type of shell holder as a press, but most trimmers come with a standard assortment of shell plates and pilots. That said, if you are loading an oddball caliber, you will need to put a trimmer pilot and shell plate that matches your trimmer.

#### HAND TOOLS, SPARE PARTS, & MISC. ITEMS

A reloading bench isn't complete without an array of hand tools and miscellaneous items. While many of these items are used sparingly, having them available will save a lot of aggravation and delays when a situation arises. These items include:

- Case hand priming tool
- Case neck brushes
- Case lube and pad
- Dry lube
- Case chamfer / deburring tool

- Primer pocket cleaning tools
- Calipers for measurement of cases and overall length
- Spare die parts including de-capping pins, lock rings, and set screws
- Stuck-case removal tool
- Bullet puller / hammer
- Cartridge blocks to hold brass during reloading

While many reloaders tend to start out by buying a basic kit, in the long run, kits often contain items that go unused or are replaced by upgraded components. In many cases these upgrades could occur within weeks of reloading their first rounds, especially for those looking for accuracy and repeatability. While these kits are easy to sell because they contain almost everything a new reloader may need, it is good to point out, up front, the shortfalls and potential upgrades that are available. As mentioned above, the one most beneficial upgrade right out of the gate is an electronic powder dispenser that can replace both the manual balance and powder measure kits that are included with most kits. If a reloader considers this to be a near-term upgrade, they should strongly consider building their own custom kit, as they will save themselves money in the long run.

As an example, a new reloader looking to reload rifle ammunition is considering the RSBC Rock Chucker Reloading Kit with an MSRP of \$479.99 that includes everything they need, less a case trimmer. If this individual were to buy all of the same components individually, minus the uniflow powder dispenser and balance, their total cost would be ~\$359.99, saving them \$120. This savings could then be used towards an electronic powder dispenser and scale, which replaces the uniflow powder measure that is generally not

## Three Products to Stock

### RCBS Rock Chucker Supreme Single Stage Reloading Press

A proven performer, this single-stage press is versatile and strong to ensure accuracy and repeatability. This press is part of the Rock Chucker Supreme Master Reloading Kit and isn't just a beginner press, as it remains a valuable piece of even the most experienced reloader's bench. Simple, yet effective, the Rock Chucker is perfect for precision rifle cartridge reloading.

### Lyman GEN 6 Compact Touch Screen Powder System

Key features include a fast three-minute warmup, anti-static and anti-drift technology, and electronic shielding that resists interference from other electronic devices like cell phones, etc. Includes an auto repeat function that drops a charge when pan is reset, dispenses at a rate of 2 grains per second, has a 1/10 grain accuracy, and handles all smokeless powders.

### Hornady Lock-N-Load AP Progressive Press

Long recognized for its durability and flawless functionality, the AP progressive press by Hornady is perfect for high-volume reloading for handgun cartridges. Includes automatic indexing for increased speed and many advanced features to ensure cases are processed with precision each pull of the handle. The Ammo Plant Kit includes an AP press and brings more advanced automation, including a bullet and case feeder.

used by rifle cartridge reloaders anyway, and the clunky manual balance. Electronic powder dispensers range in price from \$300 - \$400 on the low end, making it a much cheaper upgrade to do it now, rather than later. **HR**



# Backpack Torture Test: Victims Survive the Worst

After more abuse to five backpacks than hunters would administer in the field, the results are impressive with these tough, durable packs.

BY ALAN CLEMONS

Hunters looking for a quality backpack typically know how they will use it. The pack may be for short day trips, like a morning or evening sit for whitetails. It may be for longer hunts out West in rocky, sandy desert terrain with cactus and other sticky-pokey plants. Perhaps the pack will be taken into Southern swamps rife with humidity, gumbo mud and early-season humidity. All areas will experience cold temperatures, even in the Southeast.

Hunters may have an idea of what they want or how they'll use it, but one question often arises: Just how tough is this pack, especially for the price? They want to know what it will stand up to, what it can handle. Backpack manufacturers typically put their products through the paces with staff members or ambassadors who use them for a year, perhaps longer. By the time these packs hit the market, they've been on hunts and whatever internal testing the company does. Joe Lunchbucket looking at packs and prices still has questions.

Being able to relay positive information about a pack is helpful, as with any product. If a customer wants a bow, gun, broadheads, sleeping bag, cooler or something else, they're looking to you for feedback. Buying something on the internet is easy. Getting reliable information and service is more important, especially if you can provide specific examples.

Last autumn, I emailed representa-



tives of several backpack manufacturers to let them know about this story for Hunting Retailer. I said I'd be torturing the backpacks — the torture was undetermined at the time of the email. If they wanted in, please send a pack of their choosing that hunters would consider. We didn't ask for the biggest or most expensive; only whatever a hunter would consider. If the company wanted in, great, and if not, no problem.

I had ideas in mind about the tests

that hunters probably wouldn't encounter. The majority of hunters don't treat their backpacks terribly, although sometimes a backpack will encounter something gnarly. So, I needed to be a bad boy. For example, hunters in Texas and further west encounter sand, grit and cactus. I pondered and conjured a bit. This would be fun.

## THE PACKS

Five packs were sent, all brand new with the tags on them: the Mystery

↑ The victims, brand new before testing, clockwise starting with top left: Mystery Ranch, Sitka, UTG, Alps Outdoorz, and 5.11.

Ranch Metcalf 50, 5.11 Tactical Rush 24 2.0, Alps Outdoorz Pursuit, UTG Overbound and Sitka Mountain Hauler 2700. I was familiar with all the brands and have used, at times, packs from each company except for Mystery Ranch. Here's a







↑ Baseball bat damage to the clasp on the Mystery Ranch pack.



↑ Baseball bat casualties on the 5.11 Rush pack clasps and zipper pull tabs.



