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JUNE 2022

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Bowhunter®

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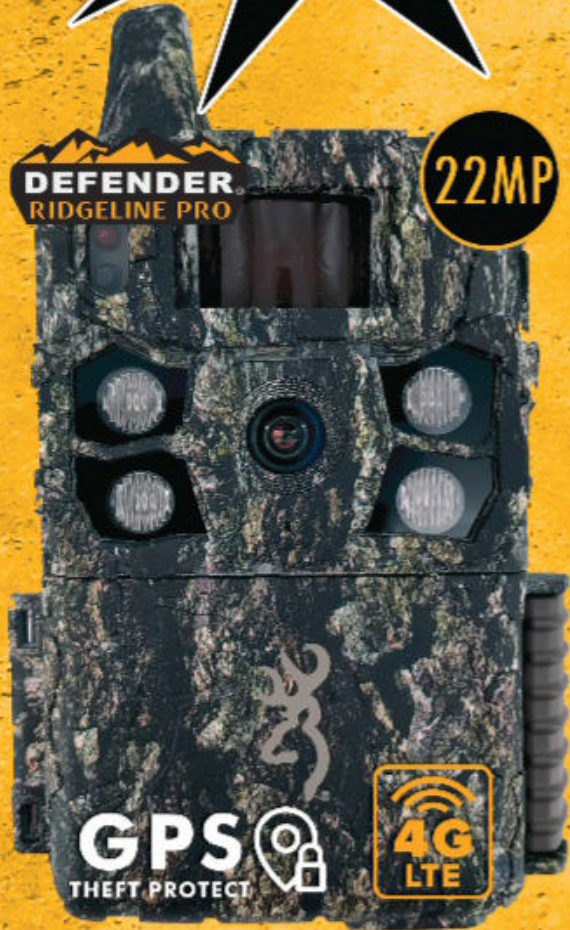
Well-known hunting industry photographer JOHN HAFNER captured this shot of a Western bowhunter quietly accessing a riverside deer-hunting spot. Our hunter is wearing **Browning Outdoor Clothing's** new soft shell **Pahvant Pro Jacket and Pants**, technical apparel built from highly wind- and water-resistant polyester fleece with SILVADUR technology for odor control, and in their proprietary **OVIX** camo (coming this June to retail). He's reaching for **Mathews' new V3X** bow with system accessories, and thanks to **Trophyline**, he'll soon be setting up a stealthy ambush with his **Covert Pro Saddle Kit**, Mini Sticks, and EDP Platform.

PHOTO BY JOHN HAFNER



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TRAIL CAMERAS



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EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

YOU MAY THINK YOU CAN HANDLE ANY SITUATION YOU COULD FIND YOURSELF IN... BUT WHAT IF YOU'RE WRONG?

IT WAS FOUR DECADES AGO, a time when I was just learning the ins and outs of hunting western North Dakota. Several buddies and I were hunting mule deer and I'd made a less-than-ideal shot on a buck. The wide-open terrain, and the lack of posted signs in those days, allowed us to stay on the buck, keeping his blood pressure up and the blood flowing. We kept going. And going.

We were so intent on recovering the buck, which we did, that we lost track of time. The darkening sky started spitting a few snowflakes, and an ominous feeling began to swell in my gut. We'd hiked over hill and dale in ranch country, under a heavy overcast sky, carelessly looking mostly at the ground. And we were a long way from our trucks.

The more pressing question was: Where the heck were we? We had no compass or maps, no GPS, no cell phones. We'd left our trucks wearing hiking clothes and fanny packs that may or may not have included food and water, or even a flashlight. We certainly had nothing to make a fire with, or extra clothing to put on. It was decided that I would stay with my deer while the others hiked back to the trucks, then they would come back to get me. Bad move.

Not long after my buddies crested the horizon, serious darkness settled over me. And cold. I shivered as coyotes yipped in the distance. It had been pitch dark for over an hour when I saw the first headlights way off across the prairie, shining in my direction. They moved left, then right, then disappeared. The lights reappeared 30 minutes later, but they were no closer. My buddies knew about where I was but didn't know how to get to me through the maze of fences and coulees woven into the darkness.

Failing to get closer, my buddies drove to the nearest ranchhouse for help. Fortunately, one buddy had taken note of a green feeder in the pasture I was left



Whether you're in the Alaskan wilderness or striking off across your home county, take the time to look ahead. Anticipate the pitfalls. Plan for the unexpected. Prepare for the worst. Take nothing for granted.

in, and the rancher knew exactly where I was. They finally showed up at 10:41 p.m. — a time I still remember to this day.

Since that unforgettable night 40 years ago, I don't go anywhere without wearing a pack that contains water, two ways to build a fire, two headlamps with extra batteries, and an extra layer — usually a puffy jacket. Dumb decisions, careless planning, and a lack of quality gear can get you into serious trouble.

On page 56, survival expert Aron Snyder offers some advice that could help you avoid similar experiences. It's a topic that could fill a book, but these condensed tips should serve as a heads up to get you thinking about the concept of always being prepared for anything. You simply can't do that unless you expect the unexpected. Accidents happen because we don't see them coming. **BH**

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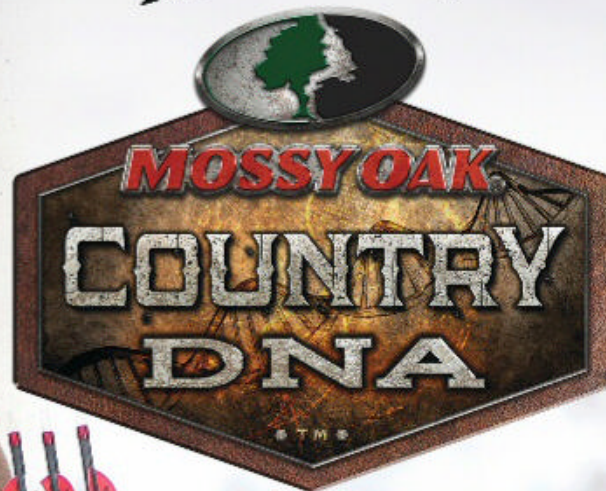
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THE TIME SPENT behind glass watching summer hayfield and setting up countless trail cameras waiting for the results to flash across your phone can be consuming. Your mind often drifts, wondering where *he* is or what *he's* doing as you stare at mapping software and try to put the puzzle pieces together. As your intel increases, so do the waypoints as you narrow down your options. Although I firmly believe in the proverb that a “bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,” that wasn’t the case last season.

