THE VOICE OF THE INDEPENDENT RETAILER

SHOOTING® SPORTS RETAILER

www.shootingsportsretailer.com
FEBRUARY 2025

INSIGHTS: OUTFITTING FOR SUCCESS

REVIEWED: NEW ZEISS CONQUEST V4

COUNTER TECH: TACTICAL RELOADS

Fine American Firearms — CHARTER ARMS® Since 1964

COMPACT AND LIGHTWEIGHT
DOUBLE-ACTION
.380 REVOLVER
SEE PAGE 4 FOR MORE DETAILS

UNLOCKING GROWTH IN **GUN SALES**

THE EVOLUTION OF **LEVER ACTIONS**

5 HANDGUNS **BUILT TO HUNT**



DESIGNED WITH SIMPLICITY AND EASE OF USE
PG.4

NEW PRODUCTS

PG. 56



GRAND VIEW OUTDOORS®

shootingsportsretailer.com

VARMINT V2 LRF

THERMAL IMAGING RIFLE SCOPES

Built-in Laser Rangefinder • On-board Ballistic Calculator • Removable Rechargeable 18650 Battery

Incredible Sub-20mK 12 Micron Thermal Sensor • Recoil-activated Video with Sound • 4 Models Available



NEW



ReachIR LRF

THERMAL IMAGING MONOCULARS

New Display On/Off Tilt Sensor • Integrated 1000yd Laser Rangefinder • Removable Rechargeable 18650 Battery

640 & 384 Resolution Models Available • Industry-Leading Sub-20mK 12 Micron Thermal Sensor

Now In-Stock & Ready to Ship

Varmint V2 LRF Thermal Rifle Scope video guide

AGM® GLOBAL VISION

Comparison video of four Varmint V2 LRF models



PARD | NIGHT VISION & THERMAL OPTICS

NEXT-GEN INNOVATION

PARD Optics is a leader in advanced thermal and night vision technology, delivering cutting-edge solutions for precision and clarity in low-light environments. Known for innovation, PARD provides high-performance optics for hunting, security, and tactical applications.



COME CHECK US OUT AT SHOT SHOW 2025 #43526

FEBRUARY 2025

SHOOTING SPORTS RETAILER VOLUME 43 ISSUE NUMBER 2

CONTENTS





FEATURES

24 Ready for the Hunt
Handguns provide plenty of power along with extra challenge and reward for hunters.
By Mark Chesnut

30 Turn the Lights On
Handheld and weapon-mounted lights aren't so simple anymore, but the profit potential is big.
By Trent Marsh

36 The Evolution of Lever Actions
Once common and then cast off, lever-action rifles have stormed back with new features and functionality.
By Wayne van Zwoll

42 A Shot in the Dark
Mission First delivers some unique Glock tactical light holster options.
By Max Archer



DEPARTMENTS

6 CounterTECH: Run it Dry or Top it Off?
Give your customers a better understanding of when and how to reload.
By William Starnes

14 InFocus: A New Conquest
Two new configurations add long-range versatility to the Zeiss Conquest V4 riflescope line.
By Brian McCombie

20 Business Insider: Unlocking Growth in Firearm Sales
Key e-commerce trends and strategies every retailer should know.
By Jason Dailey

50 Night Moves: Playing The Long Game
The AGM VarmintV2 50-384 is a long-range thermal with intuitive controls and simple setup.
By Brian McCombie

54 Gear Roundup
By Gordy Krahn

56 New Products
By Gordy Krahn

60 Insights: Outfitting for Success
Apparel represents a growth category for retailers who understand the market.
By Steve Comus



GENERATION

MEETS

INNOVATION



MB47

CENTURY ARMS

CENTURYARMS.COM

FOLLOW @CENTURY ARMS :

THIS ISSUE'S COVER BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



CHARTER ARMS
COMPACT DOUBLE-ACTION REVOLVER

Since 1964, Charter Arms® has offered 100% American-made firearms crafted by skilled Americans in Shelton, Connecticut, the heart of New England's "Gun Valley." Steeped in rich tradition with unmatched customer service, Charter Arms revolvers are the perfect choice for personal protection because of their strength, reliability, accuracy, and affordability.

Charter Arms proudly introduces the new Coyote .380 Revolver, the smallest and lightest of its kind. Offered in two models, Standard and Off Duty®, this compact, everyday carry revolver is designed for both experienced shooters and beginners, making it an ideal choice for personal protection and sport shooting.

The new Charter Arms .380 Coyote is a compact and lightweight double/single-action revolver, chambered in .380 ACP. Although this cartridge was created for semi-automatic pistols, this revolver takes advantage of the rounds milder recoil benefits. A ported barrel underlug reduces muzzle climb. Many have praised it for its out-of-box accuracy. Built with an anodized alloy frame and finished with a hi-polish stainless steel barrel and cylinder, this revolver offers durability and a sleek, modern appearance.

The Coyote .380 frame is crafted from 7075 aircraft-grade aluminum. The barrel and cylinder are formed from 416 stainless steel. This revolver is available with three finish options; a matte anodized frame with matte stainless-steel components, or a pink or lavender anodized frame with hi-polished components. All three versions have diamond cuts in the barrel's underlug and checkered rosewood grips.



The Coyote .380 Off Duty model comes with compact rubber grips and a concealed hammer. Other features include a HIVIZ® LitePipe sight and a clear anodized frame with stainless steel components. It's also offered in a pink anodized frame with hi-polished components.

Because .380 ACP is a rimless cartridge that was designed for use in autoloaders, Charter Arms Coyote revolvers must be loaded using moon clips. The .380 Coyote ships with two TK Customs moon clips to feed the 5-shot cylinder. Additional moon clips are available for purchase separately as well.



.380 COYOTE SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: .380 ACP
Capacity: 5 rounds
Barrel Length: 2 inches
Grips: Small Rosewood Checkered (standard models), Compact Rubber (Off Duty model)
Sights: Fixed front
Safety: Hammer block safety
Weight: 14 ounces
Special Features: Spurred hammer, 3-point cylinder lock-up
Concealed Hammer: Off Duty Models only

charterfirearms.com

A24123PG

INTRODUCING

Nocpix

THERMAL IMAGING SYSTEMS

While the name, logo, and some features may be new, Nocpix is born out of years of research, development, and experience in building thermal optics for hunters and outdoorsmen. We've paired this strong history of success with a fresh look at the thermal industry. This brand represents a launch of next-generation thermal devices with a unified goal: provide the best image quality and a consistently positive hunter experience.



VISTA

RANGEFINDING THERMAL MONOCULAR

· 640x480 Sensor · Lens-integrated Laser Rangefinder · Image Stabilization



LUMI

COMPACT THERMAL MONOCULAR

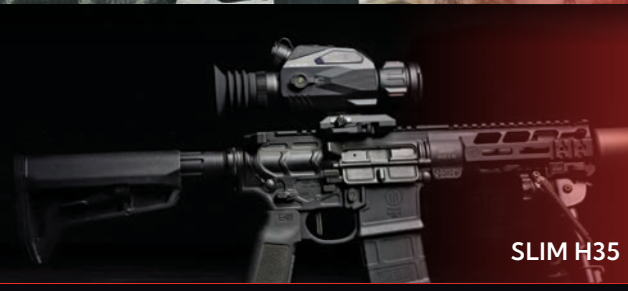
· 640 or 384 Sensor Options · Lightweight Design · 18650 Battery



ACE

RANGEFINDING THERMAL RIFLE SCOPE

· 640x480 Sensor · Lens-integrated Laser Rangefinder · Ocular Magnifier



SLIM

TWO-IN-ONE THERMAL MONOCULAR/SIGHT

· 640 or 384 Sensor Options · Innovative Mounting System · 18650 Battery

5×5 WARRANTY

Nocpix optics are protected by a transferrable five-year warranty with a five-day service turnaround guarantee.

Learn more at nocpixusa.com



← The more rounds a magazine holds, the heavier and more cumbersome it will be during tactical reloads.

RUN IT DRY OR TOP IT OFF?

Give your customers a better understanding of when and how to reload.

By William Starnes

If you want to have fun, ask a group of gun enthusiasts their favorite handgun caliber. Then sit back with a cold one and watch the fireworks display.

You'll get the same results by asking which manufacturer makes the best handgun. I'm certain you've heard the debates among your customers. It's no different among firearms instructors. Pick any topic, and instructors will argue about it. Each side has their own ideas about what's best and why they teach it to students.

People purchase guns for self defense, meaning they believe it's possible, however remote, that they might need to defend themselves or someone they love. To do that mandates that they be armed all the time. Nobody can predict when or where a threat might appear, but everyone knows that it can be fatal to be without a gun and ammo when one does. The need to carry the gun is self-evident, but the obvious accompanying question is how much ammo to carry?

Most gunfights are over in just a few seconds. Having to reload during a shooting is rare. Still, instructors and enthusiasts alike will recommend having at least one spare magazine, and that magazine swaps should be a regular part of a balanced training routine.

"The emergency reload is the only one that meets all three criteria while also being natural to most shooters."



← It's critical to know whether a self-defense gun has a magazine disconnect, preventing it from firing without a magazine.



LEARN MORE

The acquisition, ownership, possession and use of firearms are heavily regulated. Some models may not be legally available in your state or locale. Whatever your purpose for lawfully acquiring a firearm – know the law, get trained and shoot safely.

These are the three most common techniques for swapping magazines, and the thought process behind each.

The Emergency Reload

The Emergency Reload is the easiest to understand and explain. When the gun is out of ammunition in a gun fight, it's an emergency. The slide locking to the rear is the alert signal for action. When this happens, the empty magazine is dropped from the gun, and a fresh one is inserted. The slide is then pulled to the rear and released, so the gun is ready to fire again. It's simple and intuitive. No real explanation is necessary, because it's the same process everyone uses when they practice at the range.

Tactical Reloads

The theory behind tactical reloads is there may be times when it could be favorable to swap magazines before the gun is empty, as well as when the partially used magazine should be retained in case it is needed later. The classic explanation is that the gun should be topped off from behind cover when there is a lull in the battle. There are two common variations of the tactical reload. As you might have guessed, the difference between the One-in-Hand and the Two-in-Hand version is how many magazines are being held at one time when the reload takes place. Let's take a closer look at each.



↑ Holding two magazines in one hand takes coordination, especially when using extended magazines.

Two-in-Hand

When people speak of a tactical reload, they are usually referring to what is termed here as the Two-in-Hand technique. Although that name isn't quite as cool without the word tactical added, it is a better description of what the method entails. If a lull in the battle happens, the shooter first pulls a full magazine from the pouch and brings it up beside the gun hand. The partial magazine is then ejected from the gun into the same hand holding the full magazine. During that swap, the one hand is holding two magazines. Once the fresh magazine is inserted, the partial magazine gets tucked into a pocket for later use. This is the sole benefit of the tactical reload. The major drawback involved comes from having to manage the process while holding two magazines at one time.

The technique was originally designed for use with 1911-style, single-stack guns, where the magazines were thin and more easily managed. The advent of double-stack high-capacity magazines has complicated the technique – especially for those with smaller hands. This can be even more difficult when carrying extended magazines with their added weight and bulk. I can't count the number of times I've seen experienced shooters fumble and drop magazines while trying to perform tactical reloads. Sometimes it was the used one; other times it was the full one. Occasionally it was both. The technique is far from intuitive. Some say it's unnatural, that it takes concentration that should be directed toward the threat.

In addition to the difficulties above, the tactical reload is also time consuming, often doubling the time of an emergency reload. If any complications occur, such as dropping a magazine, the time increases further. One should question the advantage offered by retaining a partial magazine compared to the complications needed to do so.

One-in-Hand

It's precisely the drawbacks above that led instructors to find another, less cumbersome way to accomplish the same goal. The One-in-Hand technique is quite similar to an Emergency Reload. The difference is that the ejected magazine is tucked into a pocket before the full magazine is pulled from the magazine pouch. The problems of handling two magazines are eliminated for both single and double-stack guns, and returns to a more natural, intuitive process. While not as fast as a true Emergency Reload, it is significantly faster than the Two-in-Hand method.

The disadvantage of the One-in-Hand method is in the elapsed time from when the first magazine is dropped to when a new one is inserted. Additionally, some guns have internal safeties that prevent firing without a magazine in place. There are advantages to such a safety, but in this case, it is a factor to be considered. If the shooter has a one of these guns, the questions become how long will the gun

"Anything that simplifies responding improves reliability and success."

MADE BY PROUD AMERICANS

TAC SHIELD®
PROVEN GEAR

2009 - 2024 • 15 YEARS







PRECISION RIFLE SLINGS

COBRA GUN BELTS

TACTICAL RIFLE SLINGS

NEW PROFESSIONAL RETAILER SPECIAL OFFER

WWW.TACSHIELD.COM/NEW

TAC SHIELD
PROVEN GEAR

©2024



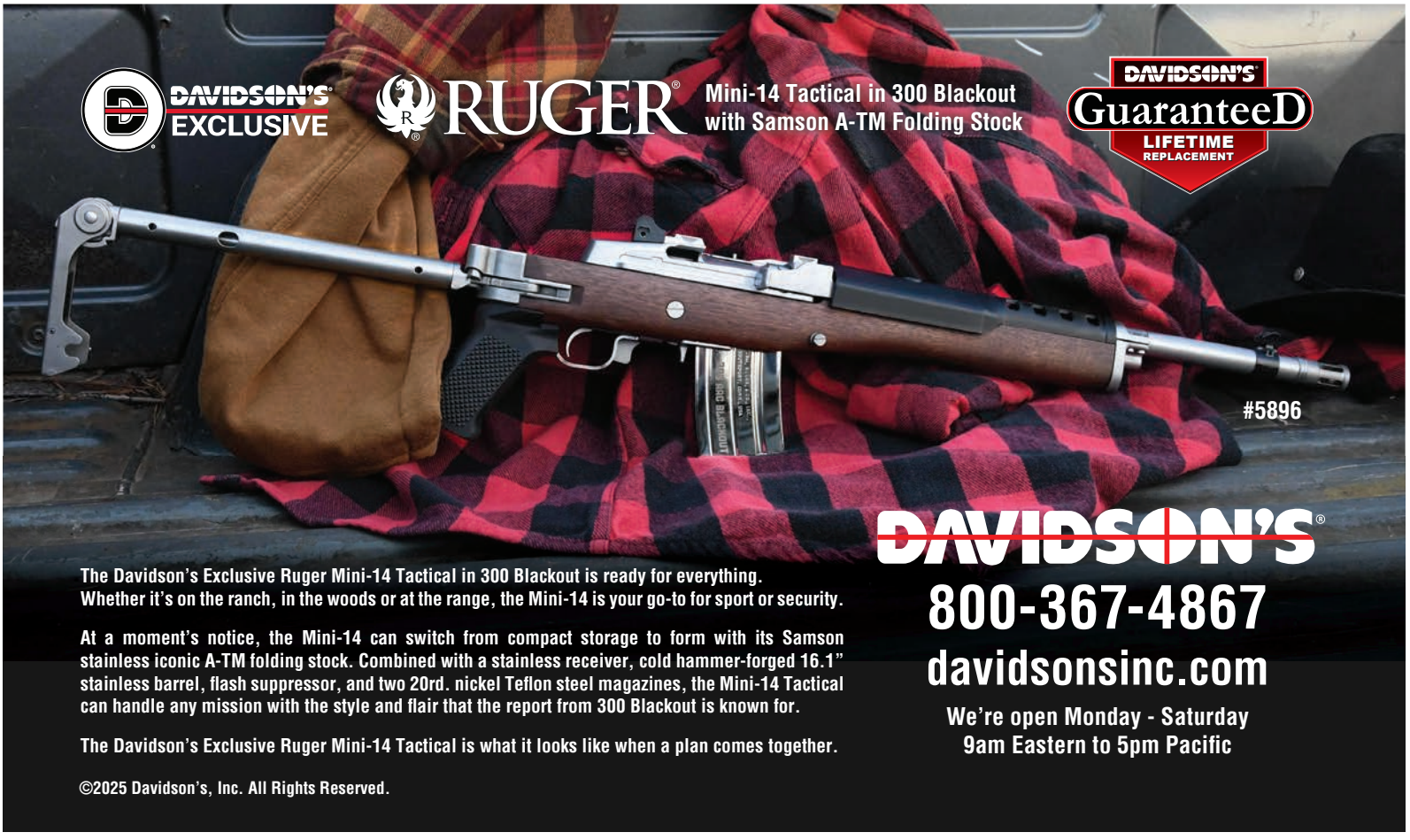
↑ This magazine is ready for an emergency reload. Note the indexing of the magazine with the index finger.

