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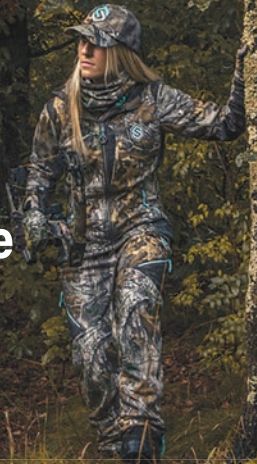
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SHOOTING INDUSTRY

CORPORATE OFFICERS

Thomas von Rosen, Thomas Hollander, Randy Moldé, Marjorie Young

PUBLISHER Russ Thurman

Editor Jade Moldae

Associate Editors Jenna Buckley, Jazz Jimenez

Art Director Natalie Harger

Advertising Sales Director Anita Carson

Advertising & Marketing Manager Paula Iwanski

Production Manager Lori Robbins

Website Manager Lorinda Massey

Staff Photographer Joseph Novelozo

Grammarian Guru Gwen Gunn

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Massad Ayoob

Pat Covert

Kevin Russelburg

Taylor Smithfield

Shari LeGate

Carolee Anita Boyles

Greg Staunton

Mark Kakkuri

Tim Barker



FMG PUBLICATIONS

SHOOTING INDUSTRY

shootingindustry.com

Publisher Russ Thurman



Editor Jade Moldae

Advertising Jeff Severson, 866.903.1199

email: jeff.severson@fmghq.com

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Publisher & Editor Roy Huntington

Executive Editor Michael O. Humphries

Advertising Delano Amaguin, 888.732.6461

email: delano.amaguin@fmghq.com

GUNS

gunsmagazine.com

Editor Jeff John

Executive Editor Payton Miller

Advertising Raymond Jones, 800.533.7988

email: raymond.jones@fmghq.com

SPECIAL EDITIONS

fmgpublishations.com

Editor Michael O. Humphries

Advertising Delano Amaguin, 888.732.6461

email: delano.amaguin@fmghq.com

ONLINE TRAFFIC MANAGER | Dana Hatfield

TEL: (858) 605-0200 Ext. 270

dana.hatfield@fmghq.com

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING | Amy Tanguay

TEL: (800) 633-8001 FAX: (858) 605-0247

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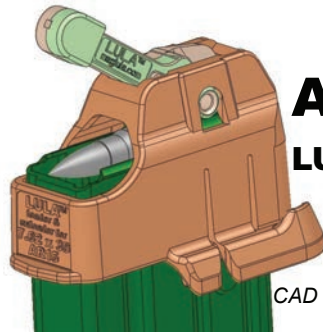
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Focus On The Customer Experience

By Jade Moldae

In spite of what's become known as the "Amazon Effect," several brick-and-mortar chains have bucked the trend and are enjoying phenomenal success in 2017 — with Home Depot and Best Buy chief among them. Yes, these two retailers operate in a different sphere of the consumer market, but the successful strategies they've employed can be scaled down to serve as a model for storefront firearms dealers.

In its most recent financials, Home Depot reported the highest quarterly revenue in its history. This achievement was managed, in part, through the home improvement chain's success in embracing and melding the in-store buying experience with the digital one.

"It is truly a blended experience today where the front door of our store is no longer at the front door of our physical store for many, many product categories," said Craig Menear, Home Depot chairman, CEO and president, during an August 15 earnings conference call. "The customer starts digitally looking at product, doing research and then in many cases, particularly in large ticket, they come in and they actually want to talk to one of our associates before they make a purchase."

This should resonate with dealers everywhere, as many of today's customers (especially newcomers) tend to research a product thoroughly before coming to your store to handle it. An inviting storefront, a friendly and knowledgeable sales staff and add-ons (like free training) will go a long way to converting a sale. And, these are things online retailers will never be able to offer customers.

Another concept implemented by Home Depot is its "Buy Online, Ship To Store" (BOSS) interconnected retail strategy. Introduced several years ago, this service provides customers with access to more than 300,000 items available for pickup in stores. Being able to successfully meld the e-commerce and brick-and-mortar side of the business is catching on for some progressive storefront dealers, and this was a central component to last month's feature "Service & Software Solutions For The Dealer."



How are you improving the customer experience? Contact us anytime at editor@shootingindustry.com or post a comment on the SI website, www.shootingindustry.com.


"Growing the e-commerce side of a dealer's business is valued-added business, and the sales of accessories typically carry larger margins. Many distributors offer fulfillment services, which also allow consumers to order accessories online from the retailer and have them shipped directly to the customer," said Christina Fisher, RSR Group senior VP, in the article. (To revisit this topic, visit www.shootingindustry.com/service-software.)

By focusing on the customer experience, whether in-store or online, storefront dealers have the opportunity to enjoy sustained success throughout the festive buying season. Fostering a welcome environment will encourage repeat business and loyalty; today's influx of new customers is looking to enhance their knowledge and your store can play a key role in that process.

SIG's New Ammunition Facility

A couple months ago, I had the opportunity to tour SIG SAUER's pristine ammunition manufacturing facility in Jacksonville, Ark., and experienced firsthand the company's commitment to its "Complete Systems Provider" strategy. From the time the final decision was made to enter the ammunition business to now, SIG has made significant investments in this segment — evidenced by the relocation into its modern 70,000-square-foot permanent facility and state-of-the-art equipment. The pride in premium American

manufacturing was on display throughout the tour, and SIG officials affirmed every part of the production process is done the "SIG" way.

The SIG SAUER Elite Performance Ammunition line consists of both handgun and rifle calibers, with expanded options set to be released later this year and in 2018. Currently, SIG offers numerous loads and weights for self-defense, practice, match and hunting applications. 



A unique facet of a factory tour is seeing the people behind the scenes who maintain quality throughout the production process. Here, a SIG employee carefully sorts handgun brass for the next step.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An Effective Approach To Consumer Rebates

Hello, I have been ranting to the various gun manufacturers the last couple of months regarding their

approach to consumer rebates. Several times this has happened: We're a couple of days into the month and we find out about a particular rebate a gun manufacturer has started from the customers themselves. This usually leaves us dealers scrambling to put together some sort of promotion in a shorter period of time, and oftentimes with an inadequate supply of product.

I spoke with two levels of representatives with a major manufacturer who runs rebates often (one worked for a rep group and the other worked for the manufacturer), and neither could tell me in the month of June if their company was going to be running a rebate in August. I asked them then because August is the month we run our biggest sale of the year, and I would have liked to incorporate

mentioning the rebate on their products if there was one in our flyer. It turns out they did do a rebate that started in July, but finding out a month after I put together our sale flyer does me almost no good from an advertising standpoint.

Remington got it right this year by laying out *all* of their upcoming promotions ahead of time so we can prepare for the consumer promotions by planning on what to promote, having the product on hand and being educated on the program. Why is it such a big secret that the manufacturers don't want dealers to be able to plan ahead and promote their product? 🤔

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Three Highlights From NSSF's 2017 Firearms Retail Survey Report

By Jade Moldae

NSSF recently released its data-rich Firearms Retailer Survey Report, the 2017 Edition, which encompasses trend data from 2008–2016. This ninth annual report includes responses from hundreds of firearms retailers nationwide, ranging from single proprietors to expansive, multi-million dollar establishments. Topics presented in this report include: insights on products sold, figures illustrating sales margins and net profit, the impact of advertising and online marketing, inventory updates and more. Here are three things that stood out to us in this comprehensive report:

1. Consumer Trends

The 2017 Edition of the NSSF Firearms Retailer Survey Report uncovered several encouraging takeaways in the sphere of new customer growth. Perhaps most impactful, 69.5 percent of reporting retailers noticed an increase in female customers in 2016 over 2015 (while only 2.3 percent noted a decrease). On average, 70.3 percent of respondents have experienced elevated year-to-year traffic from women customers since 2008. Sales credited to women customers increased to their highest reported levels in 2016, with dealers attributing 22.6 percent of revenue to this growing demographic.

Reporting retailers maintained 24 percent of all customers were first-time gun buyers in 2016. What was their

preferred first purchase? Semi-auto handguns, MSRs and revolvers led the way. Semi-auto handguns were also women's preferred firearm purchase, the survey revealed. Dealers reported a modest increase in Hispanic and black customers over 2015, while noting a decrease in Asian customers.

2. Inventory Adjustments

Inventory management represents a crucial segment of a dealer's bottom line, which the results from the 2017 survey report confirmed. For the third year running, responding dealers said product availability represented the issue that had the greatest negative impact on their businesses (59.1%). (Online competition was a close second, increasing by nearly 20 percent from 2015 to being listed by 58.3 percent of surveyed dealers.)

The percentage change in annual inventory of firearms and ammunition from 2015 to 2016 revealed some telling insights. In 2016, a significant number of reporting dealers answered their annual inventory of firearms and ammunition hadn't changed from 2015 — 37.1 and 30.1 percent, respectively. This is in stark contrast to 2015, as over a third of dealers in both categories said their inventory levels were down compared to the previous year. Another statistic: 47.6 percent of surveyed dealers said their inventory of firearms increased from 2015 to 2016, while 43.4 percent said their ammunition inventory was up over the same period.

3. Embracing Online?

Since 2008, there has been a gradual shift of retailers who have embraced today's digital age by developing the online component of their businesses. Nearly 75 percent of respondents (74.8%) shared they have a website for their business, the highest in the survey's nine-year history. However, only 53.2 percent of respondents



reported selling hunting- and shooting-related products online. For those who have a website and online store, 46.2 percent experienced an increase in online sales — which represented 24.1 percent of total sales revenues in 2016. Interestingly, 47.5 percent of those surveyed said their future business would *not* include selling products online. This is an improvement, however, as nearly 60 percent of respondents did not have plans to develop an online business in 2015.

The information for this report was collected through an online survey of retailers, conducted in March 2017. NSSF members can download a PDF of the 2017 Edition NSSF Firearms Retailer Survey Report for \$120, while voting members have immediate free access. Non-members can order the report as well, for \$1,200.

Visit www.nssf.org/research

NASGW Donates To CSF

The National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers (NASGW) has donated \$25,000 to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) to support industry advocacy efforts to protect sportsmen's rights.

"NASGW's continued support allows CSF to provide a link between the

sportsmen's community and policy makers. While maintaining close relationships with the sportsmen's community, CSF works with federal and state pro-sportsman legislators to ensure hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping remains a priority in the halls of government," said CSF President Jeff Crane.

"The National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers is proud to support the



mission of CSF to work with Congress, governors and state legislatures to protect and advance the shooting sports industries," said NASGW Chairman Brad Burney.

Visit www.nasgw.org, www.sportsmenslink.org



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Vista Outdoor Partners With BSA

Vista Outdoor Inc. has entered into a wide-ranging partnership with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Vista Outdoor is now the official conservation sponsor of the Scouts, while its brands Federal Premium, CCI, Savage, Gold Tip, CamelBak and Bell have become official partners with the Scouts for Shooting Sports, Archery, Hydration and Wheeled Safety.

“Vista Outdoor’s mission is to bring the world outside. This historic partnership will help us achieve our mission, and support over 2 million Scouts in their ability to enjoy the outdoors and be responsible citizens. Many of our employees and their children are Scouts, and we understand

the significant impact this organization makes in young people’s lives,” said Ryan Bronson, Vista Outdoor’s director of conservation.

“Scouting takes young people on adventures and lessons of character and leadership in the most remarkable classroom imaginable — the outdoors. We are honored to partner with Vista Outdoor, an organization that shares our respect for the outdoors and long-lasting commitment to environmental stewardship,” said Brad Farmer, assistant chief scout executive leading the office of development for the BSA.

As the official conservation sponsor, Vista Outdoor was the presenting sponsor of the “Conservation Trail” at this year’s 2017 National Jamboree. The company launched a “Conservation Counts”



campaign last year to better communicate how even the smallest effort can make a substantial difference when it comes to being a responsible steward of the environment.

“Conservation is a core value for Vista Outdoor. The Boy Scouts’ Outdoor Creed aligns perfectly with our company’s culture of responsibility,” Bronson added.