A certain buck first grabbed my attention in 2020 when his image flashed across my computer screen. Finding his shed antler the following spring put him on my “short list” come fall. Multiple times I glassed him feeding in a summer hayfield, but when the season opener arrived, he vanished like mature bucks always seem to do. It was a series of trail-camera photos that narrowed my search and ultimately put him in my lap. At less than 20 yards, my arrow zipped through his chest and put a climactic end to the whole experience.

THE CLIMAX OF ANY BOWHUNT IS THE SHOT, BUT FOR MANY, THE CHASE IS AN EQUALLY WORTHWHILE EXPERIENCE.

BRIAN K. STRICKLAND
Equipment Editor



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5



BINOS & RANGEFINDERS

We all know the value of having good optics and well-placed trail cameras. In fact, I bet you would be hard-pressed to find a recent example of when one or both of these tools wasn't involved in the outcome of a successful hunt. Just like the bows we carry and camo duds we wear, they are intertwined in our success season after season. And, many of us simply would be lost without them.

Luckily, finding quality optics and trail cameras isn't too hard these days, and making it even easier to have both under the same banner are the folks at **Covert**. It's no secret they offer some exceptional trail cameras, but this year they threw their hat into the optics arena with their **[1] Covert Optics** (\$499) series. The new glass is offered in 8x42 and 10x42 models, and both have an aluminum frame with a rubberized waterproof/fogproof housing. Optical performance comes from the high-quality ED glass with a BAK-4 lens system that delivers a high-contrast image with ex-

ceptional color. Diamond Bright multi-coated lenses enhance light transmission during those important times.

Another noteworthy optic that combines rangefinding capabilities in a quality package is the **[2] 10x42 Fusion X** (\$699) from **Bushnell**. These binos offer 1-mile range capabilities that incorporate their all-new ActivSync display system, which automatically changes the readout from black to red based on ambient light. You get the High-Definition Optical System you have come to expect from Bushnell over the years, plus near/far ranging modes and bow and rifle ballistics modes for precise shooting, regardless of the angle.

A new bino with rangefinding capabilities is the **[3] RangeGuide** (\$1,099) from **German Precision Optics**. Perfect for whitetail applications, they combine GPObright high-transmission coating with double-HD laminated 32mm objective lenses (in powers of 8X and 10X) to deliver topnotch edge-to-edge sharpness, clarity, and low-light performance.

At just 5.4" tall and weighing 24 oz., they are an ultra-compact combination that is equipped with a fast Class 1 laser that ranges game out to 800 yards. Plus, with true-range angle technology and a scan mode that provides three readings per second, you'll quickly realize the benefits of rangefinding binoculars.

A compact rangefinding binocular defines the new **[4] Geovid Pro 32** (\$2,899) from **Leica**. Available in both 8x32 and 10x32 models, it comes in at less than 2 lbs. and measures just 6". Expect uncompromising optical performance with exceptional light transmission, color, and edge-to-edge sharpness with this glass. They feature precise readings out to 2,500 yards and on-board GPS capabilities that communicate via Bluetooth to Leica's ballistic app, as well as integrate to third-party mapping apps. ProTrack helps hunters not only mark downed game for a quicker recovery, but can also aid when planning a stalk.

Representing an elite line of optics targeting the Western bowhunting

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crowd, **Maven** offers its first B Series model with 50mm objective lenses. With one of the most modern optical systems on the market, as well as the brightest mid-sized binocular Maven has developed, the **[5] B.6** (\$1,050) features a wide-angle Schmidt-Pechan prism, ED glass, and upgraded coatings. It's a great choice for those looking to minimize size and weight without sacrificing brightness and field of view.

A compact design with the exceptional clarity, definition, and light transmission **Zeiss** optics are known for, the **[6] Victory SF 32** (\$2,249) offers a wider field of view, so users can find game faster. With SmartFocus technology built in, it only takes 1.6 revolutions of the focus wheel to precisely zero-in on approaching game. Available in both 8x32 and 10x32 options, they also offer a unique ErgoBalance concept that shifts the center of gravity for a more ergonomic and balanced feel.

If you're looking for a backup pair of binoculars or need to save a few bucks this year, **Hawke's** new **[7] Vantage** (\$160) is one to consider. Powered by Hawke's System H2 Optics line, they are sold in 8x42 and 10x42 models and feature

multi-coated lenses for added clarity and light transmission. Nitrogen-purging makes them dust, fog, and waterproof.

In the "pure" rangefinder category, bowhunters get a nod with **Leupold's [8] RX-1500i TBR/W** (\$299). Not only does it deliver fast and accurate readings out to 1,500 yards with its onboard DNA ranging engine, but with Leupold's bow mode it generates arrow-drop readings out to 175 yards to help deliver precise accuracy. Its TBR/W technology calculates ranges for extreme angles, while also providing 10 mph full value wind hold.

Featuring their legendary HD optical system, **Vortex** adds a trio of rangefinders to their lineup this year. Topping the list is the **[9] Viper HD 3000** (\$599) and Diamondback HD 2000 (\$449). As their names suggest, they have a max range of 3,000 and 2,000 yards, with the ability to range game out to 2,000 and 1,400 yards, respectively. Both of these feature-rich units have crisp 7X magnification, must-have modes like Line of Sight, Scan, and Horizontal Component Distance among others, and a red OLED display that performs flawlessly in low-light conditions. Vortex is also launching the **Crossfire HD 1400** (\$269).

It offers 5X magnification, a max range of 1,400 yards with a game range of 750, plus Line of Sight, Scan, and Horizontal Component Distance modes.

Although some would argue that the **SIG SAUER [10] KILO5K** (\$779) is designed more for the firearms crowd, bowhunters can take advantage of its tech-heavy features as well. Besides being capable of ranging reflective targets out to 5,000 yards, semi-reflective targets to 2,500 yards, and game out to 2,000 yards, it can instantly drop waypoints into the BaseMap App via Bluetooth on ranged targets to help users navigate to bedded game. New target modes like Extended Range, Fog, and First, Best, and Last target help bowhunters make the right decisions.