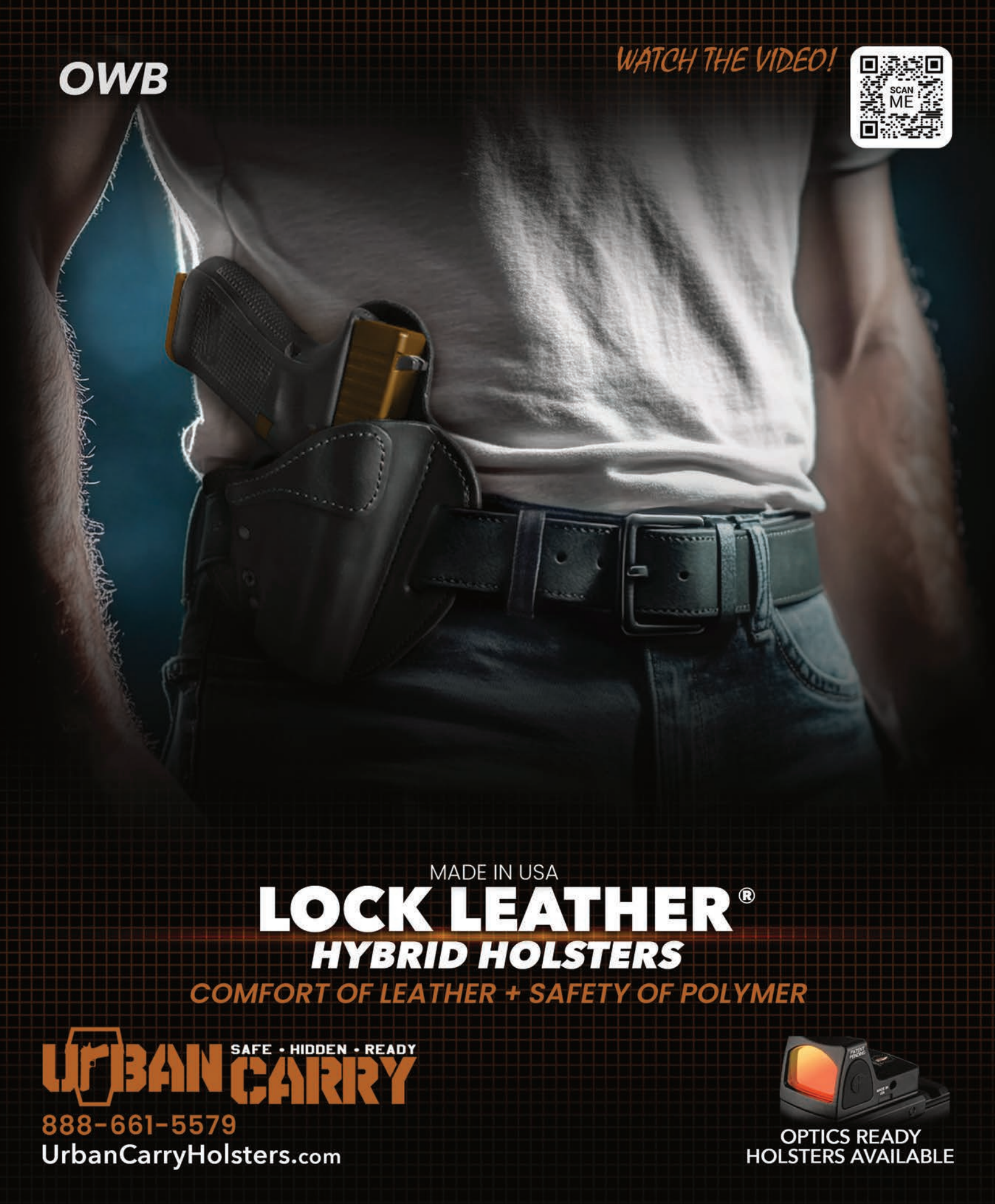
be inoperable and is it worth the delay to maintain a partial magazine?

It's easy to get caught up considering fractions of a second. Time is easily measured and compared. It may be more practical, however, to compare how intuitive each method is. Natural actions take less time than those requiring concentration and coordination. High-stress situations are already mentally taxing. Anything that simplifies responding improves reliability and success. These two factors are just as important, maybe even more so than time savings.

A Final Consideration

As a practical matter, I no longer teach tactical reloads. I have found them to be too complex for most shooters. My goal as a self-defense shooter and instructor is to find reliability, accuracy and speed. The emergency reload is the only one that meets all three criteria while also being natural to most shooters. If the goal of retaining a magazine is important, shooters can pick up their ejected magazine after the reload is completed. If they have time, great. If not, they are still able to efficiently reload and defend themselves in the shortest time possible.




OWB
WATCH THE VIDEO!
SCAN ME
MADE IN USA
LOCK LEATHER®
HYBRID HOLSTERS
COMFORT OF LEATHER + SAFETY OF POLYMER
URBAN CARRY
SAFE • HIDDEN • READY
888-661-5579
UrbanCarryHolsters.com
OPTICS READY
HOLSTERS AVAILABLE

One point must be covered, because it applies to all the mentioned techniques. No matter the method used, a partial magazine should never be inserted back into the pouch. The proper place for retaining a partial magazine is in a pocket. The shooter needs to know that any magazine pulled from a pouch is fully loaded. Confusing a partial magazine with a full one could be fatal.

While instructors may argue the fine points of any technique, the fact remains that what the gun salesperson does everyday is far more impactful on shooters in general. You're likely the only instruction many customers will receive. Being able to intelligently discuss topics like these is an engaging way to teach customers to use their firearm as intended – safely and effectively. SSR



↑ Slide lock-back is a sure sign that the gun is empty and that an emergency reload is needed.



MGE WHOLESALE

MON-FRI | 9AM-6PM EST
MGEWHOLESALE.COM
1-800-734-5965



EXCLUSIVES - HOT BUYS - WEEKLY SPECIALS

NOT A CURRENT MGE WHOLESALE CUSTOMER? CALL TODAY!

HOT NEW Kimber® PISTOLS JUST RELEASED



CDS9

KIM3600003



CDS9

KIM3600004



2K11

KIM3500050
- .45 ACP
KIM3500051
- 9MM



2K11

KIM3500055



2K11

KIM3500052
- .45 ACP
KIM3500053
- 9MM

BARRETT®

BUY 1 M107A1-S



BAR18059-S



BAR18062-S



BAR18065-S



BAR18066-S



BAR18067-S



BAR18068-S

CALL FOR SALE PRICE

GET 1 REC-7 FREE



BAR19726

BARRETT REC-7 LIMITED PRODUCTION RIFLE

DEALER VALUE $1,652.00

MGE WHOLESALE EXCLUSIVE OFFER

WE WANT TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS GROW

WEEKLY FREE FREIGHT PROGRAMS

STAY CONNECTED TO MGE WHOLESALE

MGEWHOLESALE.COM

A NEW CONQUEST

Two new configurations add long-range versatility to the Zeiss Conquest V4 riflescope line.

By Brian McCombie

The Conquest V4 optics are the most popular riflescopes offered by Zeiss Hunting, and the line recently acquired to two new configurations: the Conquest V4 3-12x44 with Z-Plex Reticle (#20); and the Conquest V4 3-12x56 with Plex Illuminated Reticle (#60).

The upgrade to these two magnifications is the addition of an external elevation turret, with the Zeiss Ballistic Stop feature. The Ballistic Stop feature build is an all-metal construction, too. The "base" models, if you will, of these two scopes have capped turrets, while both these two newer configurations are windage capped only.

The additions bring the Conquest V4 line to five different models, all with 4x zoom ratio.

Like other V4s, these two new configurations are second-focal plane optics, MOA based, with elevation and windage settings adjusted at .25 MOA per click for up to 70 MOA total. Those clicks were easy to register, too, as they made an audible "tik," which I also felt in my fingertips.

Parallax is pre-set for 100 yards, and both scopes offer 3.5 inches of eye relief.

The scopes are made with higher definition glass, enhanced with the Zeiss T* light transmission coating and LotuTec protective lens coating. ZEISS originally developed LotuTec as a coating for binocular and spotting scope lenses to enable a clear and unhindered view in all weather conditions. The coatings help produce 90% to-the-eye light transmission and great low-light performance.

Rugged, 30mm aircraft-grade aluminum tubes are standard with the V4. The newly configured scopes also feature bolder engravings on the elevation and windage turrets for quick identification and changes.

MSRP for the 3-12x56 with Ballistic Stop is $1,149.99, while the 3-12x44 with Ballistic Stop comes in at $849.99.

Last, Zeiss backs all Conquest V4 models with the company's Limited Lifetime Transferable Warranty and its Five-Year No-Fault Policy.



↑ The new Zeiss Conquest V4 3-12x44 with Ballistic Stop, a new configuration to the V4 line.

Hunt Ready

Zeiss sent me a Conquest V4 3-12x44 with Ballistic Stop to evaluate. It struck me as a more traditional hunting scope, with the uncluttered and non-illuminated Zeiss #20 plex reticle. It's the type of reticle made to get onto target quickly especially for the hunter who really knows his or her rifle and its ballistics and may need to take that quick shot out to 300 yards or so.

The images I saw through the scope were extremely clear, the edges between different colored objects cut sharp and well defined. A lever built into the magnification ring provided perfect leverage for adjusting the magnification settings, and the diopter really focused my eye on the targets.

First Shots

To test out the scope, I mounted the V4 onto a Ruger SFAR chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor. This model SFAR featured a 20-inch barrel, a Magpul PRS Lite butt stock, a free-floating handguard with M-LOK attachment slots, and an adjustable gas block.

The customization on my SFAR is a blue Cerakote finish on the upper and lower receivers and the handguard.

→ To test the V4 3-12x44, McCombie mounted the scope onto his Ruger SFAR chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor.

For ammunition, I relied on the VOR-TX LR rounds in 6.5 Creedmoor made by Barnes Bullets. They launched 127-grain, poly-tipped bullets.

I initially zeroed my rig at 50 yards at my outdoor range. First shots impacted approximately 8 inches low and 2 to the right. Within four shots and the appropriate number of elevation and windage clicks, I was on target.

It took a few more shots to fine-tune the V4 and SFAR at my 100-yard lane, but soon I was placing respectable three-shot groups at this distance. My best groups were 1.0, .90 and .75 inches.

The Box

Time to shoot the box, an evaluation technique of the scope's controls and its precision or lack thereof.

The process is easy enough, with the very first shot aimed at a bullseye at 100 yards. The following series of shots are still aimed at that bullseye. However, adjustments are first made to the elevation and windage turrets. The result of those adjustments, if the controls are precise enough, is that the points of impact at the target should move up, down or to the sides.

And not just move, but move up, down and over the distances equal to the elevation and windage adjustments. At 100 yards, the V4 and its MOA system should move at .25 inches per click or 1 inch per four clicks.

If the shooting is done correctly and the optic's controls are as advertised, the bullet holes form a rough box.

Of course, the rifle, the shooter and environmental conditions are factors in such an eval, too.

On a sheet of white paper, I drew a small blue rectangle with a green cross in the left corner of the paper. I aimed my initial shot at the center of that green cross. It hit the horizontal line of the cross to the right of the center.



I gave the windage turret 12 clicks to the RIGHT, a 3-inch shift in impact. I fired. That shot hit almost exactly 3 inches to the RIGHT.

Next, I adjusted the Elevation turret 12 clicks UP for another 3-inch shift and fired. This struck the paper 3 inches above the last shot.

I pulled two of the shots that had my point of impact moving left, but the LEFT windage adjustments worked fine; the top left corner shot drilled the paper right above the original blue rectangle at 3.3 inches from the right-hand shot at that elevation.

I clicked DOWN 12 times on the Elevation turret, which took me back to the original setting, aimed for the top half of the green cross and fired. And that's right where the Barnes bullet hit, 3.1 inches down.

Damned impressive and very precise controls.

I shot the box at 12x magnification, and the blue rectangle, green cross and the bullet holes popped nicely.

↑ Ballistic Stop is also available on the V4 3-12x56 riflescope.

"Damned impressive and very precise controls."





The scope features a built-in magnification lever.

Hunter Focused

Obviously, said Kyle Brown, director of marketing for Zeiss Consumer Products, hunters are going to be the prime customer base for these two reconfigured V4 rifle scopes.

"While it may not have tons of features and knobs to twist and turn, the 3-12x44 is a high-performance scope intended to support hunting across all American landscapes," Brown said. "The magnification range takes care of the hunter from the deep woods with a 3x setting, and to open prairie and grain fields with a 12x setting."

He suggested that salespeople also point out the 90% light transmission rating of both scopes.

"That high level of light transmission is beyond useful when hunting early morning and late twilight minutes, exactly when game tends to be most active," Brown noted.

The clean, uncluttered reticle is another hunting asset that should be stressed.

Of course, the Zeiss Ballistic Stop feature needs attention and some explanation, too.



MISSION CRITICAL PRECISION. EVERY SINGLE TIME.

vudu X™ 2-12X

PRECISION OPTICS



EOTECH®

© Copyright 2024 EOTECH, LLC, All rights reserved. EOTECH®, HWS®, Vudu®, Vudu X™, EFLX™ and OGL™ are registered trademarks of EOTECH, LLC

"The Ballistic Stop allows the hunter to take more advantage of the scope's real potential to take and make more precise shots at ranges of 300 to 450 yards," Brown said. "It provides that an immediate and sure zero setting is at the ready, even in the dark. However, the same system allows the hunter to go ahead and adjust for those extended shots beyond 200 yards without the need to hold over with guesstimates."

Let your customers know that the elevation turret allows the hunter to dial in the exact adjustment necessary to make a clean shot, at distance.

Have a T8 Torx head screw drive on hand to remove the top of the Elevation turret and expose the Ballistic Stop mechanism. Show the customer how to set that stop. Potential customers will then have confidence they can set the stop function, which will only help generate sales.

"Also, encourage the customer to look through the scope at 6x or 8x, and compare it to a competitively priced scope on the same magnification.

"If all things are equal," Brown argued, "the Zeiss image quality should be very pronounced as 'better' yielding a brighter image with strong and appreciable color contrast. These are the things that help the customer see the value in our scopes prior to purchasing them."

In Store

Zeiss typically offers its dealers in-store signage, brochures, catalogs, physical banners, digital banners, counter mats with reticle details highlighted, resolution cards for in-store optics demonstration and testing. Product highlight and detail videos are also available. Created for in-store training, these videos also work well as consumer video loops shown on in-store TVs.

Zeiss also offers a staff incentive program, where dealer salespeople earn Zeiss Points for every Zeiss product sold. Once the salesperson builds up enough points, the points are redeemable towards any products in the Zeiss lineup.

Further, Zeiss' sales team works hard to lay out marketing and sales plans with our dealers, and co-op and Market Development Funding are important parts of that effort.

Coverage

Zeiss riflescopes regularly receive coverage in United States and Canadian shooting sports media platforms.

Brown noted that Zeiss has a very strong relationship with the Outdoor Solutions group, which holds long-range shooting schools and field to table events around the country, as well as setting up hunts for clients.





↑ The slim lines of the V4 make it a fine fit with a hunting rifle.

OutdoorLife.com is among the platforms that has covered the Outdoor Solutions shooting schools, designed for hunters who want to be able to take longer, ethical hunting shots. Outdoor Solutions outfits course rifles with Zeiss Conquest V4 and other Zeiss scopes.

Brown added that he sees more and more coverage regularly generated on the V4 line and the two new configurations.

"The Conquest V4 line seems to be 'discovered' more and more on a weekly basis," he said. "They have built a strong reputation for optical and mechanical best-in-class performance."

Dealer Info

The quickest way to become a Zeiss dealer is to contact the Territory (Sales) Account Manager, or TAM, for a given area, and the TAM will gladly walk the prospective dealer through the steps required to become a dealer. Zeiss does require financial verification and a few other items to verify that the business operates with integrity and will be a good partner.

← Zeiss Conquest V4 scopes are hunt ready.



Scopes equal add-on sales of mounts, like this rock-solid 30mm X-SKEL Mount from Warne used in McCombie's V4 evaluation.

Prospective dealers can call Zeiss at 800-858-6745 to connect to the specific TAM for their location.

Zeiss offers a few different dealer levels, from Silver (the entry-level dealer) up to Blue Diamond dealers that tend to stock the widest range of Zeiss products.