Visit www.vistaoutdoor.com, www.scouting.org

Crosman Announces Acquisitions, New CEO

Crosman Corp. has been acquired by Compass Diversified Holdings (CODI), an owner of leading middle-market businesses. The sale was completed June 2. Crosman, designer, manufacturer and marketer of airguns, archery products, optics and related accessories, is headquartered in East Bloomfield, N.Y. The company’s product portfolio includes the Crosman, Benjamin and CenterPoint brands.

Crosman’s management team invested in the transaction alongside CODI, which previously owned a majority stake in Crosman and divested the business in 2007.

“We are excited to draw on our past ownership of Crosman and deep experience with outdoor-branded consumer product companies, and look forward to working

with the company’s strong management team to solidify Crosman’s leading position in airguns, and further penetrate the archery market,” said Alan Offenberg, CEO of CODI. CODI also owns and manages 5.11 Tactical and Liberty Safe.

“We are very pleased to have been acquired by Compass Diversified Holdings,” said newly appointed Crosman CEO Robert Beckwith, the company’s former CFO. “Compass’ strong management team and dedication to growth make them the perfect partner to allow us to invest in the business to take it to the next level.”

July 20, Crosman announced it had acquired the commercial business of LaserMax Inc., global provider of hardened and miniaturized laser systems for home defense, personal protection and training use.

LaserMax’s commercial business



provides laser sighting solutions and tactical lights to firearms OEM and retail channels. The company has developed significant intellectual property in laser technology.

“LaserMax is well-known for its innovative laser products in the shooting sports accessory market, and the cross-selling synergies with Crosman’s airgun and archery products are clear and highly attractive. We are excited to be able to strengthen our product line for outdoor enthusiasts by adding this iconic brand to the Crosman portfolio,” Beckwith said.

Visit www.compasssequity.com, www.crosman.com, www.lasermx.com

GLOCK Selected By Philippine National Police

The Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management of the Republic of the Philippines has declared the GLOCK 17 Gen4 winner of its solicitations to buy new service pistols for the Philippine National Police. GLOCK won this solicitation against competition from SIG SAUER and a local manufacturer.

“The Bids and Awards Committee of the

Procurement Service set a global standard for transparency and professionalism through the manner in which the testing was performed pursuant to this solicitation,” said GLOCK Asia Pacific’s Managing Director Sven De Souter.

The endurance tests performed included firing 20,000 rounds of ammunition through a single pistol without any failures or stoppages, and without having to change any parts. The GLOCK 17 Gen4 passed this testing twice, with two different pistols.

Visit www.us.glock.com



GLOCK 17 Gen4

Gun Club Purchases Armor For Local Police Department

Weston Shooters Club of Weston, Mass., has provided \$15,000 worth of body armor for the Framingham (Mass.) Police Department.

The shooting club's owner Victor Grillo learned of the department's need through Mark Haranas, president of MutualOne Bank of Framingham. Grillo and his club stepped up to fund the purchase of 25 sets of ballistic vests, helmets and related equipment for its officers.

"Our members are strong supporters of responsible gun ownership and firearms safety. We are pleased to be able to help our friends in law enforcement stay safe as they work to protect our community every day from those who don't share the same gun values we do," Grillo said.

"We have been supporting police efforts for years. Teaming up with Weston Shooters Club has been a great experience," Haranas added.



In a show of support for local law enforcement, Weston Shooters Club recently provided \$15,000 worth of armor for the Framingham PD. From left: President of MutualOne Bank Mark Haranas, Framingham Police Chief Kenneth Ferguson, Officer Philip Hurton and Weston Shooters Club Owner Victor Grillo.

"We are so grateful when members of the community step up to the plate to fund improvements that keep our officers and community safe. On behalf of everyone at the Framingham Police Department, we thank Weston Shooters Club and MutualOne Bank for their generous donations," said Kenneth Ferguson, chief

of the Framingham PD.

Weston Shooters Club opened in 2014, and serves the MetroWest communities of Massachusetts, also providing firearms safety instruction.

Visit www.westonshootersclub.com

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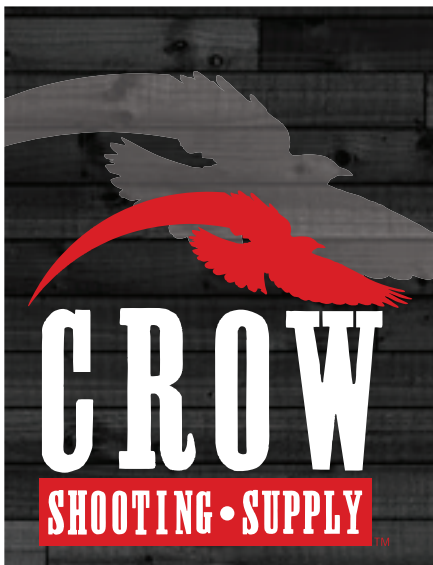


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IN

Gerber Adds Cajó Technologies

Gerber Gear recently integrated Cajó Technologies laser-marking systems into its production line as part of its ongoing effort to improve line production technology.

Gerber chose Cajó Technologies for its system's unmatched marking sharpness and speed. Cajó Technologies' unique ability to laser-mark vibrant colors on steel, titanium and chrome provides an additional benefit allowing Gerber Gear to permanently mark full-color graphics directly on its blades.

Cajó Technologies produces laser-marking solutions for industrial and branding purposes that can be easily integrated in factory production lines or one-off use. The company's laser-marking systems create precise and permanent component traceability, identification and brand markings — including 2D markings such as QR codes, bar codes and data matrices.

"We are constantly identifying and implementing technologies that enhance our products and processes.



Gerber has added Cajó Technologies' laser-marking systems to enhance production line technology. It can laser-mark vibrant colors on several varieties of metal.

"With Cajó's technology, we can deliver an even higher quality product to our consumers, and simultaneously increase the effectiveness of our operation," said Andrew Gritzbaugh, VP of marketing at Gerber Gear.

Visit www.gerbergear.com,
www.cajotechnologies.com

Shottist Sells Holster Business

Shottist, provider of custom holsters for over 30 years, announces its sale by owner Andy Langlois to Merle Schlabach, a third-generation leather worker.

"Andy is going to stick around, consult and help keep us up-to-date with the latest in gun industry trends and needs. I think combining Andy's gun industry knowledge with my 36 years

of leather-working experience is a great combo, and we look forward to making holsters people can appreciate for years, and pass on to future generations," Schlabach said.

Schlabach learned his trade from his father, who learned it from his father-in-law. Schlabach's sons are continuing the family tradition, and will be helping at Shottist.

Visit www.shottist.com

Chamber-View Holdings Acquired By X-Ring Productions

Chamber-View LLC, manufacturer of visual firearm safety products for shotguns, MSR platforms and pistols, has been acquired by X-Ring Productions LLC.

X-Ring Productions, headquartered in Nashua, N.H., is a privately held company focused on entrepreneurial product-acquisition business ventures in

the outdoor recreational industry.

Invented by Ned Bitsack in 2013, Chamber-View empty chamber indicators are molded of 100 percent blaze orange, ultra durable silicone. Once inserted into the action, the indicator enhances firearm safety, reduces accidental closings of the action and prevents debris from contaminating the ejector port, magazine and barrel. The unique design fits multiple calibers, is resistant to cleaning chemicals and non-marring to the internal and external surfaces of the firearm.

Visit www.chamber-view.com

Samson Manufacturing Christens New Facility

Samson Manufacturing Corp. celebrated the grand opening of its \$2 million, newly renovated, 60,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Keene, N.H., on July 7. New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu, Keene Mayor Kendall Lane and other local officials and friends were on hand to mark the event, which included tours through the manufacturing and anodizing areas of the facility.

Since 1994, Samson Manufacturing has designed and manufactured innovative firearm accessories and components for OEM, military and law enforcement clients in the U.S. and abroad. In addition to offering its Samson-branded products, the company provides manufacturing services to a significant number of other firearm manufacturers worldwide.

Gov. Sununu commended Samson Manufacturing on its success and dedication to developing a skilled work



Samson's newly renovated facility boasts 60,000 square feet of manufacturing space. In addition to offering Samson-branded products, the company provides manufacturing services for firearm manufacturers worldwide.

force in the Keene area. The state hopes to grow that force through a \$5 million grant program that would provide continuing education scholarships for technical skills such as those employed at Samson.

The facility, which Samson began operating out of in March, also houses its

corporate offices and an on-site affiliate finishing company, SnF Finishing. SnF provides mil-standard anodizing, baked dry film lube, PTFE, manganese phosphate and Cerakote finishing services.

Visit www.samson-mfg.com

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SureFire Suppressors, WeaponLights Provided To Philippine Marines

SureFire LLC provided suppressors and Vampire Scout Light WeaponLights for both rifles and machine guns to the Philippine Marines over the summer to assist in their fight against the Maute terrorist group. The delivery was in accordance with the Joint U.S. Military Assistance Group.

The battle has been focused on the city of Marawi, where more than 200,000 civilians — many trapped in the city — were forced to evacuate.

“We are glad the Philippine Marines are getting the best possible equipment available, and are confident this equipment will improve the survivability of their warfighters,” said Mark Hanish, SureFire’s VP of sales and marketing.



Philippine Marines inspect rifles outfitted with suppressors from SureFire. The U.S. company delivered suppressors and Vampire Scout Light WeaponLights for both rifles and machine guns — which will be used in their fight against terrorist groups.

Visit www.surefire.com

Wiley X Honored By California Assembly

Wiley X Inc. has been recognized as a “Small Business of the Year” from California’s 16th Assembly District.

State Assemblywoman Catherine Baker tapped the company for the prestigious honor in recognition of its success and contribution to the state’s economy. Wiley X Co-owners Myles Freeman Jr. and Dan Freeman accepted the award at a California Small Business Day 2017 luncheon event on June 5 in Sacramento.

California Small Business Day honors just 75 of the 3 million-plus small businesses that drive the state’s economy.

Small businesses contribute 75 percent of California’s Gross State Product, and more than half of the state’s private sector jobs.

The event aims to “salute small business,” and provides an opportunity for small business owners to connect with government agencies, elected officials and businesses, and learn about new and existing state and private sector programs.

“Wiley X is honored to receive this award on behalf of all the men and women who have worked so hard over the years to help our company thrive. What began as a vision by my father, a U.S. veteran, to provide American soldiers with state-of-the-art ballistic protective eyewear has grown into a premium sunglass brand known around the world,” said Myles Freeman Jr.



Wiley X has been an innovator in protective eyewear since 1987.

“We’re very proud that, even as we’ve grown and expanded our offerings, we have remained true to our core goal — providing men, women and youth from all walks of life with the most advanced vision protection possible,” Freeman added.

Visit www.wileyx.com

Battle Rifle Selected By Louisiana Police Department

The Bossier City Police Department in Northern Louisiana has taken delivery of 50 custom Trooper Carbines from Battle Rifle Co.

The carbines are equipped with ambidextrous controls that include selector switches and magazine releases. The rifle package also comes with Streamlight ProTac 2L lights and two-point slings, three magazines and tactical bags.

“The Bossier City Police were very thorough in their selection process. They spent two days at our facility in Houston before ordering the rifles,” said Chris Kurzadkowski, owner of Battle Rifle Co.

Sgt. Daniel Haugen, firearms trainer for the Bossier City PD, selected the design for the final product after studying the build methods and construction. The rifle was test-fired at the range on the second day while being vetted for the final package.

Located right across the river from Shreveport, La., Bossier City is reputed



to be one of the fastest-growing cities in Louisiana, necessitating more growth and modernization for its police department.

Visit www.battleriflecompany.com

N

SIG SAUER Issues Voluntary Upgrade Of P320 Pistol

In August, SIG SAUER announced a voluntary upgrade for the P320. SIG emphasized the pistol meets U.S. standards for safety, including ANSI/SAAMI, National Institute of Justice (NIJ), as well as rigorous testing protocols for global military and L.E. agencies.



The design of the SIG SAUER P320 overcomes the most significant safety concern in striker-fired pistols today: the practice of pressing the trigger for disassembly. This can be performed with a round in the chamber, which has resulted in numerous incidents of property damage, physical injury and death. The disassembly process of the P320, however, uses a takedown lever rather than pressing the trigger, eliminating the possibility of discharge during the disassembly process.