Breaking the mold in traditional rangefinder technology, **Covert Optics** introduces the first of its kind thermal imaging rangefinder, the **Covert [11] ThermX TRF** (\$2,499). With the ability to detect heat signatures out to 1,600 yards, the ThermX TRF functions as a traditional handheld unit that can also be mounted to a vertical bow, cross-bow, or light-recoil firearms to be used as a thermal sight as well. Images are



viewed on its 1.5" color OLED display, and with the multiple reticles, palette, and brightness options, it functions flawlessly in any light and temperature conditions. This technology-rich unit is powered by a Lepton 3.5 micro core sensor with a fast 9hz frame rate to ensure realtime images. Other notable features include an integrated visual laser to help with windage/elevation adjustments, a 7-degree narrow field of view for quick target acquisition, and solid waterproof performance.

TRAIL CAMERAS

Trail cameras have enhanced our ability to locate game, and for most of us, they are tools we can't do without. With cellular technology improving every year and data plans becoming more affordable, their stealthy benefits far outweigh the cost, especially considering the price of gas today.

Bushnell is certainly one making inroads in the wireless-camera arena, and their **[12] CelluCORE 30 No Glow** (\$249) is one of their latest. Not only is it super easy to set up and even easier to connect, receive and sort high-quality images, but with its .2-second trigger speed and high

output No-Glow LEDs, game won't slip past unnoticed. With the 30MP image sensor and 1080p HD video with sound capabilities, you are assured images are sharp both day and night.

Cuddeback is a household name, and their new **[13] Tracks** (\$149) cellular camera should be popular with bowhunters this year. Dual-paddle antennas guarantee a quality connection, and with its advanced IR-cut image sensor you'll be amazed at the images it delivers. It has a simple onboard interface, so you can make adjustments on the camera directly, or better yet, through a web interface or smartphone app. It also provides the ability for you to automatically send images via text or e-mail to make your buddies jealous.

Adding yet another gem to their wireless line, **Moultrie's** new **[14] Mobile Delta Base** (\$99) is sure to grab your attention. Combining a best-in-class image sensor with their new backend platform, it delivers 24MP image quality and HD video/sound, day or night. Its 36 LEDs reach out to 80', and with the fast trigger speed and 80' detection range, not much will slip past the Mobile Delta Base unnoticed. Images are

sent to the Moultrie Mobile app, allowing users to plan future bowhunts with mapping features, weather details, and activity charting.

The user-friendly **Muddy [15] Manifest 2.0** (\$149) is certainly a great addition to their robust whitetail-tailored product line this year. With the ability to capture crisp 16MP images thanks to the latest firmware enhancements, as well as an extremely easy QR code setup and activation, it won't take long before images flash across your phone screen. It also features an 80' IR flash and detection range and a burst mode to capture multiple images, and with the Stealth Cam Command App and Web interface, you have complete control of the camera from anywhere.

Adding another member to their popular wireless Defender series, **Browning** launches the new **[16] Defender Pro Scout Max** (\$159). Equipped with Dual Carrier Technology, setup is a breeze on either AT&T or Verizon networks, and with the all-new RADIANT 6 Night Illumination Technology coupled with its high-resolutions sensors, it captures striking images and HD video day or night. It has a battery sav-

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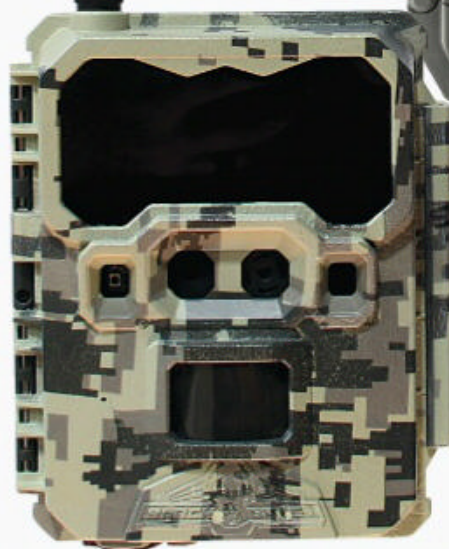
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ing adjustable IR flash range up to 120', and with its detection range of 100' and .25-second trigger and .35-second recovery, nothing slips past without striking a pose.

Connecting seamlessly within the AT&T and Verizon networks, **Covert** revamps their **[17] WC20** (\$129) scouting camera with a new compact look. It's equipped with 40 IR No-Glow LEDs with a flash range of 100' that incorporates an ultra-sensitive .3-second trigger speed with MaXimum Silence Image Capture to ensure nothing spooks when triggered. Its 20MP image sensor also captures full 1080p video. Setup is a breeze with the 1.5" incorporated screen or by simply scanning the QR code, and with the Covert Web Portal and mobile app, you have control.

Improvements to an already popular platform, **Stealth Cam** delivers an upgraded version of their **[18] Fusion X** (\$159) wireless camera. Topping the list is image quality with up to 26MP resolution and 1080p video, plus an added preview mode that shows a 3-frame GIF to determine if the video is worth downloading. Other noteworthy features are its ability to colorize nighttime images

with groundbreaking AI-powered technology, as well as image-tagging options and filters that allow users to organize specific bucks and select filter parameters to identify patterns, timeframe, and environmental conditions. And with the Stealth Cam Command Pro app, users can access controls and images anytime and from anywhere.

SPYPOINT drops another gem in the wireless world with the new **[19] FLEX** (\$). It automatically connects to the best network in your area, and with an antenna that is designed to optimize connection, it delivers excellent performance even when cell service is weak. It has a flash and detection range of 100', and with the 33MP camera that is also capable of producing 1080p video with sound, it delivers exceptional image quality. Setup is a snap with the SPYPOINT App, and with the new responsive trigger that automatically configures the camera's settings to outside conditions, plus the innovative photo and camera management app with customizable maps, weather, and BUCK TRACKER AI filters, you'll be better prepared when you climb into your treestand.

This year, **Wildgame Innovations** adds yet another solid choice to their growing list of wireless cameras with the new **[20] Terra Cell** (\$129). Noted features include a trigger speed just over a half-second, an 80' detection/flash range, and a 20MP camera that seamlessly connects to both the AT&T and Verizon networks. Even if you use a third-party cell carrier, the Terra Cell will still send images to your phone if there's AT&T or Verizon service in range. Not only is it a snap to set up with the HuntSmart App, but with the app's image management capabilities, users can incorporate mapping tools, species recognition, photo sorting, hunt predictor, and buck scoring to plan hunts from their mobile or desktop device.