↑ Baseball bat damage on the UTG Overland Pack.

little about each one:

**Mystery Ranch Metcalf 50** - This pack weighs 5 pounds and sports 3,050 cubic inches of storage along with Mystery Ranch's Ultra Light MT Frame. I've heard good things for years about Mystery Ranch, and was highly impressed with this pack. Along with hunting, the Metcalf 50 could easily handle weekend camping outings or vacation travel. [www.mysteryranch.com/metcalf-50-pack](http://www.mysteryranch.com/metcalf-50-pack)

**5.11 Rush 24 2.0** - A hybrid for field or daily use and available in several sizes and color configurations, from muted shades to camo. The Rush 24 2.0 has a 37-liter capacity and padded 15-inch laptop sleeve. It's solid for office use or travel, and tough enough to handle outdoors challenges in all seasons. A concealed compartment on the interior face doubles for CCW or special items. Easily adjustable padded shoulder sleeves are nice. [www.511tactical.com](http://www.511tactical.com)

**ALPS OutdoorZ Pursuit** - Wonderfully quiet and soft material, and light at 4.7 pounds, the Pursuit has a monstrous capacity of about 2,700 cubic inches. It carries more when using the outer straps. It has an orga-

nization shelf pocket, D-ring clip for hanging, quiver holders, drop-down pocket for a bow or gun, blaze orange rain cover, and center aluminum rib in the padded back. Compatible with fluid bladders for long outings. [www.alpsdoutdoorz.com](http://www.alpsdoutdoorz.com)

**UTG Overbound Pack** - If not for the Molle and hook-and-loop fabric on the front, the Overbound Pack would be about as inconspicuous as a grandmother at a librarian conference. Plain is good, though. It's tough enough for daily use with laptops or on a work site, or out in the field for hunting. I've used an Overbound for both situations the last couple of years. Mine has been to Europe, Singapore, Canada, Bali and throughout the U.S., shoved over or under seats on planes, and tossed in mud, blinds, stands and trucks. The Overbound Pack has 600D nylon construction, reinforced heavy-gauge stitching, multiple pockets internal and external, dedicated and a padded 15-inch laptop sleeve. [www.leapers.com](http://www.leapers.com)

**Sitka Mountain Hauler 2700** - Its sleek profile includes a molded, triple-density foam waist belt and

robust shoulder suspension to help with heavy loads. An array of pockets, inside and out, stow gear and essentials. Velcro panels on the waist belt accommodate a wide range of aftermarket accessories. It's available in Optifade camo or Deep Lichen, supports up to 45 pounds, weighs a wispy 3.5 pounds, and can handle a hydration bladder. [www.sitkagear.com](http://www.sitkagear.com)

The Sitka, Alps OutdoorZ and Mystery Ranch packs are specifically designed for hunting. I asked reps with Leapers and 5.11 Tactical if they'd be interested in submitting the Overbound and Rush packs. I consider these to be hybrids, capable of double-duty for work or vacation travel as well as for hunting. Both are big enough and adjustable enough to handle hunting accessories including calls, snacks, beverages and seasonal items (winter gloves, or an early-season Thermacell, for example). They've seen duty in waterfowl blinds, too, for toting boxes of ammo and gear.

### THE TESTING

After going over each pack, checking zippers and looking inside all the

pockets, I tossed them outside in the winter. We don't get much snow and ice in the Southeast, but it's a depressing time of year. All these bags are built to handle seasonal situations, so none of that weather caused any problems.

On into spring, the bags put up with rain, sun, some heat, cold weather again, and so on. Nothing new, no issues. Zippers all worked, nothing amiss. Hunters typically don't leave their pack outdoors 24/7 anyway, right? It goes into storage, the bunkhouse or cabin, or is in a stow box in the truck.

Finally, on a nice spring day, our grown son's old aluminum baseball



↑ A selection of the author's torture tools.

bat got put into use for the first time in more than 15 years. The little blue monster (the bat, not our son), delivered some solid whacks back in the day. It was time to put it into use again. Each backpack got 50 overhead smacks with the bat. I haven't swung a bat 250 times in more than 40 years, but each one made solid contact. I could've been an extra as an enforcer in a mob movie.

After beating them, I attached





Nite-Ize S-Biner carabiners to a 20-foot chain and attached each pack to a carabiner. The chain then was attached to a concrete block, and everything was hurled into a pond. The Sitka 2700, with its two vertical front pouches, held a couple of bricks to weigh it down. Guess what? All those suckers float, thanks to the abundance of foam padding. I retrieved the packs, unzipped them, tossed them all back in and they still floated. Even after pushing them under with a stick to fill with water, they still floated. Impressive. So, I left them like that for several days, waterlogged and sort of floating in the hot pond water.

Who runs over their backpack? I did, repeatedly, with my Toyota Tundra. After retrieving the packs and making sure none had fish or snakes in them, I lined them up in the pasture and drove over them. Back

and forth, five, six, seven times each. I lost count. Who runs over their backpack? It's possible, of course, to have an accident. Who runs over one eight or 10 times? Me.

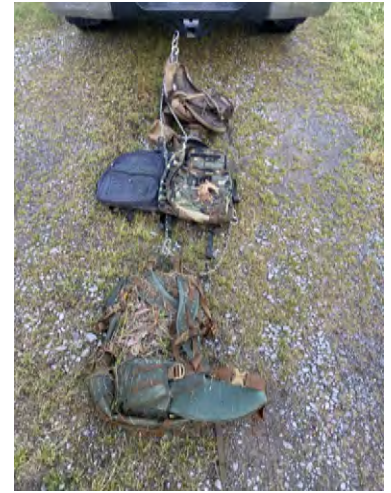
But wait, there's more.

The packs still were attached to the chain and carabiners, so I connected the chain to my truck hitch. Time for a ride, boys! The property I was on has a rocky road, fire ant mounds, a pile of gravel and sand, mud and various weeds or grasses. The latter includes some with sticky sap or something. After dragging the bags around on a grand tour, they looked like yard waste. When I got home and tossed them in our driveway, rocks fell out of a couple. I picked up the UTG Overbound one morning and ants began scurrying away.

The grass- and dirt-fouled packs lay on our concrete driveway for a



↑ Each pack got run over by a Toyota Tundra multiple times.



↑ Dragging the packs behind the truck left them looking like "yard waste."



↑ The packs handled a pond soaking like champs — they all floated, even after several days.



month in the sun and rain. I'd flip or shift them occasionally. The sun's ultraviolet rays aren't good for fabrics — natural or synthetic. Our high temperatures hit the 80s during that time, although the mildew-inducing humidity never got too bad. Boo.

The final test involved coating the still-dirty bags with sand, giving each a good shake, and testing the zippers. I also looked to see if sand got inside. Would a hunter's backpack encounter all this abuse, some of it as over-the-top as it is? Doubtful. But that's the point, and here's what I discovered about the bags.