Recent events indicate that dropping the P320 beyond U.S. standards for safety may cause an unintentional discharge.

As a result of input from L.E., government and military customers, SIG has developed a number of enhancements in function, reliability and overall safety including drop performance. SIG SAUER is offering these enhancements to its customers. Details of this program were made available on SIG's website Aug. 14.

The M17 variant of the P320 — selected by the U.S. government as the U.S. Army's Modular Handgun System (MHS) — is not affected by the Voluntary Upgrade.

"SIG SAUER is committed to our approach on innovation, optimization and performance, ensuring we produce the finest possible products," said Ron Cohen, president and CEO of SIG SAUER. "Durability, reliability and safety, as well as end-user confidence in the SIG SAUER brand are the priorities for our team."

Visit www.sigsauer.com



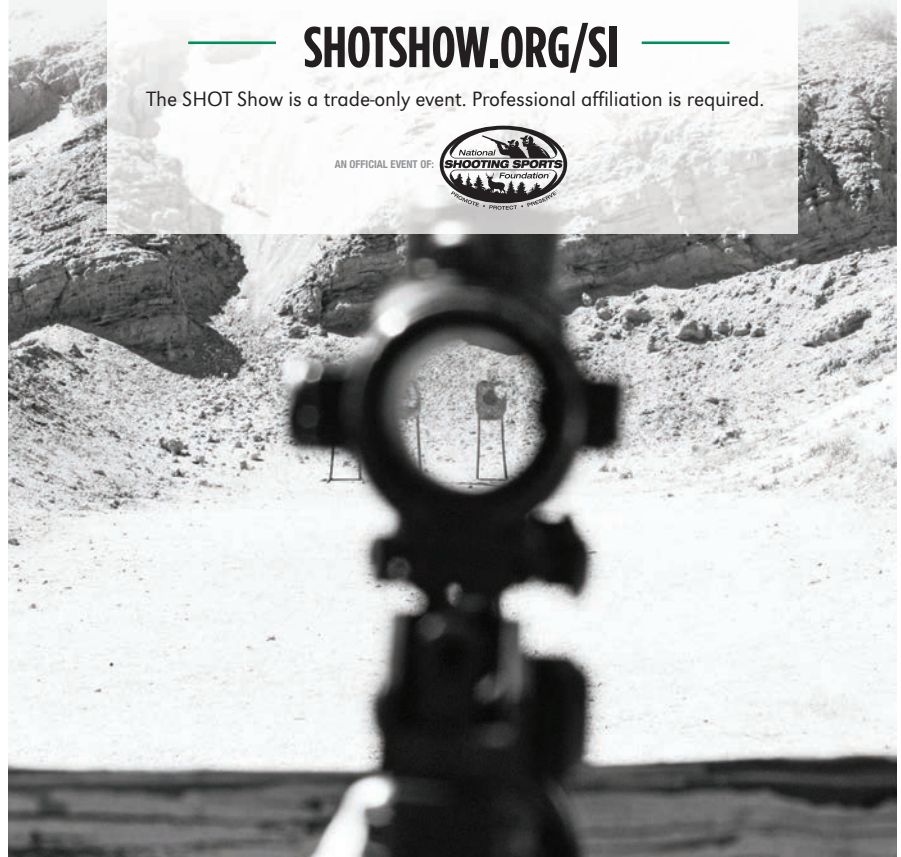
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SHOTSHOW.ORG/SI

The SHOT Show is a trade-only event. Professional affiliation is required.



Henry Repeating Arms Continues VFW Support

Henry Repeating Arms presented a check for \$50,000 to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), while also honoring VFW Service Officer of the Year Raymond Denisewich during the historic organization's 118th National Convention in New Orleans.

Anthony Imperato, president of Henry Repeating Arms, presented a Henry Military Service Tribute Rifle and a special certificate to Denisewich in appreciation of his service and continuing dedication to our nation's veterans, service members and their families. Denisewich is a retired U.S. Army colonel with 36 years of service, including combat tours in Afghanistan.

"He is an advocate for veterans, helping them to navigate the confusing maze of the Department of Veteran Affairs to secure the benefits they have earned and truly deserve. I am humbled to stand beside him and before such an esteemed audience," Imperato said in honoring Denisewich.

In 2016, Henry Repeating Arms



Henry Repeating Arms President Anthony Imperato (left) presents a tribute rifle to VFW Service Officer of the Year Raymond Denisewich, and his wife, Susan.

began a partnership with the VFW to establish a fundraising program that would raise money for the VFW National Headquarters, and offer individual VFW Posts the opportunity to enhance their fundraising efforts.

To date the program has generated \$9,000. Henry Repeating Arms added its own donation to raise it to \$50,000.

Visit www.henryusa.com, www.vfw.org

Streamlight Continues 18-Year C.O.P.S. Support

Streamlight Inc., provider of lighting and weapon light/laser sighting devices for the law enforcement market, has renewed its sponsorship of Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) for the 18th year in a row. The company's support helps underwrite ongoing programs and activities for survivors of fallen officers.

Streamlight's contribution to C.O.P.S. for 2017 totaled \$129,700. This included \$14,700 in proceeds from recent sales of its Blue Nano Light and Blue Siege AA lantern, with \$1 and \$2 respectively from the sale of each product, both bearing the C.O.P.S. logo, earmarked for C.O.P.S.

Streamlight's support helped fund C.O.P.S. activities in Washington, D.C., leading up to National Police Week, May 15-21. As part of the annual C.O.P.S. observance honoring fallen officers and their families, Streamlight once again served as a major sponsor of the organization's annual survivor's luncheon.



Streamlight C.O.P.S. Siege AA Blue Lantern

The company was also a sponsor of Law Enforcement United's "The Road to Hope" memorial bicycle ride, which helps to raise money for C.O.P.S. programs.

In June, Streamlight hosted its third annual C.O.P.S. 5K/Fun Walk at Lower Perkiomen Valley Park Trail in Oaks, Pa., located close to the company's

headquarters. Nearly 120 Streamlight employees and associates participated in the run, which raised more than \$2,500. Gwendolyn DiNardo, daughter of the late Detective Marc Anthony DiNardo, was the featured speaker at the event. Her father was a Jersey City police officer, killed in the line of duty in 2009.

"Streamlight could not be more proud to support C.O.P.S.' important work helping survivors of the fallen rebuild their lives. As the lighting tool brand of choice by first responders, we are committed to giving back to the law enforcement community. We are very proud to assist this fine organization," said Streamlight President and CEO Ray Sharrah.

Streamlight's commitment also extends to the organization's programs throughout the year, which include C.O.P.S. Kids Camp and C.O.P.S. Outward Bound, hands-on retreats for surviving family members, the C.O.P.S. Walk and the C.O.P.S. Walk Southwest.

Visit www.streamlight.com, www.nationalcops.org

Sharps Rifle Completes Florida Expansion

Sharps Rifle Co. has increased its manufacturing capabilities with a multimillion-dollar expansion on Florida's Treasure Coast. The company retains its Glenrock, Wyo., location, now dedicated to ammunition production, delivery fulfillment and customer service.

Sharps is branching out beyond its already popular .25-45 rifle line and bolt carriers. The expansion brings online a high-capacity, state-of-the-art production


facility centered on producing quality rifle barrels and high-demand firearm parts utilizing recently acquired, precision CNC and Gundrill machines. The initial focus will be on producing small arms barrels in Premium, Match and Ultra Match grades.

"While others have retreated from expansion, Sharps has invested heavily in new machining capabilities and in the human capital required to deliver the same innovative, high-quality rifles and components that have been the trademark of the Sharps brand since 1848," said Sharps CEO Jay Johnston.

Sharps has hired production stream-



lining veteran Eric Iverson as director of manufacturing.

"I am dedicated to enhancing production capabilities and expanding product offerings by Sharps. My focus is on manufacturing high-quality components through efficient, streamlined and precision applied techniques," Iverson said. 

Visit www.sharpsriflecompany.com

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NEWSMAKERS



R. Beckwith

CROSMAN CORP. Announces CEO

Robert Beckwith has been promoted to CEO of Crosman Corporation. He joined Crosman in 1999, served 15 years as VP of finance and most recently filled the role of CFO.

Alan Offenberg, CEO of Compass Diversified Holdings and Chairman of Crosman said, "Bob's in-depth knowledge of our core markets, brands and customers will serve the company well for solidifying Crosman's leading industry position and taking advantage of compelling growth opportunities. We look forward to Bob leading Crosman at such an exciting time for the Company."

Previously, he held various positions at American Packaging Corp., Xerox Corp. and was an auditor for PwC. Beckwith earned a B.S. in accounting from Clarkson University and an MBA in finance from the Rochester Institute of Technology.



J. Cannon

FLIR SYSTEMS Appoints President And CEO

James J. ("Jim") Cannon is now serving as president and CEO of FLIR Systems. Cannon has more than 16 years' experience in senior leadership from roles as president of Stanley Security North America & Emerging Markets and president of Stanley Oil & Gas.

"Jim distinguished himself as a true leader of leaders and demonstrated his experience and adaptability running business units worldwide," said Earl R. Lewis, chairman of the FLIR board of directors.

Cannon served in the U.S. Army for 10 years in a wide variety of assignments including Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Iraq. He oversaw key security missions as part of the Army's peace enforcement operations in Bosnia. He earned a B.S. in business administration/marketing from the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga.



J. Grubbs

DAVIDSON'S INC. Promotes Manager

Jesse Tucker Grubbs has been promoted to the position of sales administration and customer service manager at Davidson's. In her new role, she will help ensure the company is constantly working toward delivering superb service and provide hassle-free, friendly and efficient service to consumers utilizing GalleryofGuns.com.

Matt Nicholson, Davidson's VP of sales, stated, "Under Jesse's organization and leadership the company's sales administration team will be more supportive than ever to our account executives allowing them to better serve our dealers."

Grubbs joined the marketing department at Davidson's four years ago. Upon graduation from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she earned a B.S. in business and economics, she assumed the role of copywriter.

CREEDMOR SPORTS Advances Operations Manager

Gina Williams has been promoted to customer care and operations manager at Creedmor Sports. In addition to managing operations, Williams is responsible for directing all matters involved with providing Creedmor customers with the best service possible.

SYREN USA Expands Management Team

Syren USA has named Lynne Green the company's new brand manager. Green's duties will include overseeing dealer relations, product development and strategic planning. She is tasked with managing the growth of the brand while ensuring a positive customer experience.

STEINER OPTICS Promotes Sales Support Representative

Steiner Optics announces Phillip C. Harding IV has been promoted to sales support representative. Harding will be in charge of MAP enforcement, trade show support, report generation and direct support for Steiner customers. He will also

provide valuable sales data for the Steiner sales team to assist with growing the brand more effectively. Harding was promoted from a position as senior technical support rep.

Prior to employment with Burriss Company, he worked as the license clerk at the Florida Wildlife Commission, a gun vault specialist at Bass Pro Shops and a sales representative at Academy Sports. Harding earned his bachelor's from the University of South Alabama.

NASGW Announces Board Member Changes

The NASGW board of directors has welcomed a new member, Malcolm Getz, CEO of Camfour. Along with the addition of Malcolm Getz, current board of directors members Laurie Aronson and Stefanie Zanders have taken on new positions as vice chair and treasurer, respectively.

SIGNATURE PRODUCTS GROUP Names VP Of Marketing And PR

Steve McGrath has been promoted to the role of VP of marketing and public relations for Signature Products Group.

McGrath has been with the company since 2015 and will now oversee all creative services in addition to all marketing and public relations efforts.

STURM, RUGER & CO. INC. Announces Executive Appointments

Ruger has announced the following executive appointments: Sarah F. Colbert as VP of administration, Robert J. Werkmeister, Jr. as VP of marketing and Michael W. Wilson as VP of Mayodan operations.

Colbert has served the company in various human resource and legal capacities since 2011. She helped develop and launch "Ruger University," an internal program offering degree and non-degree courses designed to further associates' training and education.

As director of marketing, Werkmeister oversaw all Ruger marketing activities including brand development, product launches, media buying, advertising, and trade shows. He was also responsible for Ruger's web presence, including both Ruger.com and ShopRuger.com.