The majority of independent FFLs buy directly from Zeiss as long as they meet the company's annual dealer minimum purchase requirements. Zeiss products are also available through the company's exclusive Hunt/Shoot distributor, Bill Hicks & Co. SSR

SPECS: ZEISS CONQUEST V4 3-12X44 RIFLE SCOPE

Part Number: 522961-9920-080
Magnification: 3 to 12x
Reticle: Zeiss 20 Z-Plex, Non-illuminated
Zeiss Ballistic Stop: Yes
Objective Lens: 50mm
Eyepiece Lens: 44mm
Light Transmission: 90%
Field of View @ 100 yards: 19Ft. to 4.8 Ft., 3x to 12x
Eye Relief: 3.54 inches
Parallax Setting: Fixed @ 100 yards
Tube Diameter: 30 mm
Eyepiece Tube Diameter: 44 mm
Objective Tube Diameter: 50 mm
Water resistance: To 400 mbar
Operating Temps: – 13°F to + 122°F
Length: 14.5 inches
Weight: 22.5 ounces
Inc.: Zeiss Limited Lifetime Transferable Warranty, Five-Year No-Fault Policy, Scope Caps, Owner's Manual, Optic Wipes
MSRP: $849.99

For more information please visit:
www.zeiss.com





iStockPhotos/Hazal Ak

UNLOCKING GROWTH IN FIREARM SALES

Key e-commerce trends and strategies every retailer should know.

BUSINESS INSIDER

NSSF® The Firearm Industry Trade Association

By Jason Dailey

E-commerce is rapidly evolving, and key trends are reshaping how businesses connect with customers—and firearm retailers are no exception. As online shopping grows, consumers are demanding more convenience, security and transparency, especially when it comes to regulated products.

To stay competitive and meet these expectations, firearm retailers must understand these emerging e-commerce trends and the unique opportunities they offer. By adapting to the shifting digital landscape, retailers can enhance customer trust, streamline the buying experience and drive growth in this complex but promising market.

A Shift in Sales

Until recently, the shooting industry hadn't taken advantage of e-commerce to the same degree as others. Before 2020, the shooting, hunting and outdoor market was driven primarily by in-store shopping with a growing online presence. Shoppers would maybe research manufacturers' websites to scout available hardware, look at details and then make a trip to the store to see if a gun was in stock or maybe check out alternatives for fit and finish. The traditional "face-to-face" buying experience included a strong bond between shops and buyers. The in-store process encouraged browsing and buying of non-regulated accessories and soft goods. Local shops were stocked with coveted items, sometimes being the only place stocking high-end specialty items.

COVID changed all of that. First, there was a huge spike in firearms sales during 2020. While there was a major falloff during 2021, today's sales match 2019. During that same time period, online shopping via e-commerce sites has grown year-over-year and there's no end in sight.

Challenges and Opportunities

Selling firearms and firearm components online is complex but offers opportunities for growth and nurturing your customer base.

Marketing firearms online is uniquely challenging; customer expectations go beyond a typical retail experience. Consumers want an efficient, informative and secure shopping experience, with assurances that their purchase complies with the law and is responsibly handled.

Digital trust is an important factor. High-quality websites with clear information on legal compliance and secure data handling are helping build trust among consumers, making them more comfortable buying online. Retailers that navigate this e-commerce landscape by balancing convenience with stringent compliance and focusing on building digital trust stand to benefit from a loyal customer base and a competitive edge.

Preparing for the Future

Going forward, the industry will likely see more streamlined tools and platforms built

specifically for compliant online firearms sales. By staying ahead of these changes and addressing consumers' unique needs, you can deliver a valuable, responsible and efficient shopping experience.

Here are three e-commerce strategies to help you boost sales this year.

1.) Maximize your E-Commerce platform

Most website platforms (e.g., Shopify, WooCommerce, Magento, etc.) have built-in tools and functions. You can make front-end and back-end changes to leverage your platform so you can get the most out of your system. These changes include:

- **Account history.** Help people see what they bought! If they have an account, you know how to remarket and retarget those people. Amazon is a great example of this. In your account, you can easily look at sizes and models of past purchases. Now that you're back on the site, you're in the perfect place (and mindset) to start shopping.
- **Abandoned cart tools.** If people are leaving, you can use a pop-up offer and follow up with an email. (Fleet Farm does this really well!)



iStockPhotos/artas

BRAG ABOUT HOW MANY YOU SHOT
NOT HOW MUCH YOU SPENT.



SPANDAU S2

Remember when a hunter was measured by how well he shot, and not how much he spent? When memories were measured in curly tails, not dollar bills? We do. And that is why we created the Spandau S2. A reliable, extremely well balanced waterfowl gun built around the Inertia operating system for unmatched performance at a price that shows that you still know the true measure of a hunter.



LEARN MORE AT SPANDAUARMS.COM | SDS ARMS

SPANDAU ARMS
SpandauArms.com



- **Integrate emails into the shopping process.** Email is a great way to connect with your customers. You can customize emails based on audience segments. Think about a jewelry store. Marketing to someone who bought a Rolex versus an engagement ring will benefit from two unique approaches in everything from content to design.

2.) Increase your List and Leverage it Often

Your list is vital to your growth. Be proactive about acquiring potential customers and new prospects. As you nurture your list, always provide value to your customers; don't just ask for sales. This value can be in the form of promotional, educational or even include entertainment.

A note: Be wary of too many promotions—the more often you offer those, the more you train your customers to wait for the next discount. Make sure you're leveraging your list in a way that extends beyond deep discounts.

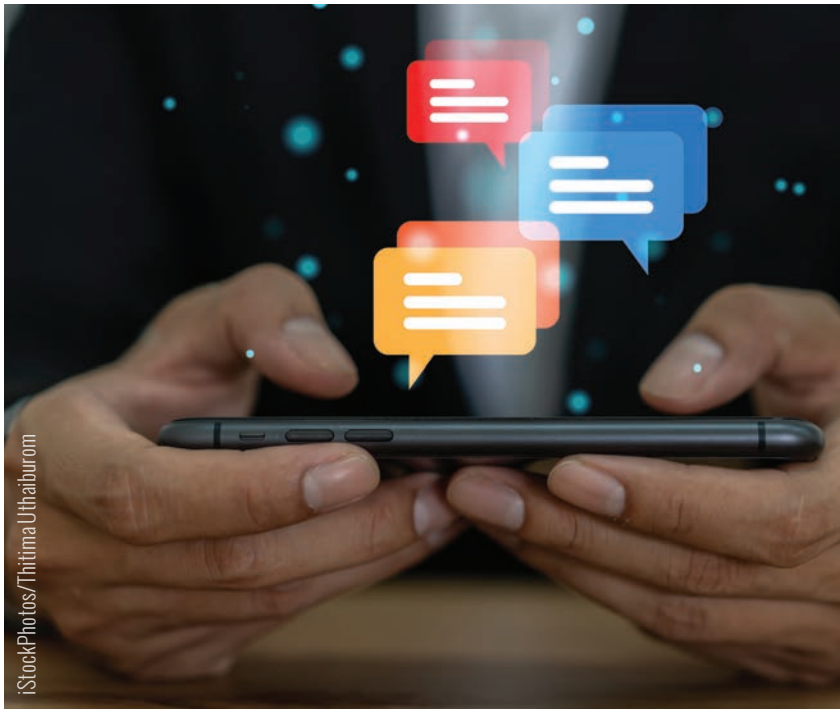
Finally, use this marketing as a place to show off your personality. This can be a great way to nurture brand loyalty and keep those customers coming back.

3.) Start using SMS

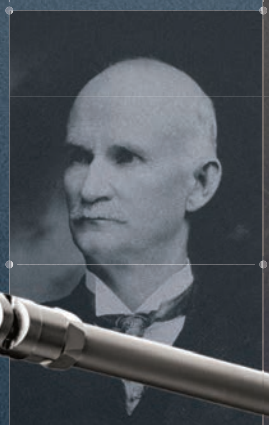
Short Message Service (SMS) is one of the fastest channels for increasing engagement, with open rates as high as 97-98% (much higher than email), making it a highly effective tool for time-sensitive notifications—order updates or flash sales. As a more immediate mode of communication, it's a good channel for urgent information, such as abandoned cart reminders or sales alerts. Because it's easy to personalize, SMS is a great way to make your customers feel valued.

SMS is a relatively low-cost channel with a high ROI, making it an affordable way to boost sales while maintaining strong connections. If you haven't used it before, I highly recommend trying SMS; otherwise, you may miss vital growth opportunities.

Every e-commerce store should implement these strategies or a combination of them over the next 12 months to increase Recency, Frequency and Average Order Value. SSR


iStockPhotos/Thitima Uthaiburom

TO SHAKE THE HAND OF JOHN MOSES BROWNING, HOLD AN FN.



FIREARMS

MORE INFORMATION

When the Father of Modern Firearms was once your lead designer, you have higher standards. This is why FN meticulously engineers for reliability, tests and retests for accuracy, and rigorously analyzes every square inch of every FN pistol and rifle. We are obsessed with performance, just as John Moses Browning taught us.

FNAMERICA.COM



iStock Photo/South_agency



READY FOR THE HUNT

By Mark Chesnut

Handguns provide plenty of power along with extra challenge and reward for hunters.

The typical tools of hunters include shotguns, rifles and bows, but there are those who prefer to pursue their favored quarry with handguns. Serving this group of hunters with the guns and ammo to take down deer and hogs can open a new revenue channel for your store.

While handgun hunting isn't for everyone, some find it a more challenging and satisfying way to harvest game during open firearm seasons. Deer hunters looking for a new challenge make up the bulk of handgun hunters since the whitetail deer is the most popular big-game animal and is found throughout most of the country. Increasingly, hunters are also using handguns to pursue the wild hogs that have become so plentiful throughout much of the nation.

Of course, with the growing trend of long-range hunting and rifles touted to shoot "minute of gnat's butt" at 1,000 yards, hunting deer with a handgun probably sounds silly to some hardcore hunters. To others, though, the challenge of getting closer and making a well placed shot at 50 yards is just as satisfying as a 600-yard heart/lung shot for long-range aficionados.

And, of course, deer aren't the only game species pursued with handguns. Rimfire handguns in .22 LR and .22 Mag. are often used for rabbits, squirrels, varmints and other pests.

Interestingly, the number of handgun hunters in the U.S. is larger than you probably think. According to a 2023 report at Statista.com, about 2.87 million Americans hunted with a handgun in 2023.

Let's take a look at several models you might want to consider when restocking your handgun shelf.

Ruger New Model Super Blackhawk Hunter

Ruger has been producing high-quality hunting guns for decades, and their large revolvers are certainly no exception. The company's New Model Super Blackhawk, chambered in three different potent hunting cartridges including the .44 Mag., .454 Casull and super-hot .480 Ruger cartridge, is a handgun that just about any hunter would be proud to take to the deer blind.

The Super Blackhawk Hunter features a traditional Western-style, hand-filling grip that has been proven comfortable and natural-pointing. It boasts dual coil springs throughout for maximum reliability, a transfer bar mechanism and a loading gate interlock to provide a measure of security against accidental discharge. A fixed-ramp front sight and adjustable rear sight come standard, and integral mounts are machined directly on the solid-steel barrel rib to provide a stable mounting surface for scope rings, eliminating a potential source of looseness and inaccuracy in the field.

Specs for the .44 Magnum version, which has a six-round capacity, include a barrel length of 7.5 inches, an overall length of 13.6 inches and an overall weight of 52 ounces (3.25 pounds) without optic or cartridges in the cylinder. The finish is stainless steel, and the cold hammer-forged barrel provides very good accuracy and longevity.



Sig P320 XTen 10mm

The Sig P320 XTen, a semi-auto pistol, serves triple duty for home defense, woods carry in dangerous game country, and hunting. Chambered in 10mm, it is as accurate as it is attractive. While some may underestimate the power of the 10mm, the XTen's 5-inch barrel propels a 180-grain bullet downrange at approximately 1,200 feet per second, which makes it effective for deer hunting within about 50 yards.

The XTen features a 15-round magazine, which provides ample follow-up shots, whether needed for hunting or unexpected zombie encounters in the woods. The barrel measures 5 inches, the overall length is 8.5 inches, and the gun weighs 33 ounces when unloaded. It boasts a full-size polymer grip module and a stainless steel barrel.

This pistol is equipped with Sig's exceptional XRAY3 Day/Night Sights, which enable easy targeting in various lighting conditions. Additionally, it is optics-ready, with an M1913 rail for mounting an optic. The pistol also features the outstanding Sig X Straight Trigger, designed to break at around 4 to 4.5 pounds of pull. To reduce recoil, a completely redesigned X polymer grip module provides a strong purchase and makes shooting comfortable for any type of ammunition.



Smith & Wesson Model 350

Smith & Wesson has been making hunting handguns for decades. The company's relatively new Model 350, introduced a few years ago, is a hunting handgun that just about any revolver fan will love. Because of the number of states that have instituted laws requiring straight-walled cartridges for deer hunting, in 2019 Winchester invented the 350 Legend cartridge, and rifle companies followed by chambering rifles in that caliber to offer hunters in those states something more potent than a shotgun slug or muzzleloader projectile. Later, Smith & Wesson chambered its massive X-frame, famous for use in the S&W 500 wheelguns, in 350 Legend.



From a pistol barrel, the 350 Legend is faster and more powerful than the oft-used .44 Mag. That's one of the things that makes this gun so appealing. The big single-action/double-action stainless steel revolver has a 7.5-inch barrel and an overall length of 13-5 inches — not exactly a concealed carry pistol. It also weighs a whopping 71.5 ounces (nearly 4.5 pounds), but that weight is helpful in calming the recoil of the big boomer. Other features include a seven-shot, fluted cylinder, ported barrel for helping control recoil and a red-ramp front sight for easy sighting in most lighting conditions.

Springfield XDM Elite 4.5 OSP

We've included a couple of semi-autos for those who prefer that platform, although their use in the field is way more limited than revolvers. Springfield's XDM Elite 4.5 OSP might not have the punch of many of the revolvers in this discussion at longer ranges, but it does have the power to get the job done with good-quality ammunition.

Chambered in 10mm, it holds 16+1 rounds of ammo, making sure no hunter is ever outgunned should a war break out while afield. The pistol features Springfield's Match Enhanced Trigger Assembly (META) with a flat face, crisp break and integral overtravel stop. Additional features include an extended/removable flared magazine well, deep slide serrations for easy manipulation of the slide and an ambidextrous slide stop. Of course, the pistol has an optics cut for those hunters who want (and many do) to mount a red-dot or other optic to their handgun.



As for specs, the slide is made of forged steel and has a Melonite finish, while the barrel is hammer-forged steel. Length is 7.6 inches, weight is a svelte 31 ounces and the frame is polymer. Along with the optics cut, the slide features a fiber-optic front sight with Springfield's awesome Tactical Rack U-Dot rear sight.

Taurus 10-inch Raging Hunter 460

Taurus introduced the new .460 Raging Hunter in 2023, and it quickly turned a few heads. One of the main reasons is the revolver's 10-inch barrel, designed to create a little more ballistic efficiency before the projectile exits the muzzle.

This revolver's specifications are nothing short of astonishing. This single-action/double-action wheelgun features a 10-inch matte stainless steel barrel with a black anodized shroud covering the first six inches. With a weight of 4.45 pounds and an overall length of 16.2 inches, the gun has a 5-shot cylinder. Rubberized, recoil-reducing grips make the large revolver easier to hold onto when firing, and high-visibility iron sights provide a good sight picture. The shroud on the rear of the barrel offers two Picatinny rails for optics and any under-barrel accessories a shooter might choose. The barrel features a proprietary recoil-reducing muzzle brake at the front end.

The .460 Magnum ammo the gun uses is equally impressive. Factory loads are available with projectiles of various types ranging from 200 to 375 grains — a wide weight range, indeed. With muzzle velocities not too far below 2,000 fps from a 10-inch barrel, these bullets produce kinetic energy levels over 2,000 foot-pounds.



Smaller Hunting Handguns

Now, let's take a look at a few small-bore handguns designed for hunting. These guns are accurate and fun to shoot, two of the main criteria for a good firearm.

Browning Buck Mark Hunter 5.9



Chambered in .22 LR, the most popular rimfire caliber, the Buck Mark Hunter 5.9 features a precision machined alloy frame and a 5.9-inch matte-blued bull barrel that is threaded for a muzzle device. The overall length

VICTRA™ 12
MODULAR SHOTGUN SUPPRESSOR
LIGHTER* ◆ QUIETER** ◆ VALUE PRICED
The VICTRA™-12 is a modular 12 gauge shotgun suppressor, easily user-configurable between 12", 10", 8" and 6" versions to suit the user's needs.
Built from the ground up with hunters, sports shooters, law enforcement and home defense in mind. The VICTRA™-12 delivers dramatic sound suppression with minimal weight.