**THE PROS**

Each bag had several common positives, foremost being comfort during use. It's challenging for some hunters to find a pack with adjustable shoulder and waist straps, padding that doesn't rub or chafe, and enough room for gear. Fortunately, top manufacturers are doing a greater job with their designs.

Each pack in our test has ample pockets for large and small items. The larger packs — Alps, Sitka and Mystery Ranch — can handle more or bigger items, such as boots, layering clothes or gear, and a thermos or Yeti. Zippers on all packs worked easily and consistently, even after the grass-dirt-sand abuse. It's frustrating if a zipper doesn't work; users want to close or open a pocket every time without fail.

As mentioned above, each pack floats. I was surprised, even after they had been in the pond for several days. I figured after soaking up water they'd at least half-submerge or maybe sink. Nope. Even the Sitka with the bricks didn't sink. I shouldn't have been surprised about this due to the amount of padding, but I was.

All the packs are pretty quiet, especially the Alps Pursuit. Its fabric is soft, hardly making any noise when brushing against things in the woods. The Rush and Overland are more rigid fabric and are a bit more noisy. The Mystery Ranch and Sitka packs have minor scratchy-scratchy noise if brushed against limbs, but nothing terrible.





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Each pack has solid add-ons, such as the grab handle on the Mystery Ranch or pockets on the Rush and Overland. Stick a pen, lip balm, EDC light and Air Pods in one and you know exactly where they are. The Alps pack's "shelf" is great in a tree so you can access the internal without having to frequently zip-close-zip-close. A nice plus with the Sitka 2700 is the internal zippered pocket for keys, phone, wallet or other stash-stuff. Another is the oversized waist belt buckle; it's easy to use even with gloves. Also, the heat-shrink zipper tabs are bomb-proof, easy to grasp and quiet.

Packrat hunters who take "just in case" items, or who need more, will love the Mystery Ranch, Sitka and Alps packs. Minimalists will appreciate the Overland and Rush 24 packs. Myriad options exist for hunting and outdoors use with all these packs. For a general, affordable do-all pack for the majority of whitetail hunters throughout the country, the Alps Pursuit would get my nod.

**THE CONS**

After each test, I examined the packs to see what worked or didn't, if anything was torn or broken, and if it was still in usable condition. With exception of a few things, all packs still are good to go after months of testing.

Being left in the pond didn't do anything other than get them soggy. Running over them with my truck squeezed out the water and didn't yield any negative results. I'm sure if I'd put some bricks in the packs and then drove over them, it might have damaged the shells or zippers. Maybe next time. Dragging them through the pasture, rocks and such only resulted in dirty appearances.

Sun exposure slightly faded the fabric on the Alps Pursuit and Mys-



↑ All packs passed the sand-in-the-zippers test without sticking or breaking.

tery Ranch Metcalf; for a hunter, the slight discoloration wouldn't matter. None of the bags stunk or smelled mildewed, even after the pond soak and repeatedly being rained on in the driveway. Sand on the zippers? Minimal issues, but all the zippers worked after a thorough shaking. The Sitka and Mystery Ranch zippers are sealed when closed, which is a huge plus. Water and grit won't penetrate.

The baseball bat whack-a-pack yielded immediate feedback:

UTG Overland: One poly zipper cord pull was sliced into; all zippers worked, albeit not as easily.

5.11 Rush 24 2.0: Hard plastic zipper tab pulls broke immediately into multiple pieces; one zipper was slightly deformed, but they all worked.

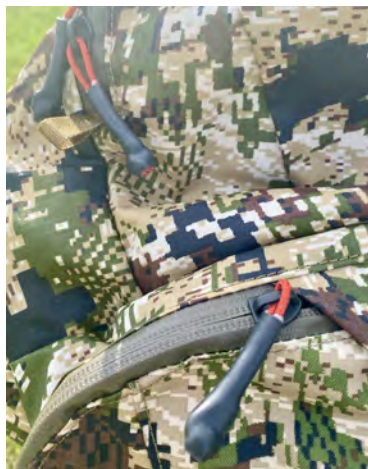
Alps Pursuit: No visible damage.

Sitka 2700: No visible damage.

Mystery Ranch Metcalf 50: Two plastic buckles broke, one on the 40th whack. The waist belt clasp and internal bar on the top grab handle broke, but both still worked.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

What hunter abuses a backpack with



↑ No damage to the Sitka pack zippers even after the sand, drag, pond and baseball bat torture tests.

these kinds of crazy tests? No one. I've hunted with packs for three decades and never have run over one multiple times, dunked it in a lake, beat the snot out of it with a baseball bat or dragged it behind a truck. While hunting out West, I've had bags get grit in the zippers, along with cactus spines or Devil's spawn sand spurs. That's common. In the Southeast, the mélange includes briars, locust trees, beggar lice and more.

What stood out during testing, though, despite a few things here and there, was how all these bags withstood these above-and-beyond challenges. They're designed well and are made with good materials. They meet the stated purpose without a problem. Prices range from "Hmmm, not bad" to "Wow, OK," but that span fits customer budgets and desires, too.

It's good to have options for customers seeking top-quality gear. Whether they treat their packs with kid gloves or are more rough-and-tumble than the average guy, offer solid advice and a nice selection to increase your sales this season. **HR**

**Why Selling Bags for Trail Cams Make Sense**

Back when I used one or two trail cameras, it was easy to stick one in a pack or carry it into the woods to hang on a tree. Now that I have about a dozen in use, having a good bag to carry them and other accessories makes sense.

If you sell game cameras and accessories for them, consider adding the **Trail Seeker backpack from UTG**. It is specifically designed to carry up to nine cameras and includes a 24-slot SD card holder. The top of the pack also has a large storage compartment on top for other items, such as zip-ties, tape or straps.

The Trail Seeker is made from 600D waterproof polyester. It has reinforced stitching, a spiked rubber bottom so it will sit upright, and a 28-liter capacity. The main storage area has removable hook-and-loop dividers for easy configuration of larger cameras or other gear. When not being used for game cameras, the padded Trail Seeker could be configured for camera bodies and lenses.

Overall dimensions are 14x9x19, with a weight of 4.13 pounds. It has several pouches, elastic loops and zippered pockets to hold other items. The Trail Seeker has adjustable shoulder straps, and a breathable, padded moisture-wicking back panel.

I didn't put the Trail Seeker through the torture tests for the other packs, but have used it this spring with my cameras. It's quite handy, and could be a good seller this summer or fall for your big-game hunters.