Wilson, with Ruger since 2007, served as director of Mayodan operations

beginning in 2013. He has been key in transforming Ruger manufacturing operations into lean value streams, creating a more efficient culture and growing sales through new product introductions.

ZANDERS SPORTING GOODS

Appoints CFO, Director Of Accounting

Zanders Sporting Goods' Co-Owner Kathy Zanders-Stellhorn has been named CFO after serving as director of accounting for over 30 years. Marc Ziebold will fill the director of accounting position. He brings 18 years of experience as director of finance for Hyatt Hotels to his new role.

FRONTIER JUSTICE

Welcomes Chief Retail Officer

Terry Atwood has joined Frontier Justice as chief retail officer. He will lead the retail division as the company begins its expansion.

Atwood's previous experience includes 10 years with sporting goods chain Galyan's, instrumental roles with Piperlime and Athleta — subsidiaries of Gap Inc. — and most recently served as VP of e-commerce at Academy Sports + Outdoors.

"We are thrilled to add Terry to our Frontier Justice team as we position ourselves to be the retail powerhouse of the firearms industry," said Bren Brown, president and co-owner of Frontier Justice. "With this key addition, we have entered into the next phase of our growth plan."

SMITH & WESSON

Promotes Media Manager

Matt Spafford has been promoted to media manager of the firearms division at Smith & Wesson. In this new role, Spafford and his team will be responsible for growing relationships with key media contacts, managing professional sponsorships and overseeing marketing communications to promote growth of the firearms brands. Prior to joining S&W in 2015 as channel marketing manager, Spafford worked in brand management roles at Newell Rubbermaid.

FERADYNE OUTDOORS

Hires VP Of Commercial Sales

Mike Reis has been appointed VP of commercial sales for Eastman Outdoors,

Carbon Express and Gorilla Gear under the FeraDyne Outdoors family of brands. He is a return employee to Eastman Outdoors. Reis' impact played an integral role in the company's growth from 2002–2007, when he served as VP of national sales. Most recently, Reis served as the national account manager for Big Game International.

CALLIS INTEGRATED MARKETING

Advances Creative Team

Callis Integrated Marketing has announced Stephanie Lindberg's promotion to art director and Tim Noland to the post of creative director. Lindberg graduated from Missouri State University with a bachelor's degree in graphic design. She joined Callis in 2014 as a senior graphic designer.

Noland graduated from the University of Central Missouri with a bachelor's degree in agriculture business and an MBA in marketing. He joined Callis in 2013 and has served as an account executive and content marketing director.

MCKEON PRODUCTS INC.

Adds Sales Manager

McKeon Products Inc. has hired Ross Clark as the company's new sales manager of outdoor sporting goods accessories. Clark has a strong history of successful sales experience and industry knowledge contributing to his new role.

McKeon Products' President Dan Asma shared, "We are confident that he is going to be a significant contributor to our continued success. His professional experience and commitment to excellence will help us provide high quality products, services and innovation to our customers in an expanding market."

VISTA OUTDOOR

Selects Brand Manager

Vista Outdoor has hired Matt Rice as brand manager for its Optics Global Product Lane where he will oversee leading optics brands Bushnell, Weaver, Simmons, Millett, Tasco and Night Optics. Rice's duties include the responsibility for market strategies and tactics for each optics brand, including marketing, advertising and promotional activities. Most recently senior account supervisor at Blue Heron Communications, Rice brings more than 12 years of industry experience to the company. ☺

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PERSONAL DEFENSE MARKET

Selling Safety: A Combination Of Common Sense And Business Acumen

By Massad Ayoob

We've long known there are us "gun folk" on one side and anti-gunners on the other — and a large percentage of undecided fence sitters in the middle. If you ask some of the undecided why they haven't bought a gun yet, a lot will answer, "I'm afraid it might be too dangerous." Common sense and business sense combine in selling safety. Let's talk about it.

Secure Storage Benefits

Yes, they take up a lot of sales floor space. And, yes, delivery issues can be a hassle. The fact is, though, gun safes make up a good deal of the cash flow at many gun shops. They are, after all, fairly big-ticket items. In my travels around the country, I see a firearms retailer every now and then who has moved so many of these items they've morphed their business model and altered the name of their store to incorporate "Gun and Safe Shop."

Today, the big market for new gun buyers isn't budding hunters or people who've decided out of the blue to take up competitive sport shooting. No, you well know personal and family protection is the big driver of first-time gun purchasing. And you *know* safety is on their minds. While they may have been worried about guns being dangerous before, they've matured enough to consider their safety, and for their loved ones, when they explore buying guns in the first place. Safe storage is simply a logical extension of this.

Quick-access storage devices are useful for any armed citizen, and particularly desirable for the first-time purchaser who has S-A-F-E-T-Y in the forefront of his or her mind in block letters.

There are lots of brands on the market. Pick one you're comfortable with and set it up on display, perhaps with a dummy gun in it. You and your sales staff should be able to show customers how a locked steel box can easily pop open for the authorized user.

A word of caution about the currently



Gun safes take up a lot of sales area, but can return a worthwhile profit.

popular biometric gun safes: The concept doesn't yet seem to have reached fail-safe perfection. Some people are simply incompatible with them — unable to successfully open them with their fingerprints for various reasons. There won't be time for it to fail when a couple of home invaders are kicking down the door and the only tool with which to defend the family is in a lockbox that doesn't open. It is, really, the same concern we in the firearms industry have with the largely

vaporware concept of "smart guns" only able to fire based on fingerprint recognition. There is also the concern of blood on the hands of an injured homeowner filling the whorls of their fingerprints and blocking recognition.

Do yourself and the customer a favor: If they insist on a biometric gun safe, try it with them in the shop and make sure it works. If it doesn't, they'll always remember you were the one who saved them and their loved ones from a

potentially fatal mistake, and it sure won't hurt customer loyalty. If you've made sure it *does* work for them, fine. You'll have a satisfied customer who got extra attention from the dealer. This can't hurt either.

Guns In Cars


We all know a significant number of guns used in crimes are stolen. Studies indicate a great many of these are stolen from unattended motor vehicles. The first recorded "save" when Florida went to shall-issue concealed carry in 1987 was a man who later became a friend of mine, taxi driver Mark Yuhr. He had to draw his Colt Government Model .45 from a Milt Sparks Summer Special, and shoot and kill a career criminal who was robbing him with a stolen Smith & Wesson 9mm pistol. You can probably guess how he feels about people who leave loaded guns in unattended motor vehicles. Yuhr's would-be murderer had stolen the S&W from such a place.

If a customer counters and says, "Yeah, but I always leave my car locked," remind them of this: cheap body dent-puller meets door lock and *voila*, the door is open. Or more crudely, rock hits car door window and screwdriver meets locked glove box — and another firearm is circulating in the criminal world.

Let's talk about another meeting: the juxtaposition of thankfully loosened laws on concealed carry and the proliferation of "gun-free zones." We have more good men and women than ever carrying guns in public, but they have to leave them in the car when they go into a courthouse, school or other posted zone. Bad guys know this.

All said, a product able to sell itself is an on-board handgun lockbox that can be secured in the vehicle. I use a GunVault unit steel-cabled to the floor under the driver's seat in my vehicle. It buys some peace of mind.

Bottom Line

Safety and guns go hand in hand. With all those potential customers out there who are holding off on gun buying because of safety concerns, marketing your shop as "Where Safety Comes First" can bring in new business. It's a natural fit. 

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PARKER BOWS REWARDS PROGRAM

Parker Bows has introduced its 2017 Parker Rewards Program. Kicking off its sixth year, the Rewards Program provides retail sales associates an opportunity to earn a free, personal use Parker bow or crossbow. Sales associates can register sales of new Parker crossbows or bows sold between June 1 and November 30, 2017 to earn Parker Bucks. For selling 15 compound bows or crossbows, associates can earn enough Parker Bucks to receive a free crossbow, including the Challenger or Bushwacker. Selling 10, one can earn a compound bow like the Lightning.

Visit www.parker-rewards.com

OUTDOOR MARKETPLACE

The Bigger Picture (Literally)

By Taylor Smithfield

The average person forms a first impression within a mere *50 milliseconds*.¹ Stop and think about that for 1,000 milliseconds — I mean a second. Our ability to make warp speed judgments has become second-nature thanks to a steady diet of visual content. We largely communicate in photos, videos, emojis, memes and GIFs. Not only that, but we regularly interact with overflowing Facebook feeds, YouTube channels, Snapchat videos and countless advertisements. Out of necessity, we've trained our brains to rapidly sort information, lest we become overwhelmed.

Successful brands find creative ways to speak this second language, and we've previously discussed many of those communication strategies in *Outdoor Marketplace*. However, it's easy to be dazzled by new trends and technologies and miss the bigger picture. While e-commerce allows you to conveniently reach customers from every corner of the country, if you can't successfully communicate with them, your platform is meaningless.

Customer Confusion

Because visitors to your online store can't physically handle products or ask questions in real time, your virtual presentation *must* be as similar to your in-store experience as possible. Online shoppers prefer to browse products from their phone largely out of convenience, so if you inconvenience them, they'll gladly go elsewhere.

Have you ever passed on an online purchase because you were underwhelmed by the product listing? Maybe the photos were poor quality, the description too vague or you were confused about basic functionality. Countless would-be sales are interrupted every day due to simple but avoidable customer confusion.

Purchasing decisions rely heavily on accurate and engaging shopping experiences, especially when it comes to online firearms transactions. The majority of manufacturers provide quality photos of their products, but what about your inventory of used firearms? It's often very easy to spot the difference between a photo taken by a manufacturer and a dealer because you (naturally) don't have access to expensive equipment and a studio. But do you *have* to be a professional photographer to put forth a professional image? Not anymore.

Illuminating Your Subject

Thanks to new technologies, it's easier to create content from the comfort of your own phone, including professional product photography. Today's smartphones are equipped with surprisingly powerful cameras, so you don't necessarily have to invest in an



**YOUR VIRTUAL
PRESENTATION
MUST BE AS
SIMILAR TO
YOUR IN-STORE
EXPERIENCE AS
POSSIBLE.**

expensive DSLR. Of course, there is some skill (and good lighting) involved. Let's get practical.

If you regularly photograph products for your online store, I'd suggested purchasing a lightbox. A lightbox is simply a miniature, portable studio where you can properly light and backdrop products — a staple tool of many online retailers. It flawlessly illuminates your subject, highlighting details important to customers. It provides both professional context and consistency for your photographs; just flip the lights on and shoot! Photos taken in a lightbox will either have a white background or the appearance of a transparent background, just like the professionals.

On the contrary, you may choose to photograph firearms against a different background, maybe a wooden counter or floor. Either way, forgoing a lightbox means you *must* photograph in even, indirect, natural

light (avoid standard artificial lights like the plague!). Relying on natural light ensures your product won't have a yellow or blue cast, a subtle difference that can be a major turnoff.

Regardless of your desired shooting conditions, it's important to provide customers with multiple views of a firearm, both wide and tight shots. Colors represented in photos should closely mimic real life (another advantage of a lightbox is color accuracy). Upon page load, the larger the photo the better (Say this five times: "In the big picture, bigger pictures are better"). Skinner Auctions, an eBay-inspired website, increased their conversion rate seven times over when they simply increased the size of their photos. Likewise, customers appreciate the ability to zoom in for details, a feature you've probably used yourself.

Adding Context

While you can certainly create interactive experiences with photos alone, video is an even more powerful medium. Watching someone handle, load or shoot a firearm can add context. It also lowers the barrier to an often-intimidating purchase when customers can imagine themselves handling a firearm in a similar manner.

As with product photography, videography has become easier to master thanks to phone cameras. There are several approaches to filming firearms to consider, though. You may choose to film a gun close up, with a pair of hands

demonstrating features. You could also shoot someone from the waist up to simulate the face-to-face interaction a customer would have with an in-store sales associate. These personal touches can counteract the often sterile nature of online shopping. Regardless of how you choose to film, it's important to use a phone tripod for stability so customers can focus on the firearm and not their nausea.


