

## NEW PRODUCT REPORTS

*SHOT Daily* hits the floor to find the latest optics from the show **P. 16**. And see what's new in ammo **P. 28** and outerwear **P. 36**



### FEATURES A CLEAR DEPARTURE

Winchester's affordable XPR rifle doesn't stint on features **SEE PAGE 78**

### DESIGNED TO DISAPPEAR

Gerber introduces a line of concealed-carry knives **SEE PAGE 88**



### NEWS TENZING ENTERS NEW TERRITORY

The company's TZ CF Legend pack is out of this world **SEE PAGE 8**

### SHOT BUSINESS AWARDS

Seven industry members are recognized as leaders **SEE PAGE 4**



NSSF

DAY 2, JANUARY 21, 2015

# SHOT DAILY

THE DAILY NEWS OF THE 2015 LAS VEGAS SHOT SHOW BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE BONNIER CORPORATION AND THE NSSF

## SHOT Showcase Theater Opens

**T**he SHOT Showcase Theater opened on Tuesday at 9:30 a.m., in the main entry hall. The Showcase Theater offers complete in-house surround sound and multi-video displays in addition state-of-the-art lighting. The 742-seat theater allows media and buyers a chance to experience the SHOT Show's newest products in a comfortable, large-format multi-media environment.

FNH USA opened the theater with its 2015 line. "We believe this is a perfect event for our company to draw independent dealers and press that may not be familiar with

the company's history and the U.S. line," says Tom Scott, director, marketing and communications.

"This is one of the many changes NSSF has made to the 2015 SHOT Show with the goal of delivering effective information that's fun and memorable," says Chris Dolnick, senior vice president and chief marketing officer.

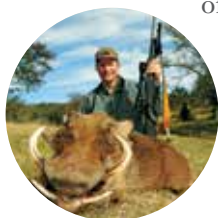
Other Tuesday presenters included Nikon, XS Sight Systems, Faxon Firearms, Leupold & Stevens, and the Outdoor Channel. One retailer commented, "The event was informative and the theater has the most comfortable seats in the entire SHOT Show." —*Peter B. Mathiesen*



## Von Benedikt Is Zeiss Writer of the Year

Carl Zeiss Sports Optics has named Joseph Von Benedikt winner of the 2015 Carl Zeiss Outdoor Writer of the Year Award.

"Joseph is one of the most progressive technical writers and optics users in the industry," said Mike Jensen, president of Carl Zeiss SBE, LLC, at the presentation Monday evening at the annual SHOT Show Zeiss writers party.



"He's a gentlemen who carries competence and confidence in every aspect of his life and work. He masterfully communicates accurate and in-depth technical information, and his passion and appreciation for the outdoors resonates throughout all of his work."

Von Benedikt, former editor-in-chief of *Shooting Times*, is now a field editor for InterMedia Outdoors.

## BERGARA EXPANDS RIFLE OFFERING

**A**t the 2015 SHOT Show, Bergara is introducing a pair of new product lines, dubbed Premier and Performance, designed to broaden brand appeal. In combination with the existing Custom offering, Bergara can now offer a "good, better, best" product segmentation.

Premier Rifles are comparable to Bergara's Custom Rifles, but standardizing some features lets the company reduce the price point. SRP: \$1,500 to \$2,000. Bergara's Performance line is targeted toward the mass market, and retail price points will be under \$1,000. The first product introduced will be the B-14 model bolt-action hunting rifle. Stocks are available in both a classic style, an oil-finished walnut, and a lightweight synthetic. Booth #14814.



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Booth #12971

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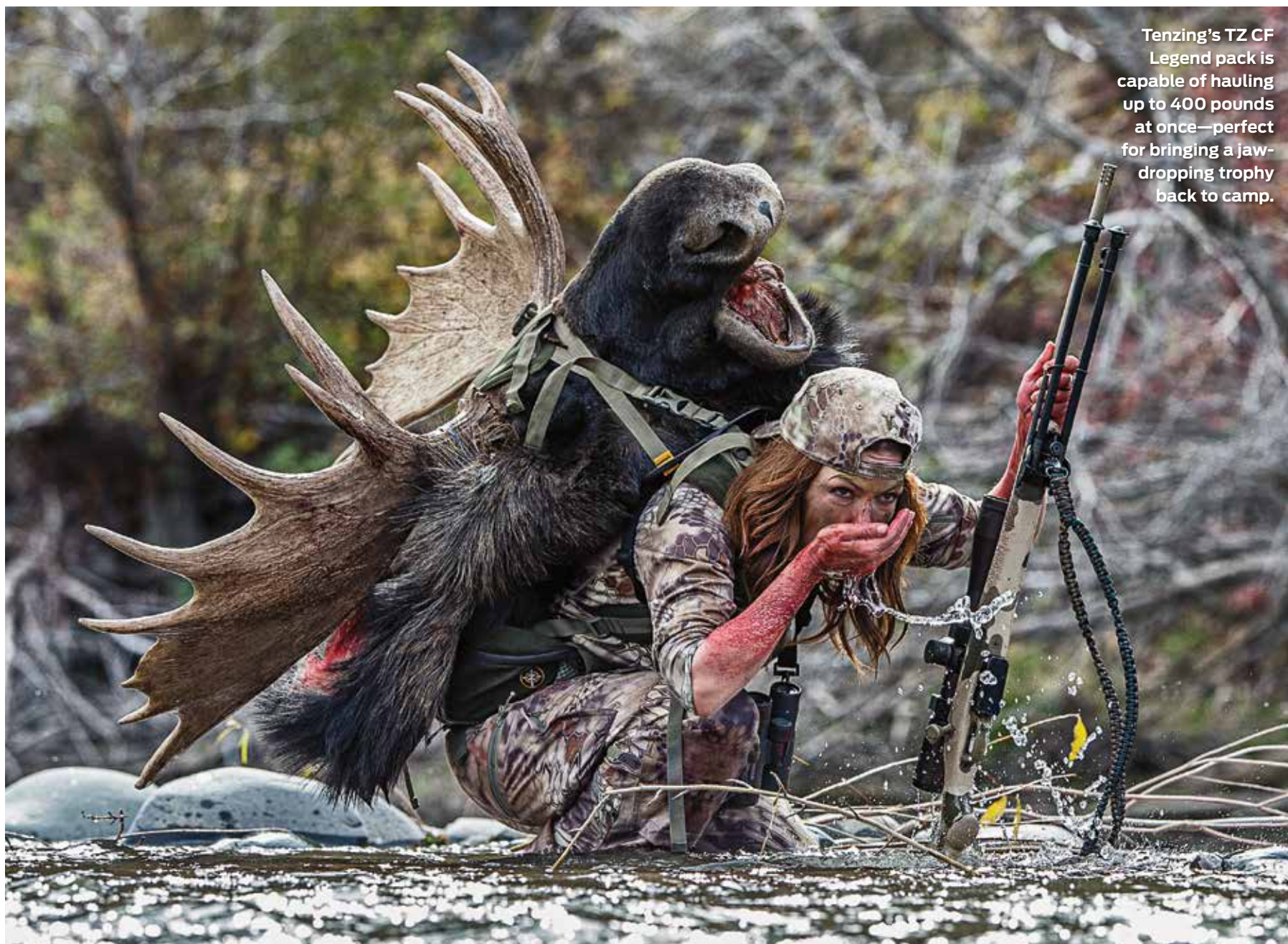
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Tenzing's TZ CF Legend pack is capable of hauling up to 400 pounds at once—perfect for bringing a jaw-dropping trophy back to camp.

# Creating a Legend

Tenzing's newest pack takes the manufacturer into "Cadillac" territory **By Joe Keller**

**W**ith the price of guns trending lower, would you believe the price of packs is picking up? Tenzing, the mountain-born backpack company started by Jay Robert and acquired by Plano in 2010, recently released a modular backpack that nears the \$900 mark.

"This pack is designed for the hunter who is tired of never having the right pack," says Robert, who knows about packing out meat. The Idaho resident is an avid big-game hunter who filled all of his Idaho lifetime tags within 10 years. "With this pack, you can carry whatever you need, and if you fill your tag, you can bring a huge load back off the hill the first time. Then peel off the parts of the pack you don't need, and go back for the rest of the meat."

The TZ CF Legend pack has the company's best-selling CF 2220 pack at its soul, and adds a super-light 24-inch carbon-fiber frame. The combo means hunters can use just the 2,220-cubic-inch daypack alone, with the supporting frame, or just the frame to pack out large quantities of game.



The TZ CF Legend modular pack adds a 24-inch carbon-fiber frame to Tenzing's CF 2220 daypack.

Colorado bowhunter Matt Guedes toted the pack among the Rockies this bow season. "It has passed all the early tests for sure," says Guedes, a Tenzing prostaffer, who used it for extended back-country hunts. "It is strong, comfortable, and durable, and has a well-thought-out system of operation. This simply is the best backpack for Western-style hunting I have ever owned."

Both packs—the detachable 2220 and the suspension frame—feature their own padded and contoured shoulder straps. The pack has adjustable pre-arched shoulder straps and a waist belt that are made to be comfortable and practical for long mountain marches. The TZ CF 2220 by itself weighs 2 pounds 6 ounces and unclips from the frame if you want a

medium-size pack for hunts or hikes. When worn as a complete unit, it has a combined weight of 6 pounds 14 ounces. The Legend has 12 pockets, five zip compartments, several compression straps, a gun-bow boot, and Tenzing's conspicuous yellow tie-down loops. The suspension frame alone is 4 pounds 8 ounces, and can carry an astounding 400 pounds or more, according to Robert.

But \$900?

"Just like in so many things in life, you get what you pay for," says Robert. "We use the most expensive carbon fiber, Dyneema strength panels in high-stress areas, Duraflex buckles, and EVA foam. Our goal is to replace not one but a minimum of two or three packs on a consumer's shelf." Booth #10570. ([tenzingoutdoors.com](http://tenzingoutdoors.com))



## DANIEL DEFENSE GOES ON OFFENSE

Daniel Defense isn't going off the rails with any of its new products; rather, it is introducing its new DDM4v11 series of rifles that feature the newly designed SLiM Rail 15.0, which is the first rail system offering the KeyMod Attachment system. As its full name—Slim Lightweight Modular (SLiM)—suggests, it has the benefit of reducing weight and offering modular flexibility to shooters. The V11 rifles will be available with the 16-inch Government, 16-inch Lightweight, and 18-inch Strength-to-Weight (S2W) barrels.

"Our new V11 series of rifles offer the customer greater customization and a much lighter base platform," says director of marketing Jordan Hunter. "At just 6.28 pounds for the standard V11 and 6.15 pounds for the V11 Lightweight, these rifles set a new precedent for lightweight carbines without having to adopt a carbon-fiber handguard."

Hunter adds that the company's engineers worked to reduce weight without losing any of the structural integrity or rugged durability that its rails are known for. "Most shooters are going to accessorize the rifle in some way; that's one of the best characteristics of the platform. But you are adding weight when you do

associated with owning an NFA item.

"Unfortunately, there are still a lot of states that do not allow SBR ownership, and the ATF's lack of funding has created a bottleneck for Form 4 approvals," Hunter says. "The upside to that is that the ATF's favorable ruling on the SIG brace has changed the way a lot of customers looked at pistols. Without a doubt, MSR pistols are in high demand right now because of the hassle associated with the long wait time for Form 4 approvals and tax stamp fee."

Moreover, Daniel Defense continues to try to set itself apart from other manufacturers in the firearms industry. Hunter says they try to live up to the manufacturer moniker, through investment in machinery, to manufacture rather than merely assemble as much of the firearm as possible.

"Doing so allows us to control the quality of the firearm and truly take ownership of the product that we are putting out to our customers," he says. "The term 'manufacturer' is one of the most over-used terms in the firearms industry, and it has different meanings depending on who you are talking to. To me, assembling a firearm doesn't make you a 'man-



Daniel Defense builds its products; it is not merely an assembler of parts that are made elsewhere.

that, so our goal was to keep the rifle as lightweight as possible. We did a pretty great job of accomplishing that."

Daniel Defense is also introducing its new MK18 Pistol and 300 Blackout Pistol Variants. These firearms take advantage of the recent ATF ruling that makes it easier to possess an MSR pistol, and extended approval times for NFA tax stamps has driven demand for the pistol variant.

The MK18 Pistol has similarities to the MK18 Factory SBR, which remains popular in the law enforcement and special operations communities. It features a 10.3-inch barrel that is classified as an SBR (short-barreled rifle) under the National Firearms Act. The 300 Blackout Pistol, chambered in 300 AAC Blackout, also comes with a 10.3-inch barrel. Each of these pistols has been designed with a 1.15-inch-diameter Pistol Receiver Extension, as opposed to a mil-spec receiver extension and buttstock. As a result, the pistols are not NFA regulated items.

These pistols are designed to fill a void for sport shooters unable to otherwise obtain an SBR, and Daniel Defense has seen the potential benefit of an MSR pistol as a great option to avoid the unnecessary and unconstitutional irritations

ufacturer.' But regardless of the customer that ends up with a Daniel Defense product, they should rest assured that we are an actual manufacturer and not assembling someone else's parts." This is no idle boast. Last fall Daniel Defense was ranked Number 1,568 by *Inc.* magazine on its 33rd annual *Inc.* 500|5000. The list represents a comprehensive look at the most important segment of the economy—America's independent entrepreneurs. Companies such as Yelp, Pandora, Timberland, Dell, Domino's Pizza, LinkedIn, Zillow, and many other well-known names gained early exposure as members of the *Inc.* 500|5000.

"Daniel Defense has again been recognized by *Inc.* 500|5000 as one of the fastest-growing private companies in the United States," says Marty Daniel, president and CEO of Daniel Defense. "This is the third consecutive year we have been recognized with this prestigious distinction. I am particularly proud that we achieved this goal while installing the infrastructure for long-term growth, and because it is more difficult to grow at this pace as a mid-size company."

Booth #20471. (866-554-4867; [danieldefense.com](http://danieldefense.com)) —Peter Suci

## SHOT Show Auction

Hornady has teamed with the Hunting Heritage Trust and some of the most respected names in the shooting-sports industry to create "The Hornady Number One." The rifle, a bolt-action in .300 RCM with serial number H-001, features a barrel and action crafted by Bill Wiseman & Company. The gun will be equipped with two separate custom-fit stocks—one for shooting and one for display. The display stock is made of select American walnut, with checkering by Clem Boyd of Lucid Solutions; the field and the range stocks have been sourced from Hogue, Inc. The engraving was entrusted to Baron Engraving.

The 2015 SHOT Show Auction Knife is a Damascus-blade Bowie with a bull elk theme from custom knifemaker Ross Tyser. Both the rifle and the knife can be viewed at Gunbroker.com (Booth #15147). The online auction for both the rifle and the knife will conclude at 5 p.m. EST, Friday, January 23, 2015. The SHOT Show auction is administered by the Hunting Heritage Trust for NSSE. All proceeds from the auction will benefit programs to further America's hunting and shooting-sports heritage.



The 2015 SHOT Show Auction Gun is a one-of-a-kind bolt-action from Hornady in .300 RCM. The rifle comes with a pair of custom stocks.

### ON THE FLOOR

#### VICTORINOX

Victorinox invites SHOT Show attendees to build their own digital camouflage knife. Participants will have the option of choosing between two knife styles—the Classic SD or Spartan—and three different colors. Cost is \$20 for the Classic SD, \$30 for the Spartan. All proceeds will be given to Homes for Our Troops, an organization that offers mortgage-free and specially adapted houses for severely injured veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Booth #14202.

#### MUCK BOOTS

Need a lift at the end of the day? The Original Muck Boot Company is hosting a happy hour from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. Booth #10951.



# HIGH-TECH AFIELD

Celestron offers a new lineup of handheld electronics for hunters



**C**elestron recently made a move into the handheld electronics arena with a host of handy products. For 2015, the company is putting a focused effort on marketing these products to the growing number of tech-savvy hunters and shooters.

The Elements FireCel is a consumer favorite. With a suggested retail of \$39.95, the FireCel not only can charge a cellphone, but also features a red LED flashlight to preserve a hunter's night vision. It also sports an electronic hand warmer to keep fingers limber dur-

**The Elements ThermoTrek (far left) is a battery-operated rechargeable hand warmer. The FireCel rechargeable can also warm cold hands.**

ing chilly days on the deer stand.

"What hunter doesn't need a flashlight?" says Elements product manager Mark Namatevs. "And a unit with a light that will keep your hands warm and charge up your cellphone? All the better!"

In numerous outlets where the item has been offered, end caps or simple displays of the FireCel sell out in a matter of weeks. The lower price point is certainly part of the attraction. In addition, Namatevs believes the product presents hunters with what he terms "a compelling story—they instantly recognize how useful it could be in the field."

Other handheld Elements products for the tech-minded hunter include the Wind Guide, which measures wind speed, temperature, and wind chill; the ThermoTrek, a battery-operated, rechargeable hand warmer; and the TrekGuide,

a four-in-one device with a digital compass, barometer, altimeter, and thermometer.

For 2015, Elements is targeting the hunting market with new packaging. The Elements lineup will feature glossy black packaging that incorporates images of hunters afield and similar hunting-based images.

To help retailers move product, Namatevs says, a number of in-store displays will be available, including two- and four-tier counter displays, a pegboard counter-top display, and a free-standing metal rolling rack with pegs. In-store staff training is available, too, through the Elements rep group, Hudalla Associates, Inc. of Perham, Minnesota.

Leading up to and during the 2015 hunting season, Namatevs notes, Elements will also be advertising the product line in a number of media platforms, including print, electronic, and social media.

"With today's hunters taking their cellphones and tablets afield, the ability to recharge their electronics is a real priority," he says. "These hunters are very willing to try other tech items, too, if those items can improve their hunting experience. We think this market will only get larger and larger in the near future." Booth #1857. **(310-328-9560; celestron.com)** — *Brian McCombie*

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# OPTICS

2015



**Nikon** The Prostaff 7 binocular comes in four models; all feature multilayer-coated lenses and phase-correction-coated prisms that help deliver sharp images.

## Vast Selection

Some shooters use optics for work that is up close and personal; others need glass that can perform at vast distances. This year, there's plenty of both to be found **By Robert Sadowski**

**T**his year will see the continuation of two trends. First, you'll see new red-dot and holo sights specially designed for close-range use with modern sporting rifles; second, since long-range shooting seems to be a trend with real legs, you'll see plenty of options in that discipline as well. In addition, manufacturers are rolling out cross-bow sights, new binocular lines, and spotting scopes. The best news of all is that, though some of this glass is mighty expensive, your customers will be able to find something they like in nearly every price range.

### BSA

► The Digital Panoramic Reflex Sight (SRP: \$87.95) has four red/green illuminated reticle options. The 10-50x56mm Long Range Scope (SRP: \$309.95) uses a 30mm tube and features a large parallax-adjustment wheel mounted on the left side of the turret. Booth #11053. (954-581-5822; [bsaoptics.com](http://bsaoptics.com))

### Bushnell

► The Elite 4.5-18x44mm (SRP:

\$2,100.45) Long Range Hunting Scope (LRHS) features a first-focal-plane G2H or G2M reticle and RevLimiter zero-stop elevation turret. The Banner Rimfire 4-12x40mm (SRP: \$188.34) riflescope features a reticle calibrated to the .17 WSM with a holdover of up to 350 yards. The SportZoom 8-24x25mm (SRP: \$194.95) binocular is sleek and compact and comes in black, green, or white. Booth #14551. (913-752-3400; [bushnell.com](http://bushnell.com))

### Carson Optical

► The HookUpz Universal adapter (SRP: \$89) connects any smart-phone to any optical device in seconds. Booth #1210. (631-963-5000; [carsonoptical.com](http://carsonoptical.com))

### Celestron

► "Tough and durable, with quality glass" describes the LandScout line of Porro-prism binoculars. The four models include the 7x35mm (SRP: \$89.95), 8x40mm (SRP:

\$99.95), 10x50mm (SRP: \$109.95), and 12x50mm (SRP: \$119.95). Booth #1857. (310-328-9560; [celestron.com](http://celestron.com))

### Konus

► The economical Pro F30 tactical scope comes in two configurations: 6-24x52mm (SRP: \$1,139.99) and 8-32x56mm (SRP: \$1,279.99). Both feature a front-focal-plane reticle with an internal level bubble. The KonusPro 3-9x50mm IR



**BSA** The Digital Panoramic Reflex Sight has four red/green illuminated reticle options.

### AIMPOINT

The ACO (SRP: \$393) is an entry-priced optic designed to mount out of the box on an MSR platform and provides absolute co-witness with iron sights. The Micro T-2 sight (SRP: \$849) features a new housing that allows use of flip covers. Beefed-up turret protection and internal electronic components are also now on board. Booth #14573. (703-263-9795; [aimpoint.com](http://aimpoint.com))





## BARSKA



The SWAT-AR riflescope line expands with a 6–36x52mm with an illuminated red/green mil-dot reticle. Its compact size and low profile pair perfectly when mounted to a flattop modern sporting rifle. Booth #3257. (888-666-6769; barska.com)



**Konus** The SightPro R8 (above) has eight reticle patterns. The KonuSpot-60 (below) is a value-priced spotting scope.



(SRP: \$239.99) riflescope has a 1-inch tube and a blue/red-illumination glass-etched reticle. The SightPro R8 (SRP: \$309.99) electronic sight has eight reticle patterns in red/green illumination. The battery is rechargeable. The value-priced 15–45x60mm KonuSpot-60 (SRP: \$169.99) spotting scope has a 45-degree eyepiece for extended viewing and includes a table-top tripod, lens covers, and carrying case. Booth #1246. (305-262-5668; konuspro.com)

### LaserMax

► The Micro laser system (SRP: \$199) now comes in a green laser; it weighs less than half an ounce and can be mounted to any accessory rail. The Guide Rod Laser line has expanded to include Beretta 92/96 FS, Taurus PT 92/99/100/101, and Glock Gen 4 G20/G21/G41 pistols. Green and/or red lasers (SRP: \$449) are available depending on the pistol. The Rail Mount Laser (SRP: \$149) fits Ruger's SR22, SR9c, and SR40c handguns and

features a pulsating and constant mode beam with ambidextrous on/off activation. Booth #12771. (800-527-3703; lasermax.com)

### Leapers

► The UTG T8 Series MRC (Multi-Range Combat and Competitions) scope line now includes a 2–16x44mm (SRP: \$349.97) that offers 8X magnification zoom, a Side Wheel Adjustable Turret (SWAT) from 10 yards to infinity parallax, and an etched-glass

mil-dot reticle with 36-color Illumination Enhanced (IE) multi-color mode. The 4x32mm Wide Angle Fixed Power Scope (SRP: \$129.97) features an ultra-wide-angle field of view—50 percent more than a typical 4X scope. The 30mm 36-Color Crossbow Scope features the PRO 4-Step Projectile Drop Compensation (PDC) reticle. Point-of-impact can be adjusted for crossbows with velocities between 275 and 385 fps. Two additional add-on parallax-indexing wheels include a 60mm (SRP: \$16.97) and a



**Bushnell** The Long Range Hunting Scope (LRHS, top) uses the RevLimiter turret. The Banner Rimfire (below) is calibrated for .17 WSM. Inset: The sleek, compact SportZoom bino.





**Celestron** The LandScout line of Porro-prism binos will now be available in four models, including 12x50mm (top) and a 7x35mm (below). All have multicoated lenses, BaK-4 prisms, and durable aluminum housings.

## CRIMSON TRACE

The small CMR-206 (SRP: \$229) Rail Master with green laser fits all rail-equipped firearms and features tap-on Instant Activation with three modes. The LG-360G (SRP: \$229) with green laser is now available for popular S&W M&P pistols. The LG-443G (SRP: \$229) Laserguard with green laser fits the Glock 42 compact pistol. The Ruger LCR revolver series includes the red laser LG-415 (SRP: \$299) and green laser LG-415G (SRP: \$399) Lasergrips. Booth #16731. **(800-442-2406; crimsontrace.com)**



100mm (SRP: \$19.97). Booth #2246. **(734-542-1500; leapers.com)**

## Meopta

► The MeoPro HD roof-prism binocular series debuts with four models: 8x32mm (SRP: \$747.49), 10x32mm (SRP: \$804.99), 8x42mm (SRP: \$997.49), and 10x42mm (SRP: \$1,034.99). All sport rubber-coated magnesium bodies. The MeoPro riflescope line has been expanded with six new models. The 3-9x40mm R/M (SRP: \$517.49–\$574.99) is suitable for rimfires and muzzleloaders. The 3-9x40mm (SRP: \$517.49–\$574.99) is for centerfire rifles (three reticle options are offered: #4, Z-Plex, and BDC). The MeoPro 4.5-12x44mm and 4.5-12x44mm T (SRP: \$804.99–\$919.99) are designed for medium-to long-range hunting. The T model features oversize MeoTrak TRZ target turrets. The 4.5-14x50mm and 4.5-14x50mm T (SRP: \$862.49–\$919.99) are for long-range hunting and target shooting. Hunters who want a mid-range price-point spotting scope should look at the new MeoPro HD 80 (SRP: \$1,724.99). It features an angled body and integrated 20–60X eyepiece along with the CentricDrive mid-body focus control, which is easy and fast to

use in the field, even while wearing gloves. Booth #3544. **(631-436-5900; meopta sportsoptics.com)**

## Night Optics

► The Panther 336 336x256 (SRP: \$6,499.99) and Panther 640 640x480 (SRP: \$8,415) thermal riflescopes come with 2x50mm high-grade germanium optics and a quick-release weapon mount. They feature 1X, 2X, and 4X digital zoom, 600x800 high-resolution AMOLED display, and more than four hours of continuous use on two CR123 batteries. The Observer 320 features a 640x480 OLED display

**Carson** The HookUpz Universal adapter connects a smartphone to any optical device, allowing nearly instant sharing of an image.