See it at [www.leapers.com](http://www.leapers.com).





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# Tech Advancements Spurring on America's Next Generation of Hunters

Hunting remains one of America's greatest pastimes, but using new technology is key to recruiting and retaining America's next generation of hunters.

BY MATT MANDA

Little compares to the sights, smells and sounds that surround you when on a hunt. Whether it's walking corn fields, brushy meadows or woodland edges for pheasant or sitting high up in a stand surrounded by woods waiting for a deer to pass by, the experience is unlike any other. Especially if it's a success and you don't head home empty-handed.

These reasons — among countless others — are why hunting has always been, and remains today, one of America's greatest pastimes.

But with the availability of so many other opportunities to fill "free time" and newer and younger generations opting for non-hunting recreational activities, recruiting and retaining younger hunters to keep America's hunting traditions heritage alive and well is more important now than ever before.

That's why using new technology to maintain old pastimes of heading out to the fields, marshes and woods for hunting is such a key aspect to continuing a healthy hunter population.

In that regard, New York is on the right path.

## CONNECTING MENTORS ONLINE

Once you travel a few miles north of New York City, the Empire State landscape changes dramatically and offers some of the most beautiful (and bountiful) opportunities for



outdoorsmen and women. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC) is now offering an easy-to-use outdoor recreation web portal to make it easier for younger New Yorkers, who might not have easy access to hunting opportunities or existing family members who regularly participate in hunting activities, to match up with mentors who do.

According to *Outdoor News*, NYDEC launched the Learn to Hunt website as a way to connect novices with experienced hunters who will

help them develop the skills needed to be safe and successful when afield. Mentored hunts will allow those younger (or older) hunters with little or no hunting experience to learn additional firearm safety and hunting skills while building confidence under the guidance of more experienced hunters. In addition, first-time hunters can even find mentored hunting events in New York and register for those learn-to-hunt opportunities on the new Mentored Hunt Program registration webpage. It's a great example of utilizing new technology

to advance and promote a revered pastime to ensure the traditions and heritage of hunting continues.

"One of the greatest hurdles to newly certified hunters going afield for the first time is the lack of a mentor or a support system to help them understand the basics of a successful hunt," outgoing DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said. The Learn to Hunt NYDEC webtool hopes to remedy those hardships.

## RIGHT ON TIME

The webtool to nurture hunters in





New York couldn't come at a better time. For all the bad gun control legislation the New York state legislature rams through, they did pass a three-year youth hunting pilot program in 2021, set to conclude this year. The law allowed NYDEC to create a county opt-in program allowing 12- and 13-year-olds to hunt deer with an experienced adult mentor in eligible areas of the state. It also required NYDEC to study each of the three years of youth hunting and report back to the state legislature. The data from the second year is promising.

After the 2023 hunting season concluded, more than 9,400 12- and 13-year-old hunters in New York, representing nearly 9,200 families, participated. Those youth hunters submitted more than 1,800 deer harvest reports, more than the first year of the program. Not only were the hunters, and the hunts, overwhelmingly successful, they were also safe.

"DEC's review of data collected also shows youth hunters followed safety guidelines and showed respect for wildlife and their fellow hunters while afield. I'm proud to see that New York's environment is in good hands with this next generation of environmental stewards," Seggos remarked at the time.

Right at the time when it's needed most, it seems the next generation of New York hunters are flourishing, and the additional tools and technology will only help.

### SIMILAR SENTIMENTS

Nearly 4,500 miles away from Albany, New York, in Anchorage, Alaska, the sentiments are similar. Alaskans are born and raised with a strong connection to the environment, and hunting plays an outsized role in family and community traditions, as well as livelihoods. Young Alaskans are taught early on the critical



importance of firearms, not only for subsistence and survival, but also for self-defense.

U.S. Rep. Mary Peltola (D-Alaska) recently spoke in front of dozens of firearm industry leaders during a breakfast conversation for the 2024 NSSF Congressional Fly-In. She relayed several stories about her upbringing and how hunting and responsible firearm education and training is vital in Alaska, and also how those lessons are entirely foreign to so many who live in big cities, where children are not taught about firearms.

"It's been a real pleasure for me to

be able to express that history and upbringing to people who haven't grown up with firearms," Rep. Peltola told industry members. "I was able to share those experiences with a room of very liberal people in New York City and they were shocked by this."

That was similar to comments Rep. Peltola offered during a Congressional hearing last year. The topic of the hearing was Pittman-Robertson funding — the nearly 90-year-old excise tax paid by firearm and ammunition manufacturers that supports conservation and wildlife management in the United States. To date, Pittman-Robertson excise tax

dollars from the firearm industry has contributed over \$27 billion, when adjusted for inflation.

"I just appreciate the opportunity to put a plug in for the many, many, many Americans who are responsible gun owners," Congresswoman Peltola said at the hearing. "You look at some of the tragedies that are occurring, and those aren't hunters, those aren't kids that have grown up with hunting and the good values that, I think, hunting and hunting families provide."

### ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

At the time, NSSF data revealed a significant number of Americans buying firearms during the coronavirus pandemic listed their interest in hunting as a reason for their purchase. That also meant millions of Americans took up hunting-related activities and took to the woods and fields. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) revealed some exciting news that all hunters can celebrate. New data showed the rise in hunting interest wasn't fleeting and those Americans stuck it out and are now full-fledged hunters. The data showed that 14.4 million people over the age of 6 participated in hunting.

New York isn't the only state with a webtool to help connect new hunters with seasoned ones. There are numerous options available to help encourage and grow the new waves of Americans taking to the fields, marshes and woods for some time well spent out on a hunt.