You can also go a step further and film instructional how-to videos with different types of guns, a strategy Advanced Auto Parts says has been wildly successful. They claim visitors to their site who watch a how-to video stay twice as long and visit twice as many pages as those who don't.

In addition, it would be beneficial to feature an instructional video about the firearms purchasing process. Due to misrepresentations about online gun purchases, it's quite possible you're losing sales because would-be customers feel the process is too difficult or dangerous. A little education goes a long way.

Visual Vocabulary

Of course, it's also essential to ensure the text accompanying your product listing is equally appealing. Ask yourself if your product descriptions pass this test: Are they interesting, succinct and accurate? Have you formatted a tidy list of specs and features? Is there a convenient contact method for customers with questions? Is the listing crowded or too busy?

The communication methods we've discussed may seem over the top, and may have been at one point. But because we now predominantly speak this second language — this visual vocabulary — it's become the number-one way to communicate with customers, and certainly the best way for you to reach yours.

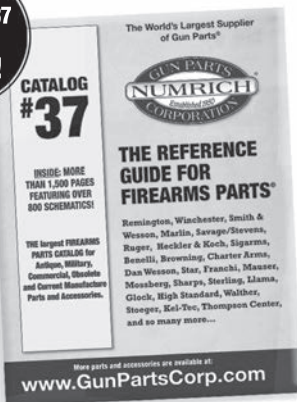
We'd love to hear how you approach your online product displays. What are your strategies for making a virtual sale? Would you ever consider upgrading to a lightbox or adding product demonstration videos? Send in your thoughts to comments@shootingindustry.com. 

¹ "Managing Your Brand Reputation Online in 2015," B&T, www.bandt.com.au.

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ARMS & THE WOMAN

Best Self-Defense Handguns For Women

By Ashley McGee

When helping a woman choose which handgun is best for her, firearm dealers take on the responsibility of educating the consumer. By instinct, a woman might be drawn to a smaller handgun because they're easier to carry and conceal. However, what she might not realize is they generally aren't as easy to shoot compared to larger guns.

"In our experience, a 9mm tends to be the preferred caliber of choice for women," said Adam Ruonala, chief marketing officer for Palmetto State Armory. "It offers the stopping power you need without being too intimidating. Overall, it's a great all-around caliber and reasonably priced."

Palmetto State Armory is a South Carolina-based retailer selling through brick-and-mortar stores as well as in the e-commerce sphere. Jamin McCallum, an Iraq War veteran, founded the company in 2008 — initially operating out of his garage as an online ammunition store.

In nearly a decade, the company has grown to a full-fledged firearm manufacturer and retailer, and has expanded to operate six brick-and-mortar retail locations throughout South Carolina — four of which include indoor gun ranges. Additionally, Palmetto State Armory operates an outdoor shooting facility.

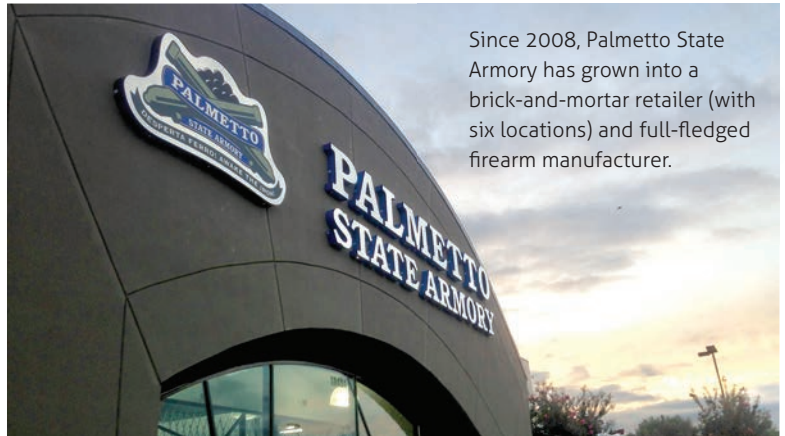
"THE FEMALE SHOOTER IS A DYNAMIC AUDIENCE THAT DESERVES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT."

ADAM RUONALA

Chief Marketing Officer
Palmetto State Armory

Initially, women made up less than 20 percent of Palmetto State Armory's total customer base. "Over the last few years, we've seen that number double to around 40 percent," Ruonala relayed. In the process, the company has learned a few things about which handguns work best for women looking for personal protection.

In terms of highest sales volume, Palmetto State Armory sells more 9mm Smith & Wesson M&P Shields (MSRP \$449) than any other. "Even most



Since 2008, Palmetto State Armory has grown into a brick-and-mortar retailer (with six locations) and full-fledged firearm manufacturer.



Springfield XD-S Two-Tone

inexperienced shooters have at least heard of Smith & Wesson," Ruonala shared. "And with their brand recognition comes confidence that you're purchasing a quality-made firearm."

Weighing in at 20.8 oz., the M&P Shield is both thin and lightweight, allowing it to be carried comfortably all day. The synthetic grip features an easy-to-handle design, even for smaller hands. The single-stack Shield includes two magazines — one flush with the handle with a capacity of seven plus one round in the chamber and an extended magazine with eight plus one.

A 3.1-inch barrel contributes to an overall length of 6.1 inches. Not too big and not too small, this "just right" sized semi-automatic handgun produces manageable recoil. The short, consistent trigger pull contributes to the gun's overall accuracy and enables the shooter to fire multiple shots rapidly. The only drawback is women may find this gun difficult to rack.

More Ladies' Choices

Other great 9mm options include the Springfield XD-S (MSRP \$499)

— which is compact enough to carry, but performs like you would expect a larger pistol — and the GLOCK G43 (MSRP \$529).

"GLOCK spent a lot of time developing the G43, taking into account a lot of customer feedback from their other models," Ruonala said. The uniquely designed textured grip allows for easy operation and a comfortable high and tight grip. However, those who prefer a slightly smaller caliber might prefer the G42 .380 — the smallest pistol GLOCK has ever produced.

For women searching for a quality handgun at a conservative price point, look no further than the Taurus Millennium G2 PT 111 (MSRP \$319). The double-stack magazine with a capacity of 12 rounds is so thin it can easily be mistaken for a single.



Taurus Millennium G2 PT 111

A woman in the market for a self-defense handgun likely values safety. Notable features on the PT 111 include a loaded chamber indicator for verification there's a round in the chamber at quick glance, and the Taurus Security System — a built-in defense allowing shooters to secure this pistol and make it

inoperable with the turn of a key. With the system engaged, the pistol cannot be fired or cocked and the manual safety cannot be disengaged. Personally, as the mom of a toddler, this feature is intriguing. I'd be willing to bet other moms would agree.

While most women tend to purchase semi-automatic handguns for self defense, some will prefer a revolver. Though revolvers are often known to be bulkier and heavier, the Ruger .357 LCR (MSRP \$699) features the shortest barrel of the guns in this article at just 1.87 inches. It also happens to be the lightest at 17.1 oz. The Ruger .357 LCR includes a Hogue Tamer rubber grip that not only helps reduce recoil, but makes it easier to hold onto. The drawback here stems from the nature of a revolver — the lack of a safety. Instead, the long and hard trigger pull acts as the safety.

No Two Are Alike

Just like no two women are the same, neither are two guns. Ultimately, the woman purchasing a handgun for self

defense is entrusting it with her life. The most important thing you can do as a dealer to earn her trust and future business is to help her find the right gun *for her*.




Ruger LCR

Firearms purchased for self defense can be for home defense, concealed carry or, in some cases, both. Recommendations should be made based on the purpose for which the gun will be used most. If home defense is a woman's number-one priority, portability and concealability won't be the most important features.

Don't assume women want the smallest, lowest-caliber handgun you offer. What they want is a gun that can shoot effectively, accurately and do what a gun is supposed to do — stop an attacker.

To help women feel comfortable with their purchase both before and after the sale, Palmetto State Armory hosts a "Ladies Shoot Free" day every Wednesday at all of their range locations. It's a perfect opportunity for customers try out a variety of handguns or to practice after choosing one.

Additionally, Palmetto offers several women-only courses throughout the year including concealed weapons, personal protection safety, personal awareness safety and non-lethal measures of self defense like properly using pepper spray or Tasers.

"The female shooter is a dynamic audience that deserves acknowledgement," said Ruonala. "We consistently strive for creative ways to keep our female customers engaged." 

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BY TIM BARKER

NOW TRENDING IN HANDGUNS

*It's
funny how
much can
change in a
single day.*

Marlon Knapp remembers the way eager buyers flocked to his store — Knapp Weaponry in Wichita, Kan. — in the days leading up to the November presidential election.

“That Monday and Tuesday, we literally had a line out the door,” Knapp recalled. “By Thursday, it was tumbleweeds and crickets.”

Now, Knapp (along with pretty much every other gun shop owner in

the nation) is dealing with what we might call a return to normalcy. Gone are the days of panic buying, when news events had the power to fuel a frenzy of purchases aimed at getting ahead of potential new restrictions on the ownership of guns and related items.

As of May, Knapp estimated his handgun sales were down 15 percent in the wake of the election. Everyone has a theory as to why, exactly, the demand has fallen so quickly. Some blame it on the pre-election surge. Shoppers were spending money, according to the theory, they didn't yet have. If so, it could take a few months for those shoppers to pay off their credit card bills before buying again.

Knapp, however, worries the overbuying trend may have extended well beyond the two months leading up to the election.

“I would stretch that out over the last eight years,” he stated. “People have overbought. But now they can breathe a sigh of relief.”

Looking around his own town, Knapp sees plenty of reasons to support his theory. In 2013, there were 62 gun shops in the Wichita area. Three years later, the number had ballooned to 90. And now that trend is likely to reverse itself.

“I've already seen several stores close,” Knapp said. “We are back to the pre-Obama types of purchases.”

A similar story is told by Paul Bastean, managing director of Ultimate Defense

Firing Range & Training Center in St. Peters, Mo., a suburb of St. Louis. The shop has seen handgun sales fall 14 percent from the previous May.

"I think it's a return to normalization. People aren't scared. There's no sense of urgency," said Bastean, who opened his store in 2010. "A lot of times, they just need a reason. With Trump in office, people have lost that mental justification. They see no reason why they can't wait until later."

CONCEALED CARRY LEADS THE WAY

At Ultimate Defense, the concealed-carry market is the strongest driver of handgun sales. This isn't unusual in the world of handgun sales, but the store likely gets an extra boost in this segment because of the St. Louis area's high crime rate, and the fact Ferguson is located just a few miles to the east.

"The scars from Ferguson are still healing," Bastean shared. "There are still a lot of people who have fresh memories from that time."

Among the store's top sellers is the Smith & Wesson M&P Shield: "We sell them pretty much as fast as we can get them," he said. And the GLOCK 43: "We just keep an open order. We maintain a waiting list for that gun."

Other popular handguns include the Springfield Armory XD-S and GLOCK 19. But Bastean isn't seeing a lot of new stuff coming out to get excited over.

"The industry seems to be in a race to see who can come up with the newest version of the same gun," he observed.

THE STAPLES DELIVER

Back in Wichita, Knapp's handgun sales are also dominated by concealed carry and home defense. "We do see some target shooting, but it's the minority," said Knapp, who's been in business nearly seven years.

His top sellers consist of the M&P Shield, GLOCK 19 and 43 and the Ruger SR9c. At the lower end, it's the S&W Sigma in 9mm or .40 cal. And not surprisingly, the SIG SAUER P320 has become very popular following news it was chosen to be the Army's new sidearm.

"It was instantaneous. As soon as they saw the military went with the P320, they were burning up the phones. We sold everything we had in stock in two days," Knapp shared. "They have the 'tacti-cool' factor."

For now, Knapp Weaponry has had no trouble maintaining a steady supply of the popular guns. But Knapp wonders if this will change once SIG starts ramping up its military deliveries.

Looking at what's coming out this year, Knapp has seen customer interest in several new

"I THINK IT'S A RETURN TO NORMALIZATION. PEOPLE AREN'T SCARED. THERE'S NO SENSE OF URGENCY. A LOT OF TIMES, THEY JUST NEED A REASON."

PAUL BASTEAN

Managing Director

Ultimate Defense Firing Range & Training Center
St. Peters, Mo.