*The full-size Victra™-12 is the same weight as the 6" Silencer Co. Salvo®
** The 6" Victra™-12 measures the same dB as the full-size JK Armament 195™ SGX
YHM SILENCING THE COMPETITION
412 Main St., Easthampton, MA 01027 YHM.net sales@yhm.net 1.877.892.6533

FORTRESS DISPLAY
HOFFMAN MANUFACTURING CORP
The Ultimate in Loss Prevention
Design, Engineering and Materials Make the Difference
Scan to see Video

You have a lot invested in your merchandise.
Display it in a Fortress.
608-222-8787
info@fortressdisplay.com
www.fortressdisplay.com
fortress_display

The challenge of getting closer and making a well placed shot at 50 yards is just as satisfying as a 600-yard heart/lung shot for long-range aficionados.

of the .22 is 10 inches, and it weighs 41 ounces without the 10-round magazine inserted. The receiver finish is matte black, and it also features the trademark Browning gold-plated trigger. Plus, the laminated cocobolo-colored target grips add a touch of class, as well as providing a good purchase on the gun for shooting.

This pistol comes with a good set of sights, including a windage adjustable rear sight and a TruGlo fiber-optic front sight. As an added bonus, it also comes with a Vortex Crossfire red-dot sight, great for faster target acquisition and accuracy, already mounted. The pistol's low red-dot mount allows the sights to cowitness through the red-dot, giving hunters a backup in the case of a battery failure.

Ruger Super Redhawk .22 Hornet

The Super Redhawk has been a staple in the Ruger revolver lineup for years, and the addition of the .22 Hornet model makes that lineup even better. Known as a long-range varmint caliber, the centerfire .22 Hornet is a real zinger. With a 45-grain bullet, the Hornet has a muzzle velocity of 2655 fps — screaming fast for a rimfire round.

No small gun, this double-action revolver features a 9.5-inch barrel and an overall length of 15 inches. It weighs in at a whopping 66 ounces (4.125 pounds) with the eight-round cylinder empty. Hogue Tamer Monogrip gives hunters a perfect place to hold on to, and sights include an adjustable rear and HiViz fiber-optic front. For those wanting to use an optic for longer-range shooting, a rail provides plenty of room for a scope, and the gun comes with scope rings. SSR













NSSF® RANGE-RETAILER BUSINESS EXPO™ RELOAD

THIS SUMMER

JULY 16–17, 2025 WEST PALM BEACH, FL

NSSF's Range-Retailer Business Expo (RRBE) is designed to load retailers and range operators with the equipment, strategies and inspiration essential for success.

scan for more information

REGISTRATION IS OPEN! **RRBExpo.org**

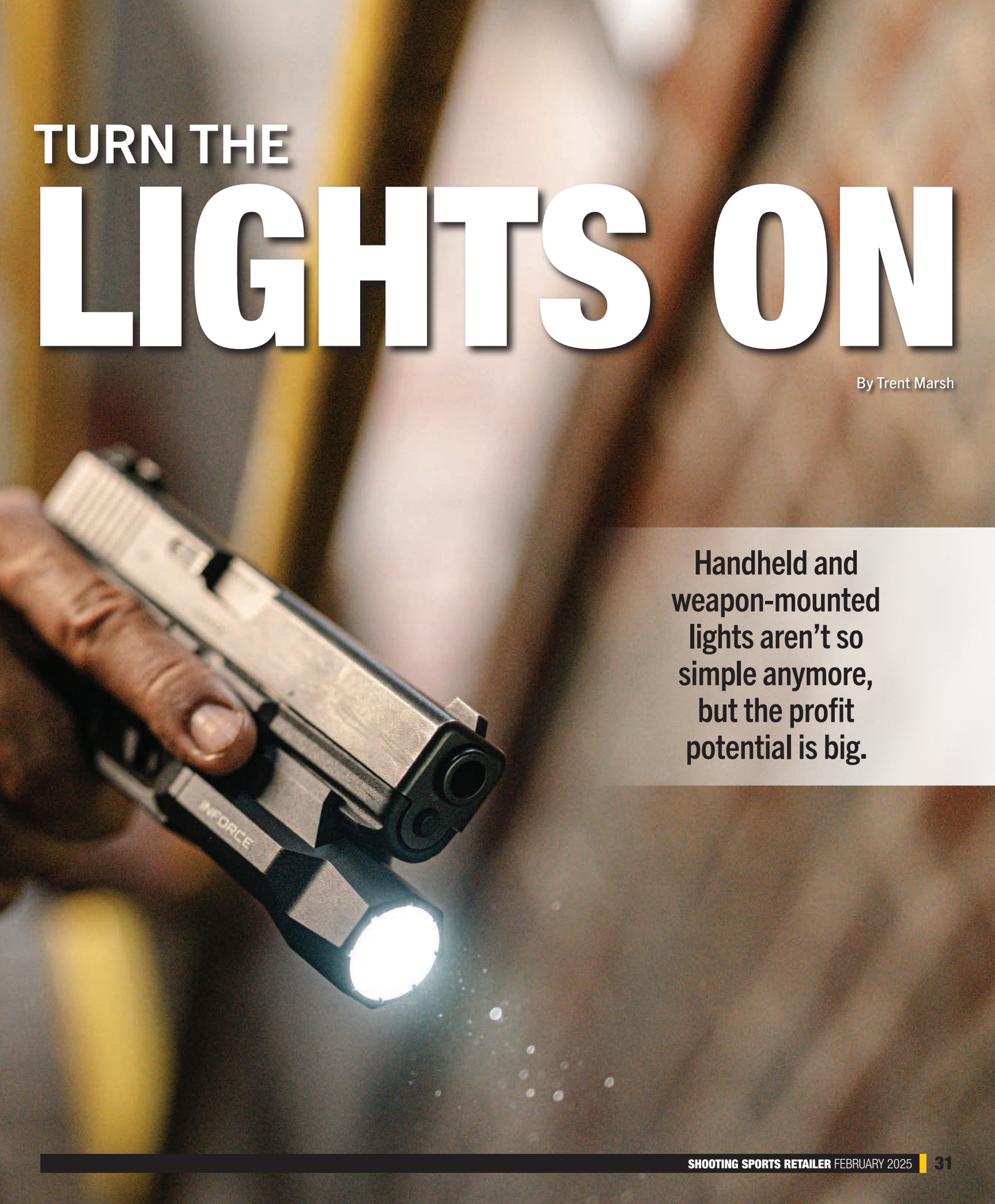
AN EVENT OF

NSSF®
The Firearm Industry Trade Association



TURN THE LIGHTS ON

By Trent Marsh



Handheld and weapon-mounted lights aren't so simple anymore, but the profit potential is big.

We live in the age of accessories.

It wasn't all that long ago that even finding a firearm that allowed for an easy addition of a magnified optics was just this side of an oddity. Now everything from .22 pistols to the heaviest of magnum calibers is equipped with all manner of rail or mounting systems that makes the purchase of the firearm just the beginning.

Nowhere is this more evident than in lights.

It isn't just weapon-mounted lights where we see this evolution.

As the idea of an EDC loadout has matured, a small, handheld flashlight has become ubiquitous among not only cops and tradespeople, but also to an entire segment of the population that believes in attacking the day with some basic tools always on hand.

What does this mean for you and your shop, and how can you bring your customers out of the dark?

Let me shed a little light on that.

Stock All the Categories

Lights are typically either handheld or weapon-mounted. Some models can pull double duty, but the days of putting a handheld light in a clunky mount to go on a long gun are largely behind us. As the segment has grown, so too has the customer's desire for more purpose-designed options.

This means you're going to be looking at three overall categories: handheld, pistol-mounted, and long-gun-mounted. There is some crossover in units that can be mounted on a pistol also working on a long gun, but the actuation switches for these are typically designed for use with a handgun. While some units allow for remote pressure pads to be used, you'll want to make sure that your assortment marries up to the firearm options you have as well.

Build Packages

For every customer that comes in wanting to put together their perfect setup and pick and choose every piece meticulously, it seems there are five that just want to walk in the store and walk out with a ready-made solution. Your mileage may vary, but that has always been the way it seemed when I was behind a counter. So, it's baffling to me that more stores aren't building kits and packages for display and sale.

Obviously, there are downsides. It's tough to display everything, and someone will almost always ask for something different.

However, there are also those customers who will see the bright and shiny new thing, with all the bells and whistles, and just want to walk out with that. Not only that, but it also gives you an opportunity to have different accessories mounted and deployable, so customers can try them out.



↑ Inforce TFx lights weigh only 3.7 ounces but deliver up to 700 lumens.

It's much harder for a customer to convince themselves that the gun they just handled, with the dot, magnifier, angled foregrip, and light needs to be stripped down so they can buy it bare.

Most customers don't understand the difference between lumen and candela. Even if you try to explain the difference between a hot spot and a spill, some will have trouble visualizing accurately what you're talking about. Building kits can help drive sales by increasing the average cart value, and they make educating your customers easier as well.

Customers who feel like they're getting help will always be better customers for your shop.

Concepts to Understand

While we're on it, make sure that everyone behind the counter can answer some basic questions about choosing a light. The biggest thing we often see people misunderstand or misrepresent is explaining lumens and/or candela.

Lumens are probably the most commonly used figure used for lights. The problem is that by itself it isn't very descriptive. Because lumens is a measurement of the total output of the light, it's tough to know exactly what the beam looks like.

Candela, on the other hand, helps us understand the intensity of the light. It is essentially the power of a single candle.

Ideally, lights would give us both figures.

High lumen and high candela will most often mean a very bright, very focused beam of light.

High lumen and low candela will be more of a flood light effect. Bright, but not focused in one area.

Get the idea?

The other major thing to keep in mind is power source. Is it a USB-charged model? Does it run on batteries? Are they rechargeable or single-use?

Whatever the power solution is for lights, stocking those would be wise as well.

Light Strategies

If at all possible, get some practical training with lights for your staff. Even if that just means sharing basic light-handling principles that you already have.

Customers either come in asking for exactly what they want, or they need advice for a use case. If your employees can't interpret the use case and present the best option for the customer, two things will happen.

The use case will not be satisfied and the customer will be unhappy with the advice they were given.

Lights are tools. Just like screwdrivers and hammers, not all tools can do all jobs. While "making dark areas light" seems pretty straightforward, there are nuances that everyone should be mindful of when choosing the right light.

A customer purchasing a shotgun who wants a light to go with it will not have the same needs as someone buying a handgun for the same purpose. Being able to talk the customer through those uses and options is critical to any product purchase, so the more knowledgeable your people are, the better the experience is for everyone.

Handheld Options

INFORCE TFx – At just 3.7 ounces even with batteries installed, the TFx is not a light that becomes a burden to carry. With high, low and strobe function, it offers the standard fare of handheld lights. The checkering improves grip, and overall, the light doesn't give off a "tacticool" vibe that may cause issues with TSA or similar security personnel that would force a donation trying to go through a checkpoint. Just two CR123

batteries deliver up to 700 lumens. A solid hand-held option. MSRP-$99.99

Surefire Stilleto – The Stilleto doesn't look like most handheld lights, but that is part of its appeal. The slim profile is a little more comfortable in pocket than many lights, and it doesn't give off the hardcore tactibro feel if you're going through security or TSA lines often. It's just 4.5 inches long and weighs less than 3 ounces — you might forget you have it on you. The 650-, 250-, and 5-lumen settings offer a setting for most anything, and being USB chargeable is a feature I've come to appreciate. MSRP - $129.00

Streamlight ProTac HL 6 – You want lumens and candela? The Streamlight ProTac HL 6 has both! It's a little bit bigger than you might want for an EDC light, but if you want to stock for first-responder types, or just want to give a more robust option, this is it. At 10.5 inches and a little over a pound, it isn't small, but it does pack a punch with 5,300 lumens and 80,000 candela on high. The ProTac HL 6 also has medium, low and strobe settings, and Streamlight's TEN-TAP programming lets users select the button programming they prefer. It comes with two Streamlight SL-B48 lithium-ion battery packs that are USB-C rechargeable. MSRP - $247.78

Pistol Options

Surefire X300T – The X300 weapon lights have become the gold standard of weapon-mounted lighting solutions, but the Turbo, or T, variant takes things to a new level. Delivering an incredible 66,000 candela, the 650-lumen beam is intense. For someone who needs to engage from longer distances, the quality of the X300T beam is a must. As a bonus, the X300T models will mount in essentially the same spots the X300U has been used. MSRP-$369.00



↑ The Streamlight TLR-7 HL-X USB produces 1,000 lumens with the SL-B9 rechargeable battery.

Streamlight TLR-7 HL-X USB – Powered by either a single CR123A lithium battery or a Streamlight SL-B9 rechargeable battery, the TLR-7 HL-X USB gives you some flexibility when it comes to powering your gun light. The SL-B9 provides a little more juice, allowing the light to produce 1,000 lumens and 22,000 candela. You can also program it down to the output generated using the CR123A, which essentially cuts those numbers in half. The rear paddle switches are interchangeable, so you can match your shooting style. MSRP - $215

INFORCE WILD2 – The WILD2 (weapon integrated lighting device) puts 1,000 lumens on your pistol in seconds by securing to any pistol with a pic rail. Encased in a 6061-T6 aluminum housing and still weighing just 4.7 ounces, two CR123 batteries deliver about 90 minutes of run time on high. MRSP-$249.99



↑ The WILD2 integrated lighting device adds 1,000 lumens to any pistol with a Picatinny rail.

Long-Gun Options

Surefire DSF Shotgun Forend Weaponlight – While this particular model is for the Mossberg 500/590, other models are available that don't use a rail attachment but actually replace the forend of some popular shotguns, and even a couple rifles. This integrated design is great, especially for pump shotguns in the home defense category, where accessory rail options are somewhat limited by the action of the gun. MSRP-$399.00

INFORCE WMLx White Gen 3 – For those looking for a long-gun solution without needing to route or manage cables, the INFORCE WMLx is a fantastic option. I recently put this particular light to use for a defensive shotgun build and subsequent class. As it was a pump shotgun, cables were a no-go, as I didn't want wires getting caught in the moving action. The angled tail section of the light allows the shooter's thumb to naturally rest on the activation switch. With the action forward, my thumb could easily activate the light. A toggle switch allows the user to select between constant or momentary functionality of the 25,000 candela, 1,100 lumen beam.

Two 123a batteries offer two hours of battery life. Moreover, the Pic rail clamp is spring-loaded and tightens down with ease. MSRP-$179.97

Sniper Hog Light 66 LRX Gun Hunter's Package – If you've got hunters frequenting your shop, they'll be interested in the night-hunting



The ProTac Rail Mount HL-X Pro from Streamlight offers mounting options for pic rails or M-LOK installation.

lights from Sniper Hog Lights. The 66LRX package includes all the accessories needed with the light itself. The light has adjustable focus, a dimmer slide switch, interchangeable LED modules to easily change color (important for coyote and hog hunters), and infrared mode. It's not a small light, but Sniper Hog Lights says it's the furthest-shining LED light on the market for its size. MSRP - $214.99

Streamlight ProTac Rail Mount HL-X Pro – Flexibility is a great feature to have in a gun light, and the ProTac Rail Mount HL-X Pro from Streamlight has it in spades. There's battery flexibility, with the ability to run on either the SL-B26 rechargeable battery pack, or two CR123A batteries. There's mounting flexibility, with options for pic rails or M-LOK installation. You have operation flexibility as well, with the Streamlight Jack-Cap allowing you to run the light off the push button on the tail cap, or the remote pressure switch. Finally, TEN-TAP programming lets you choose between multiple operation modes. High, low and strobe functions are pretty standard, with high generating a 1,000 lumen, 50,000 candela, 447m beam. MSRP - $210-266 SSR



The 66LRX package from Sniper Hog Lights provides a full setup for night hunters.

KICKS
TACTICAL CHOKE
Our Tactical Chokes are precision machined to high tolerance standards on computer controlled equipment. We use 17-4 ph grade stainless steel in order to produce the best quality shotgun chokes on the market today.
Our Tactical Chokes feature a unique conical/parallel internal design and our exclusive outward angled diagonal ports. These features **improve pattern density by up to 20%.** The extended ported section also makes follow up shots faster and more accurate by reducing recoil and muzzle jump. **They also come with a machined bezel**
KICKS-IND.COM 1-800-587-2779
KICKS GET ON TARGET
TACTICAL
PRECISION WHEN IT COUNTS.
Available in 12ga
KICKS GET ON TARGET

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE NSSA AND NSCA

CLAY TARGET NATION

Only available to members of the National Skeet Shooting Association & National Sporting Clays Association

Join the NSSA-NSCA today and don't miss an issue!