There's never a bad time to head out for a hunt. And it's clear today, there is no shortage of opportunities for knowledgeable, seasoned hunters to pair up with novice ones, young or old, to encourage them to keep it up and continue the cycle of America's greatest pastime. **HR**



BY GORDY KRAHN

# HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS

## BARNETT DEMUN ACCU STRIKE PRO CROSSBOW

With an overall weight of only 2.3 pounds, the Barnett Demun Accu Strike Pro is a powerful break-action crossbow pistol designed for shooting and hunting — with an impressive arrow velocity of 210 fps from a 6-inch power stroke. The patented two-stage break-action reloading mechanism decreases draw weight by approximately 50 percent, allowing quick and effortless reloading. With its diamond knurl soft grip and adjustable red/green illuminated reflex sight, the crossbow offers impressive control and feel, while maintaining deadly accuracy. The Accu Strike Pro comes with five 7-inch HyperBolts and Demun sling. Limb/string assembly required. MSRP: \$149.99 [www.barnettcrossbows.com](http://www.barnettcrossbows.com)



## CENTERPOINT CPS2060 SPOTTING SCOPE

The CenterPoint CPS2060 Spotting Scope offers a powerful 20-60X magnification range and a large 60mm objective lens for exceptional clarity. It is equipped with dual Picatinny rails, so users can easily attach accessories such as a red-dot sight, which can provide faster target acquisition due to its 1X magnification and wider field of view compared to the spotting scope alone. The 60mm fully multicoated objective lens maximizes light transmission, delivering bright and clear images even in low-light conditions. Fast focus and slow focus knobs ensure smooth and precise adjustments for both quick target acquisition and fine-tuned viewing. The CPS2060 includes a carry case and tabletop tripod. MSRP: \$109.99 [www.crosman.com](http://www.crosman.com)



## CUPPED WATERFOWL GUIDE BAG

Cupped Waterfowl offers the perfect bag to keep waterfowl hunters fully equipped and organized in the field. The Guide Bag features an exterior shell box and thermos holder as well as a waterproof interior cell phone pocket. Neoprene shell loops provide easy access to ammo, and a built-in tree hook allows for keeping gear within arm's reach. The Guide Bag measures 4x16x12 inches and is available in Mossy Oak Bottomland and Realtree Max-7 camo patterns for enhanced concealment. MSRP: \$49.99 [www.cupped.com](http://www.cupped.com)



## DEAD RINGER HATCHET BROADHEAD

Dead Ringer's Two-Blade Hatchet Broadhead was designed for optimal flight and hard-hitting penetration. CNC-machined of carbon steel with razor-sharp stainless-steel blades, the rear-deploying broadhead produces devastating terminal performance with a 2-inch entrance wound and 2-inch exit wound for quick recovery of game. The 100-grain Hatchet features a clipless retention system for reliable performance and achieves field-tip accuracy. It is engineered to reliably perform with arrows generating velocities up to 450 fps. MSRP: \$44.99/Three-pack [www.deadringerhunting.com](http://www.deadringerhunting.com)

## RINEHART WHITETAIL DARTBOARD

Rinehart Targets recently announced the launch of its innovative line of Game Room Hunt Series Dartboards, designed for outdoor enthusiasts to bring the thrill of the hunt indoors. Utilizing the same self-healing technology as its archery targets, these new dartboards offer a unique way for archers to switch from arrows to darts and continue practicing their aim in the comfort of their homes. The Whitetail Dartboard, the first model in the new series, measures 20x28x4 inches and comes with three darts. Rinehart Targets plans to release more exciting models, including lifelike bear and turkey designs, in the near future. The detailed board design showcases a deer with vital target rings similar to a Rinehart Target, with an added traditional dartboard bull's-eye. MSRP: \$129.99 [www.rinehart3d.com](http://www.rinehart3d.com)



## STARLINE 8.6 BLACKOUT BRASS

Starline Brass has recently added the 8.6 Blackout to its growing lineup of high-quality brass, available for much less than the price of comparable quality cases. Utilizing a .338-inch diameter bullet, the 8.6 Blackout was designed as a suppressed, subsonic round capable of firing a heavier projectile than the .300 Blackout. It can also be used in supersonic applications. At Starline, multiple hand and machine inspections ensure cosmetic and dimensional characteristics meet the highest level of exacting standards. All Starline cases are contained between each step of the manufacturing process to maintain quality and consistency. Several companies offer both bolt-action and AR-10-style rifles chambered in 8.6 Blackout. MSRP: \$178/250 rounds; \$332.50/500 rounds; \$621/1,000 rounds [www.starlinebrass.com](http://www.starlinebrass.com)







### SPANDAU S2 SHOTGUN

Spandau Shotguns, a division of SDS Imports, recently launched the Spandau S2 — a 12-gauge shotgun that comes in four different configurations for turkey, waterfowl and upland hunters. This inertia driven shotgun features an enlarged loading gate for easier loading with gloves on in cool conditions and accepts Benelli pattern extensions and choke tubes. A fiber-optic front sight makes it extremely easy to find point of aim, especially in low-light conditions. The Spandau S2 is available in four different configurations. Two are designed specifically for turkey hunters and are equipped with 24-inch barrels and two different finishes, Black and Real-tree APX camouflage. For waterfowlers and upland hunters, 28-inch barrels versions are available in Black and Realtree Max7. MSRP: \$399.99 [www.spandauarms.com](http://www.spandauarms.com)



### FEDERAL AMMUNITION FUSION TIPPED AMMO

Federal has launched an all-new product line of ammunition: Fusion Tipped. The design offers the same excellent terminal performance as the original bonded soft points but with a polymer tip that increases ballistic coefficient, flattens trajectories and boosts energy for better accuracy and extended effective range. The Fusion Tipped design offers the same excellent terminal performance as the original but with a polymer tip that reduces wind drift and drop and delivers more energy downrange. Paired with a skived nose cavity, the polymer tip also helps initiate consistent, lethal expansion. The all-new product line is offered in eight cartridge options and is now available at select dealers. MSRP: \$52.99-\$72.99/Box of 20 [www.federalpremium.com](http://www.federalpremium.com)

### RITON 3 PRIMAL 3-15X44MM LW RIFLESCOPE

Riton has expanded its extensive line of quality riflescopes in the hunting-focused Primal line with the all-new 3 Primal 3-15x44mm LW (light-weight) model, offering a unique and focused scope for hunters of all types, in virtually any landscape. This optic is a game changer for hunters who prioritize weight management and long-range accuracy. With a 30mm chassis, it weighs less than 21 ounces and the XRP (Extended Range Plex) reticle provides several holdover aimpoints for long-range accuracy. Also new to the Riton riflescope line is the 5 Primal 2-12x44mm IR, featuring the popular Riton RDH reticle; a clean, open reticle with an illuminated dot in the center. MSRP: \$749.99/3 Primal 3-15x44mm LW; \$849.99/5 Primal 2-12x44mm IR [www.ritonoptics.com](http://www.ritonoptics.com)