## EOTECH

EOTech's 518 (SRP: \$539) and 558 (SRP: \$629) Holographic Weapon Sights (HWS) feature quick-release bases and side-button functionality; they're powered by AA batteries. Both models are compatible with the G33 magnifier and laser battery caps. Booth #20159. (888-368-4656; [eotech-inc.com](http://eotech-inc.com))



and real-time object tracking and can be used day or night. The Observer 320 comes in two models: a 25mm (SRP: \$6,799.99) and 50mm (SRP: \$7,299.99). The Explorer 320 series 384x288 thermal imagers are available in two variants: an LED (SRP: \$4,199.99) and Laser (SRP: \$5,599.99). Both of these pocket-size imagers include a 384x288 high-resolution thermal core, a 640x480 HD display, 60hz real-time refresh rate, and white-hot, black-hot, and three red-hot polarity options. The improved Magnus 790 6X (SRP: \$4,779.99) long-range night-vision riflescope incorporates state-of-the-art optics and coating technologies to improve range, contrast, clarity, and light transference. Booth #20020. (800-306 4448; [nightoptics.com](http://nightoptics.com))

## Nightforce Optics

► The affordable SHV (Shooter Hunter Varminter) line has added a 3-10x42mm SHV (SRP: \$900) with two reticle options and side parallax adjustment. The ACTAR line gets additional models with the high-magnification 5-25x56mm F1 ATACR (SRP: \$2,800) riflescope with a first-focal-plane reticle configuration and several reticle options. The 4-16x42mm F1 ATACR (SRP: \$2,400) offers

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extreme optical quality, clarity, and performance, and a first-focal-plane reticle in a compact package that is just 12 5/8 inches long. Booth #20449. **(208-476-9814; nightforceoptics.com)**

## Nikko Stirling

► The Panamax Series features a one-piece tube, Microlux ETE Gen III lens coatings, and a dual red/green illuminated half-mil-dot reticle. Models include 3-9x40mm, 3-9x50mm, and 4-12x50mm AO (SRP: starts at \$119). The Diamond Series has expanded to include six additional models: 1-4x24mm, 1.5-6x42mm,



**Night Optics** The Observer 320 can be used day or night. It is available in two models.

3-9x42mm, 3-12x42mm, 3-12x56mm, and 3-12x62mm (SRP: starts at \$219). All feature 30mm one-piece tubes, low-profile turrets, and a dual-color red/green illuminated reticle. Booth #3050. **(800-553-4229; legacysports.com)**

## Nikon

► Predator hunters take note: The Active Target Special line now includes a 3-9x40mm (SRP: \$249.99, matte black; \$279.95, Realtree Max1 or Mossy Oak Brush) and 4-12x40mm (SRP: \$299.95, matte black; \$329.95, Realtree Max1 or Mossy Oak Brush) that are designed to be more effective on moving targets by using the BDC Active Target Special reticle. The Prostaff 7 lines features five models: 2.5-10x42mm (SRP: \$299.95), 2.5-10x50mm (SRP: \$349.95), 3-12x42mm SF (SRP: \$349.95), 4-16x42mm SF (SRP: \$449.95), and 4-16x50mm SF (SRP: \$499.95). Each features a 30mm body and a wider maximum internal adjustment range of 90 to 140 MOA, depending on the model. The Prostaff 7 binocular comes in four models: 8x42mm (SRP: \$189.95), 10x42mm (SRP: \$199.95, black; \$219.95, Xtra Green), 8x30mm (SRP: \$189.95),

and 10x30mm (SRP: \$199.95). Multilayer-coated lenses and phase-correction-coated prisms help deliver sharp images with superior resolution and clarity. The Arrow ID 5000 Laser Rangefinder (SRP: \$279.99) combines optics with laser rangefinder technology for bowhunters and measures from 5 yards to 600 yards. Booth #11221. **(800-248-6846; nikonsportoptics.com)**

## Sightmark

► The new Pinnacle first-focal-plane riflescope series features two models. The 1-6x24mm TMD offers a multi-purpose tactical mil-dash reticle and fully adjustable ballistics-tested BDC dials for 5.56x45mm 55-grain and 7.62x51mm 180-grain loads. The 1-6x24mm AAC includes a CDC-300 reticle for 300 BLK ammunition. Booth #11924. **(817-225-0310; sightmark.com)**

## Simmons

► For MSR hunters, the 1-6x24mm Predator/Varmint (SRP: \$259.95) scope has an illuminated Strike Zone 223 reticle calibrated for 5.56 NATO/.223 Rem. loads. The Volt 600 (SRP: \$190.95, black; \$210.95, ATAC Camo) and

## LEICA

The new Ultravid HD-PLUS 42mm binocular series uses HD/HT glass elements with AquaDura coating to protect against water, dirt, and fogging. Three models are offered: a 7x42mm (SRP: \$2,399), a 8x42mm (SRP: \$2,449), and a 10x42mm (SRP: \$2,499). Booth #12519. **(800-222-0118; us.leica-camera.com)**



SHOT BOOTH: 14271

**LAR-458 BEAST** SOC1820X  
WITH RRA DELTA CAR STOCK  
MSRP: \$1500\*

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RRA BEAST MUZZLE BRAKE

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**INTRODUCING THE  
LAR-458 BEAST**

With it's massive .458 round and custom muzzle brake to help reduce recoil, the Beast delivers the stopping power needed to take down the most menacing game.



## LEUPOLD

The unique D-EVO (SRP: \$1,874.99) is Z-shaped to allow the unit to be mounted behind a reflex, holographic, or red-dot sight without obstructing the view. Shooters can shift their focus from the 1X view of the red dot to a 6X precision optic. The 1X LCO (SRP: \$1,249.99) red-dot sight delivers a wider field of view than other red-dots on the market while also providing a clean, crisp 1 MOA aiming dot. The RX-1200i TBR with DNA laser rangefinder (SRP: \$419.99) has ranging capabilities out to 1,200 yards for hard targets and 800 yards for soft targets. TBR calculates the angle of the shot while the DNA (Digitally enhanced Accuracy) engine provides accuracy to the nearest one-tenth yard. Booth #11962. (503-526-1400; leupold.com)



**Meopta** The MeoPro HD roof prism binocular series debuts with four models: 8x32mm, 10x32mm, 8x42mm, and 10x42mm. All are built with lightweight, durable rubber-coated magnesium bodies. The high-definition, extra-low dispersion fluoride objective lens elements are designed to eliminate chromatic aberration.



Volt 600 Tilt (SRP: \$230.45) laser rangefinders offer fast ranging from 10 to 600 yards. The Volt 600 Tilt uses Tilt Intelligence to provide line-of-sight distance plus the true horizontal distance for steep inclines or declines. Booth #14551. (800-423-3537; simmons optics.com)

## Swarovski

➤ Designed for precision shooting, the STR 80 spotting scope offers HD optics and an illuminated reticle, allowing users to estimate distance and identify targets at long range. The illuminated MOA or MRAD reticle has 15 brightness

levels—10 day levels and five night levels. The reticle can also be completely removed. Booth #16422. (800-426-3089; swarovski optik.com)

## Viridian

➤ The Reactor line of green and red laser sights now includes Glock G42, G26, and G27 and SIG Sauer P238 and P938 pistols. An ECR Instant-On hybrid belt holster is included; it shuts the laser off while holstered and activates it the moment the weapon is drawn. Booth #653. (800-990-9390; viridiangreenlaser.com)

## Vortex

➤ The affordable Crossfire line of roof-prism binoculars has four models: 8x42mm (SRP: \$219), 10x42mm (SRP: \$299), 10x50mm (SRP: \$239), and 12x50mm (SRP: \$249). Features include a smooth center-focus wheel, twist-up eyecups, and tough rubber armor coating. Booth #20439. (800-426-0048; vortexoptics.com)

## Weaver

➤ The 6–30x56mm Tactical Scope (SRP: \$2,099.99) features a 34mm tube and SmartZero turrets, allowing an operator to make multiple elevation adjustments while still providing quick access to the rifle's absolute zero. The 1–7x24mm Tactical Scope (SRP: \$1,739.99) features dual-focal-plane MDR technology that integrates the close-range, quick targeting of a second-focal-plane (SFP) illuminated dot with the

medium- to long-range versatility of a first-focal-plane (FFP) mil-dot reticle. The improved Grand Slam series now features the MultiStop turret system, which lets the user configure the color-coded turret for different loads and firearms. Models include a 4–16x4mm (SRP: \$1,215.45) and a 5–20x50mm (SRP: \$1,425.45).

The Kaspas 3–9x40mm rimfire scope (SRP: \$265.49) features interchangeable turret dials calibrated for .22 LR, .22 Win. Mag., and .17 HMR. The Kaspas 3–9x40mm scope (SRP: \$265.49) has pink turret caps, adjustment rings, and other accents. The new T-Series XR fixed-power target scopes features a side-focus parallax-adjustment system and precise Micro-Trac Adjustment system for competition-level precision. Reticle choices, depending on model, include fine crosshair, fine crosshair 1/16 MOA dot, or fine crosshair 1/8 MOA dot. Models include 24x40mm (SRP: \$949.95–\$979.95), 36x40mm (SRP: \$959.95–\$999.95), and 46x48mm (SRP: \$1,399.95). Booth #14551. (608-836-0922; weaveroptics.com)

## Zeiss

➤ The 2–7x32mm XB75 Terra 3x Crossbow Scope (SRP: \$399.99) uses a ballistic reticle that offers the ability to determine aiming points from 20 to 75 yards based on the speed of the bow. The Terra ED binocular line now has a compact 8x32mm (SRP: \$388.88) model as well as a 10x32mm (SRP: \$444.43). Booth #13913. (800-441-3005; zeiss.com)

**Zeiss** The Victory binocular line now includes the Victory SF in 8x42 and 10x42. Both models use a triple-link bridge design and Ultra-FL lenses. Thanks to the wide-angle field of view, you'll be able to locate game quickly. In addition, the Ultra FL lenses deliver superior light transmission.







**Federal Premium** The 3rd Degree turkey shotgun shell uses a multi-stage three-shot payload for short- and long-range results.

# AMMO

2015

## Full Bore

Increased production and new loads make this an interesting year for new ammunition introductions **By Chris Christian**

**T**he last few years have seen less ammunition product in the pipeline than many consumers would have hoped for. That's changing, however. The supply situation is improving with increased production, which is giving the ammo makers room to introduce some very useful new loads. Here's a look at some of the most significant new products for 2015.

### Barnes Bullets

► Highlights of the Barnes offerings for 2015 include new additions to the Premium Match and Vor-TX lines and a new lead-free training round geared toward law enforcement agencies. The Barnes Premium Match Precision line adds are constructed from hard lead and a gilding metal jacket and designed with a long boattail and a high ballistic coefficient. They're optimized for long-range accuracy by tight manufacturing tolerances that reduce deviation and variation. New additions for 2015 include a 5.56 NATO with a 69-grain OTM bullet, a .308 Win. with a 175-grain OTM, a .300 Win. Mag. with a 220-grain OTM, and the .338 Lapua, which launches a 300-grain OTM slug.

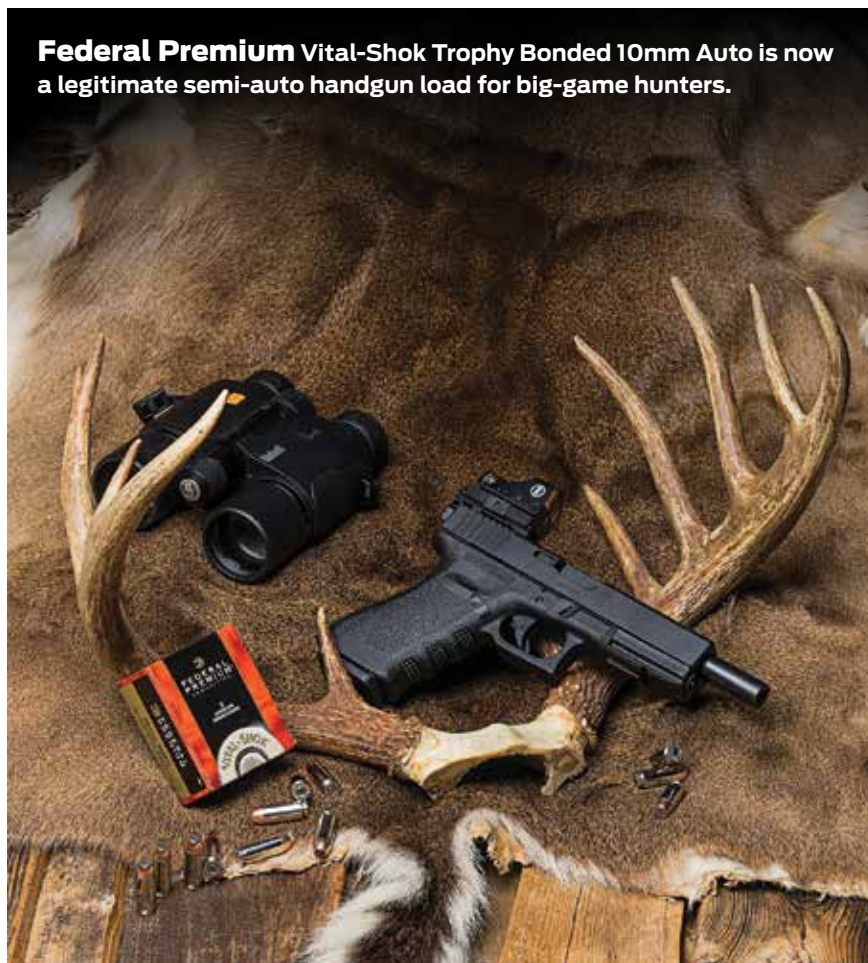
The Vor-TX line sees the addition of two 5.56mm NATO offerings that are loaded to true 5.56mm NATO pressures. One features a 55-grain TTSX projectile, the other launches a 62-grain TSX bullet. The Vor-TX CFR line sees the addition of a 300 AAC Blackout load (launching a 120-grain TAC-TX Vor-TX bullet) and the .338 Lapua (with a 280-grain LRX Vor-TX projectile).

Barnes' Alternative Material Zinc Core ammunition is lead-free and provides cost-effective training for law enforcement agencies. It will be available in a 55-grain 5.56mm NATO loading and a 300 AAC Blackout with a 90-grain projectile. Booth #15427. ([barnesbullets.com](http://barnesbullets.com))

### Federal Premium

► Federal's HST bullet design was originally offered as an LE-only round. As such, it is in wide service with law enforcement agencies across the country in 9mm, .40 S&W, and .45 ACP, where it has earned an impressive reputation for penetration, expansion, and stop-

**Federal Premium Vital-Shok Trophy Bonded 10mm Auto is now a legitimate semi-auto handgun load for big-game hunters.**



ping power. In 2013, Federal made the HST round available to civilians, but only in those three calibers. This year, however, they will extend the HST performance envelope to those opting for the .380 ACP as a backup LE or civilian concealed-carry handgun. Available in the Personal Defense line, the new HST .380 ACP load features a 99-grain bullet in a nickel-plated case; it's sold in a 20-round box. SRP: \$25.95.

Handgun hunters will want to check out Federal's new Vital-Shok Trophy Bonded 10mm auto. In terms of power, a 10mm loaded to full pressure easily eclipses the .357 Magnum and can actually tread closely on the heels of the .41 Magnum. That makes it a legitimate semi-auto handgun choice for those pursuing deer-size game or

wild hogs at ranges inside 100 yards. However, many 10mm loads are downloaded to .40 S&W velocities. The Vital-Shok Trophy Bonded 10mm is loaded to full pressure and launches a 180-grain Trophy Bonded softpoint bullet at 1,275 fps. It offers significant expansion combined with magnum penetration.

On the rifle side, the .30/30 Win. gets an upgrade with the inclusion of a 150-grain Trophy Copper load in the Vital-Shok line. The flat, polymer-tipped Trophy Copper slug is designed for tubular magazines and offers the same copper-alloy construction and 90-percent-plus weight retention of the other Trophy Copper offerings. It features a nickel-plated case for corrosion resistance and smoother cycling.

The .223 Rem. is added to the Vital-Shok line with a Trophy

Bonded Tip projectile. The Trophy Bonded Tip is built on the bonded-core Bear Claw platform and features a neon polymer tip, nickel-plated bullet, and a solid copper shank that retains more than 90 percent of its weight. A skived jacket helps ensure maximum controlled expansion. It will be available with a 62-grain slug, which makes it a viable load for deer- and antelope-size game. It also is loaded into nickel-plated cases.

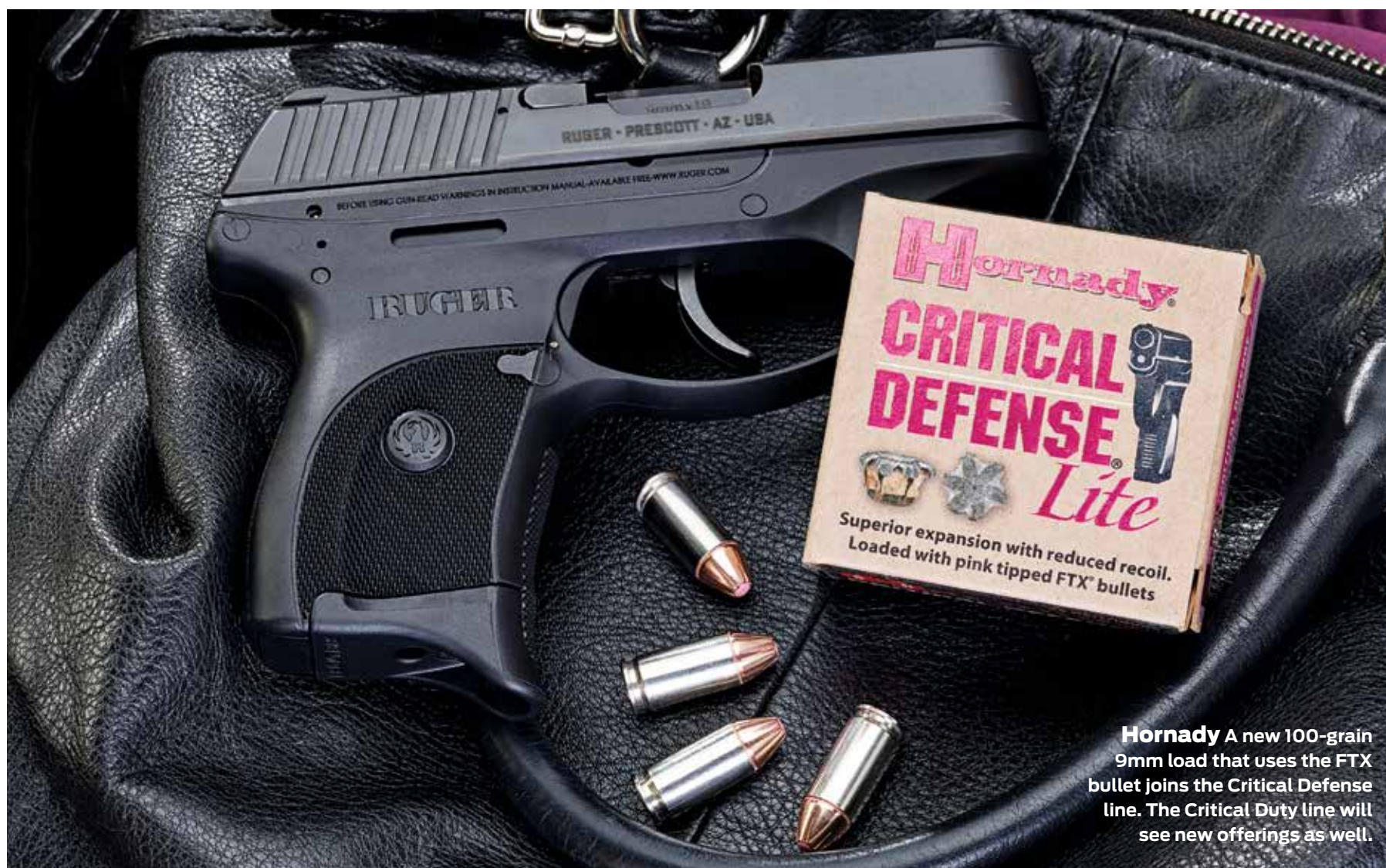
Fans of the .338 Lapua Magnum will find a new moderately priced load in the American Eagle line. The new load features Federal reloadable brass cases, Federal primers, and a 250-grain jacketed softpoint bullet.

High-volume shooters will now find the 5.56mm NATO load available in the American Eagle line in two new bulk-package offerings. The new 120-Round Mini Ammo Cans provide 120 5.56x45mm NATO rounds in either a 55-grain or a 62-grain FMJ in a reusable injection-molded polymer ammo can. Styled like military ammo cans, they are convenient to store and transport. The new 150-Round Bulk pack offers 150 5.56x45mm NATO rounds in the 62-grain FMJ load. The bulk pack is a sturdy corrugated cardboard carton that stores and transports easily.

Rimfire shooters now will find the .17 Win. Super Magnum available in the American Eagle line. Producing 3,000 fps with a 20-grain tipped varmint bullet, it offers flat trajectory and explosive expansion on prairie dogs, ground squirrels, woodchucks, and similar varmints.

Federal's new inline Trophy Copper Muzzleloader bullet is a radical design that Federal claims increases accuracy, reduces barrel fouling, and offers faster loading than conventional sabot slugs. The B.O.R. Lock MZ System bullet design does not require a sabot; it uses an expanding polymer base





**Hornady** A new 100-grain 9mm load that uses the FTX bullet joins the Critical Defense line. The Critical Duty line will see new offerings as well.

cup that seals the bullet in the bore. The rear of the cup features a hard, fiber-reinforced ring that scours fouling from the breech. This reduces the need for cleaning between rounds and speeds reloading. Federal notes that the non-sabot design is approved for use in most areas. The all-copper 270-grain .50-caliber Trophy Copper bullet features a polymer tip, deep hollowpoint cavity, and skiving on the jacket to promote consistent and increased expansion. It will be available in 15-count packs. SRP: \$24.95.

Modern shotgun turkey loads have been refined to produce such tight patterns that it almost becomes "shotgunning with a rifle." In fact, close-range patterns can be tight enough that a small aiming error can result in a miss. Federal's radical new 3rd Degree 12-gauge turkey load offers a solution. Using the rear opening FliteControl wad, which holds the rear-most pellets within the wad longer, the 3rd Degree offers a multi-shot three-stage payload that delivers both short-range spread and tight, longer-range patterns. The forward 20 percent of the shot charge is composed of No. 6 nickel-plated shot. Leaving the wad first, they create a larger pattern inside 20 yards. The next 40 percent is copper-plated No. 5 shot to create a dense pattern at mid-ranges. The final 40 percent is No. 7 Heavyweight iron-tungsten shot; it remains in the wad the longest to

create dense patterns at up to 40 yards. The 3rd Degree will be available in 12-gauge 3-inch with 1¾ ounces of shot and in 3.5-inch shells carrying 2 ounces of shot. Both shells launch at 1,250 fps. Booth #14551. ([federalpremium.com](http://federalpremium.com))

## Hornady

► New handgun loads for sport and self-defense, a new rifle line for hunters, and a 12-gauge slug highlight Hornady's 2015 offerings. The new Full Boar centerfire rifle line uses the monolithic copper-alloy GMX bullet, which is California-compatible and approved for other areas that require non-traditional, lead-free bullets. The GMX is designed to produce uniform expansion and deep penetration while retaining up to 95 percent of its weight. It will be available in .223 Rem. with a 50-grain GMX, 80-grain .243 Win., 100-grain 6.8mm, 130-grain .270 Win., 139-grain 7mm Rem. Mag., 165-grain .308 Win., 165-grain .30/06 Sprg., and 165-grain .300 Win. Mag.

Fans of the rimfire .17 Win. Super Mag. will find a new Hornady load launching a 20-grain polymer-tipped V-Max bullet at 3,000 fps. Hornady's new line of American Gunner handgun ammunition offers traditional loadings suitable for hunting, self-defense, or target work. The initial offerings will be built around Hornady's

proven XTP bullet and will be available in .380 ACP with a 90-grain XTP, 9mm Luger in a 115-grain XTP and 124-grain +P XTP, a 125-grain .357 Magnum, a 125-grain .38 Spl., 180-grain .40 S&W, and a .45 ACP with a 185-grain XTP.

In the Critical Defense line, a new 100-grain 9mm load using the FTX bullet with a unique pink Flex-Tip is claimed to offer up to a 27 percent reduction in recoil compared to standard-pressure 9mm loads. Hornady's Critical Duty line is designed for LE use and meets FBI protocol standards for penetration and terminal performance through all common urban barriers. For 2015, that line will expand with the addition of a 135-grain .357 Magnum load, which features the FlexLock bullet that utilizes a polymer tip to prevent clogging on impact. The load also assures expansion via a core-to-jacket InterLock that melds core and jacket together for maximum weight retention. Other features include low-flash propellants and nickel-plated cases.

Lastly, those who opt for 12-gauge slugs (whether by preference or regulation) will want to look at the new American Whitetail Rifled Slug. The 1-ounce lead-alloy Foster-style slug is intended for use in smoothbore barrels and launches at 1,600 fps with a compression-style wad that both protects the slug and seals the bore.

Booth #13145. ([hornady.com](http://hornady.com))

## Remington

► Remington notes that one of its goals in 2015 is to increase production volumes for all ammunition. Among those will also be two new products.

The 300 BLK has proven to be a popular round among modern sporting rifle shooters, and for 2015 Remington will introduce a 120-grain load using a OTFB bullet. It will be available in 20-round boxes. SRP: \$18.53.

Remington's new Ultimate Muzzleloader rifle uses a special priming case to launch a 250-grain .50-caliber Premier AccuTip bullet. Each purchased rifle will ship with 24 ignition cases and bullets. Those products will also be available for separate purchase in packs of 24 each. Booth #15427. ([remington.com](http://remington.com))

## Winchester

► This year's new product offerings run the gamut from the deer woods and upland bird fields to turkey swamps, clay target ranges, and personal defense. The new Deer Season XP is a dedicated deer-hunting rifle bullet. It is designed to produce a massive impact diameter with rapid expansion combined with an elevated ballistic coefficient for a flatter trajectory and greater long-range accuracy potential. Created specifically for





**Winchester** Deer Season XP is a dedicated deer-hunting bullet designed for rapid expansion. It will also have a flatter trajectory and greater long-range accuracy.

fps, and in a 3.5-inch 12-gauge load carrying 2 1/8-ounce of shot at 1,050 fps. Both will be available in No. 4, No. 5, and No. 6 shot.

The Rooster XR 12-gauge load is designed to produce tight patterns at extended ranges, such as those encountered while hunting late-season ringnecks and chukar. It will now be offered in a 12-gauge 3-inch load carrying 1 1/4-ounce of No. 5 or No. 6 shot at a range-stretching velocity of 1,450 fps.

One of the more useful tools for clay target shooters is the Winchester AA TrAAcker shot-shell. It uses a unique wad technology that actually makes the path of the shot string visible to the shooter. No longer do you have to wonder, "Was I behind or ahead of that clay?" Now you can see why you missed. It's a great practice aid for experienced shooters and an invaluable training aid for new ones. It is available with two different colored wads: fluorescent orange, which shows best against overcast skies, and plain black, more visible on bright, clear days. For 2015, the loads will be available in 12-gauge loads of 2 3/4-inch and 1 1/8-ounces: a No. 7 1/2 load that shoots at 1,200 fps, and a No. 9 that shoots at 1,145 fps. Both are available in orange or black wads. The AA Steel Target load is designed for lead-free areas and features a non-reloadable black hull. New for this year are 12-gauge, 2 3/4-inch loads with 1 ounce of No. 7 1/2 or No. 8 steel shot, leaving the muzzle at 1,450 fps. Booth #13334. ([winchester.com](http://winchester.com))

thin-skinned deer-size game, it features a radical new Extreme Point polymer tip bullet. Packed in 20-round boxes, it will be available in the following loads: .243 Win. (95 grains/3,100 fps), .270 Win. (130 grains/3,050 fps), .270 WSM (130 grains/3,275 fps), 7mm Rem. Mag. (140 grains/3,100 fps), .308 Win. (150 grains/2,820 fps), .30/06 Sprg. (150 grains/2,920 fps), .300 Win. Mag. (150 grains/3,250 fps), and a 150-grain 300 WSM (3,260 fps).

Winchester's Train & Defend handgun ammo

line pairs a range-ready practice round (Train) with a jacketed hollowpoint personal-defense load (Defend). Loaded to equal velocities, they provide similar recoil levels and shoot to the same point of aim. For 2015, the Train & Defend line will now be available in 50-round boxes of range loads and 20-round boxes of Defend loads in 230-grain .45 ACP (850 fps).