Rounding out the list is the **[21] R4G** (\$179) from **Black Gate**. It features a trigger speed less than a half-second, and with its proprietary Dual Lens and Dual Sensor technology that is specific to day and night activity, it delivers the best possible images based on those conditions. Ghostlike images are also a thing of the past with the R4G's Motion-Blur Technology and with the 940NM No Glow system, game animals won't even know you're spying on them. **BH**

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BH
GEAR SPECIAL
2022

THERE SHOULD BE a lot of thought put into picking the right hunting bow. And although the “cool factor” is certainly important, weight, balance, speed, stability, efficiency, forgiveness, and noise are really the buzzwords to focus on when it comes to making that final decision. Let’s face it, today’s flagship bows aren’t cheap, and you’ll spend more than a grand when your bowhunting rig is complete. But when you start taking these new bows for a test drive at your local pro shop, you’ll realize they’re worth every penny.

Although we all have our personal preferences, I honestly don’t think you can go wrong with any of today’s compound bows. The variables from brand to brand are pretty slim for the most part, and like anything else, there are trade-offs with each model. No one bow is likely to meet every expectation — at least I’ve yet to find one that does — but at the end of the day, once you give them a spin, you’ll appreciate what these modern bowhunting marvels bring to the table after giving them a spin.

THE LAUNCH OF THE LATEST BOWS ALWAYS DRAWS THE EYES OF SERIOUS BOWHUNTERS.

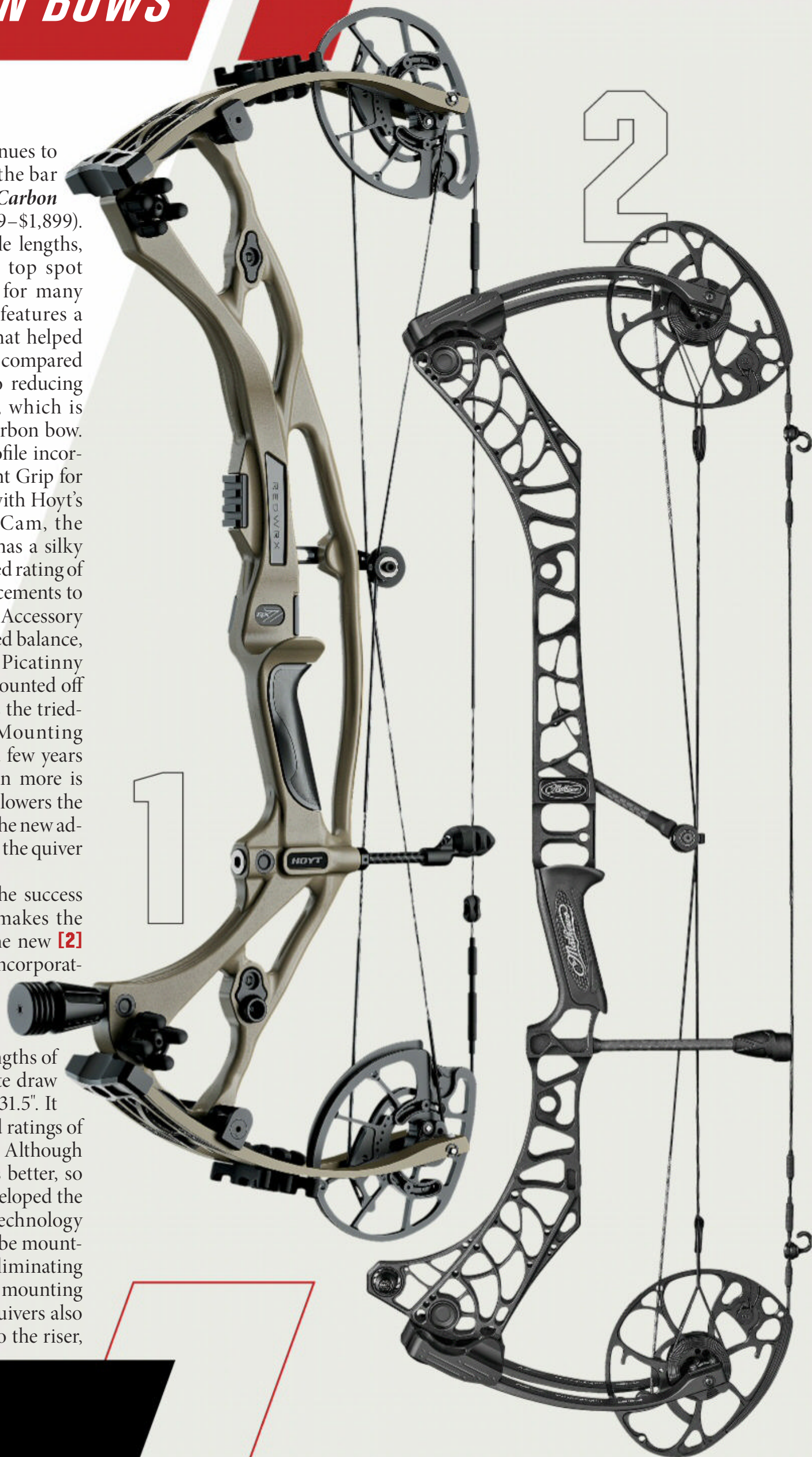


BRIAN K. STRICKLAND
Equipment Editor

NEXT-GEN BOWS

A legacy brand that continues to flex its muscle, **Hoyt** raises the bar once again with the new **[1] Carbon RX-7** and **RX-7 Ultra** (\$1,849–\$1,899). With 30" and 34" axle-to-axle lengths, respectively, they earn the top spot in Hoyt's flagship position for many reasons. First off, the RX-7 features a squared-off carbon frame that helped shave a full half-pound off compared to its predecessor, while also reducing vibration a whopping 29%, which is something coming from a carbon bow. Furthermore, its slimmer profile incorporates the all-new Vital Point Grip for a more consistent hold, and with Hoyt's next-generation HBX Pro Cam, the RX-7 is even easier to tune, has a silky smooth draw, and an IBO speed rating of 343 fps. Other unique enhancements to this RX-7 duo are the In-Line Accessory Mounting System for improved balance, which offers features like a Picatinny sight mount, so the sight is mounted off the face of the bow, as well as the tried-and-true Integrated Rest Mounting System — a fan favorite for a few years now. Enhancing balance even more is the Short Stop Stabilizer that lowers the bow's center of gravity, while the new adjustable quiver mount ensures the quiver stays tight to the riser.