### VIKTOS BLODJEGER FLANNEL JACKET

The traditional flannel shirtjacket gets a high-tech overhaul with Viktos' new U.S. veteran designed and developed Blodjeger Flannel Jacket, featuring a robust poly/spandex chassis and interior stretch panels that allow for a dynamic range of motion without a bulky fit. Fitelite insulation in the body and sleeves provides warmth and comfort, and reinforced forearm and shoulder overlays ensure it lasts long enough to become an heirloom. Gunvent zippers allow instant access to any hip-mounted sidearm, and zippered hand and chest pockets help keep trail mix and important documents safe and secure. Hidden chest snaps eliminate the possibility of snagging on bowstrings or rifle stocks when it's time to punch in and go to work. MSRP: \$195 [www.viktos.com](http://www.viktos.com)



### ZEISS V8 NA RIFLESCOPES

Zeiss' V8 NA Riflescopes were designed and configured for North American hunters. The V8 NA 2.8-20x56mm and 4.8-35x60mm scopes feature 30/34mm main tubes, respectively, MOA settings and a multi-turn, external elevation turret with Ballistic Stop. The riflescopes provide exceptional optical performance, an extra-large eye box and two reticle options that offer an ultra-fine center dot with daylight visible illumination. The V8 NA riflescopes deliver precise images with 92 percent light transmission to the eye. Zeiss T\* premium light transmission coatings guarantee brilliant images and enable shooters to see finer and cleaner details even under challenging lighting conditions. A LotuTec coating ensures a clear view in all weather. MSRP: \$3,899.99/2.8-20x56mm; \$3,999.99/4.8-35x60mm [www.zeiss.com](http://www.zeiss.com)



### SAVAGE AXIS 2 XP RIFLE

The all-new redesigned Axis 2 XP Bolt-Action Rifle from Savage Arms offers hunters even better out-of-the-box performance at the same affordable price — loaded with features that deliver tack-driving accuracy with every shot, including the user-adjust-

able AccuTrigger and thread-in headspacing. It is available in OD Green, Gray and FDE in a wide variety of full-size, left-hand and compact models along with a complete spectrum of popular hunting calibers. The updated bolt handle, with a sleek, ergonomic design, delivers on functionality to enhance user control and comfort during operation, especially in adverse conditions. The rifle is equipped with a factory mounted and bore-sighted 3-9x40mm scope with fully multicoated lenses, tool-less windage and elevation adjustments and a detachable box magazine. MSRP: \$549 [www.savagearms.com](http://www.savagearms.com)



## HUNTING RETAILER GEAR ROUNDUP

# Bolt-Action Hunting Rifles

Generations of hunters have relied on the tried-and-true bolt-action rifle for pursuing their outdoor dreams — and for good reasons.

BY GORDY KRAHN

**H**unting rifles are designed to serve a wide range of applications for pursuing game both big and small, and that's why they come in such a wide assortment of flavors — pump actions, lever actions, single shots and MSRs, to name a few. But, perhaps, none are more popular than the bolt action. This tried-and-true platform made its first appearance in the early 1800s, and was quickly embraced as an effective and trustworthy infantry gun by armies worldwide. The combination of this durable and reliable action and centerfire cartridges allowed soldiers to sustain a high rate of lethal fire — something they couldn't achieve with the muzzleloaders common to the period. By World War I, all Western nations had adopted the bolt-action rifle as the foot soldier's instrument of war.

The attributes of these fine firearms — superior accuracy, reduced weight, fast rate of fire, controlled loading — were not lost on hunters, especially those who came home from war having fought with and even slept with these trusty

rifles. And even with the rise in popularity of the AR-platform rifle for hunting — the guns modern-day warriors are most familiar with — the bolt action remains the choice of a good many hunters. But be aware, savvy salesperson: Many potential customers are brand loyal, which means if you don't have what they want, they might very well take their money elsewhere. And that's why it's uber important to stock a wide selection of makes and models — to assure that no serious firearms shopper leaves your store or clicks off your website without making a purchase.

Make no mistake: While gun sales have softened somewhat in recent years, there is still a strong desire to own quality hunting rifles. So be sure you're locked and loaded to capitalize on this market by stocking the latest and greatest in the bolt-action firearms category. Here are a dozen top-shelf examples your gun-buying crowd will want to check out when they come knocking on your storefront door or visit your website.



### Benelli Lupo HPR

The Lupo HPR Bolt-Action Rifle from Benelli takes precision long-range shooting to new heights in a platform that is comfortably suited for big-game hunting — guaranteed to deliver five-shot  $\frac{3}{4}$ -MOA performance. To achieve this level of accuracy, the Lupo HPR addresses both the “hard” and the “soft” mechanics. The hard mechanics center on the rifle's free-floating, heavy-contour, straight-fluted Crio barrel. Assisting

the barrel's accuracy enhancements is a robust receiver fitted with a stout, three-lug sculpted bolt featuring a quick 60-degree bolt throw. As for the soft mechanics, an all-new stock system developed specifically for the Lupo HPR takes many of the features typically found in a long-range precision chassis rifle system and employs them in a platform more suited to the hunter. MSRP: \$2,949. [www.benelliusa.com](http://www.benelliusa.com)







### Christensen Arms Evoke

The new-for-2024 Christensen Arms Evoke is the rifle maker's first sub-\$1,000 bolt-action rifle, making it an ideal onramp for those who aren't familiar with Christensen's quality and performance. Obviously, at this price point this isn't a carbon fiber rifle; it has a 416R stainless-steel suppressor-ready barrel with an RFR-style brake and synthetic stock. But it has a lot of shooter-friendly features, such as a proprietary

Christensen Arms action with a six-lug bolt and 60-degree bolt throw, detachable magazine, hybrid grip angle, premium adjustable trigger, integrated Picatinny rail, swivel sling studs and adjustable cheek riser and optics-ready base on select models. The rifle comes in four configurations, all of which feature CA's sub-MOA guarantee and lifetime warranty. MSRP: Starting at \$898.99. [www.christensenarms.com](http://www.christensenarms.com)



### Faxon Firearms FX7 Pershing Bolt Action

Meticulously designed and crafted, the FX7 Pershing Rifle from Faxon Firearms redefines the standards of accuracy and durability in the world of precision firearms. These rifles find their home in an MDT/Faxon Firearms co-branded rifle chassis, accompanied by an MDT Skeleton stock finished in a gray Cerakote. Equipped with a honed and lapped 416-R 5R button rifled stainless-steel barrel and chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor, the FX7 features

a 70-degree bolt lift, integrated recoil lug, 20 MOA Picatinny rail and six-lug configuration arranged in two rings of three. It is compatible with Remington 700 short-action stocks and chassis systems, is equipped with a Triggertech Rem. 700 primary trigger and accepts AICS and AW magazines. MSRP: \$2,600. [www.faxonfirearms.com](http://www.faxonfirearms.com)