Winchester's Long Beard XR (Extra Range) Magnum lead turkey load will be available in 12-gauge 3-inch with 1 7/8-ounce of shot at 1,050

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# OUTERWEAR

2015

## Steady Sailing

Consumers seem to be less price-sensitive, spurring manufacturers to release more mid-range and premium clothing **By Peter B. Mathiesen**

**O**n the manufacturing front in 2014, American companies continued to look globally to drive down expenses while increasing the quality of production. As a result, production in Brazil, India, and Vietnam rose while production in China slowed. Manufacturers and retailers also noticed that consumers over the past year seemed less price-sensitive than they have been recently, a trend bolstered by steady sales in both mid-range and premium clothing.

**5.11 Tactical** The new TacLite M-65 Jacket is an evolution of the M-65 Field Jacket released in 1965 and worn on battlefields around the world for 50 years, using lightweight and durable TacLite ripstop fabric.



### 5.11 Tactical

➤ An evolution from the M-65 Field Jacket, the new TacLite M-65 Jacket is constructed from 5.11's own TacLite ripstop fabric for durability and light weight. The contemporary cut has a number of functional features, including RapiDraw pass through pockets for quick and complete interior access, a Loop Patch ID Strip, functional shoulder lapels with prym snaps, dual hidden document pockets at the chest for secure storage, and articulated elbows. A two-way front YKK Zipper offers quick access to concealed-carry firearms. Available in Black, TDU Khaki, and Tundra, in sizes 28 to 44. SRP: \$159.99. Booth #13162. (209-527-4511; [511tactical.com](http://511tactical.com))

### Browning

➤ For 2015, Browning will expand the Dirty Bird waterfowl gear lineup to include the new Dirty Bird Timber Wader Jacket. The shorter-length jacket will keep the garment above the waterline and dry. The soft-shell construction utilizes UTW (Under The Wader) Technology (water-resistant uppers and breathable fleece lowers) that lets the jacket fit easily underneath chest waders.

Other features include Browning's Pre-Vent waterproof and breathable fabric shell. There are two upper handwarmer pockets and two lower bellows shell pockets with magnetic closures and internal pleats. The adjustable, watertight cuffs, along with a detachable, adjustable hood, provide added comfort and convenience. A raglan sleeve design eliminates the top shoulder seam for improved comfort, and the Arrow Gusset armpit design and articulated elbow offers a shooter a greater range of motion. Available in Mossy Oak Bottomland or Realtree Max-5 patterns, in sizes S to 3XL. SRP:



**Rocky** The new Silent Hunter Elite clothing will have improved waterproofing, wind-proofing, and insulation. The quilted jacket is made from a microsuede shell with a polyester micro tricot lining and 100 grams of insulation.



\$306 to \$319. Booth #15538. (801-876-2711; [browning.com](http://browning.com))

## Prois

► The Gaelic word for “storm” is *galleann*, and the new Galleann jacket and pant is the company’s premium, technical rainjacket and rainpant. Constructed from 100 percent polyester laminate, this garment is lightweight and completely waterproof. The jacket is designed to move seamlessly with the hunter while sitting, squatting,

lying down, or even running. It’s silent and highly breathable, and has fully waterproof zippers, taped seams, and snap-down sliders to keep the wearer and gear dry. The hood also has an exterior draw-string, allowing for a more precise fit and improved peripheral vision.

The pants have zippers up the entire leg so you can slide them on and off quickly and easily. Detachable Cordura gaiters secure your boots and reduce moisture around the boot and ankle. Sized for women hunters XS through XXL, the jacket

and pants are available in olive, Realtree APX, or Realtree Max-1. SRP: \$269.99. Booth #10223. (970-641-3355; [proishunting.com](http://proishunting.com))

## Rocky

► For fall 2015, the Silent Hunter Elite clothing line will feature soft, lightweight Silent Hunter suede, but with improved waterproofing, wind-proofing, and insulation. Rocky claims the new garments are its quietest line of hunting outerwear to date. The collection

## RIVERS WEST

Capitalizing on demand for scent-controlled hunting products for the Eastern U.S. markets, Seattle-based Rivers West will unveil at SHOT a new, midweight outerwear line incorporating Dow Silvadur directly into each of its product’s fleece liners (like the Artemis Jacket, below).

The new line will be available in two weights. The first is Lightweight, a 4.2-ounce micro-fleece camo exterior with a cooling taffeta lining for the early-season hunter or for those who hunt in more moderate conditions. The second is Heavyweight, a 4.2-ounce micro-fleece camo exterior with an 8.8-ounce Sherpa-fleece lining for the late-season hunter or for those who hunt in extreme conditions.

Silvadur antimicrobial combines the efficacy of silver with a polymeric delivery system. Free silver ions interact with the polymers, resulting in effective odor control through more than 50 washing cycles. Camo options include Realtree AP Xtra, Mossy Oak Break-Up, and Infinity. SRP: \$119.99. Booth #10742. (800-683-0887; [riverswest.com](http://riverswest.com))



includes a waterproof wind shirt, soft-shell jacket and pants, quilted jacket, and a unique stealth cloak. All items in the new line are guaranteed waterproof and feature Scent IQ scent-control technology.

The quilted jacket is made from a 100 percent microsuede shell with a polyester micro tricot lining and 100 grams of insulation. It features three zippered external pockets as well as a zippered inside pocket. The stealth cloak is also made from a 100 percent microsuede shell with a polyester micro tricot lining and 80 grams of insulation. A rear har-



ness slot allows for easy attachment to the treestand. The magnetic clasps allow fast, silent removal. All are available in Mossy Oak Break-Up Country in sizes S to 3XL. SRP: \$189.99 to \$309.99. Booth #11340. (740-753-1951; rockyboots.com)

## Sitka Gear

► The new Core Series lineup is the first in the hunting industry to be protected from odor-causing bacteria using Polygiene, a permanent silver-salt odor-controlling treatment. Polygiene is widely regarded as the best-performing and most environmentally friendly odor-controlling system. All three weights of the Core Series Next-to-Skin pieces are available in S to 3XL and, depending on the item, are available in Gore Optifade Concealment Open Country, the new Gore Optifade Concealment Elevated II, Gore Optifade Concealment Waterfowl, Dirt, Forest, Coyote, and Pyrite. SRP: Lightweight, \$59 to \$99; Midweight, \$89 to \$149; Heavyweight, \$89 to \$149. Available in sizes S to 3XL. Booth #10328. (707-253-1122; sitkagear.com)

## Wolverine

► This Wolverine Renegade jacket is constructed with a heavy-duty cotton duck shell bonded to micro



**Wolverine** The Renegade keeps the cold out with a wind flap and a fabric zipper guard at the collar.

ton duck shell bonded to micro fleece to keep the wearer warm and comfortable all day. With no shoulder seams and easy movement articulated elbows, the jacket is designed for any kind of outdoor work, especially for those tasks that require working above the wearer's head. The zipper uses a durable, metal pull and rubberized claw inserts for easy use and waterproofing. Other features include a left chest zipper pocket for a phone, adjustable snap cuffs, and an extended tail to reduce drafts. Sizes M to 4XL. SRP: \$90. Booth #10340. (800-545-2425; wolverinebootsandshoes.com)



**Sitka** The Core Lightweight Hooded Optifade is one of Sitka's first products to be treated with odor-fighting Polygiene.

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## FEATURE

# Changing With the Times

## NSSF Industry Summit focuses on the future

By Christopher Cogley

Change is inevitable. If an industry wants to survive and remain relevant to the customers who support it, it must change with its customers. With that goal in mind, the National Shooting Sports Foundation began hosting an annual summit to bring together retailers, manufacturers, range owners, and representatives from state agencies and conservation organizations in one place so they could discuss key issues, learn from each other's successes and failures, and figure out the best ways to work together to improve the overall health of the industry.

When those key leaders gathered last year in Springfield, Massachusetts, for the 2014 Industry Summit, the first thing they noticed was that the summit—like the industry itself—was changing.

"We changed the name from the Shooting Sports Summit to the Industry Summit because we wanted to broaden the perspective. It's an industry-wide event, and the topics we discuss are relevant to everyone in the industry," says Chris Dolnack, senior vice president and CMO at the NSSF. "We also changed the format of the summit to make it more interactive, more engaging. More effective."

The new format provided for more open discussions between industry leaders and the more than 230 stakeholders who attended the event. Melissa Schilling, director of recruitment and retention for the NSSF, says that kind of open dialogue has never been more important.

"As an industry, we're dealing with some really significant changes," Schilling says. "We need to start being more proactive and laying out plans for how we're going to adjust to those changes."

As a way to promote interactive discussions on the changing industry and how businesses can keep up with it, the 2014 Industry Summit featured general presentations, panel discussions, and several "TED-style" talks on a variety of relevant topics. The summit also had several keynote presentations from speakers such as Jeremy Gutsche, author of *Exploiting Chaos* and founder of Trendhunter.com, and Jonah Berger, author of the bestselling book *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*. Katie Pavlich, reporter for Townhall.com and contributor to the Fox News Channel, and Dana Loesch, host of radio's *The Dana Show* and *Dana* on The Blaze television network, also spoke to attendees about how to deal with the media.

Although each topic and every presenter provided important insight from a unique perspective, the common purpose was to help attendees begin to focus on the future of the industry and specifically one key element that could impact that future more than any other—participation.

"The NSSF has a five-year plan to increase participation by 20 percent by the end of 2014," Dolnack says. "One of the ways we're doing that is through the Models of Success program, and one of our main goals for this summit was to share some of the Models of Success that have proven to be effective ways of recruiting new participants."

The Models of Success is a national program that the NSSF started to help state agencies implement large-scale campaigns that raise awareness of, and increase participation in, local hunting and shooting opportunities.

"Many of the MOS programs are existing programs that needed a boost to bring them to the next level, but some are new ideas, too," Schilling says. "We needed large-scale programs that could reach the masses at the lowest cost per person."

Those programs that were able to do that were highlighted at the summit as blueprints that would

allow other state agencies and industry leaders to implement similar programs in their states.

In addition to sharing the Models of Success, the summit also focused on other critical aspects of increasing participation, and at the top of that list was diversity. From women and youth to different age groups and ethnic populations, Dolnack says there are so many people who would participate if someone would simply reach out to them.

"We have all these potential customers—why wouldn't we embrace them?" he says. "As soon as we do, they're going to discover the one thing that our industry has always had going for it—that shooting is fun. Plain and simple."

Dolnack says that studies have shown—and retailers have seen—that more and more people from all walks of life are including firearms as part of their personal protection plan, which opens the door for them to get more involved in hunting and the shooting sports. Unfortunately, the industry as a whole hasn't yet adapted to the evolving demographic of our customer base, but that, too, might change after the 2014 Industry Summit.

"I think it's certainly safe to say that the



The 2014 Industry Summit included "TED-style" talks.

groundwork was laid this year, and it will carry through to 2015," Schilling says. "There is going to be a big focus on diversity outreach for 2015."

The 2015 Industry Summit will be June 1–3 in Savannah, Georgia, and Schilling says the summit will continue the themes from 2014 on how everyone in the industry can work together to improve diversity and increase participation.

"This is a great place to capture all the lessons from across the country and see what is working, what isn't, and what we need to do as an industry to improve," Schilling says.

And regardless of the name or format, that goal has always been—and will always be—at the heart of the Industry Summit.

"What we want to do is act as a catalyst and bring together all of the people who are invested in the future of the industry so that we can all get on the same page to address these common issues and come up with solutions that work for all of us," Dolnack says. "Because at the end of the day, when we're all successful, we all benefit."

For more information on the NSSF's Industry Summit, visit [nssf.org/summit](http://nssf.org/summit).



# Gathering Momentum

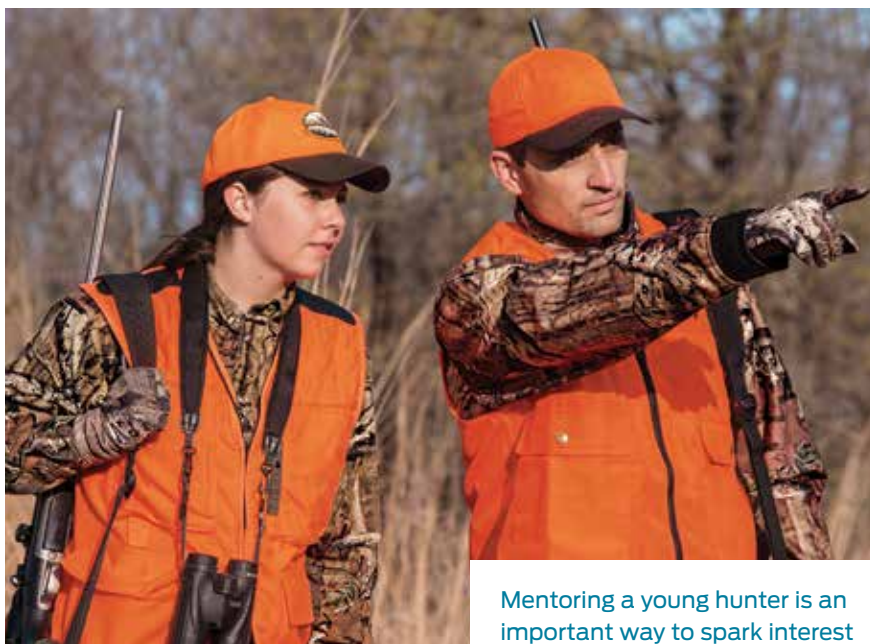
NSSF's Families Afield program works to recruit new hunters

By Bill Miller

**G**rade school kids are too young for career apprenticeships, but in 35 states, they're just the right age to learn hunting skills under the watchful eye of an experienced mentor. Apprentice hunting licenses, promoted by the Families Afield program, are rapidly catching on in the U.S.—a big step in efforts to reverse recent declines in youth hunter populations. The program, organized by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and other groups, was launched in 2004, but it did not become operational until 2006. By 2013, however, Families Afield achieved a milestone of 1 million apprentice licenses sold to newcomers like Hunter Dellow of New York, who was mentored by his dad, Wade.

"We went out and we heard these turkeys and we got close and something spooked them," Hunter recalls, still brimming with excitement. "They flew over us. And

then we went over around a hill and we saw a couple deer looking around us, and they saw these other turkeys behind us; they came up about five yards away. I turned



Mentoring a young hunter is an important way to spark interest and keep hunting participation numbers strong. Thirty-five states allow mentored hunting.



around and shot one."

This story is the kind of experience that Families Afield can help bring to youth and even some adults who are also first-time hunters. The organization's growth was steady through 2014, says Melissa Schilling, NSSF's director of recruitment and retention. "We're still at 35 states," she says, "but for 2014, we had Illinois, Kansas, Wyoming, and Utah that passed revised bills."

Momentum is critical, organizers say, considering a recent study showing that for every 100 hunters lost, only 69 new ones take their places. Declining recruitment is alarming for gun and gear retailers, an annual industry of about \$40 billion, according to NSSF data. Also concerned are wildlife conservation agencies. Each year they share an estimated \$371 million in excise tax revenues from gun and ammo sales, the data shows.

To reverse declines, NSSF banded with the National Wild Turkey Federation and the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance to create Families Afield. The National Rifle Association and Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation joined later.

Organizers, at the outset, learned a couple of reasons why fewer kids were hunting. Many didn't have the chance to hunt because their home states had age restrictions for youths under 12. Organizers say that's the age when a lot of kids finally settle on which hobbies or sports they'll pursue. Hunting, very likely, was getting overlooked, organizers say.

While safety education is essential, organizers wondered if offering a taste of the outdoors first might enthrall and inspire kids to become lifelong hunters. To do that, Families Afield worked with state legislatures to approve apprentice licenses. These "try-before-you-buy" licenses allow newcomers to hunt with mentors for two to three years, depending on their state's requirements. The programs also ease age restrictions by recognizing that parents are the best authority on when their children are mature enough to hunt. Parents frequently are their mentors.

After their apprenticeships, newcomers must complete safety education classes before they can buy regular hunting licenses. The plan worked for Seth Wasilewski of Ohio.

"I wasn't really sure if I wanted to be a hunter," he says. "My dad said, 'Let's go out there sometime. You can get this apprentice license and we can see if you like it.' So we go out there and I shot a deer. It was really fun."

Seth was mentored by his dad, Greg Wasilewski. "With the hunter

education program," he says, "I don't know that sitting in a classroom for two to three days doing that would have sparked the same interest as sitting out there, experiencing deer hunting, right there out in the woods."

The program is gaining momentum, Schilling says. "One thing that's great about Families Afield is, not only is it an excellent recruitment program, but it's also proving to be an excellent retention program."

To illustrate, she refers to recent data from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

It showed that 24 percent of newcomers surveyed said they would have become hunters, no matter what, while 26 percent said they were not sure. But 50 percent said they would not have become hunters if they had not been apprentices first.

Ohio has a three-year apprenticeship program. A recent study by its Division of Wildlife showed that 56 percent of second-year participants renewed their apprentice licenses. However, the other 44 percent were already hooked and chose to enroll in safety education and then bought regular licenses. In the third year, 25 percent renewed their apprenticeships while the remaining 75 percent went straight to hunter safety classes and regular licenses.

And apprenticeship licenses also make a powerful economic impact—NSSF data shows that the average hunter spends about \$2,000 each year on gear and other expenses.

"With a high retention rate, that number grows when they buy gear or ammo, or book a trip with an outfitter, or just by getting a hotel or going to the local diner," Schilling says. "That's money the hunter is spending that's going into local economies." And, she adds, "Whenever an apprentice license is sold, those funds go directly to benefit conservation. That's huge."

But Families Afield helps more than wildlife conservation and local economies. Participants say they're building relationships.

Wade Dellow recalls that his father-in-law was 68 when he first went hunting with the family. "Spending time with family is important," he says. "With the older generation getting older, [hunting] provides the opportunity for the younger generation to spend time and build memories."

Andrew Wecker, also from Ohio, agrees. He mentored youngsters Madelyn and Grant. "I don't care what it is," he says. "If you have a parent out with a child, something good is going to happen from that. And, for this family, hunting has been a good thing for us." ■





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FEATURE

# The Truth About Universal Background Checks

Back-door attempt at gun control vigorously opposed by NSSF **By Brian McCombie**

**A**nti-Second Amendment advocates try to make it sound like a reasonable request: Why not have universal background checks on all firearms sold? After all, they point out, NICS background checks are already done on every new firearm purchased through retailers.



The call for “universal background checks” is an excuse to begin a national gun registry and widen the federal bureaucracy. Among its proponents is former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, who’s putting his vast financial resources behind the effort.

This was the very argument President Barack Obama made in January 2013, when he announced a new push for gun control, singling out “universal background checks” as necessary to stem gun violence. He also falsely claimed that up to 40 percent of all firearms purchases are made without any sort of background checks. He said, “That’s not safe. That’s not smart.”

At the time, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) begged to disagree. And NSSF continues to oppose this back-door attempt at gun control. Start with the basics: Universal background checks are the first step toward a national gun registry. As Steve Sanetti, NSSF president and CEO, notes, “It’s self-evident that in order for universal background checks to work, first the government has to know where all the guns are. Or else how can they possibly enforce the law?”

Obama’s own policymakers at the federal National Institute of Justice (NIJ) actually confirmed this in a memo leaked to the press in January 2013. The memo admitted that a universal system of background checks would be ineffective unless it operated in conjunction with national gun registration. The mainstream media has widely reported polls showing a majority of Americans, including gun owners, support universal background checks. But do they really?

Typically, these polls have asked, “Do you think there should be a background check before anyone can buy a gun?” Non-gun owners will likely answer, “Yes, of course,” as the question itself suggests that background checks are not being done.

“A gun owner might answer ‘yes’ to this question because he or she knows that they have to submit to a background check anytime they buy a gun from any federally licensed retailer, whether in stores, at a gun show, or via internet auction sites,” Sanetti notes. “And that’s been the law for decades.”

But what if the question were

asked this way: “Would you support universal background checks, along with a national registry of firearms, plus an even larger federal bureaucracy and even more red tape for firearms retailers?”

In such a case, “We’d see an entirely different, and a far lower, level of agreement,” says Sanetti.

But what about the statistic that the President and various gun-control groups keep citing, that 40 percent of the guns bought today are done so without a background check? In truth, NSSF research reveals that only about 7 percent of firearms are sold between individual owners without such checks. The overwhelming majority of guns are sold only after a background check, usually done at a retail establishment, which the firearms industry fully supports.

Universal background checks would place a huge burden on federally licensed firearms retailers, too. Many of these proposals mandate that retailers perform background checks on private-party transfers—but cap the fee a dealer can charge at a level far below what it will take retailers to perform these checks. Retailers would also have to maintain the records of these transfers for 20 years.

And who would—and would not—subject their firearm transfers to universal background checks? Law-abiding citizen gun owners would certainly comply. But would violent criminals?

“The idea that criminals would submit to a background check prior to transferring a gun to a fellow felon is absurd,” Sanetti says.

The universal background checks issue is being kept alive by various anti-gun advocates, including former New York City mayor and multi-billionaire Michael Bloomberg, as well as the various groups he funds. “Bloomberg is using his fantastic wealth to push political candidates who hold this position,” Sanetti notes. “As long as he keeps doing so, the issue will remain alive. And as long as the issue is being bandied about, NSSF will keep fighting it. We are in this for the long haul.”





# Quicker Than the Eye

NSSF harnesses the power of mobile eye tracking **By Robert F. Staeger**

**I**t's tough to say why it happens, but in our culture, wearing glasses somehow makes people look smarter. We see this in politicians and newscasters, and in the costuming of four-eyed scientists in Hollywood movies. It's bunk, of course; glasses don't make anyone smarter, they just help them see.



NSSF has teamed with Informed Decision Group to offer eye-tracking studies. Member retailers who participate can discover exactly which products and displays draw the attention of their customers.



But what if getting *other* people to wear glasses could make you smarter?

That, in a nutshell, is what mobile eye tracking technology can do. By putting special glasses on a test population, researchers can track exactly what they look at, and how long they look at it for. Needless to say, this comes in handy in learning where we direct our attention. And the National Shooting Sports Foundation is working with Informed Decision Group to make this sort of data available to members. IDG is offering a 25 percent discount to NSSF members who wish to conduct a mobile eye tracking study in their store or about their products.

Here's how the partnership happened. NSSF research uses a variety of survey tools and data analysis to give members access to a wide variety of information on hunting and the shooting sports, everything from hunter participation numbers to surveys of modern sporting rifle

owners. In the process of gathering and compiling this information, the department explores cutting-edge research technologies. That's how IDG came up on its radar.

At first, IDG offered to do some research on the floor of last year's SHOT Show. That didn't come to pass, but NSSF director of industry research and analysis, Jim Curcuruto, kept the technology in mind. "I thought it would be good for our larger members—larger manufacturers that put the product on the shelves—and the larger retailers" says Curcuruto. "This isn't cheap research, so it's not going to be feasible for all our members."

Mobile eye tracking allows researchers to study exactly what shoppers look at. Recruited shoppers wear special glasses with sensors set up to track pupillary movement. At the same time, a front-facing camera records the subject's field of view. Later, by syncing the data from the sensors and the cam-

era, researchers can pinpoint exactly what the subject was looking at, and for how long. This information can reveal a lot about the things a shopper pays attention to, and it can also unlock some behavioral secrets. "There's kind of an unconscious decision when you're shopping," says Curcuruto. "You may think you shop a certain way, but in reality you do things a little differently."

Susan Johnston, director of client relations for IDG, explains: "Consumers cannot recall or verbalize what they look at," she says. "Fixations occur too fast for them to remember, and it only takes four-tenths of a second for a shopper to see something and decide whether they want to look at it further. This is too fast to recall." That's what makes this data so valuable. As shoppers, half the time we don't even realize what catches our eye.

NSSF conducted a test-run study in a sporting-goods store to get some general shopping data and to see how the process worked. IDG recruited 30 shoppers beforehand, setting them up in a break room. After a 15-minute setup, the shoppers were sent out into the store's hunting section to look around. Although not part of the study, Curcuruto tried out the glasses himself. "It's not too intrusive, but it takes a few minutes to get used to," he says. "You have a little battery pack that after a few minutes you don't even realize is there."

The study allowed NSSF to track the customer's movement through the store. "When they picked up a product, we could see what they were looking at on that product—whether it was the pricing, the fine print, or if it was any particular graphic that stood out to them," he says.

Afterward, the subjects can fill out an exit survey. "It can be specific about what they thought of the store, the product, their competitors, etc." says Curcuruto. "It's a good way to learn how the customers are processing what they see, and how that translates into opinions about a store or product."

After the study was complete, IDG took pictures of all the aisles and the product displays. From there, they use the data from all the subjects to overlay those photos with heat-sensitive maps. Red is where the subjects looked the longest and most often; it tapers off to green, like on a weather map.

Of course, just because a customer looks at something for a long while doesn't necessarily mean he's going to buy it. There is a correlation between how long we look at something and the likelihood we'll purchase it, but because of differing brands and other variables, it's impossible to nail down into a general rule. IDG gives the range of 43 to 550 percent per second in its lit-

erature, which is a wide spread indeed. But even at the low end of that range, that's still a positive correlation between looking at a product and buying it.

"If you're a manufacturer, you can hire IDG, work with a retailer, set up a display that has three different packages for the same product, and have customers test it out," says Curcuruto. "And if one is getting five seconds of view time versus the others getting two or three seconds, you go with the first. Packaging that gets more view time consequently will end up with a higher percentage of sales just due to this history of consumer behavior."

It's that type of study Jim Curcuruto thinks larger NSSF member businesses might be interested in exploring. "If you're a manufacturer, and you want to check out different packaging or product placement, this is one of the tools you could use." Signage, standees, packaging, point-of-sale displays—manufacturers can use mobile eye tracking to help with all of these.

Larger retailers can benefit as well. Johnston suggests a number of subjects to study in the retail environment, including ways to reduce shopper confusion, detecting and eliminating visual "noise," optimizing shelf placement, and sell-through.

But what of the test study itself? Is there anything retailers in general can learn?

The study is available as a free download for NSSF members. With a sample size of 30 shoppers, there are some tentative conclusions that can be drawn. "The top right of a display seems to be the best place to put a product, no matter what that product is," says Curcuruto. "Americans are used to reading from left to right, and we start at the top. Top right is kind of where your instinct leads you."

Another thing the study found was that shelf display worked better for ammunition than pallets. "If you look at the heat-sensitive map, you see the middle of the shelf gets more attention than the top or bottom shelves," says Curcuruto. When ammunition was on pallets, however, the product on the low to middle sections seemed to have the best placement.

In the end, this is another fascinating service that NSSF helps make available. "We wanted to provide our membership with more information on available options to them," says Curcuruto. "As sales return to normal in the firearms industry, companies may want to better position or package their product, and this is one of the options that they can look into." The report, In-Store Shopper Research, is available for NSSF members to download at [nssf.org](http://nssf.org).



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In July of 2014, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act was set for a vote on the Senate floor. Unfortunately, a number of anti-Second Amendment senators were able to use parliamentary tricks to keep the bill from being voted on.

## Bottled Up

NSSF continues to lead the fight for the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act **By Brian McCombie**

Last July, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act, S. 2363, was taken up by the full U.S. Senate for discussion and, the National Shooting Sports Foundation had hoped, ratification. That hope was founded on the truly bipartisan nature of the bill, which was introduced by a Democratic senator, had 47 co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle, and was brought to the floor of the Senate with over 80 votes.

But a sad thing happened on the way to being made law. Politics. Anti-gun politics, to be exact.

The most significant such package of legislation in a generation, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act was written to protect the right of hunters to use the ammunition of their choice, allow more flexibility for federal funds to be used to build and maintain shooting ranges on public lands, and ensure more access to federal lands for hunting, shooting, and other outdoor activities. Truly historic legislation, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act will have significant and positive impacts on current and future generations of hunters and shooters.