JoinNSSA.com

JoinNSCA.com










D5445ZY34



THE EVOLUTION OF LEVER ACTIONS

Once common and then cast off, lever-action rifles have stormed back with new features and functionality.

By Wayne van Zwoll



Dave Emary, then at Hornady, designed the potent .308 and .338 Marlin Express cartridges. Here he fires a Marlin 336 in .308 ME. Stainless steel and laminated stocks have become common in lever rifles.

Lever-action rifles include not just classics whose forms and chamberings emerged during the late 19th century. There is a resurgent new generation of levers gaining popularity among today's hunters and shooting enthusiasts.

Today lever actions include stainless, laminate-stocked models, also those with polymer and carbon fiber stocks and "tactical" matte black finish. Barrels are threaded for brakes and suppressors. Some stocks adjust for length and comb position. Forends feature M-Lok slots. Picatinny rails up front beckon lights and other paraphernalia.



↑ A Winchester 1886 helped this lass to a bear. Reproductions of the Browning-designed '86 sell briskly.

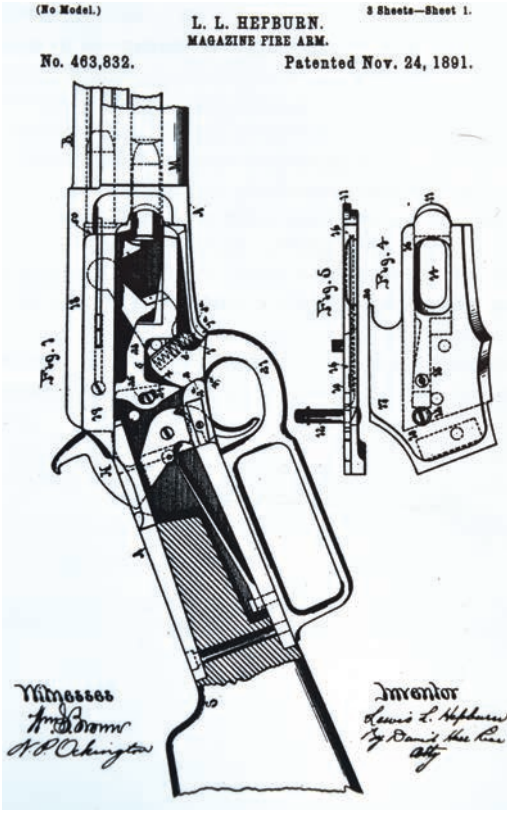
The Fall

The last half of the 20th century wasn't kind to lever actions. Production costs of lever- and bolt-action rifles were on intersecting arcs. In '63, as cost-cutting at Winchester also eviscerated the bolt-action Model 70, that rifle listed for $154. A Marlin 336 fetched $87. Within 30 years, the 70 would sell for $423, the 336 for $319. Eventually, you could buy a 70 for less than a 336. Building traditional lever rifles requires skilled labor. If bolt rifles were produced now as they were 130 years ago, their prices would be higher than they are. Bolt-action design has evolved to take advantage of automation. Bolt rifles also enjoy an "economy of scale" in a market that adores them.

In 1982, Winchester offered lever-action buffs a sop in angled ejection, which gave scopes a top-side perch. A decade later, after selling to Belgium's FN Herstal, Winchester brought back solid pins and started CNC-machining receivers. Popular moves. It also nixed the standard half-cock hammer notch and added a safety. Unpopular. Lever-rifle production ceased when Winchester's New Haven plant shuttered in 2006; but the 94 and selected 19th century lever actions are built to high quality standards by Miroku of Japan and imported by Winchester.

Marlin profited from new cartridges fashioned by Hornady for its Models 336 and 1895. The .444 Marlin appeared in 1965, the .450 Marlin in 2006. On its heels the .308 Win. and .338 Marlin Express offered hunters flatter bullet arcs and harder hits than traditional big bores. In 2007, Remington bought Marlin; in 2010 it moved production to Ilion, New York. The quality of Marlin rifles fell. In 2020, a U.S. bankruptcy court approved the sale of most Remington firearms holdings to The Roundhill Group. But Sturm Ruger snared Marlin, confident it could produce lever actions to equal the fit, finish and function of originals.

Savage kept raising prices on its 99 until sales no longer justified production. The last Savage 99, described in 1997 editions of Shooter's Bible and Gun Digest, retailed for $650. It had a 22-inch barrel in .243 Win. or .308 Win. and a detachable box magazine. That year the company also built a 99-CE (Centennial Edition) in .300 Savage only, in a run of 1,000.


(No Model.) 3 Sheets—Sheet 1.

L. L. HEPBURN.

MAGAZINE FIRE ARM.

No. 463,832. Patented Nov. 24, 1891.

Witnesses

Inventor

↑ L.L. Hepburn designed most of Marlin's 19th century lever rifles. Here, a patent drawing for the 1891.

Resurging Interest

In 2005, Hornady LeverEvolution loads and pointed FTX bullets with resilient polymer tips gave traditional tube-fed lever rifles more reach and greater accuracy. Grandpa's guns were trotted from closets to deer stands, joined by new, scoped lever rifles of stainless steel, with laminated stocks, firing frisky new cartridges. Cowboy Action matches were sparking an industry in 19th century style guns and accessories. Within a decade, Black Hills and other ammo makers would add mild lead-bullet loads specifically for Cowboy events.

Brands have been built on the resurging interest in lever actions. The Henry name, revived in .22 lever rifles, now defines a growing centerfire stable. Henry's X has the "tactical" look now thought cool. Its Long Ranger chambers the popular 6.5 Creedmoor. Rossi's Brazilian-made R92, a Winchester 1892 clone, sells in .22 versions, including a "triple black" and a carbine in .454 Casull. In Wyoming, Big Horn Armory produces lever actions for the brawniest handgun cartridges: the .460 and .500 Smith & Wesson. These carriage-class carbines combine elements of Winchester's 1886 and 1892.

A recent newcomer to the lever-rifle market is Smith & Wesson. The S&W Model 1854 is named for the birth year of the lever-action Volcanic pistol, developed by the company's namesakes. Lock-up is like that of Marlin's 336, the lever engaging a lug to bring the bolt into battery. The stainless receiver is forged, the stainless barrel manufactured and each rifle assembled at S&W's Springfield, Massachusetts plant. A walnut-stocked version wears a black PVD steel finish. The stainless/synthetic version has naked, satin-polished metal. In .44 Magnum or .45 Colt, the 19.25-inch barrel is suppressor ready, with 11/16x24 threads. It has no front band; the nine-shot magazine is held there by a collar dovetailed to the barrel.



↑ Natural pointing and fast follow-up shots endeared Winchester's nimble 1894 to generations of hunters.



↑ After 1883, John Browning designed Winchester's lever rifles. Over 7 million 1894s (here) have sold.

S&W got the butt-stock just right. Its comb is straight, its comfy top radius aligning my eye with the XS aperture on the rail, both supplied. Generous fluting accepts the heel of my hand so it doesn't fight the comb nose. The open pistol grip seats a comfortably oversize lever. Neat stippling fore and aft is like that on S&W handguns. The forend has M-Lok slots; there are QD swivel studs, too.

The 1854's hammer has a half-cock notch, so I don't use the crossbolt safety. When the hammer is at full cock, pulling the trigger drops it, regardless of safety position. When "on," the safety just keeps the hammer off the firing pin. Hearing a *clack* instead of a *boom*, you'll wonder: "Is the rifle empty? Did the cartridge misfire? Or was the safety on?" The alerted game will have left you to ponder that alone.

Levers on the Hunt

An 1854 joined me on a hog hunt this past winter. Hours into a drizzly morning, a big black boar came over a ridge short yards away. The carbine jumped to cheek and fired as the bead caught his shoulder. He flinched at the impact, then dug for another gear. Flicking the lever, I swung fast. The .44 barked again. The boar collapsed in stride, skidding on his brisket.



↑ Winchester's '73 fired the .44 W.C.F. (.44-40), the company's first centerfire cartridge. Both were hits.

Sweet on traditional lever actions, I've also used them to take deer, elk and black bears. Their link to history appeals to me. When game is scarce, cradling an old carbine makes the day worthwhile. Accuracy varies, and depends as much on loads as on the firearm. But it's always been good enough for metallic-sight distances. And often it's better than I expected. A Savage 1899 in .303 has printed 1-inch knots at 100 yards. Ditto a much-used Winchester 1892 in .25-35. Both with tang sights. With a scope, a new Marlin SBL in .45-70 drilled a ragged hole with three Hornady FTX bullets. I get similar precision with LeverEvolution ammo and Marlin's latest 336 in .30-30 Win.

Brakes, suppressors, M-Lok slots and front rails still strike me as odd on rifles birthed during our Civil War. So do AR-15-style butt-stocks, as on Mossberg's discontinued 464. But the lever-action isn't just for the tradition-bound. It now suits many tastes. From banging silhouettes to collecting venison to pestering predators, lever actions will do well by you, Pilgrim. SSR

MODERN LEVERS, MODERN PRICING

Early levers selling for less than 20 bucks are far in the rearview mirror. New models range into four figures.

Price increases have been the most predictable and painful change in lever rifles since forever. In 1901, sales of Marlin's Model 1894 fell shy of expectations. So Marlin cut the price from $18 — about that of a Winchester 1892 — to $10.40. It's hard to imagine such largess, or to endure the cruel truth that it will never return.

Savage's first catalog, circa 1900, listed Model 99s for $20, with engraving from $5, checkering from $2. A Lyman tang peep sight cost $3.50. Custom stock dimensions could be special-ordered, but in 1905 Savage admonished buyers that: "… deviation from (standard dimensions) requires the stock to be cut from the solid block by hand. This is expensive work and there is an extra charge of $10. …"

Prices crept up during the 20th century's first half. Still, at the close of WW II, $41 would buy you a new Winchester 94. Today's Miroku-built 94 lists at $1,400. Most well-made lever actions now sell for over a grand — including fine Italian reproductions imported by Benelli, Cimarron and Taylor's.

Last year, in Alberta timber on the last evening of a bear hunt, my open-sighted .45-70 downed a big red boar. That memory salves the sting of its four-figure price.



800.526.2199 | info@jcinsco.com | www.guninsurance.com



WEATHERTIGHT™

RUGGED, DURABLE, DEPENDABLE AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, PROFITABLE.





Full waterproof and scentproof cases, bags and packs.

RGD

VETERAN OWNED

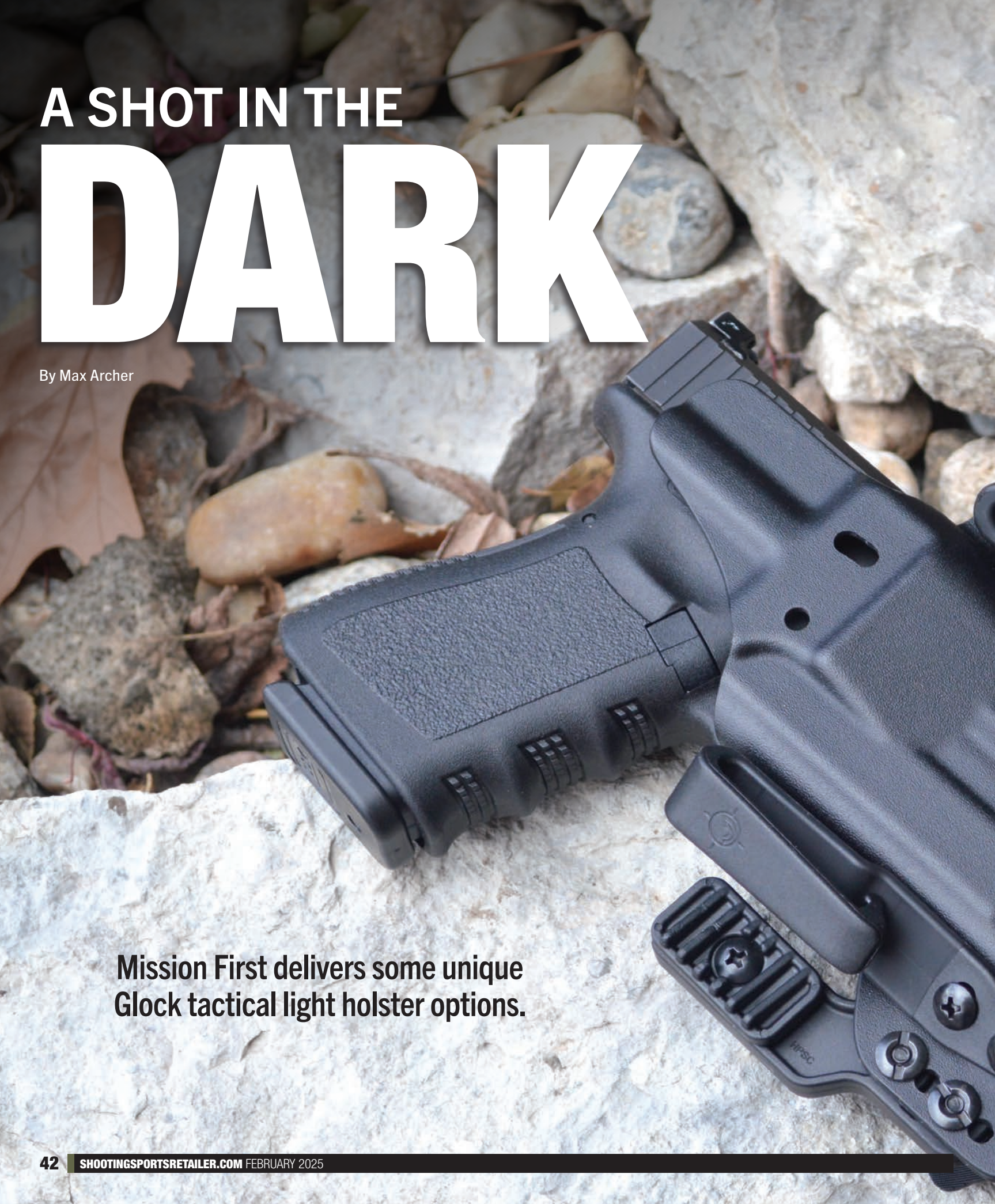
WATERPROOF, FLOATING GUN & BOW CASES

LIFETIME WARRANTY

RGDGEAR.COM | 833-777-8443 | SERVICE@RGDGEAR.COM | **DEALERS WANTED!**

A SHOT IN THE DARK

By Max Archer



Mission First delivers some unique Glock tactical light holster options.





↑ The Gen 5 Glock 17 with Surefire X300U and custom Glock 19 Gen 3 with Streamlight TLR7 can both slip easily into the MFT 10l ARCHO sling pack with room for five more Glocks.

The use of weapon-mounted lights on handguns has grown significantly, and so has the challenge of finding the right holster for a chosen setup and preferred carry style.

There is a wide variety of holsters that will accommodate weapon lights, but it's a fiscal impossibility for most dealers to stock even a small selection of the holsters necessary to match every possible pistol and light combination. Dealers instead might look to reputable manufacturers for holster options that can accommodate more than a single gun/light combination.

Mission First Tactical is a good example. The company produces high-quality products that uniquely solve some holster challenges for dealers and customers.

Versatile Options

The new MFT Guardian OWB and Pro Series IWB light-bearing holsters deliver broad weaponlight compatibility in a single SKU and offer a problem-free positive retention via rare earth magnets. This solves several major problems for dealers including reducing stocking requirements for multiple weapon light fits and greatly reducing customer service issues on retention problems with improper fit or design. In the process, customers don't need to be tied to a single weapon light model with a holster that is still fully functional even without a weapon light attached.



↑ The Multi-Hole Pattern and Ultra Concealment holsters are sure to be hits for duty and range needs.

Weapon light holsters have typically been problematic due to the detailed molding required to provide proper retention of both the weapon and a specific weapon light. This molding process often causes inadvertent light activation when holstering or unholstering the firearm. The other problem is that no two shooters mount their weaponlight the same exact way. That introduces the need for some slop in the molding fit which can further deliver fit, retention, or light activation problems. Many manufacturers often update weapon light models mid-release which can also impact overall weapon light profiles. MFT solved these typical issues with its new duty-grade Boltron holsters.