Continuing to build on the success of last year's V3, **Mathews** makes the franchise even better with the new **[2] V3X** (\$1,199–\$1,299) series. Incorporating several new features that are sure to grab the attention of the Mathews faithful, the V3X comes in axle-to-axle lengths of 29" and 33" that accommodate draw lengths of 25.5"–30" and 27"–31.5". It also has impressive IBO speed ratings of 340 and 336 fps, respectively. Although speed is nice, performance is better, so to enhance that Mathews developed the all-new Bridge-Lock Sight Technology that lets a dovetail-style sight be mounted through the bow's riser, eliminating the side weight of an external mounting bracket. Their new LowPro quivers also help by providing a tight fit to the riser,





and when the Mathews QAD Integrated MX Rest is added to the mix, the quiver moves arrows 56% closer to the riser to enhance balance and reduce vibration even more. Last but certainly not least, their innovative Stay Afield System (S.A.S.) offers modified cams paired with the minimalist Flo-orange servicing cable that allows hunters to safely remove the strings and cables without the use of a bow press.

Integrating a target-inspired bow design into a compact hunting rig that is deadly accurate, **Elite Archery** delivers the new **[3] EnVision** (\$1,199). Built with wider limbs and a longer, straighter riser with weight strategically placed over the grip to create more balance, the 31" EnVision truly does live up to its name. Featuring Elite's exclusive SET Technology (Simplifies. Exact. Tuning.), tuning is a breeze, and with a brace height just shy of 7", it delivers the forgiveness and accuracy you'd expect from a target bow. Powered by their ASYM Tri-Track Cam System with Very Performance Mod, the EnVision produces speeds up to 334 fps, and with the micro-adjust draw length in quarter-inch increments and a letoff between 70% and 90%, the EnVision sets up to your precise shooting style. Plus, with the newly incorporated Vibration Reduction Technology combined with VibeX, unwanted noise is reduced, and residual vibration is virtually eliminated.

Makers of some of the smoothest bows ever produced, **Prime** moves away from their signature parallel-cam design with the new **[4] Inline** (\$1,199–\$1,249) series. Sporting single cams to achieve the same benefits that the parallel cams did, the Inline series offers three bows (Inline 1, Inline 3, and Inline 5) with this simpler cam design that ultimately delivers less weight, a quieter delivery, and exceptional accuracy. Available in axle-to-axle lengths of 31", 33", and 35", Prime's new Inline Cam System is the first of its kind that creates an equally loaded cam throughout the draw cycle by bringing

NEXT-GEN BOWS

the cable track in line with the string track for perfect alignment. Not only is this touted as the most accurate compound bow ever designed, but with IBO ratings topping 332 fps, 337 fps, and 343 fps respectively, speed isn't compromised either. Other notables include a lighter and stiffer aluminum riser with a new balanced design, a Nanogrip that incorporates NASA-developed Aerogel to keep the grip from getting cold, and limb dampeners for ultra-quiet performance and a dead-in-hand feel. And like all Prime bows, these come with free strings and cables for life.

Engineered to be the most accurate and comfortable-to-shoot speed bow ever developed, **Bowtech's** new **[5] SR350** (\$1,299) is sure to grab the attention of the Bowtech faithful. Powered by their optimized DeadLock Cam System, this forgiving 33" gem has a speed rating of 350 fps. In addition to its blistering speed, the DeadLock Cams are the most tunable and reliable Bowtech has ever created. When you consider its smooth draw, you'll be comfortably slinging arrows with tack-driving accuracy before you even break a sweat. The SR350 accommodates draw lengths from 25" to 30" and is also equipped with Powershift Technology, which lets you choose between "comfort" or "performance" draw cycles simply by flipping the modules. And like previous Bowtech hunting compounds, the SR350 sports a pair of Orbits at the top and bottom of the riser to absorb vibration.

With detailed input from professional archer John Dudley, **PSE** has raised the bar in carbon bow innovation with the new **[6] Nock On Carbon Levitate** (\$1,899). Designed around its proprietary Dead Frequency Carbon Riser, it comes in at just 3.6 lbs., and because of its advanced design, noise and hand shock are a thing of the past, easily earning the Dead Frequency logo. The 32.25" Carbon Levitate has a new wider limb pocket and split-limb design to deliver better stability, plus with the new smooth-drawing



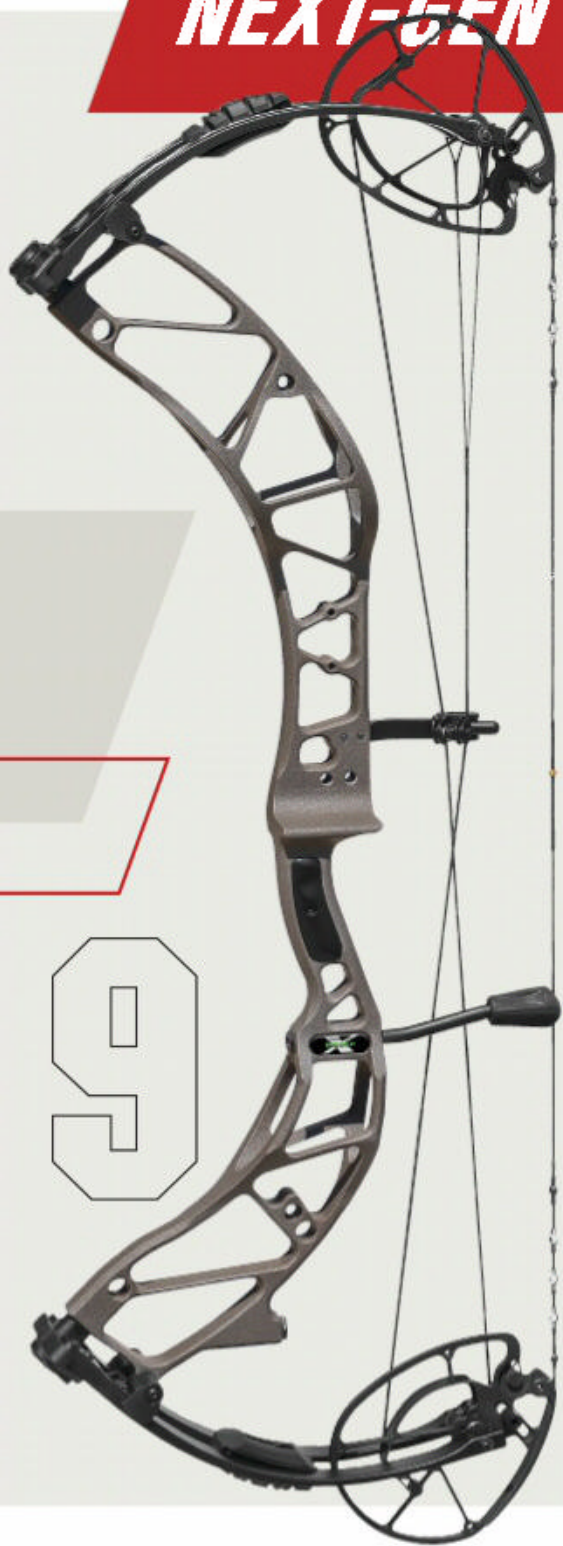


E2 Cam System, it's an extremely efficient bow that delivers an impressive speed rating of 348 fps. Other notable features are PSE's Precision Buss Tuning System, which allows you to make incremental adjustments to cam lean for better tuning, and a new Lock Down Cable Guard System that reduces friction while enhancing consistency.