As the co-sponsors signed onto the bill, and early procedural votes showed overwhelming support for the legislation, it seemed to NSSF that America's longstanding tradition of bipartisanship on sportsmen's issues would once again carry the day.

Yet, on a critical procedural vote, the bill failed to get the 60 votes needed to go forward. The problem, explains Lawrence Keane, NSSF senior vice president and general counsel, began as a series of proposed amendments to the bill began to be filed. Typically when a bill is debated and voted on in the Senate, an agreement

between both sides is unanimously agreed upon, which limits, among other things, the number and nature of amendments that can be offered to the bill being considered.

"Unfortunately anti-Second Amendment senators refused to agree on permitting only a specified number of germane amendments because they wanted to use the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act as a vehicle to move their gun-control agenda previously rejected by the Senate in April of 2013," Keane says.

Majority Leader Harry Reid then used his prerogative to employ a parliamentary tactic, called "filling the tree," to block amendments by either side, knowing this would end the process for now.

"We had over 80 votes to take

up the bill that is co-sponsored by almost a majority of the Senate. We are confident that it would have garnered about 80 votes for final passage had it been debated," Keane says.

"The usual list of anti-Second Amendment senators blocked the rest of the Senate from having a chance to vote for the bill."

But NSSF is in this fight for the long run, Keane adds. There was a chance the bill might get passed during the lame duck session before the SHOT Show. Keane, though, feels that the best odds for passage are likely during the next Congress that begins in 2015, when he expects there will be several new pro-gun senators who will support the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act.

"Situations like this demonstrate the importance of our '#GUNVOTE' voter education campaign ([nssf.org/gunvote](http://nssf.org/gunvote)) that encourages gun owners, hunters, and sportsmen and -women to learn where the candidates stand on the issues most important to them and to take that into consideration when they vote on Election Day," Keane notes. "Here, a handful of anti-gun politicians were able to help block a bill that was truly bipartisan in nature and purpose. With just a few more pro-gun senators in place, we could very well have had a different outcome."



Despite the BSA's failure in the 2014 session, the bill will have another chance in 2015.





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## FEATURE

# Complying With the Impossible

NSSF undertakes legal action against microstamping legislation **By David Draper**

**I**n California, law-abiding gun owners are faced with dwindling choices and continued attacks on their Second Amendment rights. New models of pistols introduced to the market cannot be sold in the state, and more and more existing pistol models continue to drop off California's roster of approved handguns due to the state requiring microstamping on all new or improved models of semi-automatic handguns. In January 2014, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), along with co-plaintiff the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI), filed a lawsuit seeking a permanent injunction against the microstamping requirement. Because microstamping has been proven to be ineffectual and impossible to implement, the law is, in effect, an ongoing ban against all new semi-automatic handgun sales.



Rather than attack the microstamping legislation on Second Amendment grounds, the NSSF/SAAMI case asserts that it is impossible for manufacturers to comply with the law, and therefore it should be struck down based on precedent set forth by California law stating you cannot be made to comply with the impossible.

"The slightest change to an existing model of handgun not considered purely cosmetic is deemed by the state to be a new model," says Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF senior vice president and general counsel. "Therefore, it must comply with all the requirements of a truly new model, including microstamping. If it doesn't, it falls off the roster of firearms approved for sale in California. Now what we are seeing is a slow-motion ban on pistols, which, of course, is exactly what was intended by the anti-gun legislature in California when they passed the microstamping law."

Rather than attack the legislation on Second Amendment grounds, the NSSF/SAAMI case, filed against the State of California in the Fresno Superior Court, asserts that it is impossible for manufacturers to comply with the microstamping requirement and argues that it should be struck down based on precedent set forth by California law stating you cannot be made to comply with the impossible.

"There is no existing microstamping technology that meets the requirement of this ill-considered law," says Keane. "It is not technologically possible to microstamp two locations in the gun so that the required information reliably imprints onto the cartridge casing. It is not even possible to consistently and legibly imprint on the cartridge primer the required identifying information from the tip of the firing pin, the only conceivable location for such micro-laser engraving."

Last summer, the NSSF/SAAMI moved for a preliminary injunction asking the court to temporarily block the implementation of the law until the case is resolved.

Unfortunately, the preliminary injunction was denied by the court, which, according to Keane, was a high bar for the plaintiffs to obtain. The case has since moved into the discovery phase of the litigation process, and the microstamping requirement remains in effect. Keane estimates the suit will not go to trial until late 2015, at the earliest, with "a good

chance" it could go into 2016.

Keane did note that a second case, argued in federal court, is much further along the legal process. The suit, known as *Pena v. Lindley*, asserts that California's Handgun Roster and the microstamping requirement clearly violate the Second Amendment. Early last summer, the court asked the plaintiff and the state to provide supplemental briefings on how the microstamping requirement violates the Second Amendment. On behalf of the NSSF and SAAMI, Keane provided the court with an affidavit explaining why complying with microstamping is impossible, effectively banning a category of commonly owned firearms. The case is awaiting the federal court's decision on the pending summary judgment motions.

"In the meantime, the law is effective and no new semi-automatic handgun models introduced at the SHOT Show, for example, can be sold to law-abiding gun owners in California," says Keane. ■



# Balancing Act

A new generation at Weatherby is poised to move forward while not forgetting the past **By Slaton L. White**

**G**rooming the next generation of leaders is one of the key responsibilities of any management team. But when the grooming involves a family-run concern, the entire process becomes far more fraught because the top managers usually have the same name as the company. In this instance, it's not just business—it's personal.

Weatherby, Inc., made an important announcement along those lines last summer when it revealed that the next executive vice president and chief operating officer would be Adam Weatherby, grandson of company founder Roy Weatherby. At the time of the appointment, Ed Weatherby, president and chief executive officer, said, "My son Adam brings proven leadership and communication skills, as well as a lifetime of hunting and shooting experience, to his new position. He also benefits from his past experience with our company as well. He represents the third generation of our family to be involved in running the business, and I look forward to working with him as we take Weatherby into a bright future."

Like many of those born into the fold, in 1996, Adam (after gaining valuable experience working in a gun shop) began working at the family business, holding positions over a four-year period in technical support, warranty service, sales, and marketing. But then his life took an interesting turn. Rather than continue his ascent up the corporate ladder, he became a pastor at Atascadero Bible Church, leading mission trips around the world, speaking at numerous youth events, and serving on the teaching team.

All of which raises the question: Does that experience give him any extra insight into running a multinational business?

You bet it does.

## Family Legacy

► "It's funny, because at first it sure doesn't seem like those two occupations would complement each other," Weatherby says. "However, I have realized that my past experiences have actually prepared me for this position. There are three qualities that I find I need to have as I lead Weatherby into the future: strong leadership, an excellent ability to communicate, and great character."

He discovered that the first quality was naturally honed while teaching, counseling, or leading a large mission trip. "I needed to develop a strong style of leadership in order to work with our teams to achieve the goals we set," he says. "In leading an organization like Weatherby,



Adam Weatherby, grandson of company founder Roy Weatherby, has rejoined the manufacturer as executive vice president and chief operating officer.

these things are absolutely necessary to have as well. After all, my grandfather's ability to lead and influence people was one of the key factors to his success. When you work full-time in ministry, it is all about the people. Everything you do is driven by the fact that God called us to love and care for others. As I lead Weatherby, I must constantly keep in mind the fact that it is ultimately about people. I want Weatherby to be the absolute best place to work for our employees. I also want to have quality relationships with others in the industry. Ultimately, I desire to deliver products to our customers that will enhance their shooting and hunting experiences. Similar to ministry, it truly is about the people, not just the products we sell."

If you've ever listened to a charismatic pastor deliver an inspiring sermon, you know the power of transcendent communication. And that is a far cry from the sometimes

dull-as-dishwater delivery common to some top executives. Weatherby clearly knows the difference.

"I believe that clear and compelling communication is the key to effective leadership," he says. "In my past experiences, I communicated to audiences of hundreds every week. I have spoken in front of large crowds literally thousands of times in my life. In addition, I found I needed to have the ability to clearly communicate in smaller settings to leaders who worked with me as well. I have already found that these experiences have helped shape me in becoming the leader that I need to be at Weatherby. If a leader can't clearly communicate where an organization is headed, it is unlikely the organization will ever get there."

"Author and pastor Andy Stanley has said, 'You can lead without character, but character is what makes you a leader worth following.' I couldn't agree more. Working full-

time in ministry helped shape my character in so many ways that will help me immensely in carrying on my family legacy. My father has maintained phenomenal integrity in the many years he has led this organization, and I hope to follow in his footsteps with strong moral character that is truly worth following."

That said, Weatherby knows the shooting-sports industry faces some big challenges in the next five years.

## Constant Battle

► "This probably isn't news to anyone, but I am not sure there is any greater challenge our industry will face than the constant battle for our constitutional rights," he says. "The ongoing political drama surrounding this single issue will continue to shape our industry. Being located in California, we believe we are at the forefront of the battle and directly see the results of legislation. As laws are passed and new people are elected to office, the industry tends to fluctuate. This has caused a great instability in the marketplace. The ebbs and flows of business are drastically affected by the constant attack on our Second Amendment rights. Perhaps the most frustrating thing with this is the sheer lack of stability from year to year. Unless this problem is solved, our industry will continue to face a sea of challenges that come from this incredibly important issue."

These challenges, however, haven't dimmed his passion for the future of the company.

"There are two things that I am quite passionate about at Weatherby right now: people and potential," he says. "I have the incredible privilege of working with a group of people who are passionate about what they do. As a result, we are really able to operate at high levels of teamwork to accomplish our goals. To put it simply, I love working with the group of people we have at Weatherby. The second thing that excites me is the potential that we have in the marketplace. Weatherby's reputation in the industry has been firmly established over the last 70 years, and that reputation provides us with an incredible foundation to launch into the future. I see part of my job as maximizing this potential as we look toward new and exciting projects in



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## FEATURE

the years to come. If you were to ask me where Weatherby will be 10 or 20 years from now, I obviously couldn't answer that question. However, moving into this unknown territory truly does excite me, and it gets me up every day asking myself the question, 'How can this incredible group of people I work with team up to truly maximize Weatherby's potential?'"

Thinking about all that potential helps him also focus on what the company needs to do in the future to maintain its leadership position. He believes there is a lot that can be learned from the past that can help direct the future.

"When I think back to how my grandfather initially gained his leadership position in the industry, it was really pretty simple," he says. "First, it was his drive for performance that launched the Weatherby name. It is for this reason today that we say 'nothing shoots flatter, hits harder, or is more accurate' than a Weatherby. If we continue innovating with performance in mind, we will maintain our leadership position."

### More Than a Product

➤ "Second, what really helped solidify the Weatherby reputation was rigorous testing on anything he designed. His initial trips to Africa in the 1950s were primarily intended for field testing. He never launched a new idea until he was absolutely certain that it would be the best it could be. This is why we still cling to the saying 'endurance tested, field proven' in all that we do.

"Finally, once my grandfather had this field-tested, performance-driven concept, he wrapped it up in a gorgeous final product. After all, life is too short to hunt with an ugly gun, isn't it?"

The Mark V is one of those iconic guns, the lines of which can take your breath away. But even the more workmanlike Vanguard line displays an elegant simplicity that appeals to many hunters and shooters. So it should come as no surprise that Adam Weatherby thinks a lot about just what makes a Weatherby a Weatherby.

"One of the things I have heard my whole life from people when they find out my last name is, 'I've always wanted to own a Weatherby.' Let's face it; there is something about a Weatherby that just stands out. Whether it is the hard-hitting, straight-shooting magnum calibers or something fancy out of the custom shop, there is a reputation that comes with our name that has stood the test of time."

But he also notes that the more he thinks about all this, he realizes that the company provides more than just a product.

"Somehow people see us as more than just an organization that designs, manufactures, and markets quality firearms and related products," he says. "Yes, that is what we do when we all come to work here, and we will continue to do

that. However, through doing that over the years, we have actually achieved something greater. I believe that we have inspired the dreams of hunters and shooters. The reason we hear 'I've always wanted to own a Weatherby' isn't solely because of the products. It's about the stories passed down through generations; it's about dream hunts that have been achieved; it's about long-range shots that seemed to have never been possible. Most of all, it's about cherished memories that are in the minds of men and women around the world who hunt and shoot. Our brand has been a part of these memories, from the plains of Africa to local ranches and farms. This is why we exist."

Weatherby certainly basks in the glow of a magnificent heritage. But as many companies have learned the hard way, that glow sometimes doesn't pave the way to the future. In an attempt to attract and keep younger hunters and shooters, the company recently launched WBY-X, a line of rifles, recognized by their bold graphics, that say, in no uncertain terms, "not your father's rifle." It was a daring move, but is it paying off?

Weatherby says it is.

"We recognize that there is a growing number of new hunters and shooters entering the marketplace, many of whom did not grow up with firearms," he says. "Although many people hold to the idea that WBY-X is exclusively for youth, the idea of the product line is actually to introduce new hunters and shooters into our growing sport with something that appeals to those who may not be familiar with what a gun 'should' look like. A by-product of this is that young people have also been quite responsive to WBY-X since its introduction."

At the same time, he says the company has found that there are many people out there who still primarily identify Weatherby with the more traditional Mark V Deluxe.

"Although we proudly continue to offer these types of products, the WBY-X models are a very intentional way of getting the word out that the Weatherby line is a lot deeper and wider than it once was," he says. "Furthermore, we have found that many Weatherby dealers enjoy displaying a WBY-X in a unique pattern because it just jumps off the gun display. Customers seem to ask about them a lot, and this sort of exposure has proven to be quite beneficial for both Weatherby and our dealers. I am sure my grandfather would have never envisioned a Hog Reaper or Blaze pattern on a Weatherby, but then again, his passion for innovation and cutting-edge design in the 1940s and 1950s was to his customers what our WBY-X may be to our customers today."

Remaining true to the past while forging a new future is a delicate balancing act, but one Adam Weatherby is ready to undertake. "As we move forward, we must constantly remember what got us here in the first place," he says. ■

**“There is something about a Weatherby that just stands out. Whether it is the hard-hitting magnum calibers or something fancy out of the custom shop, our name has stood the test of time.”**



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## FEATURE



The pancake-style Ambi Eclipse holster is designed to fit snugly against the body.

# Functional Versatility

Blade-Tech built its business by providing products that work in severe environments

By Christopher Cogley

**F**or some products, the importance of functionality might reside somewhere on a sliding scale between style and cost. For other products, however, functionality is the only quality that matters. Those are the kind of products that Blade-Tech makes. The Washington-based company, headquartered just outside of Tacoma, was quite literally founded on the need for functionality.

"I started out making leather sheaths, but when I was in the field, they got wet and didn't protect my knives," says Tim Wegner, founder of Blade-Tech. "That's when I started looking for something more functional."

What he found was a moldable material called Kydex, and from that he formed the foundation for the company that would eventually become Blade-Tech. Wegner started out by using his toaster oven to mold Kydex sheaths for his custom-made knives, but he quickly found out that that business model wasn't going to last long.

"I got kicked out of the kitchen because I was drilling too many holes in the counter, so I graduated to the garage," he says. "Eventually, it got to the point where I knew I had to fish or cut bait, so I quit my job and started doing this full-time."

At that point, Wegner was already producing sheaths for some of the top knife manufacturers in the world. It didn't take long for him to realize, however, that the inherent properties that gave Kydex a functional advantage over leather sheaths could also be used to make a more reliable holster. And that's when Blade-Tech's business took off.

"Pretty soon, the holster business grew even bigger than the sheath business," he says.

But it wasn't enough for Wegner to just create holsters that functioned well in theory; he needed to make sure that Blade-Tech's holsters offered the kind of functionality that people could depend on in real-world situations.

"When you design products for people who are going into harm's way, you understand that they're trusting their lives to that product," Wegner says. "It has to work. Every time. And that's exactly what we design our products to do."

To test that functionality and ensure that it was as good as it could be, Wegner started working with some of the best operators in the world.

"We'd have special ops guys who would come in and tell us what they needed. We'd make it, then they'd field-test it and give us feedback on how it worked," Wegner says. "You have to have guys like that who will give you honest feedback so you can make adjustments to the product until you get it right."

Many of the adjustments that Blade-Tech makes are focused on improving a product's functionality by increasing its versatility. But it isn't just the military and law enforcement officers that the company is focused on. Two of the new products that Blade-Tech is launching at this year's SHOT Show are designed to deliver that functional versatility to the ever-growing concealed-carry community.

The Ambi Klipt holster is contoured to reduce hot spots and features thinner material for better concealment, while the Eclipse is a pancake-style holster that's designed to fit snug to the body yet still provide a smooth draw while concealed. Both of the holsters feature Blade-Tech's trademarked Positive Lock Trigger Guard and are designed to give everyday citizens the same peace of mind that military and law enforcement officers have when securing their firearms in Blade-Tech holsters.

"Whether it's a soldier defending our country or a man protecting his family, our goal is to make dependable gear for people who depend on it," Wegner says. "That's what we're all about."

And that's the kind of functionality that anyone who carries a firearm can appreciate. Booth #14205. (877-331-5793; [blade-tech.com](http://blade-tech.com))



# Tight Tolerances

Christensen Arms displays its aerospace roots **By Bill Miller**

**M**ention “carbon fiber” in the description of a rifle barrel and a prospective buyer might fast-forward to the price list. That’s because carbon fiber is light, but also very rigid, which improves the accuracy of a barrel. This combo thrills military snipers and big-game hunters who must haul guns and gear over craggy terrain to achieve long-distance shots.



Rigid carbon-fiber barrels help deliver dramatic improvements in accuracy. This space-age material also weighs a lot less than steel, a nice bonus for hunters.

But carbon-fiber materials and the process of applying them to gun parts are expensive; price tags usually top four figures and keep rising. The average civilian hunter might be priced out of this market.

Christensen Arms of Gunnison, Utah, wants to change that.

Last summer, the company announced major price cuts on carbon-fiber-wrapped products—as much as 63 percent for MSR-style barrels and about 25 percent for bolt-action barrels. This, says Jason Christensen, the company’s president, was achieved through new manufacturing equipment and techniques that allow the company to bypass vendors and make parts in-house.

“We start,” he says, “with a very thin metal barrel—our liner—which is much thinner than other lightweight barrels. But then we apply carbon fiber to it, which is a stiff, very durable and lightweight product that supports the barrel. We have a raving fan base of hunting guys who love it, but the price point has been restrictive, honestly. The desire was to get so good at doing this that more people could afford it. But the new methods have not diminished quality.”

## Aerospace Roots

➤ Along with rifle barrels, the company makes complete bolt-action rifles for both hunting and tactical applications. It also produces MSR-style rifles and 1911 pistols. Christensen says his father, Roland, the company’s CEO, has been shaping carbon-fiber products since the mid-1970s, first in the aerospace industry and later in the development of medical prosthetics. Roland worked for several Utah-based companies before agreeing to help develop a carbon-fiber prosthetic foot that was originally designed by a friend who had died. That led to Roland’s development of Freedom Innovations, a successful prosthetics manufacturer.

“From 1984 to about 2008, we built most of the models for prosthetic feet,” Christensen says. “There are still people walking around on our feet, and most designs are my father’s original designs or versions of it.”

Later, Roland built Applied Composite Technology Aerospace, which continues to make high-stress carbon-fiber components for airframes.

About 20 years ago, he created a side venture that combined his lifelong passions for hunting and shooting with his experience

working with carbon-fiber materials.

Christensen Arms started producing barrels made of the light, stainless-steel liners, complete with rifling, but reinforced with carbon-fiber wraps.

The son had worked for Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan, but returned home to Gunnison in 2002 to help with the family businesses.

“The gun stuff remained pretty small,” he says. “Meanwhile, we grew the prosthetic foot company, and it was doing really well.”

That company was sold in 2008 and proceeds were used to fund improvements to the aerospace and gun companies.

“We were medical, then aerospace, and now firearms,” he says. “But through our aerospace roots, we have aerospace-type quality.”

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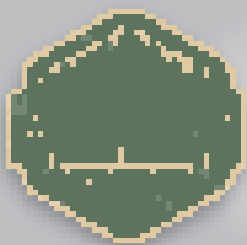
➤ ACT Aerospace has been making parts for a wide array of projects, including Bell Helicopter’s V-22 Osprey and the HondaJet from Honda Aircraft Company. Christensen

A major restructuring four years ago has helped the company position itself for continued growth.





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Jason Christensen says his company's employees are passionate about the products they build.

Arms, meanwhile, grew rapidly. There was a major restructuring in 2011; key personnel were hired to develop new products.

"We added MSRs and 1911s," Christensen says. "While doing that, I took things we understood from the aerospace side and developed a new machine for automated fiber placement."

The computer-controlled device ensures that carbon materials are evenly applied to barrels, without leaving weak spots. "That was one piece," he says. The other was pretty simple. "We always bought match-grade barrels from others, but a few years ago, we said, 'Let's quit relying on vendors and let's rely on ourselves.' So, we made the investment."

Subsequently, the company bought the machine-shop equipment necessary to make its own steel barrels in-house. The result is a lightweight, durable barrel that performs in extreme temperature ranges, everywhere from the Canadian Rockies to Afghanistan. The barrels are available in calibers .223 Rem. to .338 Lapua. They can be bought singularly or integrated in the company's complete rifles.

Christensen says the manufacturing changes are expected to cut costs for other products.

Meanwhile, the savings on barrels announced in June were significant. A carbon-fiber MSR barrel previously cost \$1,350, but it now sells for about \$500. Also, bolt-action barrels that were \$950 now cost about \$700.

"We really build things like it should go on an aircraft," he says. "But now, we're making them in such a way that it doesn't cost as much as an aircraft part."

### Tight-Tolerance Guys

► About \$5 million was spent on capital improvements to upgrade the firearms company, but Christensen says its 42 workers make the difference. Gunnison, with a population of about 3,250, is a rural area in the central part of the state, and the employees love the outdoors just as much as Christensen and his father do.

"But," he adds, "these workers have embraced the skills needed to produce precision firearms and parts from state-of-the-art materials. They're a tight-tolerance group. They love shooting and hunting, and they take that passion to work every day." Booth #10374. ([christensenarms.com](http://christensenarms.com))



The Schearers, left to right: Walker, Chad, Marsha, and Wyatt. They work hard to balance work and family.



# On the Go

Sometimes business and family interests can clash. Here's how one family merged the two successfully **By Bill Miller**

**W**alker and Wyatt Schearer are in middle school, but these Montana brothers already have made lots of checks on their bucket lists. In September, their family was in Kansas, where 12-year-old Wyatt took an 11-point whitetail buck with a .50-caliber CVA Optima muzzleloader. A few weeks earlier, they were on a craggy mountaintop in Canada's Yukon Territory. Walker, 13, used a custom Bergara rifle in .300 Win. Mag. to drop a snow-white mountain goat.

"With the adrenaline pumping, it was really an indescribable feeling," Walker says. "I also caught a Yukon grayling, which has been on my bucket list for a long time. To do it on my fly rod was awesome."

The brothers are constantly on the go with parents Chad and Marsha, working on dad's outdoors show, *Shoot Straight with Chad Schearer*. They don't attend a regular school. Instead, Marsha keeps them on a steady homeschool schedule, whether they're home in Belt, Montana, at the airport, or in a hunting camp pitched for musk ox near the top of the world.

Marsha says the family relies on flexibility and discipline. For a morning hunt, schoolwork is postponed to evening. The schedule is flipped for afternoon hunts.

"Some days we may do two days of work in one," Marsha says. "With our lifestyle and traveling, there's no way they'd be able to be

in a normal school setting."

This past fall, the family also hunted Florida alligators and Wyoming pronghorns. They went to Saskatchewan for waterfowl, and then it was back home to Montana for upland game, more waterfowl, mule deer, and elk. In previous years, they've hunted plains game in South Africa and Axis deer in Hawaii.

Social skills? No problem for these boys. The family's work puts them in contact with CEOs of major outdoor gear companies, popular celebrities, and the nation's top gun writers. After hunting season, you'll find the Schearers speaking at outdoor skills seminars around the country.

Chad grew up in Montana and became a licensed guide and outfitter and a world-champion elk caller. Marsha, from Tennessee, managed a dental office but embraced the outdoors when she married

Chad. She, too, became a licensed guide. A client, Dudley McGarity, CEO of BPI Outdoors, invited Chad to co-host a hunting show.

"I said the only way I'd do it is with my family because I would be on the road so much," he says.

Now Chad hosts *Shoot Straight* on the Pursuit Channel. CVA Rifles and other brands sponsor the show, which is co-hosted by his family. Chad also became director of advertising and media relations for BPI Outdoors, parent company of CVA, PowerBelt Bullets, Quake Industries, DuraSight Scope Mounts, and Bergara Rifles and Barrels.

People frequently ask him how to turn a passion for outdoors into a paycheck. Whether they want to host a show or market a fishing lure, solid communication skills are essential, Chad says. But don't expect success right away. He has been on shows for 10 years. Spiritual faith, meanwhile, has guided his family.

"I believe God has his plan for us, and he wanted us to do this," Chad says. "But, you also have to start at the bottom. It takes time." Marsha says she and Chad don't make assumptions with their sons. Each year they ask them if they are ready to attend a regular school, where they can play sports or be in other activities.

"Even now," she says, "they don't want to do anything different."

Just ask the boys.

"No, sir," says Wyatt. "What we do is really fun. I like school, but I'd rather be hunting. When I was 10, I completed my grand slam of turkeys, and my dad hasn't even gotten that yet. He has everything but the Osceola."

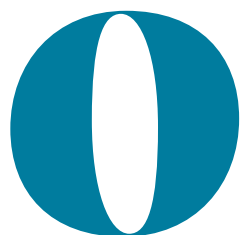
Walker says attending a regular school has crossed his mind. "But," he adds, "there's nothing I'd want to trade for all the opportunities I get to do with my family." Booth #14814. ([bpioutdoors.com](http://bpioutdoors.com))



# Tall Order

Nightforce goes to insane levels to achieve accuracy.

And it's working **By David E. Petzal**



Once upon a time, I told an FFL dealer—a guy very, very knowledgeable about tactical equipment—that I was interested in a scope for a beanfield rifle. “You should look at Nightforce scopes,” he said. “All my tactical shooters love them. All my .50-caliber shooters want them.”

I did as he said, and also took a look at the prices, the sight of which sent me reeling back into the rack where the Filson coats hung.

“Holy Hillary,” I croaked, “where do they get off charging that kind of money? What’s so different about Nightforce?”

He didn’t have an answer, so I didn’t buy one. Since then, I’ve found out what’s different. I have bought a number of them and haven’t regretted a cent of it. Here’s what that dealer didn’t know.

It all began, as the saying goes, in the town of Cleve, in South Australia, where a shooter, designer, and general gun nut named Dr. Raymond Leigh Dennis was seriously engaged in nighttime varmint hunting. He wanted a high-powered light that would emit a beam 300 yards and more to send kangaroos, foxes, dingoes, and wild pigs to the Great Beyond. So he built one. Then he found he needed a scope that was optically able to keep up with his light and strong enough to

stand lots and lots of shooting, so he built that, too. He called the scopes and the lights Lightforce.

In 1992, Dr. Dennis took a hard look at the American market and decided we were ripe for the Lightforce brand, but because that name was already taken, he settled on Nightforce. If you’re looking for a meaning in Nightforce, save yourself the effort. The scopes are not for use at night. It just sounds good.