"We looked at the typical holster problems with handgun mounted tactical lights," says David Edelman, vice president of MFT. "There are many variances to overcome including retention, which does not key off of the weapon-mounted light in order to deliver wider compatibility. We created MFT's patented In-line Magnetic Retention System (ILMRS) into an ultra-thin comfortable

profile. The ILMRS system offers consistent retention on every draw with no adjustment or wear concerns while providing 15-pound maximum pull. The strong Neodymium magnet maintains a fully loaded pistol in a holster without any locking devices. We also included an Integrated Barrel Stabilizer Insert (IBSI) which is engineered to keep the pistol in-line to the holster body spine, allowing the system to work with or without an under-barrel weapon light.

"We now offer many Glock, Icarus, Sig and Springfield versions that range from OWB and IWB holsters made in the USA from Boltron for the ultimate in durability and carry flexibility," Edelman adds. "These designs also offer some level of future proofing with broad weapon light compatibility out of the box."

I recently tested a few of these new light compatible holsters:

- MFT Pro Series Glock 19/45 TLR7 Pro Series IWB Light Holster
- MFT Glock 19/45 TLR7 GUARDIAN OWB Modular Hole Pattern (MHP) holster
- MFT Glock 17/47 TLR1 - X300U GUARDIAN OWB Ultra Concealment Light Holster.

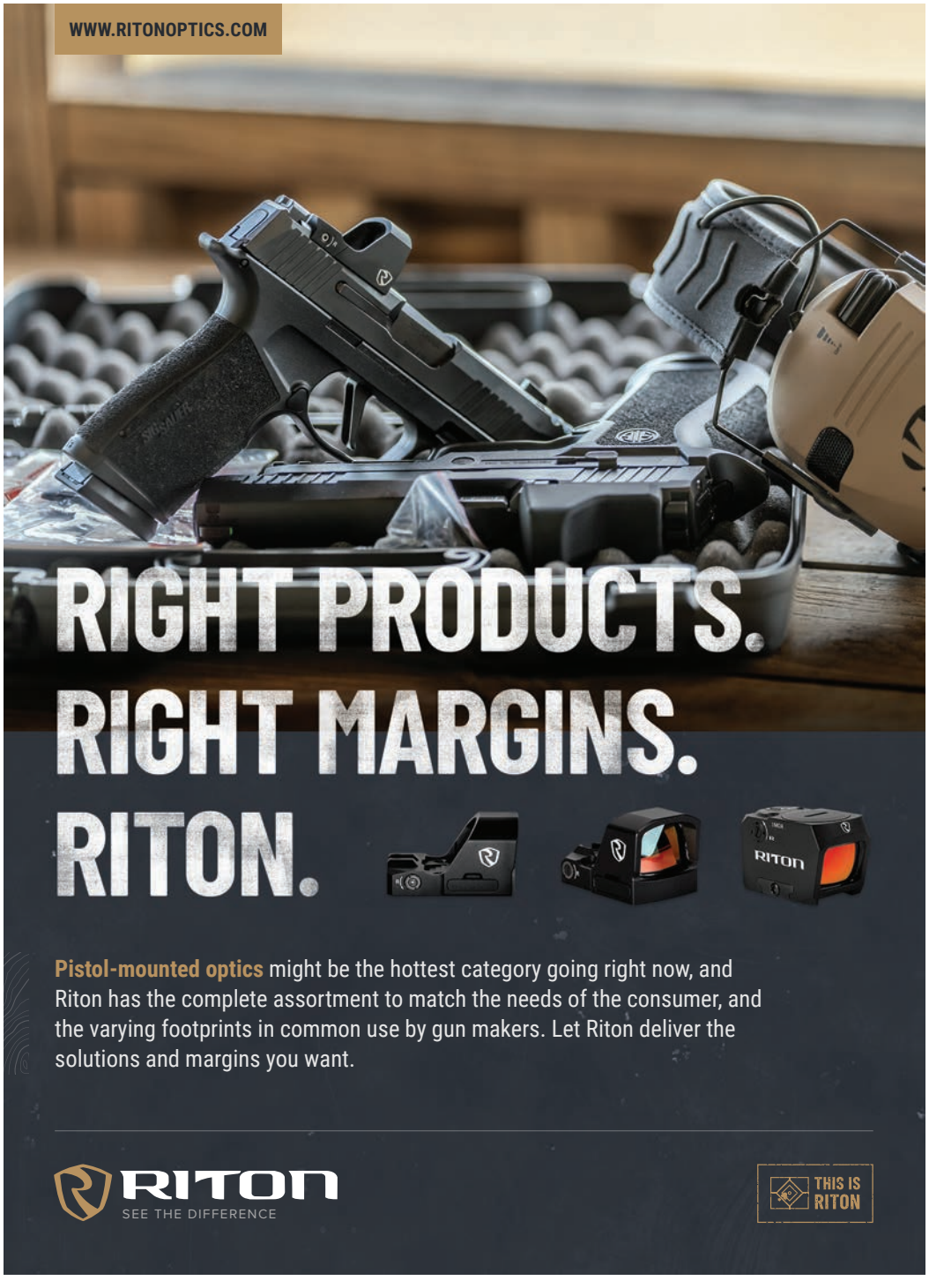
Firearms used for testing were a variety of Gen 3, 4, 5 & MOS series Glock 17 and 19 pistols. Weapon lights used for testing included the two class-leading Surefire and Streamlight brands. This includes the 1000 lumen Surefire X300 (wide beam) & X300 Ultra (narrow beam) and Streamlight's new 500 lumen TLR7 Compact dual-fuel weaponlights. Notably these weapon lights showcase both full-size and compact weapon light technology. The X300 and X300U both have slightly different profiles and the X300U is configured with a longer extended lens. The X300 models both accept dual CR123 batteries and the TLR7 accepts either a single CR123 or Streamlight rechargeable SLB-9 USB rechargeable battery.

The MFT design overcomes many design and compatibility hurdles including multiple light compatibility on some of the holster models. For example, the Glock 17/47 compatible Guardian Ultra Concealment holster supports Streamlight TLR1 & Surefire X300 and X300U weapon lights. The TLR7 IWB and OWB holsters for Glock 19/45 support Streamlight TLR7A, TLR7X, TLR-7 HL-X USB, Surefire XC1, XC2, Nightstick TCM-550XL, and Inforce Wild 1 weapon lights. That offers broad compatibility in a single SKU holster design.

Ready to Carry

The most obvious first test was to see if there were issues with holstering or accidental light actuation. With nose forward pressure while holstering, the guns all clicked in smoothly and securely. Retention was crisp and secure. Most importantly there were no accidental light discharges. The idea of magnets in holsters is not specifically new, but the method MFT has created is unique in that the Barrel Stabilizer Insert positions the barrel so that the magnetic retention can reliably occur at the barrel muzzle. Only the polymer BSI contacts the rifling and crown to protect barrel accuracy. Another advantage of the system is that it semi-

"It is one of the first holsters I have owned with this much configurability."





↑ The MFT Pro Series is completely configurable as left- or right-hand in a variety of positions and carry methods.

seals the muzzle from debris entering, similar to the ear-plug method special forces teams use to barrel seal handguns from debris in desert environments.

A benefit of the design is that OWB holsters look more blocky and less like handgun holsters which helps obscure inadvertent holster flashes when concealed. The two OWB Guardian Modular Hole Pattern and Ultra Concealment holsters are clearly more duty and range focused. Both were mounted to my gun belt during testing. The MHP version offers Bladetech Tek-Lok compatible pattern mounting and MFT's own ACHRO Harness chest plate, which will likely be my preferred winter under-coat carry method for this holster.

Concealing a full-size Glock 17 with a full sized Surefire X300 Ultra weapon light is not a simple task, but the Guardian Ultra Concealment holster placed at 4-o'clock position does a great job with just jacket coverage. Additionally the slim body hugging design sucks the holster into the body with a reduced OWB holster silhouette bulge. This design is extremely practical for EDC and duty carry of full-size firearms and weapon lights.

The Pro Series Glock 19/45 TLR7 Pro Series IWB Light Holster is fantastically adaptable and fully ambidextrous configurable with the included dual IWB tuckable belt clips that can be adjusted up or down. Additionally it can be configured with the included single large belt clip or configured with optional mounting such as Blade-Tech style mounts. It is one of the first holsters I have owned with this much configurability. Concealed carry of even a Glock 19 with a weapon light can be challenging or at least less than





↑ This Glock 17 with plus-size Surefire X300 Ultra was not only comfortable, but concealable as well.

comfortable, but MFT has clearly worked hard to assure carry comfort is maximized. Part of that comfort is due to the configurability of the holster design, allowing the shooter to find the perfect fit, positioning, cant, and height.

As a bonus carry option, MFT wanted to showcase the off-body carry of the new ACHRO EDC Sling Packs. This is an extraordinarily flexible solution to the complex needs of carrying around a bunch of EDC stuff that can range from a Glock 17 with tactical light, extra mags, tourniquet, Israeli bandage, multi-tool, tactical light, snacks, ipad, USB charging brick, earbuds, sunglasses, readers, expanding baton and other gear and still have extra room left over. Thankfully the utility bag has become vogue again and we can all carry what amounts to a purse for all the stuff we elect to carry. MFT created the ACHRO sling pack with EDC focused design elements including full hook and loop inside the top center EDC pouch that includes a universal holster mount. The top rear slot is padded for Ipad and similar devices and the rear pocket is for more secure valuables such as wallets.

Final Thoughts

For dealers, there are plenty of weapon light holster options on the market, but MFT offers dealers the flexibility to stock only one Glock 19/45 or 17/47 holster that accommodates a multitude of weapon lights that customers may purchase or already own. In the case of the new Pro Series, MFT offers dealers an option that is also fully left-hand configurable without the need for an extra SKU. According to MFT, this greatly simplifies and reduces inventory costs for dealers versus purchasing weapon and weapon light specific holsters. SSR

NSSF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Visit us at NSSF booths 42310 and CF116

NSSF® Congressional Fly-In
April 8-9, 2025 • Washington, D.C.

NSSF Annual Import/Export Conference
August 5-7, 2025 • Washington, D.C.

NSSF Marketing and Leadership Summit
May 13-15, 2025 • Clearwater Beach, FL

National Shooting Sports Month®
August 2025 • shootingsportsmonth.org

Gun Storage Check Week™
June 1-7, 2025 • gunstoragecheck.org

Gun Storage Check Week™
September 1-7, 2025 • gunstoragecheck.org

NSSF Range-Retailer Business Expo™
July 16-17, 2025 • West Palm Beach, FL

SHOT Show®
January 20-23, 2026 • Las Vegas, NV

For more information, visit **NSSF.ORG**

NSSF The Firearm Industry Trade Association



archery BUSINESS + SHOT·SHOW

THE 2025 ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION

NEW APPLICATIONS FOR 2025 AVAILABLE NOW:

WWW.ARCHERYBUSINESS.COM/ABPSHOTSHOW

JOIN THE GROWING LIST OF EXHIBITORS ALREADY IN THE PAVILION

JANUARY 21-24, 2025, CAESARS FORUM & VENETIAN EXPO LAS VEGAS, NV

FOR INFORMATION ON EXHIBITING IN THE ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION, CONTACT:

BRAD BISNETTE BRAD.BISNETTE@COLEPUBLISHING.COM (715) 891-3235

PATRICK BOYLE PATRICK.BOYLE@GRANDVIEWOUTDOORS.COM (920) 240-7280

NIGHT MOVES

iStock Photo/Ahorica

PLAYING THE LONG GAME

By Brian McCombie

The AGM VarmintV2 50-384 is a long-range thermal with intuitive controls and simple setup.

AGM Global Vision has been a key player in the thermal market for years and its product lines are growing. AGM designs, develops, and distributes a wide range of thermal units, plus professional-grade night vision products, multispectral lasers, and infrared illumination devices.

In the thermal category, one of AGM's top sellers is its newer VarmintV2 LRF line of thermals. Available in both 384 and 640 resolution models, all four V2 units feature fully integrated laser rangefinders, compact and lightweight housings and 18650 removable and rechargeable battery power.

Compared to past models, the VarmintV2 family upgrades also include new sub-20mK 12 micron thermal sensors, on-board ballistic calculators, a new user interface, more customizable image settings and recoil activated videos with sound.

Plus, every unit continues to ship with an American-made ADM mount, which makes removing and remounting to multiple rifles as seamless as ever. The V2 line is protected by AGM's industry committed customer service and fully transferrable five-year warranty.

Easy Access

I recently ran the AGM VarmintV2 50-384 unit. While it certainly can and will do the required night hunting work out to 100 yards and under (very common distances for hog hunting after dark), the VarmintV2 is really designed and manufactured to allow the night hunter to go long.

Why long? Consider the unit's impressive magnification, zoom capabilities, picture-in-picture ability, the onboard laser rangefinder and ballistic calculator. More on these features below.

The V2 features some of the easiest-to-use controls of any thermal I've used. There are three controls on the left side of the chassis, starting with the red power button forward. Next is a black "Measure Button," which operates the laser rangefinder and also allows picture taking.

Last, and at the rear, the "Operation Wheel." A fast press of the wheel brings up the Quick Menu, a long press the Main Menu. Used by itself, the wheel operates the magnification setting. But once a hunter has pressed and accessed one of the two menu options, turning the wheel facilitates moving within the menu choices.

Pressing the Operation Wheel and Measure Button at the same time will start or stop a video recording. Holding both down initiates image calibration.

Hands On

Many people in the market for a thermal unit are apprehensive about the whole menu situation. There's no better way to quiet those fears and help make a sale than letting the customer work the unit a few times. With the V armintV2, the ease of the wheel operation system needs to be stressed.

Turn on the unit and let the customer do some in-store views. Now, walk the customer through the palette changes; just a short press on the Wheel lets the customer move through the four palette settings.

That done, move onto probably the most frequently asked question first-time thermal customers have about a unit: "How do I zero this thing?"



↑ For his testing, McCombie mounted the thermal on a Sig Sauer MCX-SPEAR LT IR rifle in 5.56 NATO.

Obviously, you can't mount the unit on a rifle and perform an actual zero in store, but you can have the customer hold down the Wheel to bring up the Main Menu on the left side of the viewer. Then, have them turn the wheel to select the ZERO icon and do a single press of the wheel to open the Zero function.

The ZERO function can set up to five separate zeros. Have the customer set the ZERO for the first setting, then go down one more selection to set the distance at which your customer would be zeroing the rifle. The following selection lets the customer select the reticle type they prefer and, with the selection right under that, the reticle color.

Just below this is the magnification setting for the zeroing process.

Then comes the FREEZE or one-shot zeroing that can be selected. And beneath this are the manual controls for shifting the X and Y reticle axis.

Power On

As noted, a single 18650 (3.7V) Lithium rechargeable battery powers the VarmintV2. AGM rates battery life at six hours of continuous use.

The unit is sold with a battery charger, plug and cable.

Running the thermal with an external power pack is an option, too, through the USB Type C power port.

The battery compartment is located atop the unit and at the rear. It unscrews and a handy rubberized tether means the cap won't be dropped at night in the field when the hunter is making a battery change.

Winter Wonderland

It was snowing, windy and 28 degrees at my outdoor range in north-central Wisconsin when I ran the VarmintV2. A good test for the unit and the shooter, I figured.

For that shooting, I used a Sig Sauer MCX-SPEAR LT IR rifle, chambered in 5.56 NATO and sporting a 16-inch barrel. The rifle features Sig's Reduced IR Signature Gen II FDE Cerakote, a telescoping/folding stock featuring a push-button lock, and fully ambidextrous controls.

The rifle also sported Sig's Suppressor-Ready QD Flash Hider, and the rifle itself is interchangeable with all other MCX-LT barrels and handguards.

For ammunition, I stayed with Sig and used their Elite Performance Copper Hunting rounds in .223 Rem. loaded with 60-grain copper alloy bullets.

I first zeroed the V2 and rifle at 50 yards using a larger HeatPack handwarmer for my target. I did try the one-shot Freeze function, and it was easily accessible, but then decided to rely on the manual zeroing function. Most one-shot functions will get you pretty close to the bullseye and occasionally right on it. Most of the time, though, I find I still need to use the manual zeroing to finish up the process, anyway.

My first shots were high and a good half foot to the left. I manually moved the X and Y reticle axis and that got me on at 50 yards.

I moved to my 100-yard lane and here my targets were a pair of smaller HeatPack warmers. The first shots at the first warmer were still high and left, so I made adjustments, shot, still high and a bit right, more adjustments and I was on.