Christensen Arms A4



SIG P320



Colt Cobra



FN 509

guns — including the new CZ P-10 C and (while not a handgun) Mossberg's pump-action Shockwave, a 12-ga. with a 14-inch barrel.

Most of this year's offerings he considers fairly typical. "But the Shockwave was pretty unexpected. We've got four to five people on the pre-order list," Knapp said.

ATTRACTING NEW CUSTOMERS

So how do you thrive — or even survive — in this new environment? Both men talked about the importance of providing strong customer service and using social media to reach new customers.

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As is the case for many dealers, Ultimate Defense Managing Director Paul Bastean sees the concealed-carry segment as a primary driver of handgun sales. The S&W M&P Shield, GLOCK 43 and Springfield Armory XD-S are among his top sellers.

To get people in the door, Knapp has increased the store's social media presence, with accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as a standard website.

"We're very active. We try to post at least three times a week," he added.

Posts include updates on new inventory, including a "just out of jail" feature for used guns now available for sale. They also encourage customers to spread the word about the store through social media, with discounts available for those who share mentions of the store.

But getting new customers to the shop is just the first hurdle. You also need to make them feel comfortable. So, Knapp instituted a feature that might seem a little odd at first: "There's no exterior door handle. We have to walk over and let customers in," he shared.

This is meant as more than a security measure. It's part of the store's effort to make sure everyone feels welcome. Every customer through the door gets a greeting: "The biggest complaint customers have is being ignored," Knapp said.


Ultimate Defense in Missouri is also making a strong social media push, with Facebook and Instagram accounts. They encourage customers to post photos from the range. "We get a tremendous amount of new clients that way," Bastean informed.

The store also works to broaden its appeal beyond the traditional market. Much of that is in the attitude of the

employees, he said. But they've also designed the shop as a well-lit, modern retail environment. "They won't see a bunch of dead animals on the wall when they first come in," Bastean stated.

This is one of the things that makes the store more accessible to women. But the treatment of female customers is key. "What women want is to be comfortable," he said. "They don't want to be talked down to."

The store also relies on special events to help generate traffic. These can be the typical industry-type events, featuring gun manufacturers. But on the more creative side, Ultimate Defense offers special range events that have proven quite popular.

Those have included a "Shoot the Mannequin" weekend, where a dummy was brought out on the range every hour. There was the "Kill Your Office Machine" day when people were allowed to bring in office supplies (laptops, cell phones, printers, etc.) for stress relief on the range. And then there was a July 4th event featuring watermelons. That one, Bastean said with a laugh, was a little crazy: "What a huge mistake. It took two-and-a-half hours with a pressure washer to clean the range." 

How would you rate your current handgun sales compared to last year? We want to hear from you: comments@shootingindustry.com.

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GET ON TARGET WITH
BOWHUNTING PRODUCTS

Pursuing A Sales Brace

BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

While there is a small percentage of gun dealers who carry bowhunting equipment, the majority aren't — and they're missing out on potential sales and potential customers.

Image Courtesy of ScentLok Technologies

As dealers invested in this segment will reveal, getting into bowhunting is not as straightforward as simply adding a few SKUs. It takes commitment. And this commitment can translate into increased store visits and a more robust bottom line.

David Ferrell owns Hunter's Refuge in White Hall, Ark. He said gun dealers should carry bows for the same reason they carry guns: increased foot traffic.

"Carrying bowhunting equipment adds another whole category to your store," he asserted. "Some of the guys who bowhunt are not gun hunters, so you have two different types of customers. You bring more traffic into your store, which hopefully will bring in more paying customers."

This doesn't just mean bringing in more archery aficionados; you'll get more customers for all kinds of products.

"We handle footwear and clothing, and having archery gear brings in more customers for all those other things," Ferrell relayed.

The bowhunting market is very competitive, Ferrell shared, so you need to know what's going on in your local area. The first thing he recommends is to add bows from

a couple of major manufacturers. The manufacturers you choose will depend, in part, on which brands any archery stores around you currently sell. To maximize your advantage, you need to sell something your competition doesn't already carry.

"In our area Mathews, PSE, Hoyt, Bear and BowTech are the big brands," he observed. "You can't carry them all, so you have to work around the competition. If there's a store near you strong in one line, you might want to concentrate on a different one."

According to Ferrell, another factor to consider in adding bowhunting equipment is many bow lines are not sold through distributors. For those lines, you'll need to get to know the manufacturers and work directly with them. Making the investment to attend the Archery Trade Association (ATA) show held each January, would pay dividends.

If you decide to add archery equipment, it will also mean adding a new staff position.

"Archery is labor-intensive," Ferrell said. "To set up a bow takes two or three hours. You really have to know what you're doing to set it up correctly. When you add archery,

it's a big step. It's not like adding a style of boots. You need a good bow technician who can work on bows."

"YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE WHAT PEOPLE WANT"

Kevin Cordell is the manager of Talespinners Outdoors in Lafayette, Ga. He confirmed archery and bowhunting are growing sports, and they're something people want to teach their children.

"It kind of died out for a while," he said. "But now it's coming back good and strong, and we need to keep it going. Gun dealers can do what we do. We have an indoor range, and we're in the process of doing an indoor archery range. It's not something everybody does, but it's something everybody could do if they wanted to."

Where should a dealer start if they're looking to get into the bowhunting market? Cordell shared a good line of bows and reliable accessories are integral.



"You've got to have what people want," he said. "BowTech is a major brand; it's probably the top brand right now. Mathews is still strong. Bear has a lot of good products out right now. The Diamond line is made by BowTech and is a less expensive version of their bow — it's a great product."

When it comes to accessories, one thing Cordell recommends is the Limbsaver from Sims Vibration Laboratory. "String leeches also from Sims are good to go on the string," he added.

Cordell also likes the products from New Archery Products.

"They're a good source to have for their drop-away rest system," he said. "And there are so many broadhead manufacturers out there now."

It's important to keep a range of price points on broadheads.

"Keep a less expensive broadhead in the store for people who can't afford the \$40 or \$50 broadheads," Cordell stated. "We keep both \$22 and \$50 options."

Just as Ferrell advised, Cordell affirmed you need someone specifically trained in bow setup and repair to really serve your bowhunting clientele.

"Make sure you have someone to fix problems, change draw modules, add accessories, cut arrows to length, confirm the customer has the right-sized field points, etc. You need someone in the archery department who knows what they're doing," Cordell concluded.

"It's coming back good and strong, and we need to keep it going."

KEVIN CORDELL

Manager, Talespinners Outdoors
Lafayette, Ga.



OVERLAPPING INTERESTS

Depending on your area and who you ask, there can be some overlap between what gun hunters and bowhunters buy. Ferrell sees plenty of it at his store.

"Pants, accessories (such as flashlights) crossover between both groups," he said. "Bowhunters do more close-range hunting and are concentrated on scent, so your ScentLok clothing is important."

Most of Ferrell's bowhunters started out as gun hunters and eventually moved to bowhunting, which presents more of a challenge than hunting with a rifle. The one exception to this rule of thumb is the bowhunter who has kids.

"This type of hunter may rifle hunt with his kids and then transition them into archery," Ferrell added. "But all dedicated bowhunters do is hunt archery. It just evolves this way for a lot of people."

Cordell also sees a high rate of crossover between bowhunters and gun hunters.

"Probably 90 percent of hunters do both," he observed. "If you bowhunt, you can start the season nearly two months early. I'd say 25 to 30

percent of my customers bowhunt all the way through gun season.”

Your experienced rifle hunters may be intrigued by bowhunting as they seek out new challenges.

“Gun hunters get more interested in hunting itself, and they’ll say, ‘I’ve never bowhunted before.’ This is when I start talking to them about it,” he shared. “I tell them if they don’t like the idea of having to pull back a string on a compound bow and hold it while they look through pin sights, they can try a crossbow. It’s just like holding up a rifle or a shotgun: it’s got a scope on it and it’s an easier way of getting into the game.”

There are several core hunting products that will crossover between gun hunters and bowhunters.

“When you start talking about scents and things like that, they’re basically all the same thing,” Cordell said. There may be some small differences, such as using a doe scent during bow season and a doe in estrus scent later during gun season. But both gun hunters and bowhunters purchase items such as blinds, clothing and other general hunting products.



PSE Fang 350 XT

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Cordell is constantly telling gun hunters who haven’t discovered bowhunting yet to give it a try.

“It’s just that simple,” he added. “I encourage them to do it for a family activity.”

Whether the customer ever bowhunts or not, there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy archery as a family.

“Kids really enjoy this stuff,” Cordell revealed. “I try to keep people encouraged to try archery, because it’s going to be a lost activity someday if we don’t.”

If you can get your product mix right, hire experienced staff and successfully reach out to your established gun hunters and invite them (and their families) to participate in a fresh challenge, adding bowhunting equipment to your inventory would represent a profitable piece of business. **SI**

How have you improved bowhunting profits at your store? Contact us at comments@shootingindustry.com.

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Cutlery Market Maintains
Upward Trajectory

SUPER STEEL!

BY PAT COVERT

IF there were any questions about whether a newer arms-friendly presidential administration would signal a slowdown in the cutlery market, those were dashed away in good measure at the 2017 BLADE Show held in Atlanta. This year's event was held June 2–4 with over 1,000 vendors and broke the show's already burgeoning attendance record with nearly 11,000 attendees.

Folding knives still rule the roost in the cutlery world, but there are some burgeoning categories gaining traction. Trending upward at this year's event is a shift to dress tactical and traditional folders (often referred to as "slip joints"). Sporting fixed-blade knives have also increased in popularity with more emphasis on hunting and bushcraft. In essence, knife users are becoming

more attuned to upgrading their everyday carry and enjoying more leisurely activities than filling their arsenal. Here are some highlights from this year's offerings.

STANDOUT FOLDERS

Spartan Blades took home the top dog 2017 American Made Knife of the Year for their new, upscale Kranos (Greek for "Helmet") tactical folder. Stealthy and stunning with a stylized Spartan helmet designed into the titanium-and-carbon-fiber handle and a beautifully machined pocket clip depicting an arrow, the Kranos features a graceful 3.5-inch S35VN stainless steel drop-point blade. This will be one for your high-end enthusiasts: MSRP starts at \$515.

The CRKT Crossbones won the Imported Knife of the Year at this year's BLADE Show. This sleek flipper folder, with its "dog bone" handle design, is a collaboration between CRKT and custom knifemaker Jeff Park, understudy of many years to renowned cutler Ken Onion. The Crossbones is 8 inches

overall and sports a 3.5-inch AUS 9 satin steel blade. MSRP is \$99.

The Spyderco Magnitude, a collaboration with noted custom knifemaker Peter Carey, is a flipper folder both sturdy and elegant in its design. The Magnitude is 8.22 inches overall with a 4.5-inch CPM S30V stainless steel clip point blade that rolls out on smooth ball bearing washers. The attractive handle is 3D machined black twill-patterned carbon fiber. MSRP is \$485.95.



CRKT CROSSBONES

The big news at the Emerson Knives booth was a new series of Balisong knives. Founder Ernest "Ernie" Emerson informed *SI* there will be four Balisongs in the first production run, all featuring blade styles currently in the company's

line. These will feature the same handle platform of titanium liners with G10 scales but, according to Emerson, the construction will pay homage to his “roots” by featuring easy screw head assembly. As of this writing, MSRP hasn’t been determined.

If your customer leans to the exotic, the Krudo Dao tactical folder fills the bill. This is a dress tactical with an aggressive blade style patterned after the Chinese Dao-style blade. Owner and Founder Louis Krudo is a martial arts expert who designed his knives to be used in all manner of self defense — from cutting to hitting — so there are multiple options built in. The Dao model features a 3.75-inch 9Cr18MoV stainless steel blade, which can open via a flipper or thumb stud. The handle is sculpted stainless steel and G10. MSRP is \$149.

With new, relaxed knife laws, automatic knives are becoming trendy and Hogue Knives has jumped in feet first. The Hogue OTF (Out The Front) Automatic features an attractive “bamboo”-shaped handle with a sliding blade release also serving to retract the business end back into the handle. Overall length is 8.5 inches; 3.5 of the total length is in a CPM-154 stainless steel blade offered in a drop point or Tanto style. The handle features an attractive honeycomb pattern. MSRP is \$349.95.