But the name and reputation go only part way toward selling a scope. If you have someone like me in the store and are asked what’s the big deal, you can start with the windage and elevation knobs. Unlike many scopes, on which the numbers and index lines are small,

dim, and oddly situated, Nightforce numbers and index lines are big, white, and highly visible. Moreover, they’re highly visible from any angle. They are obviously the work of people who shoot—and who listen to shooters.

Then point out the elevation knob, which conceals Nightforce’s ZeroStop feature. This allows you to sight-in the scope for a particular yardage and then lock the knob so it returns to that yardage when you turn it down as far as it will go. When a shooter gets so hopelessly screwed up that he can’t remember what his last elevation setting was or where the rifle is shooting, all he has to do is turn the knob until it stops. He’s back to square one.

There’s another difference that you can’t detect by sight. Nightforces don’t break. I’ve seen just about every make of scope, foreign and domestic, lose control of its bodily functions either from recoil, improper use, bad design, or poor manufacture. This includes expensive scopes as well as cheap ones. Nightforces do not break, which is why .50 BMG shooters love them, and why tactical shooters covet them.

But the fundamental difference between Nightforce and everyone else’s optical sights is this: Nightforce does not consider its scopes to be telescopes first and sights second. It sees what it builds as replacements for iron sights; the

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The ATACR 4—16x42 F1 riflescope, like all Nightforce products, features stunningly precise adjustments and is tough as a tank.



glass is there to enhance the image of the target. And by “iron sights,” I mean those machinists’ delights that cost as much as a rifle all by themselves and will crank up and down, right and left, with unfailing precision no matter how much use they get.

Consider how most shooters use a scope. They’ll take their rifle on its once-a-year trip to the range, shoot it hot enough to brand heifers, crank on the elevation and windage until it shoots somewhere close to where they want it, and then put it away, not to be fired at a target again for another year. If the adjustments are less than pre-

cise and less than repeatable, so what?

Now consider the shooter who pays for a Nightforce. He has probably bought one because whatever he’s been using has pissed him off for the last time. He’s learned, the hard way, that if you’re shooting at small targets, or at long range, even minute errors by yourself or by your scope result in big misses. That’s why, if you put four clicks of elevation on a Nightforce, it will move the bullet 1 inch up at 100 yards. Not 1 1/8 inch, or 3/4 inch, but 1 inch. Every time, no exceptions.

The key to this lies in the scope’s windage and elevation adjustments,

and to achieve it, Nightforce uses dissimilar materials in the adjustments that create friction when they rub and work against each other. Normally, this would kill a scope in short order, but Nightforce compensates. In the words of Kyle Brown, director of sales and marketing: “At the end of the day, we put the expensive components, sweat equity, and rigorous testing into our scopes that other manufacturers simply aren’t willing to. We chase third, fourth, and fifth decimal point measurements of our internal parts and components nearly to an insane level to ensure repeatable and accurate perfor-

mance. It’s a tall order to do this in production day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year.”

In the beginning, says Brown, the typical Nightforce buyer was an experienced shooter who was fed up with the failures of other scopes and was willing to spend whatever it cost to get something that worked. Today, he says, it’s probably the case 60 or 70 percent of the time.

There’s a reason for those big prices on Nightforce scopes. Once you explain why, they don’t look so big any more. Booth #20449. (208-476.9814; [nightforceoptics.com](http://nightforceoptics.com))

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# Keep It Clean

Remington unveils a new line of gun-care products **By W.H. Gross**

**D**uring three recent surveys conducted by Remington Arms Company, firearms owners were asked which of 33 brands of gun-care products they have used or at least heard of. Remington (74.1 percent) came out on top. The surprise finding was that Rem Oil finished fifth (45.1 percent). A Remington product, Rem Oil it seems has effectively become a brand of its own in consumers' minds.

"We're proud of our high brand-recognition status," says Robert Kaleta, product manager of gun-care accessories for Remington Arms Company. "We believe we've achieved that high ranking because we aimed that part of our core business at what shooters told us they wanted most in gun-care products: performance and effectiveness, quality and durability, time savings and ease of use—and also little or no mess."



The MZL Premium Synthetic Patches are made of a material that evenly distributes the bore cleaner.

In 2015, Remington will be more actively targeting two specific groups of shooters with its gun-care products: MSR (modern sporting rifle) owners, and those who own a muzzleloader. "MSR and muzzleloader owners shoot more and also spend more, on average, on gun-cleaning products than owners of other types of firearms," says Kaleta. "For instance, nearly two-thirds of muzzleloader owners report cleaning their firearm after every use."

Kaleta also says that the manufacturer knows that muzzleloader and MSR owners participate in more shooting activities than those shooters who don't own either type of gun. "And more than half of muzzleloader and MSR owners expect their shooting activity to increase in the next 12 months, while other shooters expect their shooting activity to remain constant."

The survey results also showed shooters are looking for new products that make firearms

cleaning easier. "They actively seek out innovative products," says Kaleta. "As a result, Remington has several new products for 2015 specifically developed to make cleaning muzzleloaders quicker and easier."

Remington designed four new cleaning products to care for its new Ultimate Muzzleloader rifle. A bolt-action, the gun is based on Remington's popular Model 700 centerfire rifle. One difference between the Ultimate Muzzleloader and most other modern muzzleloaders, though, is that, due to a unique and extra-clean ignition system, the breech plug is not required to be removed for cleaning. However, this does not allow for pull-through cleaning, as with the proven and popular Rem Squeeg-E. The situation sparked the development of an aggressive and innovative gun-care system called MZL.

"To clean the gun, we had to develop a chemical solution that is extremely aggressive on carbon and



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The idiosyncrasies of muzzleloader cleaning (modern ignition systems don't require removal of the breech plug) led Remington to develop the MZL line of cleaning products for the guns.

fouling," says Kaleta. "We named it Remington MZL Muzzleloader Bore Cleaner and put it in a black plastic bottle with a convenient, no-waste applicator. Customers readily identify and differentiate it from the gun-cleaning products of our competitors because the bottle is similar in look and design to other Remington bore cleaners."

To go along with its new bore cleaner, Remington developed Remington MZL Premium Synthetic Patches. Die-cut and fiber-free, the synthetic material chosen was selected for its strength and ability to distribute the chemical bore cleaner across the entire surface of the cleaning patch. "It works much better than the traditional cotton patch," Kaleta says.

Remington then combined its new bore cleaner and cleaning patches into a third new product, Remington MZL Patch & Bore. "It's an all-in-one, grab-and-go solution for use at the range or at hunting camp," says Kaleta. "The pre-saturated patches give muzzleloader shooters the convenience of a quick clean in the field or at home."

A fourth new product, Remington MZL Patch & Lube, is designed to be applied following a more thorough cleaning of a muzzleloader to prevent corrosion when the gun is stored. To get the word out about these new cleaning products to consumers and retailers, Kaleta says, Remington will focus this year on marketing and consumer education. Booth #15427. (800-243-9700; [remington.com](http://remington.com))



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# Crossover Carry Options

Blackhawk adds to its innovative line of low-profile firearms transport cases

**I**t was once the case that hunting ruled all in the outdoors industry. Not so today. Tactical gear has become just as prevalent among the halls of the industry's biggest stage—the Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show. And now, preparation and self-defense have taken a strong hold on the industry, too. This shift has ushered in a flood of crossover items that borrow the very best technologies and features from all three genres. It has also created a new kind of consumer, one who demands the best features teamed with the latest styles and customized to their specific use or needs.

The firearms showcased each year illustrate these trends on the front covers of magazines. However, a perfect example can be found in the latest bags, cases, and packs.

## Common Looks, Topflight Features

➤ Getting your firearms from one place to another often requires some thought. You must keep your valuable guns protected—not only from scratches and dings, but also from individuals. Industry leader Blackhawk has tackled this problem head-on by creating an inconspicuous solution for moving firearms. It's called Diversion. The bags and

packs of this line mimic everyday backpacks and satchels, but are fully customized, low-profile firearms transport cases.

For discreet and convenient off-body carry, the Diversion Carry Sling Pack (\$54.99) and Diversion Carry Backpack (\$134.99) offer quick-and-easy access to hidden handgun compartments. Both packs have lockable zippers and come with universal hook-back holsters. Each can be worn in such a way that puts the firearm close to the body and in responsible control of the wearer while providing quick access should a dangerous situation arise.

Meanwhile, the Diversion Range Bag (\$149.99), Courier Bag

(\$139.99), Racquet Bag (\$64.99), Workout Bag (\$174.99), and Board Pack (\$144.99) offer full-featured firearm, accessory, and ammunition transport with the look of standard bags. In each product, padding and specifically tailored pockets and configurations provide a handy transport solution. The Racquet Bag, Workout Bag, and Board Pack are even built to accommodate rifles up to 29 inches or MSR platforms separated into upper and lower receivers.

## New Style, Tactical Pedigree

➤ This year, Blackhawk is taking this award-winning Diversion line

to a new level with the Diversion Wax Canvas series. These new Wax Canvas Bags are made with 10.10-ounce Army Duck Martexin Original Wax Canvas to blend style with cutting-edge design features. Hidden compartments allow you to carry and protect firearms and other sensitive items unnoticed.

The Wax Canvas Messenger Bag (\$229.99) offers two strap styles to allow secure cross-body or courier-style shoulder carry. It has a top-closure lid with a quick access pass-through waterproof zipper and a padded, loop-lined compartment for additional accessories or a laptop computer. The loop-lined handgun and accessory storage compartment features ambidextrous access through the back of the bag.

The Diversion Wax Canvas Series also offers a large Rucksack (\$249.99) with a quick-access pass-through waterproof zipper on the lid and hidden, easy-access handgun and laptop compartments. The Wax Canvas Satchel is a smaller bag sized for everyday carry. It holds small- and medium-frame handguns and offers discreet access with a pass-through waterproof zipper in the lid. The loop-lined storage compartments accept hook-back Velcro holsters and accessory panels. The final piece of the Diversion Wax Canvas line is an accessory pouch (\$29.99) that offers a hidden nylon stretch pocket with a pull cord for carrying a water bottle.

## Endless Customization

➤ Blackhawk has also introduced a line of accessories to augment any bag equipped with Velcro panels. This includes the Diversion line as well as popular go bags (\$5.99 to \$29.99) such as the Brick Go Bag, Block Go Bag, Go Box Mag Bag, and Go Box Sling Packs. The Go Box accessories feature hook-back panels to mount to the interior loop-lined surfaces of the bags. These accessory pouches and panels feature the same quality components found throughout the Go Box line, including YKK zippers and 500-denier nylon. The hook-back panels mount to any Velcro surface and allow the accessories to be easily removed or repositioned. The line includes the Go Box ID Panel, for labeling bags or pouches; Go Box Small Tool Panel, for securing items such as tools and cleaning supplies; Go Box Med Pouch, with easy-ID red handles and zipper pulls for medical contents; Go Box Handgun Mag Loop Panel, for single- or double-stack pistol magazines; Go Box Shotgun Loop Panel, which holds six 12-gauge shotgun shells; Go Box Mesh Pouch, for various accessories; and the Go Box S.T.R.I.K.E. Pouch, with webbing to attach a variety of MOLLE-compatible accessories.

Booth #14551. ([blackhawk.com](http://blackhawk.com))



The Diversion line of bags and packs allows for discreet and convenient off-body carry.



# Improving the Breed

Volquartsen Custom is dedicated to precision shooting

By Slaton L. White

**C**arroll County, Iowa, sits in the middle of the country's Corn Belt. The county seat, Carroll, located along the Middle Raccoon River, is home to a little more than 10,000 people. In many ways, it's virtually indistinguishable from any of the other small farming communities that dot the Midwest. Its sole claim to fame is that it is named for Charles Carroll, of Carroll County, Maryland, who was the only Roman Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence. Given the bucolic nature of the environment, you could be forgiven for not knowing that just outside of town, off U.S. 71, is a company that specializes in precision firearms and custom parts of extraordinary quality.

Volquartsen Custom started, oh so humbly, in 1974 as a gun-bluing shop in the basement of a rented house. But the founder, Tom Volquartsen, had a vision of a future far bolder than gun bluing. That he saw anything on the horizon at all is an amazing testament to good old-fashioned American ingenuity. He had no formal firearms training; everything he learned was self-taught. He began with refinishing, and then gradually transitioned into gunsmithing. In 1986, he decided to turn his hobby into a full-time business and recruited his wife, Linda, into the fold. In 1997, the company began producing complete firearms while still turning out a full-line of aftermarket accessories for several different firearms. In 2005, their children assumed control, and continue to run the firm as a family enterprise.

Tom Volquartsen may not have foreseen a company that designed components of exacting tolerances for precision shooters, but he obviously was interested in producing something that improved the breed. Along the way, the company has benefited from the growth of action shooting sports in which the participants seek out raceguns modified to allow them to compete at a higher level.

"It's been quite a ride," says Scott Volquartsen, president of Volquartsen Custom. "First, we pioneered the 10/22 revolution by creating the finest custom 10/22s, custom 10/22 parts, and Mark II pistols on the market. Our custom parts and accessories are still in high demand and are still considered among the best available."

The venerable Ruger MKIII remains a popular

choice for many shooters, and Volquartsen is kept busy customizing these .22s for its customers. "First, we start by tuning the action using our own MKIII accurizing kit, as well as installing a pretravel adjustment screw to the trigger to achieve a crisp, clean 2.25-pound trigger pull," he says. "Our high-tech Volthane grips (right-hand only) are standard on all of our Mark III pistols unless otherwise noted. We use only stainless-steel match digitally gauged blanks on all of our pistol models, and we use the same chamber and bore dimensions on each of our pistols models as well. The chamber is hand-cut using our own unique reamer. The feed ramp is also hand-polished. All pistols have a

stainless finish, but a matte black finish is available.

## Top of the Line

➤ Volquartsen is justifiably proud of his entire line, but he takes time to single out the rimfire rifles. "Nobody, but nobody, makes better-crafted or higher-quality custom rimfires," he says. "Each is beautiful to behold and a delight to shoot. The secret is in our choice of top-of-the-line materials, our obsession with attention to detail, and our insistence on uncompromising, precision craftsmanship."

Volquartsen notes that every barrel features a match chamber and match bore with 0.0001-inch bore tolerance from muzzle to breech and a standard .920-

inch bull barrel design.

"We use our own CNC-machined stainless-steel receivers with integral Picatinny mounts for perfect, permanent alignment."

Other products include the Fusion takedown rifle, which lets the shooters go from .22 WMR to .17 HMR by switching the barrels. Now, he says, the company is moving "on to bigger things, like our new semi-auto .17 WSM, which we feel is a worthy addition to our line."

Volquartsen Custom is obviously poised for more growth. Its facility is 9,000 square feet, a far cry from the basement of a rented house, and this year Volquartsen says they will add an additional 15,000 square feet. Currently, there are 13

full-time employees as well as several part-timers.

But at the same time, the family remains committed to the values upon which the company was founded 40 years ago. "Even though our growth has been nothing short of phenomenal, we remain a family-owned and -operated business," he says. "As a result, customer satisfaction is still our number-one goal. We keep our delivery times as short as possible, but we will not sacrifice quality to meet a deadline."

Volquartsen also tries to make it easy for a retailer to get into its product line. "We have several pricing levels available to fit any size retailer," he says. Booth #11229.

([volquartsen.com](http://volquartsen.com))



Iowa-based Volquartsen, which began life 40 years ago as a gun-bluing operation, now makes exquisite custom rimfire pistols and rifles. Control of the family-owned company has now passed to the second generation.





The Winchester XPR is intended as a high-quality, affordable starter rifle for new hunters and shooters.

# A Clear Departure

Winchester's new price-point XPR doesn't stint on features **By David Draper**

**F**or many hunters, hearing the name Winchester conjures up a particular image, whether it's Jack O'Connor leaning one over a rock outcropping in sheep country, Jimmy Stewart defending Shelley Winters with his '73, or maybe a grandfather's handsome Model 70 Featherweight that now resides in the gun safe of his heirs. Throughout its nearly 150-year history, Winchester has earned that reputation as an aspirational rifle, one that's accurate, reliable, and, well, classic. That status sets a high bar for shooters new to the sport or young hunters saving for their first rifle—one that was tough to clear if that hunter wanted a Winchester.

Realizing its reputation, as good as it was, served as an obstacle for some people, the Logan, Utah, based riflemaker has introduced a new rifle to its line that's a clear departure from what Winchester has come to be known for. Instead of a wood stock, forged receiver, and controlled-round-feed action, Winchester's new XPR centerfire rifle meets modern hunters' needs with features that are now common on other gunmakers' introductory, price-point guns.

"The Model 70 isn't going anywhere, and we weren't going to mess with that popular, and proven, design," says Glenn Hatt, product manager for Winchester Repeating Arms. "But we needed an entry-level bolt-action rifle that took those same elements Winchester is known for—accuracy, qual-

ity, and reliability—and put it in an affordable package."

In the early stages of the XPR's development, Hatt and the rest of the Winchester team talked closely with retailers, distributors, and customers to get a broad sense of what they wanted in an introductory Winchester rifle. The XPR is a product of that valued input and Winchester's long history of making accurate, reliable rifles.

The first difference is the most obvious—the black polymer stock. Although the Model 70 has been available in synthetic-stocked models over the years, a black Winchester is still rare. The XPR's stock consists of an advanced polymer that resists twisting or warping in extreme temperature fluctuations. Further accuracy is ensured thanks to a unique bedding system that uses flat surfaces in the stock that Winchester

calls "interface pads" and a cross-mounted recoil lug, both of which hold the receiver securely in place and keep the stock from flexing during the shot.

The stock is stippled with a textured grip and forend, and is designed with some modern lines. And not just a cheap, plastic stock—the XPR has technology built-in in the form of an Inflex recoil pad that directs felt recoil down and away from the face and shoulder. It also incorporates a polymer detachable box magazine of a single-stack design.

Anyone who's looked at a price-point rifle in the past five years will recognize the barrel attachment system that Winchester incorporated into the XPR. The gunmaker fitted the receiver to the button-rifled chromoly-steel barrel using a barrel nut and washer. This connection not only helps the XPR come in at a

friendly price point, but also keeps the receiver and barrel in precise alignment with the optimal amount of headspacing between the bolt face and bore for each chambering.

"We looked at several different options when designing the XPR," says Hatt. "The Model 70's is among the best out there, but it's extremely expensive. With the barrel-nut system, we found we didn't need to compromise accuracy and reliability."

The receiver and bolt take advantage of modern materials and manufacturing processes, helping further reduce cost without making any sacrifices. Precision machined from a solid bar of through-hardened chromoly steel, both are incredibly tough and built to resist wear and torque, even under heavy use. It's important to state the XPR's action is a push-

feed design, rather than the Model 70's venerable controlled-round-feed. This decision was again motivated by the requirement to keep the price in the targeted range.

A great trigger is something hunters might not expect to get in an entry-level rifle, but one thing Winchester didn't leave behind in designing the XPR was the company's proven MOA fire-control system. This all-steel adjustable trigger group features 2:1 mechanics, meaning the trigger itself travels half the distance of the actuator, resulting in an enhanced trigger feel that greatly reduces felt creep and over-travel. The design also incorporates a coil spring that reduces initial trigger takeup for a smoother, more tactical trigger pull.

While the trigger may be familiar to Winchester fans, the safety is a departure, though with a Winchester tweak.

"In our talks with customers, we found that many wanted a two-position safety," says Hatt. "So that's what we built into the XPR, but we added a bolt unlock button just ahead of the switch. This still allows hunters to move the bolt with the safety on, which is a core of the Winchester experience."

It's that experience that the company wants new and young shooters to discover, at a price they can afford. It's part of the company's overall strategy to grab customer share throughout its line by giving them a positive first-time experience they'll remember when it comes time to buy their next rifle, hopefully a Model 70.

"We have a Cadillac in our line—the Model 70—but needed a commuter car," says Hatt. "The XPR is a gun for everyday hunters, but it allows them to aspire to the Model 70. Because of their experience, they'll be more likely to think of Winchester when they want to move up to that next level of quality and workmanship in a rifle they can pass down through generations, just as the Model 70 has been for so many hunters." Booth #13329. **(800-945-5237; winchesterguns.com)**



# Under The Gun

Leapers targets the sweet spot on the price/performance curve

By Jock Elliott

If you need to see better, shoot better, illuminate your target, carry your gear, protect your body, customize or accessorize your weapon, transport it safely, or do any of a dozen other shooting-related tasks, Leapers Inc., based in Livonia, Michigan, has you covered. What began as a dream in a garage 22 years ago with one part-time employee has become an international company with nearly 400 employees offering some 700 “UTG” (that stands for Under The Gun) products to the shooting community. These include scopes, rail systems, illumination systems (tactical flashlights and lasers), supporting rests, grips, accessories, polymer stocks and grips, soft goods, gun cases, tactical armor, load carrying systems, cases and backpacks, and even goodies for airsoft and paintball.

In a day and age where it is common for top company leadership to have little knowledge of the products they make or the customers they serve, the founders of Leapers—husband and wife David Ding (vice president) and Tina Ding (president) buck the trend. They have the “creds” to successfully lead a shooting-sports company. Before they came to the U.S.,

they put in 10 years in law enforcement in Taiwan. David became the youngest police station chief in Taipei, Taiwan’s largest city, and Tina was the highest-ranking female police officer in Taiwan—and an impressive pistol shot.

And the Dings aren’t the only ones in their operation who understand shooting: Leapers fields a shooting team with participants



For many of its products, Leapers controls every aspect of manufacturing from beginning to end.

from the company’s sales, operations, and product development divisions. They walk the walk and talk the talk.

The Dings also buck the trend in other ways. While many companies are rushing to move operations offshore, Leapers has built and is expanding an advanced manufacturing center in the United States. It features CNC machining,

precision-injection molding, and Cerakote finishing.

“We still have manufacturing capabilities near Shanghai, manufacturing and R&D in Taiwan, and warehousing and distribution in Germany, but I had a burning desire to make things in the U.S.,” says David Ding. “We started in 2008 and have been expanding ever since. We’ve bought the kind of



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equipment that is appropriate for extreme precision.”

At the heart of the company’s spectrum of products is an underlying philosophy: to aim at the sweet spot on the price/performance curve by manufacturing excellent, innovative equipment that most shooters can afford.

Ding recognized his desire to be an entrepreneur when he worked at Ford Motor Company. “I was working for Ford in 1986 in heavy truck sales and marketing,” he says. “The CEO of Ford wanted everyone to take charge like an entrepreneur, and I was inspired. This was something that I really wanted to do. It became a passion for me, and three years down the road, I wanted to start my own business.”

Ding first thought about creating a U.S.-based export business (night vision, body armor, and so forth) to serve law enforcement in Taiwan. “During the process, I realized that I wanted more mass market and a more open society, so I could demonstrate what I know and what I love to my customers,” he says.

Toward that end, Leapers today is a company that is integrated both vertically and horizontally. Vertical integration means that, for most products, the company



David and Tina Ding had distinguished law enforcement careers in Taiwan before founding Leapers in the U.S. in 2008.

controls every aspect of the manufacturing process from beginning to end.

“We don’t have to worry whether we will get the quality we want. We know we have it, because we’re on top of it at every step of the way,” says Tina Ding.

Horizontal integration means that Leapers looks at its products from a “systems” point of view so

that everything fits together.

“If you stick with Leapers products, you don’t have to wonder if the laser mount or scope mount will integrate with our rail system. They will, and our other components will work together as well,” he says.

Since the company makes just about every shooting-sport product except guns and ammunition,

Leapers works closely with firearms manufacturers such as Mossberg, Smith & Wesson, Ruger, and others to integrate its offerings with the OEM products. Sharp-eyed shooters will see magnum pistols with Leapers bipods or dot sights and rifles with Leapers stocks, rails, scopes, sights, and modular components. Leapers also did a body armor project for the U.K.’s NATO troops.

One of Leapers’ secret weapons is the ability to listen. “We want to be the company that really connects with end users,” Ding says. Consequently, he takes listening to users very seriously, frequently monitoring the company’s system for feedback from customers.

When Leapers wanted to make scopes that could withstand the vicious whiplash recoil of spring-piston airguns, Ding solicited input from airgunning experts. He listened, and the result is an ultra-tough scope architecture that is the basis for all of Leapers scope offerings.

In the end, Leapers offers a constellation of high-quality products that most shooters can afford. If you need something to make your shooting better, chances are Leapers has just what you need. Booth #2246. (734-542-1500; [leapers.com](http://leapers.com))



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# The Czech Connection

Vigorously courting U.S. shooters, CZ offers old-world quality and unexpected value **By Wayne Van Zwoll**

**W**

hen we first spoke, Milan Kubelen had retired after 30 years at CZ. “Hitler’s plans for Eastern Europe were clear long before they spanned the Channel,” he recalled. In 1936, the Czech government moved its arms factory to Uhersky Brod, as far as practical from Berlin. The small city clings to rolling hills fringed, at their woody tops, by fields of grain. On a misty dawn my jogging path wound past log decks stacked by tractors pre-dating Krushchev. Old men in dark, shapeless coats prowled the forest. Mushroom hunters, their rust-pocked Skodas in tilted repose on the edges of dirt tracks. The images, and the silent fog, spun the clock back to the Cold War, unobtrusive people passing intelligence in unobtrusive places.

Decades earlier, before WWI, Zbrojovka Brno produced rifles on government contract in Brno, a town in central Czechoslovakia. In 1921, the firm became Ceska Zbrojovka, or “Czech Armsmaker.” To augment Brno’s rifle output, CZ established a factory at Strakonice, where it produced CZ pistols. By the time Hitler rolled into Poland, the Uhersky Brod plant had become a subsidiary. Neville Chamberlain’s capitulation in Munich prompted the Nazi seizure of the Sudetenland.

“It was no surprise to us here in the East,” said Milan. At war’s end,

Germany had to relinquish its conquests, and Czechoslovakia was, for a time, self-governing. But in 1948, Communists took political control. Seven years later the Uhersky Brod operation split from Strakonice. Firearms manufacture in Brno was throttled in 1964, but the Brno name had such a following, it remained on ZKK, ZKM, and 527 rifles—all produced at Uhersky Brod. During the 1960s, this factory grew substantially.

It’s still a big facility. I visited it again last year and found Milan Kubelen as sharp and active as he’d

proven a decade earlier. We joined Radomir Jarko, Richard Velisek, and David Hradil for a tour. The CZ complex is nearly a mile long, and many buildings date to the war years. Their peaked roofs, cosmetic at a glance, “have a residential look through a bomb-sight.” Like many firearms factories in Europe and the U.S., CZ still employs tooling from that era. “It works fine for some operations,” Milan reminded me. We passed, too, through banks of modern CNC machines and an investment casting operation. The company kept pace with manufac-

turing innovations through the 1980s, and in 1991, two years after a revolution led by Vaclav Havel overthrew Communist rule, the country’s industries were privatized. In 1993, Czechoslovakia became two nations. The Czech and Slovak Republics remain autonomous.

Zbrojovka Brno endured these political upheavals, but internal improprieties would bring it to its knees. Following a 2004 bankruptcy, it recovered with a line of shotguns and single-shot rifles. “CZ has since thrived,” said Radomir. “In fact, it is growing, and not just in Europe. The Uhersky Brod operation employs 1,750 people. We export to 80 countries and design rifles and pistols for American tastes.”