I then took six shots at the second, clean hand warmer. I did pull one shot low and just below the target, but the other five shots drilled the warmer with a 1.2-inch group.

Range Finding

At night, I had no problem rangefinding out to 250 yards on various heat signatures, large and smaller. But I couldn't find a reliable heat source at any greater distances to range.

I went out during the daytime to see just how far the VarmintV2's laser rangefinder could go, confirming distances with a Bushnell laser range finder. The furthest away I could locate a solid heat source was 575 yards. So, I'm confident the unit can deliver on its specified 600-meter ranging ability.

Of note, the rangefinder can be set to measure distance once when the Measure button is pressed or the Continuous setting can be applied. The



↑ The V2's laser rangefinder sits atop the unit.

latter provides continuous distance scanning at various timed settings (15 seconds to 300 seconds), and once the Measure button is pressed, ranging occurs at the preselected interval.

Recording the Hunt

I spent a night in the countryside taking photos and videos with the Varmint2 and both were nicely detailed, the heat signatures clear and nicely separated.

The AGM Connect app allows a hunter to pull images and videos off the Varmint2 wirelessly. I didn't download the app, though, choosing to use the USB cable included with the thermal to download my pictures and videos onto my laptop. A number of thermal manufacturers are going to the app-only download. But I was glad to see that AGM still provides the ability to connect the thermal right to my laptop.

The cable connection also provides for fast and easy firmware updates for the thermal.

Outside the Box/Store!

For those thermal customers who may have owned or used an AGM thermal in the past, Chase Stephens, AGM's director of brand development, recommended starting with the new features inherent in the Varmint V2 lineup.

"What separates the VarmintV2's from AGM's other thermal riflescope line is its integrated laser rangefinder and on-board ballistic calculator," Stephens says. But don't simply point out the rangefinder. As always, it's a good sales technique to let a potential customer use a thermal, as was noted above.

And then, if at all possible, get the customer and the unit outside.

"This 50mm-384 resolution unit has a base magnification of 4.5X, which means it's ideally suited for predator hunters with access to wide-open spaces, where longer-range shots may be required," Stephens says. "One big piece of advice we share with dealers for this particular model is to show it outside or somewhere with some distance between the user and the target."

As he explained, "With the unit's higher base magnification, it can be difficult for users to find and focus in on objects close in, within a store setting. But as soon as they go outside, they get a real understanding of the range the unit is capable of."

Dealer Help

"We're actually in the process of re-upping on dealer swag materials as we speak," Stephens notes. "We've recently updated our brand logo and colors, and we'll be sure to have some new dealer support materials available early in 2025. These include gun mats/mouse pads, AGM in-store hanging banners, 3D pop-ups, AGM patches and AGM decals."

AGM also offers zoom training for store staff at any time the establishment is able to schedule such a training with their sales rep; in-store training can be accomplished, too.

"And we've also invested a ton of time and energy into support videos on our AGM USA YouTube page," Stephens adds. "For each product family, we have a promotional introduction video and then a full-menu walk-through showing each button push and what each part of the menu does to the device.

"And for applicable models, we do 'How to Zero' videos and 'How to Setup Your Ballistic Calculator,' as well. These are invaluable tools at teaching dealers, distributors, sales staff, employees and end-users how the units work and how everything operates."

Direct and Distributor

AGM is headquartered in Springerville, Arizona, with offices in both Florida and Texas. Independent FFLs can buy direct from the company.

"We service many independent dealers directly," Stephens noted. "We typically offer any dealer who can manage $50,000 in purchases in a calendar year the ability to buy directly. But for those who only need to special order products occasionally, we sell to all the major two-step distributors as well, who offer really enticing purchase terms and fulfillment speed."

AGM distributors currently include Sports South, RSR, Hicks Inc, Bill Hicks, Zanders, and Chattanooga Shooting Sports. More distribution options should be available in 2025.

To become an AGM dealer, reach out to the company at *info@agmglobalvision.com*. A dealer application will be emailed back quickly.

A Dealer Focus

"We are completely and unflinchingly committed to supporting our dealer network," Stephens says. "All of our internal systems have improved dramatically in the last 18 months, and the results are starting to show. We've hired very experienced people, we have the best customer service team, our image quality is constantly improving, our quality control is constantly improving."

He noted that AGM has and will continue to commit many, many resources to dealer support, including the afore-mentioned instructional videos, social media promotions, OEM collaborations with other large brands, and product giveaways.

"It's an increasingly competitive landscape with thermal, but we're building a machine that, when fully optimized, will make us very easy to work with, and very tough to compete against." SSR

SPECS: AGM VARMINTV2 50-384 UNIT

Resolution: 384×288
Refresh rate: 50 Hz.
Magnification: 4.5× to 36×
Digital Zoom: 1×, 2×, 4×, 8×
Detector type: 12µm VOx Uncooled Focal Plane Array
Lens system: 50mm; F1.0
Monitor: 1024x768, 0.39 inch, OLED
Eye Relief: 1.77 inches
NETD: Less than 20 mk (@25°C, F#=1.0)
Laser Rangefinder: Up to 600 meters, w/±1 M Accuracy
Palettes: Black Hot, White Hot, Red Hot, Fusion
Reticle: 10 types, 4 colors, on/off
Picture In Picture Mode (PIP): Yes
Video Recording: On-Board
Internal Storage: 16 GB EMMC
Battery Type: 18650 (3.7V) Lithium Rechargeable Battery
Wi-Fi: Yes
Battery Operating Time: Approx. 6 hours
External power supply: 5 VDC/2 A, USB Type-C
Operating Temperature Range: -4°F to 131°F
Dimensions: 8.9×2.9×3.4 inches
Weight: 1.29 pounds
Protection Level: IP67
INC: ADM Mount w/QD Lever, Battery Charger w/Plug-In Adapter, Carrying Case, Instruction Manual, Two Batteries, USB Cable.
MSRP: $3,515.00

For more information please visit:
agmglobalvision.com

GEAR ROUNDUP

By Gordy Krahn

LEVER ACTIONS

They never really went away, but in recent decades lever actions took a back seat to other firearm platforms. Hunters and shooting enthusiasts, however, are now digging to the back of their gun safes or visiting local gun shops with renewed interest in these nostalgic — and every effective — guns. There are at least two good reasons for this. No. 1: Modern ammo designed specifically for lever guns has made them more accurate and safer to shoot. No. 2: Shooters and hunters are rediscovering the appeal of lever-action firearms. This trend is not lost on gun makers as new and improved levers hit the market, while shooting sports retailers realize the opportunity to sell these guns, along with new lever-specific ammo and accessories. Modern lever guns have gained legitimacy from the whitetail woods to Cowboy Action matches to home defense. For those who want a dependable, quick-handling, lightweight firearm with considerable knockdown power at moderate ranges, lever guns are hard to beat. Here are eight models that will interest your gun-buying patrons.

1: BIG HORN ARMORY BLACK THUNDER TACTICAL



Chambered in .500 S&W Magnum, Big Horn Armory's Black Thunder Tactical Lever Gun is a great choice for hunting, home defense and survival situations. The .500 S&W Magnum chambering allows the use of bullets ranging from from 200 grains to truck-stopping 700 grains. This incredible stopping power combined with the availability of almost any style and type of bullet imaginable makes the Black Thunder capable of taking any game animal that walks the planet. It is equipped with a 16-inch Trapper barrel and features a black laminate wood finish, scout scope mount and fiber-optic front sight. MSRP: $3,199. **www.bighornarmory.com**

2: HENRY LEVER ACTION SUPREME



The Henry Lever Action Supreme delivers accuracy, reliability and safety. Far more than a rework of an existing lever-action design, it is equipped with a quad bar linkage and slider crank mechanism. The internal hammer design means everything is fully sealed off when the lever is closed to keep it clean and keep it quiet when shooting suppressed. The Lever Action Supreme sports a free-floated blued steel barrel and user-adjustable match-grade trigger. The drift-free rear sight is fully adjustable for windage and elevation. The rifle is equipped with an American walnut stock finished with ultra-precise diamond checkering, with sling swivel studs providing convenient mounting points. It includes a 10-round PMAG with a five-round limiter to comply with hunting regulations across the country. MSRP: NA. **www.henryusa.com**

3: LEGACY SPORTS INTERNATIONAL CITADEL LEVTAC MODEL 92 CAMO

One of the most popular firearms in the Citadel lineup is back in stock — the Levtac Lever Action — including the Model 92 Large Loop Vector Camo version. The Levtac comes with a 16.5-inch threaded barrel and modular forend M-Lok design for easy accessory attachments. This lever-action rifle is sure to be a hit with deer hunters in straight wall cartridge allowance areas and can do double duty as a home defense weapon. The Levtak Model 92 is equipped with a Picatinny rail and has a rear peep sight and bladed front sight. It's also available in traditional Black or Respect Flag versions and comes chambered in .357 Mag., .44 Mag., .45 LC, .22 WMR and .454 Casull. MSRP: Starting at $829. **www.legacysports.com**



4: MARLIN TRAPPER SERIES MODEL 1894 .357 MAGNUM

The Ruger-made Marlin Trapper Series Model 1894 Lever-Action Rifle, chambered in .357 Magnum, is quick-handling, soft shooting and a great choice for hunting small game, plinking and home protection. The rifle features a 16.1-inch, cold hammer-forged threaded barrel with a 1:16 twist that will accommodate common muzzle devices. It is equipped with a stainless steel receiver, lever, magazine tube and barrel and receiver-mounted Skinner Sight System. The black laminate stock and forend feature crisp checkering that delivers excellent grip in all weather conditions. A generous butt pad absorbs recoil and the forend has been slimmed down for an attractive look and comfortable feel. MSRP: $1,279. **www.marlinfirearms.com**



5: SAVAGE ARMS REVEL DLX



The Savage Revel DLX is a sleek, modern take on the classic lever-action rimfire rifle. Crafted with precision engineering and advanced materials, this rifle embodies a fusion of tradition and innovation. Its streamlined design features a contoured walnut stock with intricate stippling for superior grip and comfort. The lever-action mechanism delivers smooth and reliable cycling, while the crisp trigger ensures precise shot placement. Quick take-down makes this a great go-to backpack rifle. Equipped with a tubular magazine, the Revel DLX offers ample firepower for plinking or small-game hunting. With its timeless aesthetics and cutting-edge performance, this rifle sets a new standard in rimfire firearms — available in .22 LR, .22 WMR and .17 HMR chamberings. MSRP: $539. **www.savagearms.com**

6: SMITH & WESSON STAINLESS STEEL MODEL 1854



Chambered in .45 Colt, the Model 1854 Stainless Steel Lever-Action Rifle by Smith & Wesson seamlessly melds precision engineering and timeless design with modern features, including M-Lok slots and a Picatinny rail for optics. Equipped with a 19.25-inch 410 SS threaded barrel, forged 416 SS receiver and black synthetic stock with textured grip panels, the Stainless Steel Model 1854 is a blend of heritage and innovation. Other key features include a gold bead front and XS Sights ghost ring rear sight, 1:20-inch RH twist eight-groove rifling and large-loop operating lever. The S&W Model 1854 is also available in Traditional Walnut (.45 Colt) and Traditional Walnut Magnum (.44 Mag.) versions. MSRP: $1,279-$1,399. **www.smith-wesson.com**

7: TAYLOR'S TC73 9MM TUNED RIFLE



Now chambered in 9mm, the Taylor's TC73 Tuned Rifle is designed on the traditional 1873 lever-action platform for exceptional accuracy at medium range. It has an 18-inch barrel and 10-round capacity and features a walnut stock and forend, steel frame with real case coloring and a smooth hammer/trigger pull. It includes a Taylor tuned action with hand polishing, custom hammer and lever springs, custom magazine tube spring and an overall lightened action. The TC73 9mm Tuned Rifle has a dovetail semi-buckhorn rear sight with a reversible notch plate and dovetail white bead front sight. It sports a rubber butt pad, has an overall length of 37.5 inches and weighs 7.82 pounds. MSRP: $1,999. **www.taylorsfirearms.com**

8: TRISTAR LR94 LEVER-ACTION SHOTGUN



The LR94 Lever-Action .410 Shotgun from TriStar is a blend of Old World style and New World beauty — offered in a matte black, case-colored or nickel finish, all with oil-finished Turkish walnut furniture. TriStar's LR94 features a top safety, blade/bead front sight, leather lever wrap (installed) and, as always, is backed by TriStar's five-year warranty. This lever-action top-eject shotgun is chambered for 2.5-inch shotshells and has a capacity of five-plus-one rounds. It comes with one Beretta/Benelli Mobil-style modified choke and black rubber recoil pad, has a 14.25-inch length of pull and weighs 6.3 pounds. The LR94's compact size makes it a good truck gun as well as a good choice for hunting and home defense. MSRP: $990-$1,100. **www.tristararms.com**

NEW PRODUCTS

EC EDITOR'S CHOICE

By Gordy Krahn

1 SPANDAU SEMI-AUTO S2 SHOTGUN

The popularity of shotguns cannot be denied. An uber-efficient firearm for hunting, law enforcement, personal and home defense and shooting sports, the sacred scattergun delivers massive firepower to excel in a great multitude of purposes. And that's why firearms manufacturers make such a variety — to fit the wants and needs of all their consumers. Even specific product lines carry a wide range of models to cater to specific user groups. The Spandau S2 Semi-Auto from SDS Imports is a good example — a 12-gauge shotgun that comes in four different configurations for turkey, waterfowl and upland hunters. This inertia driven shotgun features an enlarged loading gate for easier loading with gloves on in cool conditions and accepts Benelli pattern extensions and choke tubes. A fiber-optic front sight makes it extremely easy to find point of aim, especially in low-light conditions. Two S2 shotguns are designed specifically for turkey hunters and are equipped with 24-inch barrels and two different finishes, Black and Realtree APX camouflage. For waterfowlers and upland hunters, 28-inch barrel versions are available in Black and Realtree Max7. MSRP: $399.99/Black; $499.99/Camo

WWW.SPANDAUARMS.COM





2 BACKYARD BROADHEADS 4N1 LITE CROSSBOW KICKSTAND

Backyard Broadheads, a trusted provider of high-quality crossbow accessories, has announced the release of its new multi-function crossbow hangers and bipods — including the 4N1 Lite Hanger/Kickstand. The 4N1 Lite is a versatile accessory for Ravin crossbow users, serving as a bipod, hanger, rest and kickstand. Built from durable hot-rolled steel and weighing just 12.6 ounces, it offers convenience and stability without adding bulk. It easily attaches to the Picatinny rail beneath the quiver bracket on Ravin crossbow models, including R9, R10, R10X, R15, R20, R29 and R29X. The 4N1 Lite is not just a hanger, it's also a cocking and de-cocking aid. MSRP: $69.95

WWW.BACKYARDBROADHEADS.COM



3 BALLISTA MEGABAT REVERSE DRAW CROSSBOW

The full-size, reverse-draw Megabat Reverse Crossbow from Ballista features a built-in self-retracting cord tensioner, which makes loading the crossbow quick, easy and noiseless. Its reverse-draw limbs and differently shaped cams lengthen the power stroke and increase the force acting on the bolt — producing velocities of up to 450 fps. Thanks to the reverse limbs, the Megabat's riser is located closer to the shooter, which provides better balance and retention, and the crossbow does not move forward during the shot and does not create additional vibrations. The Megabat package includes a 4x32mm scope and three 355-grain 20-inch bolts. The bow measures 8.6 inches axle-to-axle cocked and 13.3 inches uncocked. It has a 12.2-inch power stroke. MSRP: $999

WWW.BALLISTA.COM

NEW PRODUCTS



4 BLACK HILLS 6MM ARC 90-GRAIN DUAL PERFORMANCE AMMO

The Black Hills 6mm ARC 90-grain Dual Performance Load was designed to shoot flatter to 600 yards compared to the 103-grain ELD-X introduced this past year, plus open immediately upon impact to create a large 7-inch-diameter wound channel. Velocity is 2,650 fps with over 1,400 foot-pounds of energy. The monolithic solid-copper bullet is designed through the wonders of modern precision machining so the petals separate after impact and penetration, spreading to create their own wound tracks through the stretched tissue, significantly adding to terminal performance. The solid copper shank remaining then continues to penetrate deeply (18+ inches) to ensure game-stopping performance. This new load is an exceptional option for hunting with modern sporting rifles. MSRP: NA