Fans of traditional pocketknives are well aware of Queen Cutlery’s legendary quality. Their new Sway Belly Trapper carries on that reputation in spades. At 4.2 inches closed this is a nice-sized folder, but its slim cross-section keeps bulk to a minimum. The blades, a clip point and spey, are O1 high carbon steel and a new single blade clip model has just been released. There are a variety of handles scales available, all pinned between nice nickel silver bolsters. MSRP range is \$99–\$149.

One of the hottest pocketknives right now is the new W.R. Case & Sons Tony Bose-designed Tribal Lock. Based on the Trapper pattern, an incredibly popular design, the 4.2-inch (closed) Tribal Lock features a graceful Tru-Sharp stainless steel spear point blade, a lock-back



CASE TRIBAL LOCK

mechanism and is available in single or double bolster models. Case offers a plethora of handle scale options. MSRP ranges from \$78.60 and up.

Following the success of the Carter Prime tactical folder, Ontario Knife Company has released the new Cerebus. This robust tactical knife is 9.25 inches fully deployed, with a 3.75-inch D2 steel drop point blade. The titanium frame has a sturdy frame-lock mechanism on the backside and incorporates scalloped jimping on the frontal base for enhanced purchase. A reversible tip-up left- or right-hand carry pocket clip completes the package. MSRP is \$164.95.

KNIFE USERS ARE BECOMING MORE ATTUNED TO UPGRADING THEIR EVERYDAY CARRY AND ENJOYING MORE LEISURELY ACTIVITIES THAN FILLING THEIR ARSENAL.

FIXED-BLADE PLUS

ESEE Knives’ latest addition to its Camp-Lore line is the PR4, an excellent take on the legendary Horace Kephart camp knife. Designed by Patrick Rollins, (longtime member of the ESEE Knives and Randall Adventure Training team)

the PR4 is 8.9 inches overall with a 4.10-inch blade of 1095 high carbon steel and a protective tumbled black oxide finish. The handle, with its sculptured Micarta scales, is a work of art in itself. The ESEE PR4 comes with a leather pouch sheath and MSRP is \$190.64.

Battle Horse Knives stepped out of the bushcraft zone with their new Honey Badger — a svelte 6-inch dagger for those who prefer a fixed-blade for their self-defense EDC. The 2.4-inch blade is 400C stainless steel and handle scales are checkered black G10. Easy to conceal, the Honey Badger comes with a black spring clip Kydex belt sheath with screw construction for adaptability. MSRP is \$140.

Those who prefer to carry a small-game dressing knife in addition to a larger field knife will like Habilis Bush Tool’s Small Skinner. At 5.75 inches overall the Small Skinner can be worn on its Kydex belt sheath or is easily packable. The 2.5-inch clipped Nesmuk-style blade is easy to sharpen 1095 high carbon steel with a gun blued coating. Better yet, the blade steel is a thin 1/16th inch thick for fine slicing. Scales are orange/black layered G10. MSRP is \$88.

The TOPS Tanimboca Puukko brings the traditional Scandinavian Puukko knife style up to modern day standards. At 7.75 inches overall, the Tanimboca Puukko is meant for general fieldcraft such as carving and shaving. The 3.63-inch modified Scandi grind on its 1095 high carbon steel blade is meant for carving, and the squared spine is designed to throw sparks off a ferrorod.



ONTARIO KNIFE CO. HUNT PLUS

The handle is natural Micarta with a bow drill divot and a brown leather belt sheath is included. MSRP is \$150.

The Kopis Design STK (Sliding Knife Tool) was one of the most unique new products on display at the show.

The STK is rectangular in shape with a 3-inch titanium frame housing a premium S35VN stainless steel multi-functional blade with various functions built into it. The blade portion can cut, scrape and also serve as a chisel or pry bar. The blade also has a wire stripper, a quarter-inch bit drive and, when not in use, the SKT doubles as a money clip. MSRP for this coolness is \$200.

This is just a small sampling of the thousands of knives on display at BLADE. If attendance and overall enthusiasm represent any indicators, you'd be remiss not to at least evaluate your current knife offerings. Are there any knives "a cut above" you would have added to this list? Send us an email at comments@shootingindustry.com.

SAVE THE DATE

BLADE Show will return to Atlanta in 2018, taking place June 1-3. For more information, visit www.bladeshows.com.



The exquisitely designed Kranos by Spartan Blades won the 2017 American Made Knife of the Year. The tactical folder features a stylized Spartan helmet designed into the titanium and carbon fiber handle.

WEBSITES

www.battlehorseknives.com
www.crkt.com
www.emersonknives.com
www.esseeknives.com
www.habilisbushtools.com
www.hogueinc.com
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The Ruger American Pistol® Compact model shares all of the features and rugged reliability of the duty-size gun in a smaller, lighter, more concealable package. Originally introduced in December 2015, the feature-rich Ruger American Pistol® was designed with the latest U.S. Military standards in mind and was tested in the harshest environments to ensure the rugged reliability consumers have come to expect from Ruger.



RUGER AMERICAN RIMFIRE
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Available in .22 LR, .22 WMR and .17 HMR, this new rimfire rifle features a 416 stainless steel barrel, bolt and receiver. Hand-buffed from end to end, the satin finish is highlighted by the contrasting black thread protector, bolt release, stock and one-piece Picatinny scope base. The 18" cold hammer-forged barrel free-floats in the lightweight synthetic stock and is finished with a 1/2"-28 threaded muzzle.



RUGER SP101®
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The Ruger SP101® Match Champion™ is a five-round revolver designed with the competitor in mind. With its ergonomic enhancements and tuned action, the Match Champion™ delivers fast, accurate shots and takes the popular SP101 to the next level.



RUGER® SR1911®
IN 10MM AUTO

The SR1911® in 10mm Auto features Bomar-style adjustable sights and a tight-fitting, bushingless bull barrel - a first for Ruger. The ramped barrel is black nitride coated and this pistol has rubberized grip panels for extra control and comfort.



5 WAYS TO WELCOME A NEW SHOOTER

BY MARK KAKKURI

You know it when customers new to firearms and shooting walk into your store. They usually come through the door and stop and look around, taking it all in.

They're probably looking for helpful signage to direct them to the right place in the store, but it's clear they're not familiar with the place. And they're not against talking to friendly (but visibly armed) salespeople; they just don't want to appear dumb. After all, this whole "gun thing" is quite new to them and it is somewhat intimidating. Remember when you were a newbie? What kept you coming back to your local gun store? Maybe it was the only resource you had. Hopefully the staff welcomed you, answered your many questions and got you pointed in the right direction.

As with many areas of life, learning something new just takes time and occasion. For new shooters, visiting a local gun store can be a great experience for them (and you) as long as you create an inviting experience

for them. Sure it helps if a newbie shows up with a teachable attitude. Even if they don't, here are five ways you can make your store as friendly to new shooters as possible.

1 Immediately create a safe and helpful atmosphere. Remember the perspective of someone new to shooting — they may be overwhelmed at all there is to learn but desperately want to get it right. As such, make an effort to greet all your customers with a friendly smile and an offer to help. Talk to new shooters in a way that assures them they're in a safe place not just physically, by psychologically. Review basic gun safety rules with them right out of the gate; you'll get an idea of how familiar a customer is with safety but also establish a precedent that all gun handling will be guided by accepted safety standards. While all the "safety talk" may seem a bit like a lecture, it will likely go a long way in creating a good foundation for ongoing conversation.

2 Distribute a handout with helpful resources. Possible topics include safety, training, gear and even terminology and firearms history. Remember how long it took for you to master gun safety, let alone to have a command of all the lingo associated with guns and shooting? Simplify the learning experience for a new shooter by capturing several key resources such as helpful websites on a single handout. It's great if you have information like this on your website, but it will have more staying power if it's provided on a physical print-out. Put your store's contact information on the handout and coach all your employees to be aware new customers may be reaching out to them with questions. Know the resources you're providing well, especially if you are pointing to resources online. Make sure you are only giving your customers excellent, helpful information.

3 Create a "new shooter" area of your store. Provide handouts, show training videos and distribute product literature from that area. While you're at it, staff the area with a knowledgeable and friendly employee who has a knack for clear and winsome communication. Encourage your regular customers to check out the new shooter area and recommend it to their friends. Make it the best kind of "safe space" where there are no dumb questions.

4 Offer a free, 10-minute safety training session or quiz. Hand a new shooter a blue gun and ask them to demonstrate how they would handle it in a variety of circumstances. Ask them to identify basic gun parts and functionality. Make sure the session or quiz is conducted in a friendly, engaging way while demonstrating the importance of safe handling practices and knowing the ins and outs of how a firearm works. Then, show a training video from a reputable firearms organization to demonstrate best practices in these areas.

Once a customer proves mastery of the content, give them a certificate of completion that doubles as a 10 percent off coupon in your store. You'll have

provided written and visual content, tested their own manipulation of a safe gun, interacted with them on the topics at hand and rewarded their participation. Also, you'll now know a bit more about how your customer thinks about guns and what type of training and gear may be best for them.

5 Offer a free "advice checking" service. Ever hear "My uncle told me I should buy a .38 revolver" or "I read the .45 ACP is the best cartridge" from a customer? Or "I read on the Interwebs that I should carry two MAC-10s for personal protection." Maybe the advice is sound. But maybe it's not. How is a customer to know? While you're there to generate sales in your store, one of the best ways to do this is build trust. And one of the best ways to build trust is to provide excellent resources to your customer to allow them to make a good decision. While this is similar to No. 2, you're actually offering to put your

own advice to the customer on the line and ask them to be the judge.

So, gladly point out the pros and cons of some of the advice out there regarding guns. Build rapport and trust with a customer by being willing to tell them what they aren't expecting to hear, such as, "You don't really need this more expensive gun when this less expensive one will do."

WORTH THE EXTRA EFFORT?

Yes, all of these methods will require dedicated resources, meaning time and money. But they're all reasonable investments that will provide a helpful and encouraging atmosphere for new and experienced shooters alike. Moreover, if your gun store is seen by customers not only as a place to buy guns and gear but also to gain valuable knowledge, you'll likely see an increase in traffic and sales as the community warms up to sincere efforts to help customers go from being a new shooter to being a safe and responsible one. 📍



A smile, friendly demeanor and inviting storefront go a long way in welcoming new customers. Get creative to simplify the learning experience and become a trusted source of information!

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By Jenna Buckley

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[www.shootingindustry.com/
company/bushnell-outdoor-products](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/bushnell-outdoor-products)



Bushnell announces **ENGAGE**, a new line of high-quality, performance-driven optics for modern hunters and shooters. Engage scopes and binoculars have fully multi-coated glass to capture a bright, clear image while preventing glare, and actively repel water, oil, dust and debris. Features include a Deploy MOA reticle offering 1-MOA windage and elevation hashmarks, locking turrets and tool-less zero reset. Riflescopes are available in nine configurations from 2-7x36mm up to 6-24x50mm. Engage binoculars are offered in four options from 8x42mm to 12x50mm.



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HOGUE

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www.shootingindustry.com/company/hogue-inc

Hogue has announced several of its grip lines now include an **AQUA** color option. In the HandALL Beavertail Grip Sleeve line, fits are available for S&W's M&P 9mm, 40 Shield and 45 Shield, Ruger's LC9 and LCP II, GLOCK 42 and 43 and Kahr Arms' P9, P40, CW9 and CW40. Options from HandALL Universal Grip Sleeve line fit most .45, .40, 10mm and 9mm semi-autos. The Hogue HandALL Jr. fits most .22, .25 and .380 pocket pistols. A HandALL Hybrid model for the Ruger LCP .380, with or without the Crimson Trace button, is also available. Select grips in the standard grip line with an aqua option include: 1911 Government, Ruger LCR, Ruger SP101, S&W J-Frame models, SIG SAUER P239 and P938 and the Taurus 85.