## The New World

➤ CZ-USA came about in California in 1997, moving to its present home in Kansas City, Kansas, the following year. Alice Poluchova heads CZ’s U.S. arm. The company’s acquisition of Dan Wesson Firearms brings to CZ an extensive line of 1911 pistols, which isn’t to say that CZ isn’t proud of its Model 75. Between 1975 and 2007, more than a million of these reliable self-loaders were shipped, most in 9mm. You can get it in .40 S&W, too. The 97 is a .45 ACP variant.

While the Uhersky Brod factory turns out CZ’s best-known rifles, not all the firm’s long guns hail from the Czech Republic. More than a decade ago, CZ partnered with a factory in the mountain town of Huglu, Turkey, to produce shotguns—a staple of that plant since 1962. Another source came on line recently, at Akkar, another Turkish facility. CZ now offers autoloaders and pumps, plus side-by-side and over/under shotguns, in several grades in home-defense, big-game, and competition versions.

Yielding to fate and fortune lo these many years, I’m more enamored of rifles than smoothbores. CZ catalogs a broad selection, from the 805 Bren A2 selective-fire infantry arm (5.56x45 and 7.62x39) to the 750 Sniper (7.62x51) and 550 High Energy Tactical (.338 Lapua) bolt guns. More to my

The Uhersky Brod plant has 100 CNC machines, plus traditional tooling, like the investment casting forge. The author (bottom) checks out the CZ 455 rimfire. Sales of CZ’s famous Model 75 (right) have topped more than 1 million units.







CZ's newest centerfire is the push-feed 557 (top). The bolt head has a Sako-style ejector (below left). The company also processes a lot of walnut for its stocks (below right).

taste, there's a grand selection of sporting rifles—rimfire and centerfire. The switch-barrel 455 lets you change from .22 LR to .17 HMR in minutes. It's a lovely small-game rifle and a worthy understudy to the svelte 527 and the husky 550, stalwarts in the CZ line.

The 527 is one of few bolt rifles blue-printed for cartridges like the .222 and .223. Except the heavy-barreled Varmint, most weigh from 5 3/4 to 6 1/4 pounds, with barrels of 18 1/2 to 23 1/2 inches. A sop to the unsophisticated, the "M1" in .223 has a synthetic stock. But you have many options in checkered walnut (with a fetching full-stock variation, iron sights, and chamberings like .17 Hornet and .204 Ruger). Despite the delightfully trim profile of these rifles, they've drilled very snug groups for me.

Clearly Mauser 98 in derivation, CZ's flagship 550 features a forged receiver with integral recoil lug and a staggered-stack internal magazine with hinged floorplate. The twin-lug bolt has an external Mauser-style extractor for controlled feed and a Herculean pull on sticky cases. For years, you could get a 550 in chamberings from 6.5x55 to .416 Rigby. Chamberings have proliferated, especially at the top end. I've used the Safari Magnum and Safari

Express in .404 and .450 Rigby. Want a .505 Gibbs? That's available too, with other clavicle-bruising options. Actually, CZ big bores handle recoil comfortably. But you're still smart to hold a .505 very firmly.

With some chamberings retailing for less than \$1,500, the CZ 550 Safari Magnum is, in my view, one of the best buys in "stopping rifles." Its Turkish walnut stock (Kevlar is an option) has the dimensions to mitigate recoil. The Mauser mechanism is bomb-proof and sunrise-reliable. I've found these powerful rifles accurate enough for Saturday shoots in woodchuck pastures.

The 550 appears in trimmer form bored for the likes of the .30/06 and the 7mm and .300 Winchester Magnums. I carried a 550 in 9.3x62 on a moose and mountain goat hunt in British Columbia. It proved as endearing as my pre-64 Model 70 Winchesters. The action, weight, and balance are indeed similar, albeit the CZ's safety is a two-detent thumb switch. Its trigger is of single-set design; push it ahead to get a very light let-off. After a day glassing, we spied a moose antler in heavy cover. A stalk ensued. The bull rose at 40 yards and dropped instantly to a Norma-loaded softpoint. Near week's end, I

crept toward a mountain goat on an impossible ledge and shot him quartering away at just over 200 yards. The sturdy CZ emerged a top choice for backcountry hunting, the 9.3x62 confirming its reputation as a hammer for tough game.

A couple of years ago, CZ announced a replacement for the 550 in short-action chamberings. It also appeared in 6.5x55, .270, .30/06. "Shades of 1964," thought I, recalling Winchester's ill-conceived overhaul of the Model 70. But surely CZ was smarter than to give its famous bolt rifle over to corporate bean-counters. Turns out, it was. The 550 was not abandoned. And the push-feed 557 is a worthy addition to the line. This is no entry-level rifle, built to a price. Its polished receiver, machined from a billet, boasts the 550's integral 19mm dovetails, for CZ scope rings. The two-detent safety lets the bolt cycle "on safe."

The trigger (not a single-set) adjusts for take-up, weight, and overtravel. A hinged floorplate secures the four-shot magazine. Cold-hammer-forged like all barrels on CZ centerfire rifles, the 20 1/2-inch bore is also lapped. You can pick the Sporter with checkered walnut or a Manners synthetic stock (the latter in long-action form

only), or the Carbine with iron sights. Oddly, both versions wear a 20 1/2-inch barrel. The 7 1/4-pound walnut Sporter lists for \$792, the Manners option, 8 ounces lighter, for \$1,268. Carbines cost \$812.

The first 557 that came my way was an early Sporter. Its stained beech stock was pre-production. I liked the classic look, though, even better than that of the stock on my 550 in 9.3x62. A slight grip swell helped steady the rifle. Center-weighted balance gave it a nose for the target. Under a 2.5-7x32 Weaver, this .30/06 printed near-minute groups. The straight comb kept recoil civil, even with heavy-bullet loads. I bought the rifle just as the Carbine became available. A sucker for iron sights, I had to try that one, too.

Especially on short barrels, irons confirm a rifle is complete. This CZ looks ready. Taut in profile, it has a quick, strong demeanor. It leaps eagerly to my cheek; the sights align instantly and without effort. Seldom does a "factory" stock fit me perfectly. This one does. Grip and forestock fill my catcher-glove hands but impose no superfluous bulk. The straight comb urges my eye to the target. Beyond dimensions and features, though, this CZ has a pulse, a predatory soul.

Fitting a Zeiss Terra 3-9x42 in low, steel, four-screw CZ rings, I bore-sighted, got on paper at 35 yards, then moved to 100. Four of my first five factory loads, with bullets of 150 to 180 grains, drilled tight groups. Hornady 150-grain SSTs edged the competition with a .75 knot; but 155-grain A-Max's in Black Hills ammo, and Winchester 180-grain E-Tips, both nipped 1-inch triangles. With noon heat at 90 F, the barrel got hot as I finished with five 165-grain Remington Core-Lokts, fired quick-step. The group measured a pleasing 1.45 inches, four inside an inch.

While I hardly need two .30/06 557s, I can't part with this Carbine. Richard Velisek had summed it up well in Uhersky Brod: "It's economical, but there's nothing cheap about it. CZ doesn't build cheap."

In a country and a company that have endured much, satisfying gimlet-eyed riflemen is a point of pride. CZ firearms still have the solid, gunny, pre-war feel now sifting from other rifle, pistol, and shotgun lines. Perhaps it's Czech history—or maybe the place, below Uhersky Brod's hills, where in forests once shaken by bomb blasts, old men seek mushrooms under the morning's mist. Booth #11955.

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The Ghostrike Fixed Blade has strategic cutouts to reduce weight and comes with a 6.9-inch straight-edge blade.

## Designed to Disappear

Gerber introduces a line of concealed-carry knives **By Christopher Cogley**

**T**actical knives are meant to be carried. They don't do much good sitting in the truck, the squad car, or the Humvee. But just because they're meant to be carried doesn't mean they have to draw attention to themselves when discretion is called for. That's why Gerber developed its new Ghoststrike series of tactical knives.

"These knives are designed to effectively integrate with the clothing you're wearing so that you can carry high-quality knives in a discreet manner," says Andrew Gritzbaugh, marketing communications manager for Gerber.

A natural extension of Gerber's Tactical collection, the Ghoststrike line includes two separate knives that offer users a variety of options for carrying them, thanks to the versatile sheaths Gerber designed for the blades.

The Punch Knife features a T-handle with a rubberized textured grip and a 2.5-inch 420HC blade with a black ceramic coating. The Punch Knife is designed to be worn around the neck, but the glass-filled nylon sheath can also be slid onto a belt or strap. To provide even more versatility, the sheath also has four grommet holes that allow it to be tied down to MOLLE gear with the included 550 cord.

The other knife in the line is the Ghoststrike Fixed Blade. The Fixed Blade is 6.9 inches long with a 3.3-inch 420HC ceramic-coated straight edge



The Punch Knife utilizes a T-handle with a rubberized textured grip and a 2.5-inch 420HC blade.

blade. The knife's stylized handle features strategic cutouts to reduce the weight and is covered with a rubberized textured material to ensure a secure grip. The Fixed Blade is offered with two sheath options. The standard knife comes with a glass-filled nylon sheath that can be worn on a belt either horizontally or vertically. The sheath also

includes grommet holes that allow it to be tied down for easy access on packs or other gear. The Fixed Blade Deluxe Kit features the same nylon sheath, but it's mounted on an innovative neoprene sleeve that can be comfortably strapped on an ankle or calf and hidden almost completely under the pant leg, allowing anyone easy access to a boot knife—even if they're not wearing boots.

Although the knives were created for military and law enforcement applications, they will likely be just as appealing to tactical enthusiasts, or anyone else who wants to carry something for self-defense but doesn't necessarily want to be weighed down by it.

"People are carrying concealed weapons more and more," Gritzbaugh says. "The Ghoststrike knives provide all kinds of flexibility for how you can customize and carry them in a very convenient way."

After all, the more convenient it is, the more likely it is to be carried. And that's the whole point, isn't it? Booth #13614. [800-950-6161; gerbergear.com](http://800-950-6161;gerbergear.com)



# LaserMax's Laser Focus

A new Dealer Rewards Program is one way to target an exploding market **By Christopher Cogley**

**I**n the early years, there were only about three major players in the market," says Celia Crane, director of marketing for LaserMax. "Now, it seems like a new company is popping up every day."

As more companies enter the market, each one searches for a void to fill that will allow them to stand apart from their competition. As with many categories dominated by technological advancements, the most obvious—and attractive—opening in the laser targeting market seems to have become the void at the bottom of the price-point spectrum.

As one of the top-quality laser targeting companies in the world, and one that is consistently at the forefront of cutting-edge technology, LaserMax isn't searching for a void in the market. What the Rochester-based company is looking for, however, is a way to help customers understand the importance of the niche LaserMax has been dominating for more than 25 years.

LaserMax is implementing a new Dealer Rewards Program at this year's SHOT Show.

"We want to get to know our retailers better, and this will be a really cool way for us to connect with them," Crane says. "The beauty of this program is that retailers can pick what they want and customize it based on what works for their store and their customers.

ally the credits that dealers can earn toward that merchandise won't just come from selling LaserMax products, but also from learning more about the company and the constantly changing category.

"We feel that you really have to know about the product," Crane says. "The more you know about the products, the more you can teach your customers and the more

cheap, poorly made lasers go out of alignment easily and often just stop working."

Which is why LaserMax is focused on creating the highest quality laser targeting systems on the market rather than the least expensive ones.

"We offer the best warranty in the business—five years," Houde-Walter says. "But in practice, people learn about the quality of the LaserMax on the range. We have happy customers with 10- and nearly 20-year-old lasers that are still working. One customer told us that he put 40,000 rounds on the gun, had to change the barrel out, but the laser was still going strong."

LaserMax has had that kind of commitment to quality as the cornerstone of its philosophy since the company was founded in 1989. Originally, most of the company's business came from the military and law enforcement sectors, but as technology has advanced, making quality laser targeting systems a practical option for nearly every gun owner, LaserMax has begun to earn a solid reputation with people in the civilian market who understand just how beneficial a well-constructed laser can be.

"With a laser sight, you shoot better, especially when you or the target is moving, or you're shooting with your weak hand, from behind cover, or in a prone position, and under stress of deadly force," Houde-Walter says. "Because they make you so much better at shooting, in most cases police often find that the little red dot on the suspect's chest gets complete compliance without having to shoot."

Because these—and so many other—benefits are almost instantly recognizable to anyone who uses a laser targeting system, Houde-Walter says that she believes the day isn't far off when lasers will become standard equipment on nearly every firearm.

"It's happening now," she says. "It's a positive feedback loop. The more that people try lasers, the more that people find out about their benefits, and even more people start using them. And the trend shows every sign of growing."

Booth #12771. (800-527-3703; [lasermax.com](http://lasermax.com))



To help give its retailers the tools they need to educate customers, LaserMax is instituting a new Dealer Rewards program at the 2015 SHOT Show.

"The market acceptance of lasers has quadrupled in the last 12 years, but there's still a certain price-point intolerance because there are so many cheap ones out there," Crane says. "And unfortunately, it's not apparent to the consumers when they're buying it which laser is going to last and which one is going to fall apart in a year."

LaserMax understands that the best way to remedy that situation is by working with its retailers. To help give its retailers the tools they need to educate their customers,

Our goal is to get to the point where we can service their needs directly and give them the tools they need to sell our products."

Through the rewards program, retailers will earn credit for the LaserMax merchandise they sell. They can then work with the LaserMax marketing department to use that credit to purchase merchandise that will make it even easier for them to educate their customers on the benefits of LaserMax products. Although the program is still in its early stages, Crane says that eventu-

you're going to sell."

And with that kind of product knowledge, retailers can begin to show their customers the differences between the higher-priced lasers and the cheaper low-end models—differences that most people aren't aware of until it's too late.

"You don't always get what you pay for," says Susan Houde-Walter, CEO of LaserMax. "There are definitely over-priced and over-marketed products on the market. The laser must hold alignment under rough conditions to be useful, and





Federal's 3rd Degree ammo combines three different types of shot for patterning at close, medium, and long distances.

# Three Degrees of Turkey Torment

Putting Federal Premium's new turkey load through the wringer

**S**pecialized turkey loads have evolved magnificently during the past 20 years. Current offerings have been engineered to pattern more tightly and reach farther than ever before. But these loads have also become less forgiving at close range—in some cases, leading to missed birds. Federal Premium Ammunition set out to solve this problem. The result is a new, high-tech load—3rd Degree—specifically crafted to cover any situation a hunter might face. The load, which is debuting at the 2015 SHOT Show, blends three different types and sizes of shot and combines technologies from the company's most popular shotshell lines. This balanced combination results in a turkey hunter's dream ammo—one load that works at all distances, from extremely close to the extended ranges that have set performance standards for today's gobbler chasers.

Taking a page from the playbook of Federal's successful Black Cloud Close Range waterfowl load, part of 3rd Degree's payload is designed to quickly open into a deadly close-range pattern, even when using aftermarket turkey chokes. The load also uses a dose of copper-plated lead for the more common 20- to 40-yard shots. And for far-out birds, it contains ultra-dense Heavyweight shot to deliver a consistent, long-distance punch. The entire payload is maximized by Federal Premium's exclusive Flitecontrol wad, which stays with the shot column longer for even, reliable patterns.

Throughout the development of 3rd Degree, the company counted on a pool of employees, who are also seasoned hunters, to conduct initial field testing. Their findings proved this load's multi-range capabilities.

## In-Your-Face Close

► The leading section of the 3rd Degree's payload—20 percent of the total pellet count—is made up of No. 6 nickel-plated Flitestopper lead

pellets, the same as those used in the company's popular Prairie Storm pheasant loads. These pellets have a distinctive cutting ring that creates a massive wound cavity as it passes through tissue. They also crush bone on impact. The load is designed to disperse the pellets quickly, which creates a larger effective pattern within 20 yards.

Federal Premium marketing communication specialist Jacob Edson got a firsthand look at the close-up effectiveness of 3rd Degree while testing the load in South Dakota's Black Hills. "On the first day of the hunt, I struck a midday gobbler while prospecting an old logging trail," he says. "The bird initially honored my yelps and closed to within 100 yards. But then it quit responding. I waited 15 minutes to see if the tom was coming in silently and then decided to reposition to where I last heard him."

As Edson snuck through the ponderosas, he discovered a fence between him and the bird. He slipped through and set up on the other side.

"As I stepped through a small gap in the fence, I was surprised when the gobbler walked out from

behind two pines just six steps away," he says.

"The bird was just as surprised, snapping its head toward me with eyes as wide as turkey's eyes can go. I threw the gun to my shoulder as the gobbler turned to run, then fired and watched him topple."

Edson's shot, while hasty, found its mark. The Flitestopper pellets left a series of ragged holes along a 6-inch span of the bird's head and neck. The tightest portion of the pattern, however, seemed to have just grazed the neck. "When I stepped off the shot, it was just seven yards. Had I been shooting a typical über-tight, long-range specific load, I might not have killed that bird."

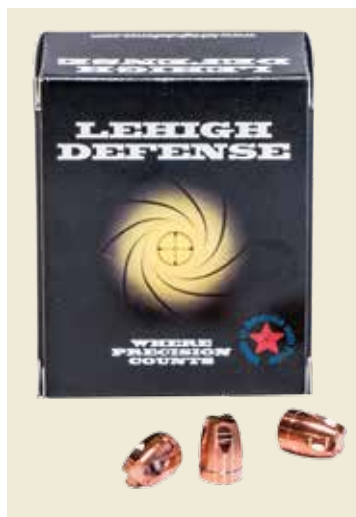
## Common Ground

► Loaded behind the Flitestopper pellets, and making up 40 percent of the 3rd Degree payload, is a layer of copper-plated No. 5 lead shot, which creates a dense, even pattern at moderate ranges. This is the same type of shot that powers the popular Federal Premium Mag-Shok turkey line. However, 3rd Degree is the first load that uses it in









Clockwise from top: The Controlled Chaos hunting bullet; the solid-copper Extreme Penetrator personal-defense bullet; and the subsonic CF (controlled fracturing) .308 bullet, which has been designed for both hunters and tactical operatives.

# Outside the Box

Lehigh Defense ammo delivers out-of-this-world performance **By Richard Mann**

**T**he monolithic—one metal—bullet is nothing new; for some time it's been touted for its accuracy, weight retention, and penetration abilities. Conventional thinking subscribes to the notion that the two best features of the mono-metal bullet are its integrity and its lead-free construction. However, some ballisticians believe the lack of a lead core and 100 percent integrity limits a mono-metal bullet's ability to damage tissue. An American company thought there might be a work-around and began exhaustive research.

Lehigh Defense out of Quakertown, Pennsylvania—influenced by the effectiveness of a little-known all-copper bullet from France called the GPA (and with the assistance of men like Dan Lilja of Lilja Barrels and renowned wildcatter and subsonic expert J.D. Jones)—began producing machined, solid-metal bullets like no other. Lehigh Defense also tapped into the knowledge of noted cartridge wildcatter Mike Cyrus from West Virginia. Cyrus contributed his years of cartridge development, handloading experience, and

terminal-performance testing to the equation. After ceaseless experimentation and testing, Lehigh Defense now offers a variety of purpose-built, fully machined mono-metal bullets.

Lehigh Defense owner Dave Fricke's other company, Millennium Manufacturing, is a top-end machining company with multitudes of experience in the firearms industry. Fricke took that machining proficiency and applied it to bullets. Machining a bullet from a solid bar is accomplished while the bullet is spinning, mimicking the

bullet's flight. There are no voids, inclusions, or off-center components to hinder external ballistics. The axis of symmetry is equal to the axis of the geometry, and this significantly increases the potential for manufacturing a bullet with unparalleled flight characteristics. In other words, properly machined bullets are incredibly accurate.

But it's not just about accuracy. By thinking outside the traditional terminal performance box, Lehigh Defense has created projectiles that are distinctive with regard to terminal performance. Their

Controlled Chaos bullet originated from an agency's desire for a lead-free fragmenting projectile for culling deer. The request stipulated immediate incapacitation without risk of bullet pass-through. The all-brass Controlled Chaos bullet violently fragments inside the animal, creating massive tissue destruction. I've used the Controlled Chaos bullet on various game species and in multiple calibers on animals in North America and Africa with delightful results.

With their Extreme Penetrator bullet, Lehigh manipulated the flat nose of a solid-copper pistol bullet so it would enhance tissue destruction without the customary expansion that limits penetration. The result is a non-expanding, .380 ACP bullet that will drive to at least 13 inches in 10 percent ordnance gelatin while leaving a path of wicked tissue destruction in its wake. For those who carry a compact .380 for personal protection, they now have a bullet that meets the FBI's minimum suggested penetration depth and will cut through bone, cartilage, and tissue like they were butter.

But maybe the most interesting Lehigh Defense projectile is the .308-caliber controlled fracturing (CF) bullet. This is an all-brass rifle projectile designed to provide previously unachievable expansion at subsonic velocities. This is something that conventional lead-cored and mono-metal bullets simply cannot do because the reduced impact velocities of subsonic projectiles do not induce the necessary force to overcome the rigidity of the materials. By combining a pointed brass insert with a deep hollowpoint cavity and pre-stressing the bullet, the CF bullet will fracture—and the secondary, razor-sharp projectiles devastatingly rip tissues, even at subsonic velocities. The CF bullet revolutionizes the use of subsonic rifles by providing supersonic-like terminal performance. The application of the CF bullet should be apparent for hunters and tactical operatives wanting to engage and incapacitate targets with limited shot signature.

The good news is that to enjoy the performance of Lehigh Defense's high-technology lead-free projectiles, you don't have to hand-load. This is because in addition to components, Lehigh Defense also offers loaded ammunition. Their unique approach to projectiles, combined with an informative website and enticing dealer programs, makes Lehigh a reliable source for bullets and ammunition when maximum wounding potential is desired. Lehigh Defense has unquestionably improved upon the miniature machines we call bullets. Booth #2057. **(215-536-4100; [lehighdefense.com](http://lehighdefense.com))**





SIG's Elite Performance ammunition is available in .380 ACP, 9mm Luger, .357 SIG, .40 S&W, and .45 ACP. New loads for the 10mm Auto and .300 Blackout are on the way for 2015.



# Elite Performance

SIG Sauer's new ammo line is designed to perform at a high level **By Richard Mann**

**W**ith defensive handgun ammunition, there are two primary points of consideration. First and foremost, the ammunition must be reliable. It should cycle through your handgun with the ease and regularity of air moving in and out of your lungs. Secondly, it should provide maximum wounding potential. Well known for their defensive handguns, SIG Sauer felt it was time to bring the same level of elite craftsmanship and performance their firearms are known for to defensive handgun ammunition.

Though there is some question as to what constitutes optimum terminal performance, the established benchmark with law enforcement has been a minimum of 12 inches of penetration and at least 80 percent weight retention with a bullet that expands to at least 1.5 times its unfired diameter. With regard to reliability, anything less than 100 percent is unacceptable.

Range tests involving 500 rounds of the new SIG Sauer Elite Performance ammunition in five different cartridges and seven different handguns produced a reliability percentage of 99.8 percent. There was one failure to feed out of the 100 rounds fired through the Diamondback DB 380. (Compact pistols like the Diamondback can be tem-

peramental.) Terminal performance tests in 10 percent ordnance gelatin were very promising. Only the .380 ACP failed to meet the minimum criteria, and then only in the penetration category. This should not be considered a detractor; .380 ACP loads that show 1.5 times expansion and penetrate 12 inches are unicorn-like rare.

To obtain this level of performance, SIG Sauer started with a proprietary bullet design called the V-Crown. This is a non-bonded, jacketed hollow-point with the bullet jacket mechanically locked to the bullet core so that it can deliver expansion and the necessary penetration regardless of the intermediate barriers it might have to pass through. To do this, the bullet's core must

remain with the bullet's jacket, and the toothed cannellure holds them together. The bullets are specifically engineered for each cartridge to offer the desired balance of expansion and penetration. And, bullet profiles were optimized to ensure reliable feeding. To further enhance reliability, every cartridge case has a Techni-Chrome plating.



Law enforcement benchmarks require bullets to expand to 1.5 times their unfired diameter.

## One-Stop Shop

Loaded ammunition is currently available for five cartridges: .380 ACP (90 grain), 9mm Luger (124 grain), .357 SIG (125 grain), .40 S&W (165 grain), and .45 ACP (200 grain). However, new loads for the 10mm Auto and .300 Blackout will soon be rolled out, and these will have a hunting application. In addition, 115- and 124-grain loads will be offered in 9mm Luger; you'll also see a 180-grain load for the .40 S&W and a 230-grain load in .45 ACP in 2015. Bud Fini, SIG Sauer's vice president of marketing, indicated that to round out this new ammunition offering, ball (FMJ) pistol loads will soon be available, too.

Gun manufacturers mak-

ing ammunition is nothing new, but it is something new for SIG Sauer. SIG Sauer has a loyal customer base who appreciates the fine workmanship, reliability, and precision their firearms offer, particularly in the defensive handgun market.

Just the same, many law enforcement agencies issue SIG Sauer pistols to their officers. And, a recent trend in law enforcement shows movement to non-bonded bullets such as the SIG V-Crown. With the competitive sales programs offered to distributors, dealers, and law enforcement agencies by SIG Sauer, they are becoming a one-stop shop for both personal protection and law enforcement firearms and ammunition needs. Booth #12240. (603-610-3000; [sigsauer.com](http://sigsauer.com))



# In the Zone

Thermacell keeps biting insects at bay **By Lou Dzierzak**

**N**ative Americans used a variety of home remedies (the smell of which could gag a maggot) to repel biting insects. The 21st Century sportsman is far more fortunate; modern chemistry has created products that are easy to apply and don't smell nearly as awful as bear fat. One of these modern remedies is DEET. Though effective, the repellent does have some untoward side effects, so much so that most medical experts do not recommend its use by children.

Thermacell believes it has found a better way. The manufacturer's lanterns and appliances use a single butane cartridge to heat a small mat saturated with allethrin. Found naturally in chrysanthemum flowers, allethrin repels mosquitoes, black flies, and no-see-ums without subjecting a hunter to any of the adverse effects that DEET can cause when applied to skin. Once heated, the repellent rises into the air and creates an invisible barrier around the user that insects can't penetrate.

"Thermacell is different from other repellents because the airborne repellent creates what we call the Zone of Protection," says Allegra Lowitt, Thermacell's chief marketing officer. "It's a zone that extends out from the unit for 15 by

15 feet in all directions. Those inside the zone don't get the flybys, the droning, and the buzzing. Most important, they don't get bit. In extreme mosquito situations, consumers—such as Alaskan bear hunters in June—tell us they can actually feel a force field around them. They see a wall of mosquitoes hovering just out of reach."

Lowitt admits some consumers are initially skeptical about how the Thermacell product works. "People have tried mosquito-repellent products that don't work, so there's some skepticism," she says. "But our word of mouth is great. We often hear people say, 'I really didn't think it would work, but it does.'"

One early barrier that Thermacell had to surmount after its introduction in 1999 came

mainly from hunters who thought the product might emit smells that would spook game. This was, obviously, less of an issue with rifle and shotgun hunters, but bowhunters are known to be particularly fussy about controlling any odors and scents that might scuttle a hunt. Once in the field, however, they quickly discovered the product worked as advertised.