### Franchi Momentum Elite

The Momentum Elite, Franchi's headliner bolt-action rifle for discerning big-game hunters, is now available in .30-06 Springfield and .450 Bushmaster chamberings, sporting a 22-inch free-float barrel dressed in Midnight Bronze Cerakote paired with a True Timber Strata camo Evolved Ergonom-X stock. Franchi Momentum series rifles feature an exceptional ergonomic fit, precision manufacturing and factory-guaranteed 1 MOA accuracy when used with premium ammunition. Franchi engineers developed the Ergonom-X

stock for comfort and fit, making it the perfect bridge between the shooter and the barreled action. Additional features include the crisp and adjustable Relia trigger group, one-piece Dependa bolt with its short 60-degree throw, a free-floating, cold-hammer-forged chrome-molybdenum barrel, removable muzzle brake and TSA recoil pad. MSRP: \$999. [www.franchiusa.com](http://www.franchiusa.com)





### Howa Hera H7 Bolt-Action

Shooting enthusiasts will not want to miss Legacy Sports International's addition to its firearms lineup, the Howa Hera H7. This affordable bolt-action rifle comes chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor and .308 Win., sporting three different color options — Tan, OD Green and Black — and is equipped with a modern and easy-to-use Howa short-action chassis system. Made from fiberglass-reinforced polymer, with alumi-

num V-block bedding and an aluminum fore-stock, this stock system comes with two spacers, a polymer cheek piece support and two AICS-compatible five-round magazines. The H7 stock system also has M-Lok mount points for attaching accessories. The Hera H7 is available with three different barrel options: 24-inch heavy, 24-inch carbon-wrapped and 22-inch standard. MSRP: \$749-\$1,219. [www.legacysports.com](http://www.legacysports.com)



### Mossberg Patriot LR Hunter

The Mossberg Patriot LR (long range) Hunter is available in four popular hunting calibers — .308 Win., 6.5mm Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC and .300 Win. Mag. It is based on Mossberg's twin-lug, push-feed machined-steel action and features a standard contour, free-floating barrel with an 11-degree match crown with straight-edge fluting and is threaded for the addition of a suppressor. Its button-rifled barrel is constructed of

carbon steel with a matte blue finish, and a top-mounted Picatinny rail accommodates mounting and repositioning optics. Completing the standard features of this classic bolt action are an oversized bolt handle, Mossberg's Lightning 2- to 7-pound user-adjustable trigger and a stock designed for comfort and stability in the field or at the range. MSRP: \$847. [www.mossberg.com](http://www.mossberg.com)



### Savage 110 Pro Pursuit

Designed with "Farming the Wild" host Mike Robinson and crafted for those who spend time chasing wild game, this specialized Savage Model 110 seamlessly blends precision and reliability to meet the demands of serious hunters. With nine carefully selected calibers and a 20-inch Proof Research carbon fiber wrapped stainless-steel barrel, it strikes the ideal balance between stopping power and accuracy. The lightweight Grayboe Phoenix 2 stock, fashioned from high-grade, weather-resistant

materials, offers both durability and comfort, its ergonomic design accommodating diverse shooting positions. Other key features include an M-Lok bottom rail on the forend, lightweight stainless-steel receiver with Magpul OD Green Cerakote coating, one-piece flush AICS-style magazine frame and trigger guard, knurled bolt knob and much more. MSRP: \$2,399. [www.savagearms.com](http://www.savagearms.com)







### Seekins Precision Havak Slam

Seekins Precision's new Havak Slam Bolt-Action Rifle features the firearms maker's proven Element barreled action mated to its new Slam hunting chassis — made from skeletonized aerospace-grade aluminum wrapped in hand-laid carbon fiber. The Havak Slam is a purpose-built rifle developed for extreme hunting environments that sacrifices exactly nothing. Key features include spiral-fluted 5R 416 stainless-steel

Cerakote black barrel, TriggerTech Diamond trigger, anodized armorer black action, integrated recoil lug, 20 MOA rail, M16-style extractor, four locking lugs, 90-degree bolt throw and much more. Short-action models of this rifle start at only half an ounce over 5 pounds and come chambered in 6.5 PRC and .308 Win. A long-action version comes chambered in 7 PRC. MSRP: \$4,650. [www.seekinsprecision.com](http://www.seekinsprecision.com)



### Sig Sauer Cross-Magnum Sawtooth

Sig Sauer's Cross-Magnum Sawtooth combines the one-piece Cross-Magnum receiver with a 24-inch Proof Research carbon fiber precision barrel to deliver lightweight performance and extreme accuracy in a high-country bolt-action hunting rifle. It is available in 7 PRC and .300 PRC calibers and features an ultra-light fully adjustable PRS stock, lightweight ARCA handguard with dual sling points and a Cerakote Moss

finish. Other key components include a stainless-steel heavy profile radial brake that reduces felt recoil by up to 45 percent and a 2.5- to 4-pound adjustable match trigger. Every rifle ships with its sub-MOA target in the box. The Cross-Magnum Sawtooth weighs 8.5 pounds with the magazine. MAP: \$2,699.99. [www.sigsauer.com](http://www.sigsauer.com)

### Springfield Armory 2020 Waypoint Long Action

Springfield Armory's Model 2020 Long-Action Rifles are precision manufactured in the USA, each one built to deliver exceptional accuracy and performance — with an impressive .75 MOA accuracy guarantee. The Cerakote finished action features an integral recoil lug and is machined from pre-hardened stainless steel with EDM cut raceways. The fluted bolt can be disassembled without tools and employs dual cocking cams. Other key features include a premium, hand-painted, 100 percent carbon fiber stock by AG Composites hand-painted in Ridgeline or Evergreen camo and the choice of carbon fiber or stainless-steel barrels. The Waypoint's TriggerTech trigger features a low-profile, non-slag safety and employs the company's Frictionless Release technology — adjustable from 2.5 to 5 pounds. Available in six popular hunting calibers. MSRP: \$2,173-\$2,670. [www.springfield-armory.com](http://www.springfield-armory.com)