WWW.BLACK-HILLS.COM



5 C-MORE SYSTEMS RTS3B RED-DOT SIGHT

The C-More Systems RTS3B Red-Dot Sight was designed for maximum reliability with pistols, rifles and shotguns — for competition shooting, hunting, duty and everyday use. It sports a shorter footprint for easier mounting on optics-ready handguns, and its crisp super-bright LED dot is available in 3, 6 and 9 MOA options. For increased durability, the RTS3B has a stronger aircraft-grade aluminum housing, aluminum side load battery tray and integrated base plate. Electronic features include new style raised buttons, 2NV/10 daylight brightness levels and Shake-to-Wake. The C-More mounting standard for the RTS3B is one of the most widely adopted mounting standards in the red-dot sight industry, with numerous optics-ready pistols being supplied with a plate that accommodates it. MSRP: $749

WWW.CMORE.COM



6 DICKINSON ARMS SEMI-AUTO 212 SHOTGUN

The 212C24-OS Semi-Auto Turkey Shotgun from Dickinson Arms is loaded with the features turkey hunters demand — built with advanced CNC manufacturing technology. The 12-gauge shotgun is finished in Mossy Oak Obsession camouflage and chambered for 3-inch shotshells. It has a contoured pistol-grip stock and a 24-inch barrel with a ventilated rib. It comes with hi-vis fiber-optic front and rear sights as well as Picatinny railing on the top of the receiver, so hunters can mount the turkey optic of their choice. It also comes with an extended extra-full choke that has been tested for extremely tight patterns with multiple types of ammo. Included is a hard-side carrying case and a magazine capacity-limiting plug. MSRP: $649

WWW.DICKINSONARMS.COM



7 ELITE TACTICAL SYSTEMS GROUP OMEGA GLOCK 18 MAGAZINE

Engineered to combine the durability of steel with the lightweight, impact-resistant properties of ETS polymer, the Glock 18 Omega 9mm ETS Magazine from Elite Tactical Systems (ETS) Group, is compatible with all standard double stack 9mm Glocks. It features hardened steel feed lips, an Omega Joint and a military-grade teflon coating for corrosion resistance. Weighing 50% less than all-steel magazines, it offers 30-round capacity, 100% drop-free reliability and compatibility with Gen 1–5 Glock handguns. The ergonomic design ensures easy handling, and it is fully compatible with Glock extensions. Backed by a lifetime warranty, this high-performance magazine delivers the strength, function and precision that Glock enthusiasts and professionals demand. MSRP: $27.99

WWW.ETSGROUP.US



8 G9 DEFENSE 9MM COPPER SUBSONIC AMMUNITION

The 9mm 126-grain Subsonic External Hollow Point (EHP) bullet from G9 Defense is made completely of copper. Specifically crafted with self defense in mind, it creates catastrophic wounds without the risk of over-penetration. The EHP Subsonic has minimal deflection in auto glass and has noticeably reduced felt recoil and muzzle climb. The sound signature when firing is only identified by the cycling of the action when suppressed. This projectile's four parabolic flutes were meticulously designed to boost wounding potential and control penetration. Crafted with precision from solid copper, there's zero risk of jacket separation, regardless of the barriers faced. It optimizes kinetic energy transfer into the terminal target while significantly reducing felt recoil. MSRP: $36.99/Box of 20

WWW.G9DEFENSE.COM



9 HOLOSUN DRS-TH RED-DOT SIGHT

Holosun's groundbreaking DRS-TH Fusion Optic combines advanced red-dot sight technology with thermal imaging capabilities. This innovative optic features a stunning 1024x768 resolution display at 50 fps, enabling users to see clearly in various light conditions. The DRS-TH integrates a 256x192 thermal sensor and multiple thermal image palettes, including White Hot and Highlight modes, ensuring unparalleled visibility. With a durable IP67 waterproof rating and user-friendly design, the DRS-TH also boasts a rechargeable battery life of up to 10 hours for the thermal sensor and over 50,000 hours of runtime for the red dot. Its LED multi-reticle system allows a seamless overlay of thermal imaging on standard visuals. MSRP: $1,882.34

WWW.HOLOSUN.COM

NEW PRODUCTS



10 MAVEN CRS.3 4-20X50MM RIFLESCOPE

Housed in a robust first focal plane 30mm tube, the CRS.3 4-20x50mm Riflescope from Maven brings C Series clarity, durability and affordability to an all-purpose hunting scope that fits the bill for mid- to long-range shooting and hunting. Featuring a broad 4-20X magnification range for versatile shooting capabilities and precise dialable elevation and windage turrets for accurate adjustments, it is equipped with an illuminated reticle to ensure visibility in low-light conditions. A side parallax adjustment provides enhanced clarity/fine-tuning reticle shift. The CRS.3 incorporates two popular RS Series reticles: the SHR-W (MOA) and SHR-MIL (MIL), so precise and accurate dialing is just a few clicks away. The CRS.3 4-20x50mm measures 15.4 inches in length and weighs 27.3 ounces. MSRP: $700

WWW.MAVENBUILT.COM



11 PULSAR COMPACT AXION XG30 MONOCULAR

The Pulsar Axion XG30 Monocular is designed to be compact yet powerful, featuring a high-resolution 640x480 pixel Lynred sensor with a 12-micron pixel pitch. This pocket-sized powerhouse delivers exceptional image quality, even in the most challenging environments, making it ideal for hunters, law enforcement personnel and outdoor enthusiasts who need reliable thermal imaging on the go. The Axion XG30 boasts a rugged magnesium alloy housing, providing durability while maintaining a lightweight feel. It delivers an impressive 14.6° wide field of view and a detection range of 1,421.70 yards. Other key features include photo and video recording, Stream Vision 2 integration, quick-change long-life batteries and an IPX7 waterproof rating. MSRP: $2,199.99

WWW.PULSARNV.COM



12 SAFARILAND INCOG X IWB HOLSTER

The Incog X Inside-the-Waistband (IWB) Holster from Safariland now accommodates Glock pistols with large lights. This new addition to the Incog X series is a collaboration between Haley Strategic Partners and Safariland, and provides exceptional features for a top-tier concealed-carry experience. This ergonomic, RDS-compatible, multi-positional holster features an improved clip strut design, combining functionality and customized concealment shims. Users can insert or remove them effortlessly without needing any tools, allowing for a fine-tuned concealed-carry experience that suits any preferences. Other key features include micro and full-size red-dot compatibility, microfiber suede-wrapped Boltaron body, over-the-belt polymer clips, passive trigger guard and ejection port retention and optional magazine caddy with tension adjustment. MSRP: $92.50-$122.50

WWW.SAFARILAND.COM



13 SAVAGE ARMS 110 PPR BIG-GAME RIFLE

The Savage Arms 110 Pro Pursuit Rifle (PPR) — a partnership with Mike Robinson of Farming the Wild — features the proven 110 action that incorporates a lightweight stainless steel Cerakote-coated receiver and fluted bolt body with a Blackout Cerakote coating. The 110 PPR comes with a 20-inch Proof Research carbon fiber wrapped stainless steel barrel and lightweight Grayboe Phoenix 2 stock, and an M-Lok bottom rail on the forend allows for easy accessory attachment. It is also equipped with a one-piece, flush AICS-style magazine frame and trigger guard and three-round AICS-style magazine. The user-adjustable AccuTrigger allows for a personalized trigger pull ranging from 1.5 to 4 pounds, and an Omniport muzzle brake reduces recoil. The 110 PPR is available in nine popular calibers. MSRP: $2,399

WWW.SAVAGEARMS.COM



14 STREAMLIGHT TLR-7 HL X SUB RAIL-MOUNTED LIGHT

The TLR-7 Sub series from Streamlight is going rechargeable — the rail-mounted light accepting either Streamlight's SL-B9 USB rechargeable protected lithium-ion battery pack or a CR123A lithium battery. It delivers up to 1,000 lumens and 10,000 candela over a beam distance of 200 meters, and was designed to fit select Glock, Sig Sauer, Smith & Wesson, Beretta, Springfield Armory and Heckler & Koch railed subcompact handguns. Run time is 30 minutes (default) or one hour (programmable) when using the SL-B9 rechargeable battery pack; the battery charges within 2.5 hours via USB-C cord or optional bank charger. With a CR123A lithium battery inserted, run time is 1.5 hours. MSRP: $295

WWW.STREAMLIGHT.COM



15 URBAN CARRY MAVADO HOLSTER

Say goodbye to overwhelming inventory and hello to efficiency. The new Mavado holster line by Urban Carry Holsters covers over 1,800 firearms with just five sizes, freeing up valuable shelf space and ensuring your customers always find the right fit. Mavado combines the comfort of premium leather with the security of the LockLeather retention clip, delivering a holster that clicks into place for unbeatable safety. Available in OWB and IWB styles and two stunning leather finishes — Classic Black and Rustic Brown — the Mavado is as versatile as it is practical. Made proudly in America, this hybrid design offers retailers a low-cost, high-quality solution that customers love. MSRP: $59.95

WWW.URBANCARRYHOLSTERS.COM

THE VOICE OF THE INDEPENDENT RETAILER
SHOOTING SPORTS RETAILER



Connect with
SHOOTING SPORTS RETAILER
ONLINE!

Visit Us at
www.shootingsportsretailer.com for exclusive content, gear reviews and breaking news!



Follow Us On
TWITTER!
@ShootingSRMag

Check out
GRAND VIEW OUTDOORS ON FACEBOOK!

THE VOICE OF THE INDEPENDENT RETAILER
SHOOTING SPORTS RETAILER

EDITORIAL
Editor / Luke Laggis
Group Managing Editor / Hilary Dyer
Product Editor / Gordy Krahn
Contributors / William Starnes, Brian McCombie, Luke Laggis, Jason Dailey, Mark Chesnut, Trent Marsh, Wayne van Zwoll, Max Archer, Gordy Krahn, Steve Comus

CREATIVE
Art Director / Tod Molina

ADMINISTRATION
Circulation / Holly Gensler
holly.gensler@colepublishing.com

ADVERTISING
President/Publisher GVO
Derrick Nawrocki / **derrick.nawrocki@grandviewoutdoors.com**

Regional Sales Manager
Mike Kizzire / **mike.kizzire@grandviewoutdoors.com**

Regional Sales Manager
Patrick Boyle / **patrick.boyle@grandviewoutdoors.com**

Regional Sales Manager
Don Harris / **don.harris@grandviewoutdoors.com**

Account Executive
Brad Bisnette / **brad.bisnette@colepublishing.com**

SHOOTING SPORTS RETAILER® (ISSN 0887-9397) is published 12 times a year January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December by COLE Publishing, Inc. Published and owned by COLE Publishing, Inc., P.O. BOX 220, Three Lakes, WI 54562.

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

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS:
Free to qualifying retailers, wholesalers, manufacturers, and salespeople of shooting sports products within the U.S. and Canada; $60 annually for all other U.S., Canada or Mexico subscribers; and $150 for two years to all other foreign countries. To subscribe, visit *www.shootingsportsretailer.com/subscribe* or call 800-257-7222.

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to:
SHOOTING SPORTS RETAILER
P.O. BOX 220
THREE LAKES, WI 54562

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

CALL 800-257-7222 | **FAX** 715-350-8456
EMAIL **holly.gensler@colepublishing.com**. Please include both old and new addresses.

SHOOTING SPORTS RETAILER is a member of: **National Shooting Sports Foundation**
© Registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Copyright 2024 COLE Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the General Manager.

National SHOOTING SPORTS Foundation
PROMOTE • PROTECT • PRESERVE

COLEpublishing

GRAND VIEW OUTDOORS®

OUTFITTING FOR SUCCESS

Apparel represents a growth category for retailers who understand the market.

By Steve Comus

How important are apparel sales to shooting sports retailers? More important than many may imagine because the growth in shooting apparel is projected to be higher than the overall growth of the shooting sports industry.

A study by Grand View Research forecasts steady growth in the apparel category for the remainder of this decade.

"Shooting sports apparel is expected to grow at a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 7.9% from 2024 to 2030. As more people engage in shooting sports, there is a growing need for specialized apparel that enhances performance, comfort and safety. This includes gear designed for various weather conditions, tactical vests, and clothing that provides camouflage or protection. Shooting apparel is designed with features that prioritize safety, such as reinforced padding, moisture-wicking fabrics, and specialized pockets for gear. The increasing awareness of the importance of proper attire for safe shooting practices has led to a higher demand for such clothing," the study reported.

This growth projection is based on the overall shooting sports sales activities at $36.50 billion in 2023. With that base, shooting sports sales are projected to grow at a CAGR of 5.8% from 2024 to 2030. This means that the apparel category is projected to grow slightly more than the overall industry.

Shooting apparel, especially apparel for the range and tactical maneuvers, needs to be high performance wear. Certainly, under any circumstances, what a shooter is wearing should not get in the way of shooting.

This is where the retailer can perform meaningful customer service while upselling in the process. Just walk the customer through the logical process that it takes for them to get both what they want and what they need.

And don't overlook the sales/buying appeal of fashion. Yes, shooters also have personal identities, and if the apparel looks like shooting wear or tactical gear, they will identify with that look and be predisposed to purchase it.

In that vein, colors are not as complicated as they are in the general apparel industry. Shades of brown to tan and green, as well as black or gray pretty much cover the bases.

Most important when advising customers about shooting apparel is to learn what kinds of shooting or maneuvers they intend to do. Knowing that opens the door to conversations that address those specific concerns, but which can go way beyond just those details and into areas like creating an ensemble rather than just one or two items.

Ideally, shooting apparel should be high quality, fit comfortably (but not loosely) and have features that make the overall shooting experience more effective for a long time.

Why does quality matter? Because when shooting, customers develop routines and if apparel fails, it interrupts the routines.

A "wardrobe failure" on stage for performers can be embarrassing. A wardrobe failure when shooting can mean blowing the shot(s), which can be much more serious than a blushing face.

Consistency is the essence of accuracy and repeatability. And this includes clothing. This means that once customers find apparel that fits right and has the features they need to operate and shoot most effectively, it's important for them to use that clothing every time they shoot.

I'm talking about the right size pockets in the right places, boots or shoes that don't slip on some surfaces.

The nice thing from a retailer perspective is that shooters need to have at least two sets of the proper clothing – sometimes enough sets to change daily for a week.

Also, shooting apparel needs not to inhibit the movements and body positions customers face when shooting. This is an important decision when they choose a particular item because not all clothing is created equal. For example, there could be a shirt or jacket that fits well for general purposes, but which binds or restricts movement in one or two particular areas of the body while shooting.

Although generally there is no way for customers to practice shooting when purchasing shooting apparel, it is possible for them to move their arms, legs and neck/head through the positions they will be in when shooting. Encouraging them to go through such an exercise presents an opportunity to point out the particular assets of one brand/style over another, etc.

When it is possible to do so, it is important to have at least a full-length mirror in the store, and it is even better if a changing room is a possible option. Retailers in the general clothing industry have known this forever. When customers literally can feel and see how a particular item fits and looks on them, they will buy more, and they will be more satisfied with their purchases.

Regardless of how much space a store has for customers to try on apparel, it is important to stress the logic of ensembles rather than individual items of clothing. For example, within their various lines of apparel, manufacturers tend to be consistent with both the look and feel of individual items as they relate to other items. We're talking about shirt/pants combinations.

When it comes to shooting or tactical kinds of apparel, often there is a resultant "look" that approaches, or even can be, a uniform. There is nothing wrong with that. Many shooters wear uniforms on the job anyway, so a rather uniform look can feel natural.

"Just walk the customer through the logical process that it takes for them to get both what they want and what they need."

Often, when customers come to the shop for guns, ammo and that sort of thing, they are not thinking about shooting apparel. There is a way to trigger such conversations over the counter. That is to have employees wearing apparel brands and models that also are in inventory. That way, the customers can see how those apparel items look on someone, and it opens the door to conversations about apparel.

Although this may not open the apparel sales floodgates, one thing is certain. The shop will sell more apparel items if customers think about apparel while shopping than it will if there is no such conversation.

Selling shooting apparel is not rocket science, but it does require a plan. And there is no better time to come up with an effective plan than right now. SSR

Sports South

One Focus • Distribution

Over **48,000 products,** represented by more than **700 industry leading brands.**

PROUD TO BE DISTRIBUTING

Kimber®

AMERICA'S PREMIER GUN MANUFACTURER



KDS9C

Premier Personal Protection

QUALITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

1-800-388-3845 • www.TheShootingWarehouse.com

Firearms • Ammunition & Reloading • Optics • Accessories • Bulk Orders • Range Programs

SUPERIORITY
TRANSFORMED



CANiK
SUPERIOR FIREARMS

CANIKUSA.COM

FOLLOW @CANIKUSA :