Bear Archery expands their Legend Series this year with its new flagship **[7] Refine EKO** (\$999). Building upon the success of its predecessor — the 31" Redemption EKO — the 33" Refine has a speed rating of 342 fps, and with the "Refined" all-new Vibration Reduction System that includes KillerWave limb dampeners, it is the quietest compound bow Bear has ever produced. It's driven by Bear's EKO cam system that not only offers a smooth draw but also adjustable draw lengths from 26.5" to 30.5" and a letoff between 75% and 90%. Plus, with the bow's overall weight topping 4.4 lbs. and the new and more comfortable GRIZgrip, the Refine EKO is a pleasure to shoot.

Although it has the same name as its predecessor, don't let that fool you. The new flagship from **Darton**, the **[8] Spectra E 32** (\$1,049), has been completely overhauled to deliver tack-driving accuracy in a 32" package. With an IBO speed rating up to 335 fps, the Spectra is no slouch in the speed category. And although we all like speed when it's time to drop the hammer, consistent performance is what the Spectra truly delivers. It sports wider limbs and limb pockets with a more parallel-limb design than before, and its all-new riser is constructed from a stiffer, high-grade, pre-stressed and pre-stretched aluminum that minimizes riser flex for a dead-in-hand feel and a more stable platform. It's powered by cams with adjustable draw modules (25.5" to 31") with positive limb and cable stops, and with Darton's exclusive Equalizer Cable System, even pressure is achieved on both axles, further enhancing consistency, forgiveness, and performance.