## High Season

➤ Thermacell offers a variety of handheld models as well as an outdoor lantern utilizing the same repellent mat and butane cartridge system. Three lantern models provide ambient light as well as the same repellent zone protection. The success of the appliance mod-

els is driving sales outside of traditional hunting seasons, and like many other outdoor products, Thermacell has seasonal sales spikes. Turkey and deer seasons see a lot of traffic, as do Memorial Day and Father's Day (traditional times for family outdoor events). The highest spikes of all are the Fourth of July and September, so make sure you have enough in stock to meet demand. "We also have a strong holiday season," says Lowitt. "Thermacell is a great gift for the sportsman at an affordable price. Customers using the product for hunting are now purchasing it for their homes. If Thermacell works in the field, why not get that same benefit at home?"

The unit most hunters purchase is the classic Camo Appliance (SRP: \$29.99). It appeals to a wide range of shooters and hunters because the compact, easy-to-carry unit easily fits in a daypack or vest for transport. The retail package includes one reusable appliance, one butane cartridge (lasts up to 12 hours), and three repellent mats (each lasts up to four hours). The butane cartridges and repellent mats also can be purchased as refills, and this ongoing traffic gives you the opportunity to regularly upsell other items when customers return for refills.

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Thermacell intends to broaden its market by creating new products that appeal to campers.

## Broadening the Market

► Now that the Thermacell brand is firmly established in the hunting and shooting markets, the manufacturer has decided to expand its reach by moving into the camping market in 2015. Why camping?

“Because camping is roughly three times larger than hunting,” says Lowitt. “We know that more than 70 percent of campers always or frequently use mosquito repellent when they camp. Our research also shows that the average camper went on 5.8 camping trips in 2012, and these campers treat for mosquitoes, in terms of local hours, more than any other activity. It’s a great opportunity for us.”

Thermacell’s initial foray into this lucrative market will be the Gold Series Camp Lantern. “There are other camp lanterns on the market,” says Lowitt, “but ours is the only one that provides 300 lumens of low-glare LED illumination, 50 hours of continuous light, four power settings, a power indication button, and a built-in hanging clip.”

In addition, Lowitt notes that the Gold Series Camp Lantern provides all the aforementioned bug

protection of a Thermacell product. The product will also no doubt find its way into deer and turkey camps across the country.

Most important for retailers, Thermacell intends to increase brand awareness among the camping public with a vigorous program of advertising, public relations efforts, and social media impressions. To help accomplish its goal, the manufacturer is changing the look of its

products as well as its packaging.

“We’re going to update all our products to give them a more modern look and to better differentiate them from the competition,” says Lowitt. “We’re also going to add key benefits to draw in consumers, and the packaging will clearly explain the Thermacell Zone of Protection.”

The new packaging has a common architecture, yet allows for

variation by segment. For instance, the packaging for the Sportsman Series (main target is hunters and shooters) is slightly different from the packaging for the Outdoor Living Series, which is more focused on family activities and pure camping. Above all, the packaging makes use of new colors and graphics to give it a more contemporary look. Booth #2348.

([thermacell.com](http://thermacell.com))






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First Place, Senior Division Team, Altus, at the 2014 Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program.

# The New Pop Warner

Scholastic shooting programs are on the rise

**W**ith two high-profile college football teams and scores of local high schools that stage their version of *Friday Night Lights* each fall, it isn't surprising that, by and large, Oklahoma is a football state. With an equally rich hunting and shooting heritage, it also should be no surprise that the Sooner State has great enthusiasm for the shooting sports. This might help to explain the scene last spring to the west of Oklahoma City in the town of El Reno, where more than 40 schools took part in the Oklahoma Trapshooters Association's State Shoot.

By the end of the competition, more than 600 students in the seventh through the 12th grades had assembled to participate in the Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program (OKSSSP) event, firing more than 16,000 shots before its conclusion. "The OKSSSP has proven to be immensely popular among the state schools that have joined the program," says Damon Springer, a senior information and education specialist with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Modeled after programs such as the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), the Oklahoma trapshooting event is a shotgun program designed to instill confidence and self-esteem in participating students. "Not only are students given the chance to learn about firearms and gun safety, but the schools receive financial support from endowment funds for participating in the program," says Springer, who also serves as the coordinator of the OKSSSP.

Springer also noted that the endowment funds for his state's program are provided by donations

from Larry and Brenda Potterfield of MidwayUSA.

"Brenda and I are fortunate enough to be able to gift half of our income each year," says Larry Potterfield, founder and CEO of MidwayUSA. "We looked long and hard at the future of the shooting-sports industry and came up with what we thought was the greatest opportunity—youth shooting sports in general and specifically high school and college shooting teams."

Potterfield says that he learned

to hunt and shoot from his father. When Larry and Brenda married, it didn't take long before she also learned to shoot. As a result, the couple went on to raise children who also took up hunting and shooting sports. All of which helps to explain their passion for recruiting youth into shooting sports.

"About 15 percent—around 3,000—of the high schools and colleges in the U.S. have some type of a shooting team for air rifle, small-bore, or shotgun," says Potterfield.

"For Brenda and myself, some of our donations go to those organizations that are helping set up new teams. Our pet project, the MidwayUSA Foundation, helps provide funding for new and existing high school and college shooting teams."

Michael Bane, a television show host/producer of several Outdoor Channel shows, including *The Best Defense*, *Shooting Gallery*, and *MidwayUSA's Gun Stories with Joe Mantenga*, has seen firsthand the fruits of such labors. "We were in Montana a few months ago filming for *Shooting Gallery*," he says.

"While we were on the range, the local high school shooting team was there as well. It was a small team from a tiny town in Montana, but they were competing against much larger schools for the state championship. It was exciting to hear them talk about competing in the event and trying to knock off the bigger schools."

Bane acknowledges that there are elements in the mix that aspire to limit such programs. These elements include the cost of the firearms, the cost and availability of

“

**About 15 percent—around 3,000—of the high schools and colleges in the U.S. have some sort of a shooting team for air rifle, small-bore, or shotgun.”**



the ammo, and locating places to shoot. Also in the mix, unfortunately, is the political pushback of mainstream media and the anti-gun portion of society. But he counters that there also is plenty of enthusiasm and forward momentum for scholastic shooting programs that teach responsibility, safe firearms handling, a sense of purpose and commitment, teamwork, and a positive self-image. He also says that he found proof of that while dining in a college town located in his home state of Colorado.

“While I was there, I overheard a conversation between a few students who had all just turned 21 and had obtained their concealed-carry licenses,” he says. “These girls were enthusiastically talking about practicing with their firearms, about feeling safer while living off-campus, and how they all shot scholastic clays while they were in high school. You don’t see or hear such stories very often, certainly not from the mainstream media.”

From the clay-shooting program mentioned above to such endeavors as the National Shooting Sports Foundation’s Rimfire Challenge, Bane says there are numerous entry points now available for young people to get involved in the shooting sports. “Now, with all of these scholastic pistol, rifle, and clay-shooting competitions, a young person can actually letter in the shooting sports in some places, just like they do in football or basketball.”

As good as all of that sounds, Potterfield notes that there is plenty of room for future expansion. “In the short term, the growth in high school and college shooting sports shouldn’t be noticeable, but every school that starts a new team engages 20 to 100 students. There are 17,500 schools without shooting teams, and the 3,000



First Place, Junior Division Team, Locust Grove, at the 2014 Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program.

schools with teams have much room to grow, in terms of number of students engaged and the number of shooting disciplines.”

Bane believes the key to such future growth will be the industry taking ownership of these endeavors and being willing to continue to invest time, energy, and money. “I think that unlike any other industry, we have to financially accept the needs of these programs to help them continue and grow,” he says. “When we look at the future, young people coming into shooting sports and hunting now, they represent our very survival.

That’s the way the culture that we love survives.”

In a similar line of thought, Potterfield believes that if scholastic shooting competitions, like the one in Oklahoma last spring, continue to grow across the country, the results will be very favorable. “The long-term effect will change the future of shooting sports, the shooting-sports industry, and the way the entire country thinks about the shooting sports,” he says.

And that’s a future certainly worth investing in for the survival of our culture and growth of our industry. Booth #L231. ([outdoorchannel.com](http://outdoorchannel.com))

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**SHOT SHOW**





SilencerCo's YouTube video "Johnny Dronekiller" is an example of the company's edgy marketing, intended to emphasize fun.

# Attack of the Drones!

Edgy marketing and innovative manufacturing have SilencerCo sitting atop the suppressor market **By Brian McCombie**

**L**ast July, "Johnny Dronehunter" hit the YouTube scene. It was a short, tongue-in-cheek video of Johnny tooling along in his vintage (read: beat-up) Cadillac—rock music pounding—when he suddenly notices he's being stalked by a swarm of airborne drones. A man of action, Johnny brakes the Caddie, grabs a long gun from his backseat, and starts blasting the menacing drones out of the sky with a shotgun sporting a long, rectangular suppressor. Within three weeks, "Johnny Dronehunter" had racked up more than 600,000 individual views across the internet. (See Johnny in all his drone-busting glory at [tinyurl.com/j-dronehunter](http://tinyurl.com/j-dronehunter).)

The video, the work of SilencerCo of West Valley City, Utah, was designed to help launch the company's Salvo 12 suppressor. Not only was the video a big part of that launch, but "Johnny Dronehunter" reflects SilencerCo's edgy, humorous marketing approach, one designed to make suppressors a mainstream product with the country's hunters and shooters.

"Among ourselves, we refer to it as 'post-modern tactical,'" says Mike Aland, SilencerCo's vice president of marketing, talking about SilencerCo's marketing approach. "Kind of the next step beyond what's become traditional tactical."

For the tactically minded, says Aland, there's nothing cooler than a good SWAT Team, the officers decked out in dark clothing, toting



Suppressors, such as these from SilencerCo, are legal in the vast majority of states. SilencerCo salespeople are happy to help a retailer through the paperwork necessary to become a dealer of NFA-controlled products.

MSRs and pistols, maybe even rappelling down the side of a building.

"We like it, too," he says, "and there's definitely a place for that approach in the suppressor market. But most people aren't going to be able to do anything close to what a SWAT Team does in their daily lives. To attract new people to our products and really to make them more mainstream, we think we have to reach outside that tactical box. The idea is to give people something to aspire to that's more doable. And it helps if we show them it's doable and a lot of fun."

To that end, 2015 will see SilencerCo focus a big part of its marketing muscle on the hunting market. A good deal of the message is informational, mainly that suppressors are legal to own in 39 states, and hunters can use them in



32 of those states. Another important message is that shooting and hunting are more enjoyable when you don't have to wear bulky hearing protection.

To do all this and more, Aland and his marketing crew are reaching out to new customers with a marketing approach that is heavily weighted toward social media—YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. You'll also see some advertisements on select internet sites and a little print advertising in some niche markets.

SilencerCo also sponsored media hunts in 2014 and will continue to do so in 2015, in order to get articles in print and digital outlets showing that hunting with suppressors is effective and enjoyable. The focus will be on the Salvo 12 and the Big Bore Harvester, a suppressor for .30-caliber and larger centerfire rifles.

"Not that we think people are going to be shooting down drones," says Aland with a laugh. "We thought that take on it was humorous. At the same time, it did show the Salvo 12 in action, doing what we said it does—effectively suppressing a shotgun. And we believe social media is the way to connect with younger, more tech-oriented shooters."

Founded just seven years ago by

best friends Josh Waldron and Jonathan Shultz, SilencerCo's beginnings were modest enough: Waldron and Schultz, a garage, and a fabricating machine. Oh, and the idea for a new rimfire suppressor, the Sparrow. A professional photographer and entrepreneur since high school, Waldron was looking to branch out into the shooting industry. So was his pal Schultz, who, like Waldron, was an avid shooter since childhood. Schultz also had a background as a sound engineer, so the two began looking into the suppressor market.

"We looked at rimfire suppressors, and we just felt that the ones on the market at that time weren't designed very well," Waldron remembers. "We thought we could do better."

The result was a rimfire suppressor, the Sparrow, that could be easily taken apart for cleaning. Waldron sold 700 of them on his first sales trip around the country, and the company has never looked back. Today, SilencerCo's product line includes a variety of handgun and rifle suppressors, as well as muzzle brakes, logoed clothing, and accessories.

Retailers stocking and moving significant amounts of SilencerCo products can receive a dealer kit, complete with informational coun-



SilencerCo CEO Josh Waldron co-founded the company in a garage, not a spacious factory floor.

ter mats and signage. All retailers can get a variety of SilencerCo's brochures, including "Silencers Are Legal," which explains suppressor regulations and the application process.

SilencerCo salespeople regularly visit their stores, too, educating staff on the product line and suppressors in general. Aland says they will also help a retailer through the paperwork to become a dealer that can sell NFA-controlled products such as suppressors.

"Contact us and we'll help you get going, whether you want to sell SilencerCo products or not," says Aland. "Of course, we hope you do, but we feel it's every bit as important to encourage and promote suppressor use and ownership." Booth #8403. (801-417-5384; [silencerco.com](http://silencerco.com))

## The Salvo 12 on the Firing Line

I got a chance to use the Salvo 12 last July and was impressed. While I feared that the rectangular suppressor attached to a shotgun barrel would be bulky and awkward, it took relatively little practice to find the shotgun's balance point.

Shooting standard field loads, and using the largest of the four Salvo models—12 inches long and 34 ounces—I didn't need hearing protection, even after hours of shooting. The Salvo muffled the report to a "thwack!" like that of a loud pellet rifle.

Recoil was minimized, too, by about 25 percent versus a non-suppressed shotgun.

The Salvo 12 attaches to the shotgun with a connector, included, that screws into the choke tube threads. SilencerCo offers a variety of choke sizes, including an extra-full version for turkey hunters. The Salvo 12 can handle slugs, too. (10-, 8-, and 6-inch-long models are also offered.) SRP: \$1,400.



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Clockwise from top left: X-Sight HD 3-12X, BinoXS-HD 4-16X, X Sight 5-18X, and Shot Trak-X HD.



# Through a Glass, Lightly

ATN is on the move **By Brian McCombie**

**A**ll indications are that 2015 will be a very successful year for American Technologies Network Corporation (ATN), one of the country's top manufacturers of night-vision and thermal-imaging equipment. Why? Probably the biggest factor is that, as the category continues to attract the interest of hunters, personal-defense consumers, and law enforcement, prices are dropping. This, in turn, is driving more product development to meet the increased demand. Interest in these products has risen to a level where ATN has decided to debut three new items at the 2015 SHOT Show.

"We think these new products will take the industry by storm," says James Munn, ATN's president. "When consumers see the features these products have, plus the price points, these new items will be moving off the shelves very quickly."

The X-Sight HD 3-12x rifle-scope has night-vision capabilities, but it also can be used during daylight. It records video and takes photos and has built-in Wi-Fi. All this in a compact 10x3.5x3-inch package. SRP: \$629.

The BinoXS-HD 4-16X binocular comes complete with Wi-Fi capability. It also records video and takes photos (and stores both) while allowing you to employ a remote viewfinder via Android or iOS applications. The bino is day or night compatible and uses an SD card from 4 to 32 GB. SRP: \$499.

Designed by shooters for shooters, the Shot Trak-X HD mounts on any rifle, handgun, or bow, where it can capture color video in full HD (1920 x1080p). While most action cameras today offer only a wide lens, the Shot Trak-X HD delivers five times

the magnification of a standard action camera. The unit is made from military-grade materials and is rated as recoil-proof. SRP: \$179.

Another big reason for the overall growth of this market is the surging populations of coyotes and feral hogs across the country. More and more states are changing regulations to help reduce populations of these species, and a common regulation change is to allow night hunting of these species.

Night-vision equipment uses ambient light (including starlight and moonlight) to illuminate targets. Thermal units detect the "heat signature" of a person, an animal, or an object and digitally presents that image onto an optic. Lights that can attach to a firearm or bow are another night hunt option. However, the night-vision and thermal products that ATN manufactures detect and illuminate animals at greater distances than lights.

"We think our Shot Trak camera will be very big," Munn says. "With the booming digital world and the growth in social media,

more hunters than ever are filming their hunts and sharing them with friends and family. The Shot Trak not only lets you record your hunt, but it has built-in Wi-Fi, so you can share your experiences that much easier and faster."

For retailers, ATN has a very robust outreach program to help them sell product, including an online e-catalog accessed via the ATN website. ATN also offers the INVC tablet, to qualified retailers, which acts as a training tool for staff, a point-of-sale video display, and an interactive catalog. Automatic free updates constantly enhance the INVC tablet with new videos, products, and virtual tools.

And then there's IKE—and IKE Jr. IKE is the "Interactive Sales Kiosk" for ATN night-vision and thermal-imaging retailers. This stand-alone kiosk unit acts as a resource for retailer sales staff, providing them with the space to display the latest ATN gear, and a 13-inch touchscreen tablet with the ATN Product Selection Wizard. There's also an area for promotion-

al information or monthly retailer specials, plus product support cards listing key selling points on ATN night-vision and thermal-imaging digital products.

The IKE also comes with an LCD TV with ATN promotional videos highlighting the products' technologies. The entire kiosk features eye-grabbing graphics with colorful, informative imagery.

IKE Jr. gives retailers all the same display characteristics except for the LCD TV. Contact ATN to become a dealer or, if you're already a dealer, to find out what the requirements are for getting an IKE or IKE Jr. in store.

"We have over 200 of the IKEs and IKE Jr.'s in stores right now, and they really help drive sales of ATN's night-vision and thermal products," says Munn. "Each is a teaching tool that removes a lot of the questions and hesitations customers have with this type of high-tech product. No matter which you choose, it's a truly valuable resource for your customers—and your bottom line." Booth #14973. ([atncorp.com](http://atncorp.com))



# Solving Problems

Rocky Brands found success by keeping hunters warm and dry **By Christopher Cogley**

**S**ometimes, it's the simple ideas that are the most successful. When it launched its first line of hunting-specific footwear, Rocky Boots was focused on just one thing—making people's hunting experience more enjoyable by keeping their feet warmer and drier. It might not sound like a lofty ambition by today's standards, but in 1979, it was a truly revolutionary concept.

"We were the first people to make all-Cordura waterproof, insulated hunting boots with camouflage patterns printed on them," says David Sharp, president and CEO of Rocky Brands. "We really defined the hunting boot category. Before that, no one focused on hunters and their unique needs."

From that single boot—and that simple idea—Rocky has become one of the most trusted names in quality outdoor gear by continuing to focus on the goal of providing hunters with the products they need to make the pursuit of their passion more enjoyable.

"There is no group that is as passionate about their pursuits as hunters," Sharp says. "When a brand helps them to enjoy that pursuit even more, hunters are extremely loyal to that brand."

For years after the introduction of that first hunting-specific boot, Rocky built a dedicated following of enthusiasts who had discovered how much more enjoyable hunting could be when their feet stayed warm and dry. But then, as is often the case when people see what's possible, those loyal customers began to expect even more.

"They kept asking us to take what we had done with boots and do the same thing for outerwear," Sharp says. "So in 2002, we took that challenge on."

It wasn't a challenge that was accepted lightly, and it certainly wasn't a challenge without risks. From the beginning, the company understood that it wasn't just the success of the new outerwear that was on the line, it was the hard-fought reputation of the entire Rocky brand.

"Our customers expect a lot from Rocky, so for us, the bar is always set pretty high," Sharp says. "We knew that if we were going to maintain the loyalty of our fans, all of the attributes that went into our boots—warmth, comfort, durability, and waterproof properties—had to go into the apparel."

Obviously, the risk paid off, and today Rocky

is nearly as well-known for its apparel as it is for its boots. And while there are undoubtedly countless factors that played into the success of Rocky's venture into apparel, the element that likely played the biggest role is the one that probably seems the simplest.

"We spend so much of our time going out and learning about what hunters want," Sharp says. "You just have to listen to what your customers are saying, but to do that, you have to get out there in the field with them, and that's what we do."

It's a concept that Rocky calls VOC—the voice of the consumer—and it's at the heart of everything the company does, from product development to manufacturing to marketing.

"For us, it's about finding those unmet needs—especially the ones that people aren't even aware of yet—and developing an innovative solution that gives our customers more

than they expected," Sharp says.

It's that ability to listen to the VOC and recognize the unmet needs of its consumers that led Rocky to develop some of the innovative new items that will be released at SHOT Show this year. Chief among them is the Silent Hunter Elite series of outerwear that takes the whisper-quiet material in the original Silent Hunter series and makes it waterproof without adding any additional noise to the fabric. Sharp says independent tests found it to be three times quieter than the competition's apparel. By adding the waterproof element to the clothing, Rocky created something that provides more than expected.

But unlike many other companies, at Rocky that process doesn't end once the product is launched. To help ensure that consumers are aware of the new features and benefits of Rocky gear, Rocky established a unique training program for retailers. Dubbed Rocky Brands

University, it's a two-and-a-half-day conference where Rocky brings key retail partners to its headquarters and provides them with insight into everything Rocky. "It's our way of training the trainers," Sharp says. "We try to impart as much knowledge as we can in those two and a half days so that they'll be better able to pass that information on to the consumers."

It might seem like another simple concept, but like many of the other innovative steps Rocky's taken to build a successful company and respected brand, it's just one more example of Rocky doing what it does best. Booth #11340. **(800-848-9452; rockybrands.com)**



Rocky Brands president and CEO David Sharp pays attention to the voice of the consumer, listening closely to hear his customers' unmet needs.

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# A Face for Radio

A midlife career change leads to a revelation—and a revolution **By Bill Miller**

**J**im Ferguson likes to joke that he has a “face for radio.” Fortunately for him, he has lots of confidence in his voice, which can be heard each week on the outdoors radio show that he hosts with his son, Trav. The father-son duo say *The Revolution with Jim and Trav* is the largest nationally syndicated broadcast dedicated to hunting and fishing. The show is on 430 radio stations, many of which are with the American Forces Network.

**Radio host Jim Ferguson hosts a weekly show out of Kansas. But with satellite radio, he looks to expand the show's reach way past the Sunflower State.**



There is no shortage of material. Jim, now in his late 60s, has spent a life outdoors, starting as a Michigan tyke with a BB gun. He has hunted and fished all over North America and completed an African safari in 2013. With his wife, Terrie, he has six sons—all outdoorsmen. Trav is the youngest.

“We don’t bill it as a father-son show,” Jim says. “It’s just a couple of guys who love to hunt and fish together.”

*The Revolution* also highlights guests who are known personalities in the outdoors. Pick a name: Lakosky, Nugent, Shockey. The mix also includes entertainers, outfitters, and just average folk, many of them kids, with incredible stories from the field.

It is the official radio program of the Outdoor Channel (Booth #L231), and it has the support of more than a dozen sponsors, including Cabela’s, Camp Chef (Booth #15543), Nissan, Remington (Booth #15427), and Ruger (Booth #11940). The sponsorship is money well spent, says Steve McGrath, marketing director for Camp Chef,

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the Utah-based maker of outdoor cooking appliances.

"We don't do a lot with radio because we believe our product is more visual, so we do more print and TV," McGrath says. "But Jim and Trav do a great job. I don't know anyone who has a show that reaches as far as they do. I think a lot of people overlook that they have the American Forces Network, and that's huge."

## Learning Curve

► The Fergusons produce 52 shows a year from studios near their homes in Colby, a small community in northwest Kansas. Jim started the show in 2001, after careers in publishing and advertising.

"A lot of people say, 'You have a great voice for radio,'" he says. "I wish I'd known that earlier."

But he did know that his voice, rich and clear, was an asset when closing a sale.

"There's something about my voice that evokes confidence," Jim says. "When you're on a sales call or a radio interview, you have to make the other person know they are the most important person in the room or, in these cases, on the phone."

But a radio career didn't occur to Jim until he was in his mid-50s. He recalls how, one day, he was semi-

retired in Kansas and writing a column for a group of newspapers when he drove past a local radio station. "I wondered if a radio show on hunting and fishing would work. I didn't know anyone who had one."

He entered the station, made a pitch, and was challenged to find 10 local sponsors. He got 24, and his first broadcast was in October 2001. Its reach steadily grew.

"I never woke up in the morning and thought just Kansas," he says. "I'm thinking coast to coast. And now, with the advent of satellite radio, I'm thinking the world."

But, he notes, "My learning curve was straight up. We didn't have standards because we didn't know we needed standards. Now I listen to some of the first shows I did and, honest to God, they stink."

Jim sought regular critiques from broadcast professionals and soon learned how to fill time, change up segues, and other skills. He also learned that a few public relations firms were eager to show that their clients hunt and fish, which eased his search for interesting guests.

His first celebrity interview was Georgia outdoorsman Wayne Pearson; the second was Ted Nugent. Once he had 200 stations, Jim started gaining national advertisers. Accolades followed. He says by late 2014, the show had earned

23 state, regional, and national broadcasting awards.

## Forty Hours By Wednesday

► Meanwhile, Trav had his own family and was considering a career in medicine, but he admired his father's work and asked to join the team.

"I just wanted to jump headfirst into the outdoors," he says.

"Besides, not everyone has the opportunity to work with his dad in a family business where, literally, the sky is the limit."

Trav worked behind the scenes with the show's small staff but eventually got to co-host. Jim says his son is actually the better interviewer and a heavy lifter during production.

"You're never short on things to do, and the list is ever growing," Trav says. "We're constantly writing copy, producing ads, doing promos for networks, and podcasts. Usually I have 40 hours in by mid-Wednesday morning."

The show's tone is light-hearted and filled with a lot of self-deprecating humor, but there is a structured format. According to Jim, "Each of our shows has a theme: women of the outdoors, duck hunting, whitetail deer. But in order to be a guest on my show, you have to do something in the outdoors."

Some guests might surprise the audience. Retired professional boxer Sugar Ray Leonard was interviewed because he loves going after catfish; comedian Dennis Miller came on to talk about flyfishing. Regular appearances are made by Kansas catfish guide CatDaddy Shumway, Wisconsin angler Chance Orth, Trav's wife, Sarah (Mrs. Bunny), and their daughters Fiona and Olivia.

"I've been interviewed on *The Revolution* many times," says Bob Kaleta, Remington's gun-care accessories product manager. "What I like is you never exactly know where the conversation is going to go. It keeps you on your toes, and it keeps the dialogue real and fun."

It's not all happy talk. The Fergusons report on issues, too, such as the Second Amendment. They're particularly proud of their reports on Kansas' "walk-in" program, which recruits farms and ranches for public access to hunt.

Jim and Trav expect *The Revolution* to evolve. According to Trav, the ultimate challenge would be producing a show enjoyed by people who don't yet hunt or fish.

"Why can't we have a show like a typical morning show? It's on five days a week and everyone enjoys it. I mean, millions of people watch cooking shows, and they're not all chefs." ■



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# Lightning in a Bottle

New propellant technologies for extreme shooters

**A**dvanced reloaders and shooters are always looking to squeeze more performance and better repeatability from their pet loads. And long-range shooters who push themselves and their equipment to extremes insist on nothing less than perfection.

Temperature stability has long been a hallmark concern for these shooters. In general terms, propellant tends to generate more pressure upon ignition in high temperatures and less pressure when the mercury bottoms out. As a result, shooters have traditionally struggled with repeatability when dealing with, say, subzero weather on a Saskatchewan whitetail hunt after zeroing their rifle and load months earlier in oppressive summer heat.

Engineers at Alliant Powder had their sights set on this dilemma when they sat down to develop new Reloder 23. Modeled after its sister product, Reloder 22, this new propellant incorporates sophisticated TZ technology (a registered trademark of EURENCO Bofors AB) to manipulate the response of the energetic material and resist natural, temperature-induced pressure changes. It is perfect for long-range target shooters seeking perfor-



Alliant's new Reloder 23 and 26 boast excellent lot-to-lot consistency.

mance similar to Alliant's Reloder 22 with velocities that hold steady across the temperature spectrum.