SXP SHADOW MARINE DEFENDER

WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS

(801) 876-3440

www.shootingindustry.com/company/winchester-repeating-arms

The new **SXP SHADOW DEFENDER** and **SXP SHADOW MARINE DEFENDER** pump shotguns from Winchester Repeating Arms feature synthetic pistol grip stocks with textured gripping surfaces. Each is supplied with two length of pull spacers to adjust the shotgun to fit the user, and two interchangeable comb pieces to dial in eye-to-optic alignment. A ribbed tactical forearm gives a firm grip for optimum control. Both models are offered in 12- and 20-gauge with 3-inch chamber. Alloy receivers are drilled and tapped for bases and rings. The SXP Shadow Marine Defender model features matte hard chrome plating on the barrel, magazine tube and slide arms for added resistance to wear and the elements. Barrel length for all models is 18 inches and a cylinder choke tube is supplied.

**HAVE A NEW PRODUCT?
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of-mossberg-sons-inc](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/of-mossberg-sons-inc)

Mossberg has introduced three **FLEX CONVERSION KITS** for the Mossberg 500 and Maverick 88 pump-action shotguns in 12- and 20-ga. options. The FLEX System gives users an easy and quick way to adapt their shotgun to a variety of shooting applications. Three conversion kits are available for each gauge with all required hardware included: the Stock and Forend Adapter Kit, Stock Adapter with FLEX Pistol Grip Kit and Stock Adapter Kit.

CENTURY ARMS

(800) 527-1252

[www.shootingindustry.com/
company/century-arms](http://www.shootingindustry.com/company/century-arms)

Century Arms is now shipping the **CANIK TP9DA**, a double action/single action polymer 9mm. The TP9DA pistol gives users the ability to carry a DA/SA style trigger in a modern polymer frame. It features a 4.07-inch match grade barrel, loaded chamber and striker status indicator, industry standard dovetail sight cuts and a user-friendly de-cocker system. The TP9DA is offered in a black or Burnt Bronze Cerakote finish, is chambered in 9mm and comes with two 18-round magazines, a polymer holster (with both a paddle and belt attachment), interchangeable backstraps, cleaning rod, brush and limited lifetime manufacturer's warranty.



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AMERICAN TACTICAL IMPORTS

(800) 290-0065

www.shootingindustry.com/company/american-tactical-imports-inc

American Tactical Imports is now offering the **OMNI HYBRID .410 SHOTGUN**. The Omni Hybrid is a gas-operated, short stroke, balanced piston system for use with 2.5-inch .410 shells. It's built on the patented Omni Hybrid lower receiver with a six-position adjustable stock and the upper handguard has a 13-inch free-floating Keymod rail. The shotgun has 5-round capacity, weighs 6.5 lbs. and sports an 18.5-inch barrel.



TROJAN FIREARMS

(602) 888-4357

www.shootingindustry.com/company/trojan-firearms

A new line of 9mm AR platform carbines, the **TFA-PCC9** series, is now available from Trojan Firearms. The TFA-PCC9 rifles are CNC-machined using high-grade aircraft billet aluminum in the lower, upper and handrail. The lower features Teflon coated springs and detent pins and an enhanced flared mag well. The 16-inch lightweight contour barrel features a Grater Gen II 9mm tunable muzzlebrake. Other features include a Gen II ambidextrous charging handle and adjustable drop-in trigger group. Two models available are the TFA-PCC9G, compatible with 9mm GLOCK magazines; and the TFA-PCC9M, compatible with 9mm MBX/STI 2011 magazines. The TFA-PCC9G is also available in a California 2017 compliant version.



VICTORY ARCHERY

(866) 934-6565

www.shootingindustry.com/company/victory-archery

New **RIP TKO** hunting arrows from Victory Archery feature MaxxKe technology boasting a 3K carbon weave designed to reduce torque at launch and give the arrow faster recovery time in flight. It also increases the spine consistency of the shafts of each arrow. The smaller shaft diameter decreases the potential for wind drift during flight and has better speed and a dramatic impact on penetration. Three versions — Elite, Gamer and Sport — are available in varying straightness ratings. In addition to Nano Ceramic "ICE" coating, RIP TKO arrows come standard with Victory Shok aluminum inserts, and accept 8/32-inch broadheads.



BERGARA USA

(877) 892-7544

www.shootingindustry.com/company/bergara-barrels

Bergara has introduced the **B14 SERIES HUNTING AND MATCH RIFLE (HMR)**. The B14 HMR features a solid molded synthetic stock with a built-in machined aluminum mini-chassis. It supports a free float barrel to ensure extreme accuracy. A precision-machined bottom allows the HMR to accept AICS-style magazines. The rear stock was specifically created to offer a multitude of adjustments for different types of shooters, both right- and left-handed. The cheek piece is fully adjustable up and down, and most of the quick adjustments can be made by hand. The B14 HMR is currently offered in .308 Win. with a 20-inch barrel and 6.5 Creedmoor with a 22-inch barrel.

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www.shootingindustry.com/company/kershaw-knives

Kershaw Knives has introduced two knives from custom knifemaker Gustavo Cecchini: the **MALT** and the **HOPS**. Both knives feature a sculpted style and a flipper doubling as a bottle opener. The blade on the Malt is 3 inches and the Hops' blade is just under 1.5 inches. A two-tone treatment on blade and handle, and a single-position pocketclip anodized in blue, add to the distinctive look of the knives.



STEYR ARMS

(205) 417-8644

www.shootingindustry.com/company/steyr-arms

Steyr Arms has introduced the M9-A1 pistol with an **OD GREEN** colored grip frame. The M9-A1 is a full-size pistol with a 4-inch hammer-forged barrel. It features an innovative polymer frame with a high grip and low bore axis that mitigates muzzle rise. An integrated trigger safety with a Reset Action System trigger requires positive finger pressure to operate, and the striker-fired M9-A1 also incorporates a keyed safety lock.

TANGODOWN INC.

(909) 392-4757

www.shootingindustry.com/company/tangodown-inc

TangoDown has reintroduced the **IO COVER** for the Aimpoint T-1 (iO-003). The iO-003 maintains the same sleek and snug fit of the original iO cover, but deeper solid caps provide protection from scratching the lenses. They conveniently nest together to keep out of the way while the optic is in use. The iO-003 also has protection ears for the elevation adjustment cap. The covers are currently available in black and Flat Dark Earth. The iO-003 accommodates the following optics only: Aimpoint T-1/H-1/R-1.



B2B EXTRA!



HONOR DEFENSE REWARDS PROGRAM

Honor Defense has announced a Rewards Program to benefit dealers. This program launched August 1, 2017, and runs through the rest of the calendar year. Salesmen can earn a free pistol by selling seven Honor Defense pistols.

To enter, visit www.honordefenserewards.com and use the username *honordefense* and password *honordefense!1*. Then, click the "Register" link to create an individual account. After the email address is confirmed, log in to a personal site and begin earning free pistols. Another benefit of this program is salesmen can purchase an Honor Defense pistol for \$249.

Visit www.honordefenserewards.com

SAVAGE ARMS

(413) 568-7001

www.shootingindustry.com/company/savage-arms

The new **B SERIES HARDWOOD** from Savage Arms features a 21-inch Sporter barrel and ergonomic, walnut-stained hardwood stock with unique, modern checkering. The B Series Hardwood is drilled and tapped for scope mounts and includes adjustable iron sights. A 10-round rotary magazine and Savage's adjustable AccuTrigger are standard. The rifle is available chambered in .17 HMR, .22 LR and .22 WMR.



KALASHNIKOV USA

(754) 205-9385

www.shootingindustry.com/company/kalashnikov-usa

Kalashnikov USA announces the long-awaited release of the first KUSA firearms available to the U.S. marketplace. Two KUSA shotguns, the **KS-12** and **KS-12T**, will be the first to ship. The **KR-9 9MM** platform will follow and include the KUSA 9mm pistol, KP-9, KR-9 carbine and KR-9 SBR (Short Barreled Rifle).



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OMEXTRA!

XS SIGHTS TRAINER PROGRAM

XS Sights has launched a Trainer Program, allowing shooting instructors to receive a free set of night sights for their training handgun or a blue demo gun equipped with night sights. This program joins several others offered by XS, including POP displays and free night sights for rental guns.

"Trainers are the best influencers to explain and demonstrate the logic of our express sights. With this program, we can better support our network of trainers and get our sights on their pistols," said Tanya Gorin, XS commercial sales manager.

Email dealers@xssights.com to request an application.

"Hunting Saves Business Year" — A Deserving Headline

By Russ Thurman

Hunting may be the key to rejuvenating sales this year. Yes, personal defense still ranks highest in reported firearm and associated purchases, but the soft sales this year reveal a shift in consumer focus. Gone are the “must-buy-before-they’re-banned” purchases. This shift away from anti-gun pressure buying has impacted firearm sales significantly.

“Customers aren’t making any rash purchases. They’re buying guns they’ve always wanted to own,” said John Stephenson of Metro Shooting Supplies in Bridgeton, Mo. Stephenson reports Metro’s sales remain brisk, ahead of last year’s sales.

Dealers also report they are doing extremely well selling used firearms. Many of these guns are trade-ins, ones consumers used in recent years to finance the purchase of soon-to-be-banned firearms. Now those guns — many of them hunting rifles — are being snatched up by consumers.

Also fueling the hunting market is a notable increase of women hunters. The increase began — or at least gained the attention of the national media — a few years ago. In its Nov. 2013 issue, *National Geographic* reported on the increase in women hunters, which was widely reported by other media.

“In recent years, American women are spending more time in treestands and deer blinds — and putting fresh meat on the table. Although men still account for the majority of the 13.7 million U.S. hunters, the number of women actively hunting is on the rise,” the magazine reported, while capturing the reasons women hunt.

“Hunting offers an alternative to the grocery store that lets women provide truly free-range and organic meat for their families, while also helping create a more sustainable food system,” says Lily Raff McCaulou, author of *Call of the Mild: Learning to Hunt My Own Dinner*.

NSSF, citing data from the National Sporting Goods Association, reports the number of women hunters increased 104 percent from 1.8 million in 2001 to 3.67 million 2016. By all accounts, that percentage continues to grow.

Attracting Today’s Hunter

NSSF also reports in 2016, 33 million people participated in hunting or target shooting in the U.S. The largest age group — 6.7 million — was 25–34-year-olds. In all, NSSF reports 18 million hunters took to the field with a firearm in 2016.



While hunting firearms lead sales for most dealers, those who also specialize in bowhunting enjoy further rewards. The additional challenge associated with bowhunting, along with the extended time in the field, are key selling points. And, in what may surprise many, millennials are the most devoted, growing segment of bowhunters.

“In ways no one could have predicted, bowhunting is quickly becoming the sport of young, hip millennials eager to plunk down some change for quality gear and gadgets,” wrote Taylor Smithfield in *Shooting Industry’s Outdoor Marketplace* (“Forest-To-Table: Red [Meat] Is The New Green,” September 2017).

Smithfield presented data from an Archery Trade Association survey, showing 51 percent of millennials increased the time they hunt with a bow, compared to 27 percent of baby boomers. Just as important, 44 percent of millennials say they are likely to buy a bow every four to five years, compared to 26 percent of those in the boomer generation.

Another key to attracting today’s hunter is the vast array of advanced products, many of them must-buys, especially for newer hunters and those in the 25–35 year-old age group.

Catering to them is key to success, according to Jim Curcuruto, NSSF director of industry research and analysis.

“Think about what you wanted when you were that age. Likely the latest and greatest, right? That means you’d better be up to speed on the products that are cutting-edge technologically. For instance, you’ll want to have this year’s trail cameras (because last year’s are so, like, last year). Same with clothing and footwear,” Curcuruto said.

Deals Aplenty

Manufacturers, distributors and dealers are unleashing an unprecedented number of promotions to attract hunting sales this fall and winter. These generous consumer-friendly deals are vital to rebounding from a sluggish spring and deep summer slump. It would be ironic, if hunting, which has posted slow-to-negative growth for years, provided the catalyst for stabilizing industry sales.

With consumers “buying guns they’ve always wanted” and the increase of women and younger hunters, it could happen. Beyond the obvious benefits for all of our businesses, it would return hunting to its long-earned status as a growing and respected tradition of our industry and national heritage. **SI**



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SAR 9 **Polymer Frame, Striker Fired 9mm**

Caliber: 9mm

Capacity: 17 + 1

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