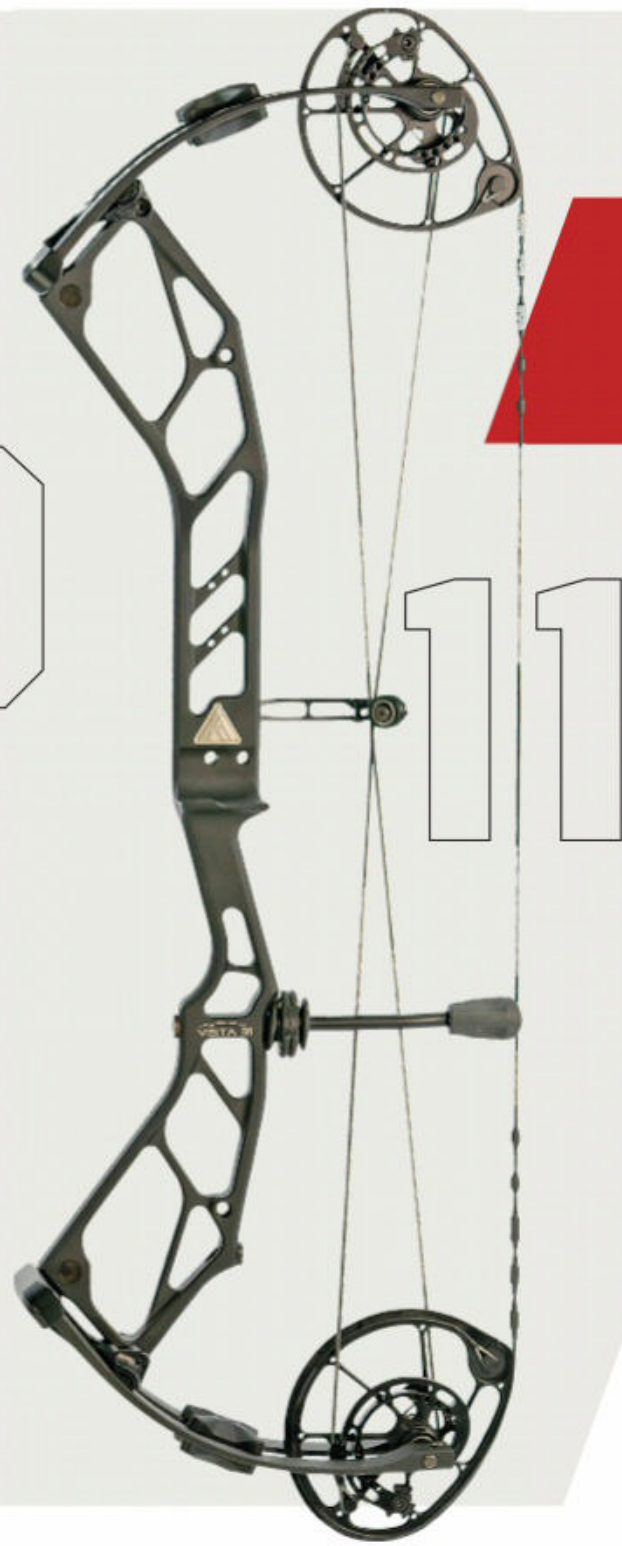
NEXT-GEN BOWS



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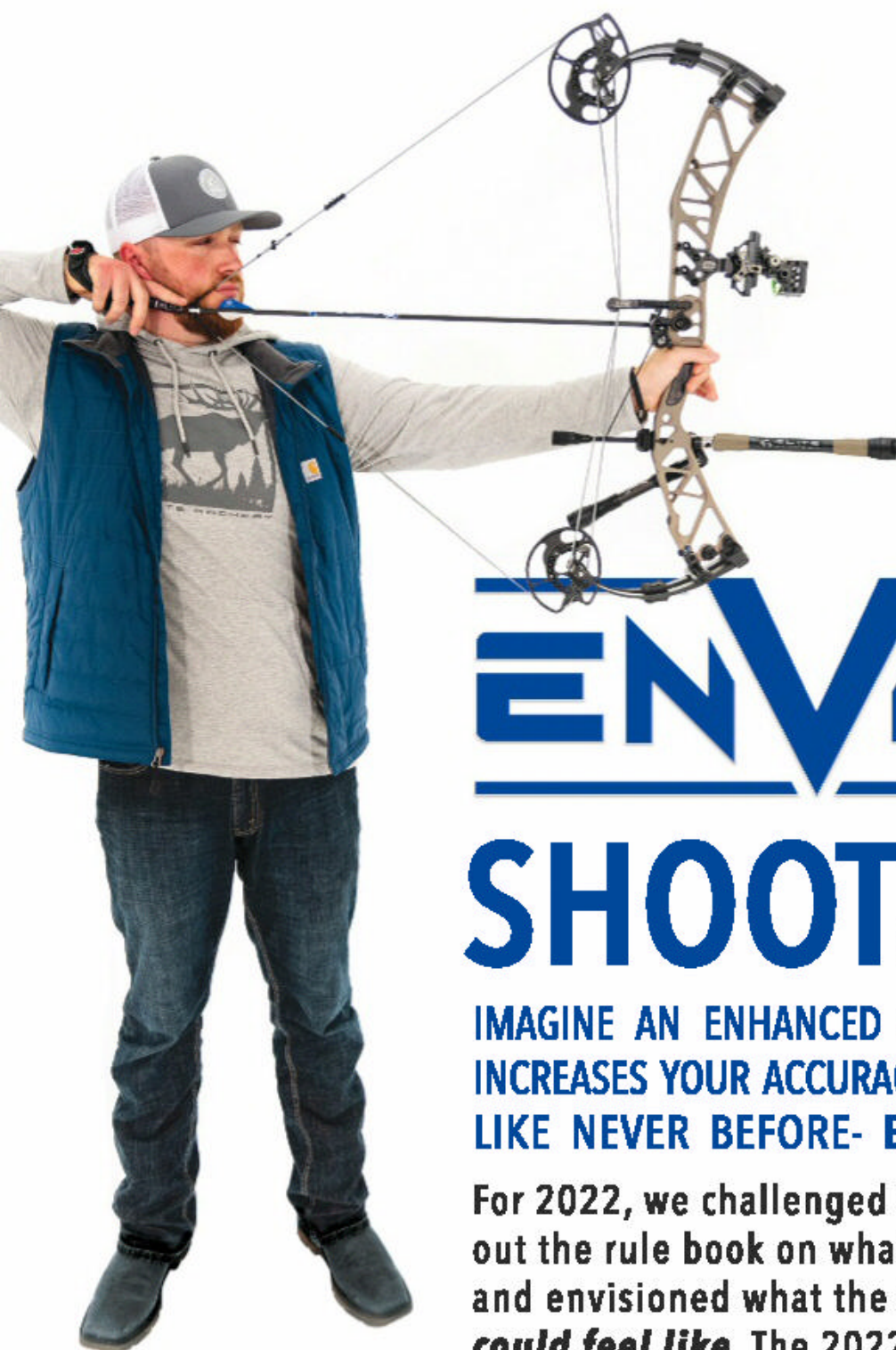
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If you're a fan of **Xpedition Archery**, you are sure to like their limited-edition **[9] Smoke** (\$1,099) for 2022. Not only is it a great value for a bow in the flagship position, Xpedition says it's also the fastest bow they've ever developed. That's an impressive statement, considering their Mako X from a couple of years back had a top IBO rating of over 360 fps. Equipped with a handsome "smoke" finish, the new Smoke features an ultra-smooth but aggressive hybrid cam system with a rock-solid back wall, so you can really lock-in. Draw lengths range from 28" to 30" and are cam specific, meaning there are no modules for adjusting draw length. This speed demon has a 32" axle-to-axle design, comes in at 4.4 lbs., and is equipped with Xpedition's stable X-Lock limb pockets and their ETS (Energy Transfer System) cable system to ensure overall better performance and efficiency with each drop of the string.

Touted as one of the fastest, most-

forgiving hunting bows on the planet, **APA** adds the new **[10] Black Mamba 31** (\$1,199) to their lineup this season. With an axle-to-axle length of 31.25" and weighing 3.8 lbs., it certainly meets the compact and maneuverable standard. Plus, with its speed rating of 350 fps and a brace height of 6.75", the speed and forgiveness boxes also can be checked off. With its slimmed-down Fang Riser design, it has a great natural feel, and by taking advantage of its Mass Transfer Module and Weight Distribution System, you can achieve better bow balance by adding customizable disc weight in key locations. Also, with the riser's built-in tool center that includes a broadhead and nock wrench, as well as a blade sharpener, plus APA's innovative Cam Lock Technology that lets you replace cables and strings and make other adjustments without a bow press, the Black Mamba 31 won't let you down when in-field repairs are needed.

And lastly, grabbing the flagship position for **Athens Archery** this year is the new **[11] Vista 31** (\$1,099-\$1,149). Driven by their ultra-smooth RT-X cam system, it's touted as the most stable, repeatable, and adjustable hunting bow Athens has ever produced. Not only does this popular cam system flex its muscle with arrow speeds topping 340 fps, but it also provides adjustable draw lengths of 24.5" to 30.5" in half-inch increments, as well as 80% and 90% letoff. Adding even more adjustment is their new TCS (Tunable Cable System) roller guard that allows for lateral adjustment to fine-tune arrow flight, and with its Limb-Lok limb pocket design, the Vista's new 1" limbs are securely locked in place to prevent lateral movement for a more consistent platform. Rounding out this 31" bow are the new low-profile X-Out limb dampeners by Mountain View Products, which quiet the bow and give it that dead-in-hand feel at the shot. **BH**



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BEST IN SHAFT

WHEN IT COMES to consistently putting meat in the freezer, few things are as crucial as arrow choice. The arrow leaves the bow, cuts through the air, and drives a broadhead home. If that arrow is of a subpar build, or is over or under-spined for your bow's poundage, problems can occur. From stout bone-breakers to ultra-thin wind-slicers to shafts designed to appease the need-for-speed crowd, finding the right arrow for your bow setup is paramount. Here's what I mean.

**IT WOULD BE WISE TO TAKE A HARD
LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING NEW ARROWS
AND IMPORTANT ADD-ONS.**



JACE BAUSERMAN



1

2

3

4



Last season, the tag gods finally smiled down on me and I drew a Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep permit in my home state of Colorado. It took me 19 years to draw the tag, and I knew a shot of over 60 yards was a definite possibility, so I did some testing and settled on Easton's 4MM Axis Long Range arrow. The shaft cut the wind beautifully, promised great speed and strength, and proved incredibly accurate. The shot on my bighorn was 64.5 yards, and a SEVR-tipped 4MM Axis punched through both of the ram's lungs. Later in the season, when hunting rutting whitetails from an elevated perch in the timber, I opted to go with a heavier, quieter arrow. Sure, the Axis arrows would have worked fine, but testing proved Easton's 4MM FMJ penetrated deeper and was quieter in flight due to its heavier build. There are one-size-fits-all arrow builds, and those engineered for specific bow-

hunting pursuits. In the end, the choice is up to you, and for 2022, there are some great arrows worth considering.