### Stag Arms Pursuit

The Stag Pursuit Bolt-Action Rifle is the start of a new line of user customizable light-weight precision hunting rifles. With a completely custom Remington 700-pattern design and a tri-lug bolt, the rifle features an incredibly smooth action and 60-degree throw for lightning-quick follow-up shots. The chassis is a three-part modular design, enabling modification and customization with new stocks and handguards that will

completely change the look and application of the rifle. The Pursuit's barrel is made from 416 stainless steel with an interchangeable Picatinny rail. The rifle comes chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor or .308 Win., 18-, 20- and 22-inch Sporter fluted barrels and three finishes: Black, OD or Tan. MSRP: \$1,899.99. [www.stagarms.com](http://www.stagarms.com)

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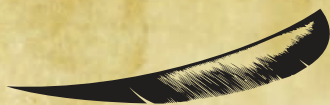




### Weatherby Model 307 Alpine CT

An addition to the Weatherby Model 307 family of bolt-action rifles, the Alpine CT features a carbon fiber stock. The Model 307 is a two-lug design equipped with an M-16 style extractor for smooth and reliable cycling. The bolt has a unique toolless disassembly feature that makes it easy to break down for cleaning and field maintenance. The action's cylindrical design accommodates Stiller/Savage scope mounts and

comes equipped with Peak 44's Picatinny rail. It sports a Peak 44 Bastion stock that weighs just 24 ounces and a rigid BSF 416R stainless-steel barrel sleeved with carbon fiber. The Alpine CT comes with an externally adjustable TriggerTech trigger and recoil reducing Accubrake DST. The metal work has a durable Cerakote coating. MSRP: \$2,199. [www.weatherby.com](http://www.weatherby.com)



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# Should Lead Ammunition Be Banned?

The environmental question keeps coming up: Is it time to ban lead ammo?

BY BOB ROBB

Since time immemorial, hunters have been the backbone of the North American conservation movement. As serious outdoorsmen, our ability to continue to enjoy hunting revolves around a healthy environment. So when, decades ago, the question arose whether or not hunters and shooters were contributing mightily to environmental degradation by using lead ammunition, we asked questions. Is there a problem, and if so, is it a big one? If it is, what's the solution?

Of course, lead is a toxic metal, and lead poisoning is a serious condition that can be fatal. That's why its use in products like paint and gasoline was banned decades ago. The physical properties and relative low cost of lead also make it an attractive metal for use in many products, two of which are bullets and fishing sinkers. In 1986, in response to concerns about lead poisoning in waterfowl, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced a ban on the use of all lead shot for waterfowl hunting on federal refuges, to begin in 1991. Interestingly, the ban was enacted not out of concern for waterfowl populations — lead poisoning was only adding an estimated 3% to the overall mortality rate — but forced by legal action because individual bald eagles, on the endangered list at the time, were dying from ingesting ducks containing lead pellets. As the years have passed, lead bans have been extended in some states to bullets and shot used in hunting, the reason given being that scavengers can get lead poisoning from eating

the carcasses of game killed with lead bullets and shotgun pellets.

Today the lead vs non-lead ammunition battle continues. In summer 2023, the USFWS rejected an appeal by the anti-hunting group Center for Biological Diversity to ban lead ammunition and fishing sinkers on more than 500 million acres of federal lands. On November 17, 2023, the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility ([www.peer.org](http://www.peer.org)), which describes itself as “a service organization that helps federal, state and local public employees who seek to improve environmental protection and accountability within their agencies,” filed a petition to ban the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle on all property managed by the National Park Service (NPS). According to the petition, this includes more than 51 million acres open to hunting, more than 60% of the system's land area. Then in May 2024, the U.S. House of Representative passed HR 615, dubbed the Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act, which specifically forbids the U.S. departments of the Interior and Agriculture from prohibiting or regulating the use of lead ammunition or fishing tackle on federal land or water that is under the jurisdiction of such departments and made available for hunting or fishing.

The primary arguments against lead bans are twofold. First, that such a ban would require alternative products that would be much more expensive and less available; and secondly, and most importantly, that such a ban has no supportable scientific data that shows that lead

ammunition and fishing sinkers actually cause significant and measurable impacts on wildlife populations.

In truth, the lead ammo ban issue is not as simple as blanket-banning its use everywhere. While many species have been shown to feed on the carcasses of dead animals shot with lead ammo, birds — specifically, waterfowl and vultures, particularly the California condor — have had documented detrimental issues with lead. Unlike waterfowl and other mammal, reptile, and amphibian populations, condors are an endangered species; the loss of even one individual can have a significant effect on population recovery. There is also documentation of lead in animals ingested at or near local trap and skeet ranges, as well as old mining operations, for example. But these localized issues would best be addressed at the local level, rather than used as support for severe restrictions and/or bans on lead ammunition on a national level.

Another cry from the anti-lead ammo crowd is that eating meat shot with lead ammunition poses a serious health risk to humans. However, actual scientific research — objective reviews of peer-reviewed human medical literature — actually tells us that a person would have to ingest lead almost daily to raise your blood lead level above the acceptable threshold. In fact, one study conducted by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) showed that the average lead level of the hunters tested was actually lower than the blood lead level of the average American, including non-hunters. The reality

is, consuming meat harvested with lead ammunition poses no discernible health risk. Of course, all game birds and animals should be field dressed and butchered properly, with all shot-damaged meat removed and discarded before processing and cooking.

Then there is public perception. That the general non-hunting public has a high degree of empathy for individual animals is one reason why anti-hunting organizations can collect millions of dollars in donations from well-meaning but uneducated individuals through campaigns focused on “cuddly” creatures like wolves. Hunters, more in tune with the realities of Mother Nature, are more focused on population-level cause-and-effect. Going forward, it seems to make sense for hunters to become proactive in voluntarily limiting the use of lead ammunition where practical. I'd much rather take that approach than having the government banning lead ammo carte blanche just to appease the anti-hunters or to save biologically insignificant population percentages. The state of Arizona, for example, offers hunters who draw big-game tags in areas of California condor habitat a free box of non-lead rifle ammunition to use on their hunt if they choose to do so — but they can legally use whatever they wish.

What's your take? Are your customers using non-lead ammo when they can, or is high cost the limiting factor? Drop me a note at [editor@grandviewoutdoors.com](mailto:editor@grandviewoutdoors.com), I'd love to hear your thoughts. **HR**







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