Shooters who don't have to contend with drastic temperature swings are more focused on wringing every possible foot-per-second of velocity from the cartridges.

Enter new Reloder 26. The powder takes advantage of EI technology (a registered trademark of Nitrochemie Wimmis AG) to moderate the burn rate of the propellant to deliver extraordinary velocity. The burn curve results in higher pressure for a longer period of

time, which transfers more of the chemical energy to the projectile.

Velocities are further improved by the propellant's high bulk density, which allows reloaders to fit more Reloder 26 into a given cartridge case.

Combined, these properties extract that critical velocity boost that lets long-range fanatics shoot flatter and farther, and hit targets more consistently.

That is not to say that Reloder 26 is a slouch when it comes to temperature stability—far from it. The powder coughs up its speed while still offering a controlled temperature response. It's not as rock-solid as Reloder 23, but for shooters who crave velocity and don't have to cope with wild temperature variations, it's an excellent new option.

Both Reloder 23 and 26 feature proprietary de-coppering agents and contain no dinitrotoluene (DNT) or dibutylphthalate (DBP). Like all propellants from Alliant, these two additions to the Reloder family boast excellent lot-to-lot consistency, which means shooters can count on recipes to perform predictably, round after round, season after season. Both are available in 1-pound bottles (SRP: \$25.95) or 8-pound cannisters (\$189.95). Booth #14551. ([alliantpowder.com](http://alliantpowder.com))

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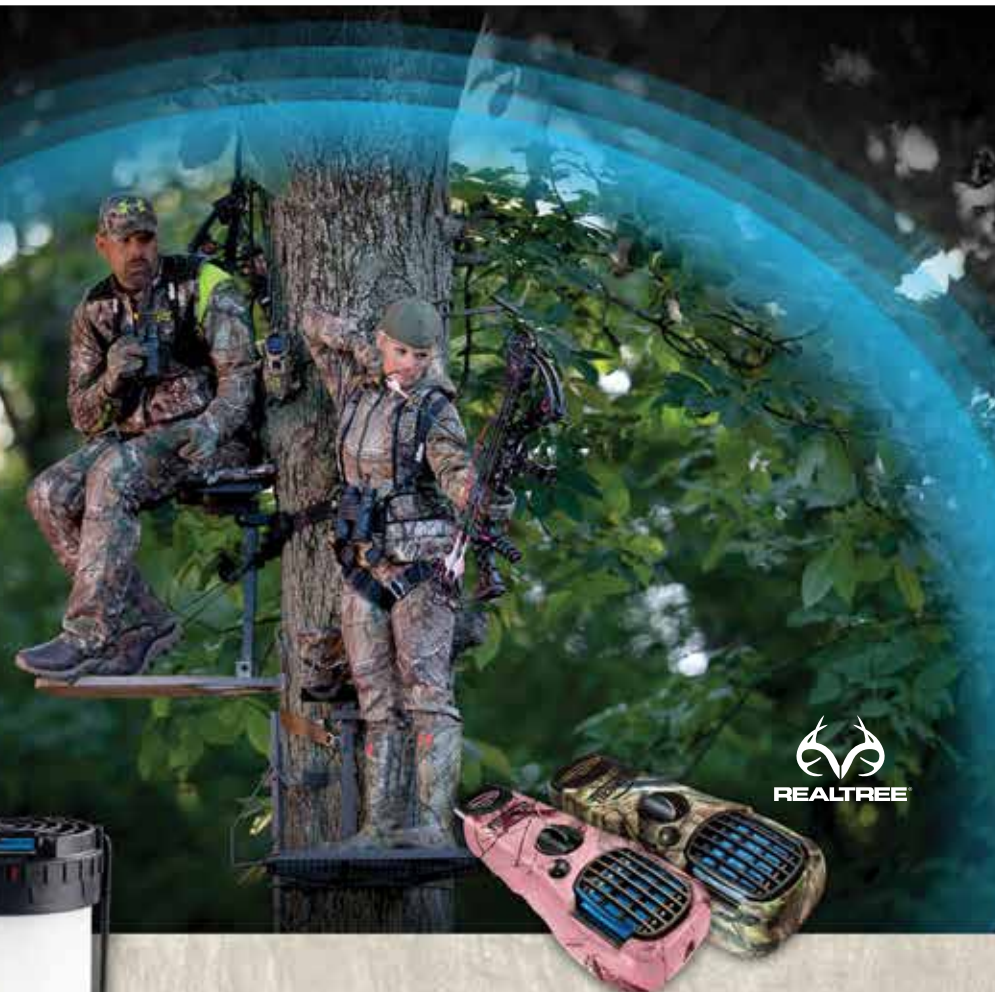
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# Big Brother

Mossberg expands its line of MSRs **By Brian McCombie**

**I**n 2012, O.F. Mossberg and Sons entered the modern sporting rifle (MSR) market with the Mossberg Modern Rifle (MMR), offered in two models—the Hunter and Tactical—chambered in .223/5.56mm. But Mossberg wasn't done. This spring, the gunmaker is launching “big brother” versions—the MMR Hunter 7.62 and MMR Tactical 7.62—sturdy MSRs that deliver the .308 payload many of today's shooters and hunters prefer.

I had a chance to use the new MMR Hunter 7.62 during a free-range aoudad hunt in the rugged landscapes of southwestern Texas as well as shooting sessions at my local shooting range. In both cases, the MMR performed without a flaw.

The rifle was bore-sighted before the hunt, so at the outfitter's impromptu range I finished the process using Hornady American Whitetail ammo with the 150-grain Interlock bullet. Once I was sighted in at 100 yards, I took on a steel aoudad silhouette at 500 yards. It took me several shots to get the drop figured, but once that was accomplished, my next three shots hit metal. I had no intention to take a 500-yard shot, but knowing the rifle could deliver an accurate shot at that range boosted my confi-

The author with his aoudad, taken with a new Mossberg MMR Hunter 7.62 in Texas.



dence that it would do the job at 300 yards.

I took my aoudad (which weighed 250 pounds) the second day of the hunt, after a long stalk over rocky, dusty land, killing it at 130 yards. The next day, I also bagged a 40-pound javelina at 100 yards. Another hunter killed an even larger aoudad with a single shot the next day. Clearly, this rifle is plenty enough medicine for deer- and hog-sized game. With good optics, it can be a longer-range hunter, too, reaching out to 300 yards without difficulty.

The weather was sunny and clear, and the ever-present dust and grime got into most everything, from the MMR's chamber and bolt carrier to the inside of my mouth. The grit didn't help my dental work, but it didn't phase the MMR Hunter one bit.

The MMR Hunter weighs more than a standard .223 MSR, but it's relatively light compared to other .308 MSRs. Mossberg's senior vice president of sales and marketing told me, “On the MMR Hunter, the trim tubular forend allowed us to remove almost one pound of weight.”

The MMR Hunter has good balance and points well. The slim handguard fits the hand nicely and the checkering provides a sure grip (the Tactical model features a quad rail). The rifles employ carbine-length gas systems, and feature 20-inch carbon-alloy steel barrels, with a 1:10 twist rate, and a Picatinny rail atop of the receiver.

Recoil was more pronounced than that of a .223 MSR, of course, but the rifle's 8-plus pounds does reduce that recoil considerably. The trigger? It's mil-spec and felt fairly gritty. To be fair, it was a completely new rifle and mil-spec triggers will smooth out a little to a lot with use.

Mossberg has always strived to deliver both reliability and value. Though SRP has not yet been set, the company is known for value, and I don't expect that to change. On that dusty hunt, I saw the rifle's reliability firsthand. Booth #12734.

([mossberg.com](http://mossberg.com))

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Rob Pincus of I.C.E. Training Company points out that laws surrounding home defense are almost universal across the country.

# Got a Plan?

To Rob Pincus, personal defense of the home involves a lot more than simply owning a firearm

By Peter Suci

**H**ome is the one place most people should not only feel safe, but actually be safe. And although most people usually are safe there, a home invasion can turn that completely upside down. Being a victim in one's own home shouldn't be an option, says Rob Pincus, a foremost authority on self-defense and firearms, and owner of I.C.E. Training Company. "There are plenty of people who carry and already know how to use a firearm responsibly

in a public space for self-defense when the time comes, but they may not think about how to use that gun at home to save their life."

Pincus, who is also the developer of the Combat Focus Shooting Program, recently released his sixth book, *Defend Yourself: A Comprehensive Plan for the Armed Homeowner*, published by Gun Digest Books. Pincus says that knowing the best strategies for evading, barricading, and, when the time comes, battling an armed threat takes planning. You need to not only make the right firearms choices, but also be able to stage them properly.

Local firearms laws mean that people in different parts of the country have to approach personal safety outside the home quite differently, but at home, most people can use similar strategies.

"We look at the restrictions in purchasing and especially in carrying concealed firearms, and we know there are vastly different pictures across the country," says Pincus. "Even as more and more states have now allowed for concealed or open carry of firearms, there are still also restrictions on what types of guns people can own. But from a big-picture view—what I call the 50,000-foot perspective—the option to be armed in one's home now is the same for about 90 percent of the population. This means there is some opportunity for home defense."

Pincus notes that depending on where you live, you can face waiting periods, purchase limits, and magazine-size restrictions. "But even in this context, most people can legally own a firearm and protect their home. Some firearms, such as a semi-automatic MSR, might not be allowed, but there is an armed home defense option for the overwhelming number of people in the United States."

He also says that his strategy may not appeal to everyone; nevertheless, he hopes that his tips can help firearms retailers as well.

"My latest book is aimed at those who may not be gun owners, as well as gun owners who may be thinking about adding some protection but are still on the fence about whether they should buy one for home defense," he says. "What I'm saying to retailers is, 'Here is a book that provides those who are new to thinking about firearms for home defense with the information they need, including proper storage and how to access the gun when it is needed.'"

## A Safe Bet

➤ For retailers, home security is a good opportunity to drive sales. But don't think only of firearms; think also of the safe storage of these firearms.

Pasquale Murena, director of marketing at Cannon Safe, says retailers should stock a diverse assortment of gun safes. "Different gun-capacity safes will keep your customers in your store and help them make a better decision on the spot for what they need," he says. "Have a quick-access pistol safe, such as a GunVault MiniVault or SpeedVault, at your checkout counter. We see sales on these units increase at every store that uses a GunVault at the counter. It flows right into the conversation when selling a gun."

It all comes down to showing that protection and safety can go hand in hand.

"Gun rights come with personal responsibility. Knowing that your gun will not get into the wrong hands is value in itself," says Murena. He also stresses another strong selling point. "Safes are not only for guns. Everyone has other items they can place in their safes, including money, documents, family photos, hard drives, and more."

Pincus will be making personal appearances at Cannon during SHOT Show. Booth #12714.

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# 5 MINUTES WITH...

**Anthony Acitelli**

President and CEO  
of Taurus USA

## Solid Value

Taurus wants to grow the CCW market

**A**nthony Acitelli was named president and CEO of Taurus USA less than six months ago. Though he's new to this job, he's a seasoned industry veteran with more than 20 years of experience in the firearms industry. Before his appointment at Taurus USA, he was senior vice president of sales at Colt. Before that, he was president of ATK's accessory division.

**SHOT Daily:** What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the industry in the next five years?

**Anthony Acitelli:** Planning your business is becoming more and more difficult with the polarizing swings and artificial drivers in the market compelled by our current political and security situations. This leads to extremely fluctuating demands on inventory and over-saturation of guns in the marketplace. Predicting the future is always the biggest challenge, as it is hard to accurately gauge business in this climate. As for Taurus, we intend to be number four in the industry in the next five years. We are a solid value brand.

**SD:** When you wake up in the morning, what gets you excited about your business?

**AA:** The ability to change and winning gets me out of bed! The management team and our sales force are excited about our new pricing structure as well as our new, innovative products. Our distributors and sales reps are ready to win and are eager to move Taurus products. We fit a nice niche in the market for someone who wants a value as a first-time gun owner, who is not necessarily a gun person. They want value and features at a good price, and that is what we offer. We have such a broad offering of products, from personal protection to home protection, as well as products that are just plain fun to shoot.

**SD:** For the past several years Taurus has emphasized its concealed-carry line. Do you intend to maintain that focus? If so, why?

**AA:** Short answer: definitely yes. Taurus is a personal-protection brand, and concealed carry is a growing segment of the market. One of our biggest industry-changing product introductions for 2015, the New Curve, demonstrates our continued commitment to concealed carry.



Taurus USA president and CEO Anthony Acitelli says the manufacturer will continue to be a leader in concealed-carry firearm design.

**SD:** The women's market continues to grow. Will the Taurus product line evolve to meet this new demand? What does your research tell you about this important emerging market?

**AA:** Yes, we have already responded by color variation as well as our new TCP with wings. The TCP with wings was designed specifically for females and smaller shooters so they can rack the slide with ease. We have taken market feedback, and I believe Taurus is perfectly positioned to continue introducing products that are tailored to women. As a world leader in revolvers, we currently have a plethora of different models available. Our very own Taurus Team shooting captain, Jessie Duff, leads the charge in helping develop firearms for our female market.

**SD:** The Model 85VTA was an intriguing launch. Any more plans along that line?

**AA:** The Model 85 is one of our best-selling models in the market. The market desires new products and new sells. So we will continue to bring product innovation to all our lines. Stay tuned! (Booth #14240)

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Victorinox has subsumed Wenger into its brand, but still offers a variety of Swiss Army Knives, such as the EvoGrip (top), EvoWood (bottom), and the RangerGrip (right).



# The One and Only

Retailers and consumers respond well to Victorinox merger **By Christopher Cogely**

**T**here used to be quite a bit of confusion. For generations, people around the world knew what the little Swiss cross on the outside of the utility knife meant, but not everyone knew who, exactly, made the knife that was so instantly recognizable. That all changed last year when Victorinox Swiss Army announced plans to help eliminate that confusion by bringing all of the Wenger knife business under the Victorinox brand and creating one—and only one—official Swiss Army Knife.

“We have received very positive feedback from North American retailers following the Victorinox Swiss Army and Wenger merger,” says Dennis Piretra, senior vice president of marketing for Victorinox Swiss Army. “Retailers in particular have reaped the rewards of the consolidation, namely their ability to focus on one source for Swiss Army Knives as well as the reduction of consumer confusion between the two brands. So in many ways it’s a win-win for both retailers and consumers who are simply interested in finding the best pocketknife on the market.”

Although the two knife brands officially merged last year, Wenger has technically been part of the Victorinox company for several years. But because the two were operating as separate brands, they were each able to maintain a

certain level of independence in their product development, production, sales, and marketing efforts. With the merger, that all had to change.

“There were two major transitions we faced during the merger,” Piretra says. “First was ensuring our customers were fully engaged with an account manager and were provided frequent updates related to our progress. The second was the combining of both companies’ back-end systems—a challenging proposition. We were very pleased that both of these transitions moved forward effectively, thanks in large part to our dedicated team that executed against a solid operations transition plan.”

Because each brand had its own strengths and capabilities, one of the greatest challenges of bringing them together proved to be creating a line of knives that could take

advantage of the best aspects of both brands and combine them into one collection that would be greater than the sum of its parts.

“Both Victorinox and Wenger focus the majority of business effort on designing, engineering, and manufacturing the best quality product,” Piretra says. “With such a deep focus on perfecting these three significant disciplines, it’s not surprising that this aspect of the transition took longer than we initially planned.”

The effort paid off, however, and the result of the newly combined team’s hard work and dedication is the Delémont Collection of 52 knives that Victorinox launched in August. It’s the first collection that combines the best attributes of both companies under one brand.

“This was done in just the last year and on a very aggressive schedule where we encountered a

number of manufacturing adjustments that had to be made as we merged the Wenger and Victorinox processes,” Piretra says. “The Delémont Collection launch has been a solid first-introduction success for the company, and we will continue to move the business forward with an ever-increasing momentum in the coming months and years.”

Combining two well-known and established brands into one is never easy, and not without its challenges, but with a full year under its belt—and one very promising collection of knives already in the market—it seems that the Victorinox and Wenger merger has successfully passed its first major milestone. And while there will undoubtedly be more challenges to overcome, and more adjustments that have to be made, Piretra says, there’s one thing that will never change.

“Retailers and consumers will experience the same great level of service they have come to expect from Victorinox Swiss Army since our beginning in 1884,” he says. “And with the newly combined companies’ intelligent collaboration and business planning practices driving the Swiss Army Knife across all channels, they can also expect to see more new products on a more consistent, ongoing basis from us. Again, hopefully an end-game where everyone wins.” Booth #14202. **(800-442-2706; [swissarmy.com](http://swissarmy.com))**





Sitka Gear has begun to incorporate Polygiene odor-fighting technology into all of its next-to-skin garments.

## You Stink!

Sitka Gear has just raised the bar in suppressing body odor **By W.H. Gross**

**P**erspiration is essentially odorless. It's not until sweat combines with bacteria found on the skin and is then absorbed and trapped in fabric that the bacteria begins to multiply, producing unpleasant body odor.

Polygiene, originally developed in Sweden for use in the medical field with bandages, keeps any fabric treated with the substance from allowing bacteria to grow. Sitka Gear, a manufacturer of high-performance hunting clothing since 2005, recently incorporated this new technology into all of its synthetic next-to-skin garments. Essentially stopping body odor before it starts, this feature should be particularly attractive to hunters attempting to mask their scent.

Sitka founder Jonathan Hart says the move has allowed the manufacturer to grow beyond its mountain roots. "We now have applied our clothing-system-building expertise to three of the largest hunter groups: big-game [more physically active pursuits, often in the mountainous West], whitetail [treestand hunting], and waterfowlers. Skin-to-outer-shell systems in each of these categories always start with a great base layer, and Polygiene has taken us to the next level."

He added that most hunters tend to focus first on their choice of gun, bow, or other gear, not necessarily their hunting clothes. "It should be just the opposite," he says. "High-performance hunting garments enable you to be more successful by allowing you to stay afield longer and more comfortably."

Polygiene is not a nano particle, so it has been declared safe for

extended use against skin. It's also a "green" technology, as the natural silver salts (silver chloride, a highly effective antimicrobial agent) required for its manufacture are gathered from recycled electronics. Another side benefit of the new technology is the reduction in washings that a garment requires, as body odor is managed at the textile level. Fewer washings not only reduces the amount of water and detergent used, but it also improves long-term durability of a garment.

Like many outdoor manufacturers, Sitka employs a team of professionals who constantly use and test gear, often pushing it to an extreme level. One Sitka Gear Athlete—Hart calls his pro staffers athletes—is Mark Seacat, who used Polygiene-based clothing on a Montana backpack elk hunt.

"I spent nine straight days during a late-season backpacking elk hunt deep in the backcountry of Montana and never changed my base layers once—I even slept in them," he says. "The weather ranged from highs in the 60s to minus 20, so I was alternately sweating and freezing. I wore Sitka's lightweight Core top treated with Polygiene next to my skin the entire time, and after those nine days, it still smelled like the day I started hunting. It wasn't as clean as when I started, but it didn't smell." Booth #10328. ([sitkagear.com](http://sitkagear.com))



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# NEW PRODUCTS



## 1. Yamaha Motor Corp.

► The 2016 Yamaha Wolverine R-Spec, a new side-by-side vehicle, boasts an all-new chassis with a compact design, a comfortable and secure cab with seating for two, and Yamaha's proven core technologies. Configuring the vehicle for extreme terrain and durability, Yamaha incorporated features such as rear wheel protectors that extend from the bottom of the frame to reduce obstacle contact with rear tires. In addition, the new design of the chassis allows it to ride more than 2 inches higher than the center of the frame to help the vehicle pass more smoothly over obstacles. The Wolverine R-Spec's long-travel suspension with standard KYB piggyback shocks can be custom-tuned for the terrain.

The new camo Wolverine R-Spec will be the first SxS to feature Realtree Xtra Camo. SRP: starts at \$12,199. Booth #10243. ([yamaha-motor.com](http://yamaha-motor.com))

## 2. Weatherby

► Weatherby's new Element Deluxe semi-auto shotgun is the start of a new line that features an inertia-operated action designed to ensure clean, smooth, and reliable performance for round after round of high-volume shooting. Bird hunters and target shooters can choose from three Element Deluxe gauge options—12, 20, or 28—with either a 26- or 28-inch barrel. The 12- and 20-gauge options have a 3-inch chamber; the 28-gauge has a 2¾-inch chamber. The Element's inertia-operated action directs carbon and gas out of the barrel, helping to keep the gun cleaner, and a drop-out trigger system can be quickly removed for easy cleaning. Each Element Deluxe shotgun sports a AA Grade American walnut stock designed in partnership with Minelli of Italy. The American walnut forend features 22 LPI wraparound checkering.

In addition, the bolt head and carrier are chrome-plated for reduced friction as well as increased durability and corrosion resistance, and a checkered bolt handle provides a sure grip. Element also has a dual-purpose bolt release, which functions as a means of releasing the bolt forward and as a way to unload the shells in the magazine safely without chambering them.

Element Deluxe 12- and

20-gauge shotguns feature Weatherby's Integral Multi-Choke System and come with Improved Cylinder, Modified, and Full choke tubes. The 28-gauge offers the Beretta Mobil pattern choke tubes. SRP: \$1,099, 12- and 20-gauge; \$1,149, 28 gauge. Booth #12729. ([weatherby.com](http://weatherby.com))

## 3. Spyderco

► From custom knifemaker Serge Panchenko and Spyderco comes the handy Dog Tag Folder. At just 2 inches long with a 1.23-inch chisel-ground blade of CPM S30V steel and a titanium and aluminum handle, the little cutter is endlessly handy. It's a non-locking folder, held in place in the open position by the ball-bearing detent mechanism in the handle scale's integral spring arm. It can be carried as a dog tag, on a keychain, or tucked away pretty much anywhere, and is available in bright colors or all black. SRP: \$119.95. Booth #13113. ([spyderco.com](http://spyderco.com))

## 4. FNH-USA

► The FN 15 Tactical Carbine offers a free-floating chrome-lined cold-hammer-forged barrel for increased life and easier cleaning. It also comes with enhancements such as a three-prong muzzle brake to reduce flash, a mid-length gas system, and an H1 buffer to decrease recoil. In addition, the rifle sports a Magpul grip, buttstock, and M-LOK accessory mounting system as well as an ALG Defense combat trigger for a smoother pull and cleaner break. SRP: \$1,479. Booth #13662. ([fnhusa.com](http://fnhusa.com))

## 5. Edgecraft

► Chef's Choice's new Model 700 electric knife sharpener for ceramic and metal knives uses an advanced diamond-abrasive technology to quickly create a sharp and durable edge to both ceramic and steel knives. Featuring an elegant design with three sharpening stages and precision knife guides, it will easily sharpen virtually any knife. SRP: \$179.99. Booth #225. ([edgecraft.com](http://edgecraft.com))







The team from Shooters World (top left). Person of the Year Julie Golob (above). George and Ben Romanoff with Todd Shay (left).

## Shot Business Awards

**A**t the Bonnier Outdoor Group breakfast yesterday morning, *SHOT Business* honored seven industry leaders. The honorees were Cabela's, Chain Retailer of the Year; ATK, Company of the Year; Chattanooga Shooting Supply, Distributor of the Year; Ace Sporting Goods, Independent Retailer of the Year; Shooters World, Range of the Year; Todd Shay of Smith & Wesson, Sales Representative of the Year; and Julie Golob, Person of the Year.

"The *SHOT Business* Awards recognize and acknowledge leadership in the shooting-sports industry. Simply put, the winners of these awards represent the best in the business," said Slaton L. White, editor of *SHOT Business*.

Lee Dolan, vice president of brand marketing for Cabela's, accepted the award and expressed his gratitude for the recognition.

"We are so honored. This industry allows us to prosper, and just being a part of what we do for our customers every day and being honored like this is extraordinary," Dolan said after the presentation. "Chains can become nondescript; chains can become faceless. And if we ever lose the face that Dick, Jim, and Mary Cabela established, shame on us. We love our customers and our industry partners, and we're delighted to be a responsible outdoor retailer. We couldn't be more proud to be a recipient of this award. We're just grateful."

Mark DeYoung, president and CEO of ATK,

took the opportunity to look to the company's future in the outdoors world.

"We're excited about the launch of Vista Outdoor. Many may be aware that ATK's shooting-sports segment, which is about \$2.3 billion, is being spun off into its own publicly traded company in about three weeks, and that will allow us to focus 100 percent on this industry. We're looking forward to that," DeYoung told the audience.

After receiving the Person of the Year Award, champion shooter Julie Golob expressed a feeling of completion after a long career.

"This is amazing. Thirty years ago, I was just a little girl on the range with my dad, and from there I was inspired by the great people and great companies in this industry. I'm literally living my dream," Golob said. "It's an amazing thing. I want to thank NSSF and *SHOT Business* and all of you for all you do to make sure that we're reaching women and children, and sharing in the Second Amendment."

### NSSF PAC EVENT

Monday night, the National Shooting Sports Foundation Political Action Committee (NSSF PAC) hosted its first reception of the year, which featured Milwaukee county sheriff David Clarke Jr. Sheriff Clarke spoke passionately about protecting the Second Amendment, as well as the need for continued industry involvement in the political process.

Larry Keane, NSSF senior vice president and general counsel, said, "We are very pleased to have Sheriff Clarke join us and deliver his message that our industry should be 'afraid, very afraid' of the Obama administration. All industry members should heed Sheriff Clarke's warning."

The anti-gun crowd is attempting to "shred away the Second Amendment, and that is why we need to continue this fight," said Sheriff Clarke.

As always, NSSF PAC invites members to stop by the NSSF Members Lounge to learn more about the PAC.

### ON THE FLOOR

#### L.E.A.F. HOUR TODAY

Hydrapak, manufacturer of advanced hydration solutions, wants to express its gratitude to Law Enforcement and Armed Forces (L.E.A.F.) personnel in attendance at SHOT Show 2015. Active duty and retired law enforcement and military personnel (with proper ID) are encouraged to visit the Hydrapak/Mercury Luggage booth and receive a complimentary Hydrapak SoftFlask as a gesture of Hydrapak's appreciation and commitment to those who serve. L.E.A.F. Hour takes place today from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Booth #10665.



## Danner Debuts A New Booth

**D**anner Boots has been leaving a footprint at the SHOT Show for 32 years, but this year it's changing its tread. With a growing need to support both the hunting and the tactical markets, the company has created a new space that not only highlights the heritage of the brand, but also showcases all of its products. The new booth also includes focal points for media opportunities as well as improved meeting space.

With its most recent launch of

the fourth generation of the popular Pronghorn, along with ongoing high-speed performance boots for the tactical industry, the company hopes the synergy of its brands will be reflected in its new booth space.

Guests to the booth will see first-hand Danner's latest innovation in premium performance, the Danner Comfort System (DCS), which delivers durability, cushioning, and support in a complete package. The DCS can be found in the new Steadfast (hunting) and Lookout

(law enforcement) models. Danner is also introducing the Sharptail, a boot that brings rugged quality and performance to any hunt. Danner has not forgotten the burgeoning women's hunting market, and it will offer three new women's hunting boots in its High Ground series. This afternoon, Danner will continue its annual tradition of the Danner Sock Sale and Beer Hour. All proceeds will go to Hope for the Warriors. Booth #10770.

—Barbara Baird