ARROWS

Easton celebrates 100 years of projectile brilliance in 2022, and to honor this momentous occasion, the manufacturer has launched its **[1] 5MM FMJ Autumn Orange 100 Year Limited Edition Shafts** (\$119.99/half-dozen fletched). This limited-time offering gives archers a modern arrow with a throwback nostalgia to the days when they were following Dad and Grandpa around the woods. The 5MM FMJ Autumn Orange is available in spine sizes of 250, 300, 340, and 400. HIT inserts are included, and 5MM X Nocks are installed.

Another new-for-2022 shaft from Easton is the **[2] Sonic 6.0** (\$89.99/half-dozen fletched). Created from scratch using Easton's seamless Acu-Carbon

process to ensure weight and spine perfection, the Sonic's lighter overall weight gives you the ability to build the arrow exactly how you want it based on your shooting and hunting needs. This arrow comes from the factory helical-fletched with Easton's 2" Bully Vane, and the arrow can be designed for lightweight speed setups or high-FOC heavyweights. The Sonic 6.0 is available in six spine sizes (250, 300, 340, 400, 500, and 600), and comes with pre-installed nocks.

Carbon Express' Maxima line needs no lengthy introduction. This tried-and-true arrow lineup has been filling freezers for years and has created more trophy photos for hunters than we can fathom. The latest family member, the **[3] Sable RZ** (\$164.99/dozen bare shafts), is a lightweight hunting arrow featuring TriSpine Technology with 360-degree spine consistency. Upping speed and reducing drop, this .244" inner-diameter hunter is



constructed of 100% carbon, guaranteeing an ideal strength-to-weight ratio, flat shooting, and deep penetration. Available in a dozen bare shafts or a half-dozen fletched with 2" Quadel vanes in black and grey, all Sable RZ arrows come with inserts, Launchpad nocks and shaft-protecting Bulldog nock collars, and in spines of 350, 400, and 500.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. This is **Gold Tip's** mantra for 2022, and who can blame them. The manufacturer's legendary [4] **Airstrike** (\$119.99–\$209.99) is a carbon killer. Built for speed and proven to put both fieldpoints and broadheads in the money zone, this slick-looking arrow has a .204" inside diameter with an extreme front-of-center build. Another huge attribute of the Airstrike is the high-modulus carbon from which it's created, plus GT's exclusive Dyna-Tek Slick Shield Coating, which helps with penetration and arrow removal from

foam targets. The Airstrike is offered in multiple spine sizes.

Victory knows that youngsters are integral to the future of archery and bowhunting, and the company showed its dedication to the next generation of stick-and-stringers with the unveiling of the [5] **Victory VForce JR** (\$70/dozen bare shafts) — a premium projectile designed to give junior competitive archers an edge. These standard-diameter arrows are available in spines of 600, 800, and 1,000 and come with Bohning Blazer Nocks installed, including aluminum inserts. These arrows can be purchased fletched or as bare shafts, and while designed for 3-D and target shooting, they will work equally well in the bowhunting woods. Those who select fletched shafts can expect these carbon arrows to arrive with 2" Q2I Raptor vanes attached.

Another winner from Gold Tip is its [6] **Force F.O.C. Hunting Arrow**

(\$99.99–\$184.99). Designed to produce high kinetic energy and penetrate like crazy, this shaft features an extremely lightweight but high FOC design. The Force was built with an inside diameter of .246" and sports a straightness rating of +/- .001". The arrow comes with both brass and aluminum inserts, so you can customize the arrow's front-end exactly the way you want it.

Dead Ringer has given us plenty of products to gawk at over the years, and its all-new [7] **Sinister** (\$N/A) is worthy of slipping into your favorite quiver. Built off the success of the manufacturer's .006 lineup, the Sinister will put razor-sharp heads on the mark and fill the freezer. This universal 350-spine arrow showcases a .003" straightness rating.

Black Eagle's [8] **Spartan Fletched Arrows** (\$83.99–\$93.99/half-dozen) are a great choice. Black Eagle created the Spartan by taking the best characteris-



tics from larger $\frac{1}{4}$ " arrows and smaller $\frac{1}{8}$ " arrows and married those characteristics together. Available in spines of 200, 250, 300, 350, 400, and 500, there's a Spartan for every shooter. These 100% carbon shafts are fitted with an insert that ensures easier arrow removal and provides beef to the arrow's front to ensure deep penetration.

AMMO MUST-HAVES

Arrow builders cling to **Gateway Feathers** the way good glue adheres to carbon. For 2022, Gateway adds to its famous Batwing line. Enter the **[9] 2" Left-Wing Batwing** (\$22.99/50-pack). Available in Lemon Lime and other all-solid colors, this is the first-ever Batwing available in a left-wing option. Designed for compounds, recurves, and longbows, Batwings are renowned for their ability

to achieve maximum spin when fletched with a helical twist. They also provide excellent speed and stability.

If you're like me and enjoy making up your own arrows, then I implore you to pick up **Bohning's** new-for-2022 **[10] Cauldron** (\$110). A three-vane fletcher, the Cauldron builds arrows quickly and with ease, and its simple-to-switch inserts for different fletching orientations (straight, 1-degree left offset, 1-degree right offset, 3-degree left helical, 3-degree right helical) can be swapped in and out without any tools. This amazingly adjustable jig accepts all arrow diameters, and you can fletch arrows with the nock on for perfect indexing.

Nockturnal's **[11] Shift Nock** (\$32.99/2-pack) is another shining example of lighted-arrow perfection. Available in colors of red, green, and

red/green strobing, this strong polycarbonate nock weighs 25 grains and promises 20 hours of lithium-powered battery life. The big story, though, is the nock's simple on/off design. An external switch makes the process of turning a bright, string-activated nock off more straightforward than ever. Each pack of nocks comes with X, H, S, and GT arrow bushings.

A topnotch lighted nock that promises up to 40 hours of continuous runtime, **Lumenok's** **[12] HD Orange** (\$31.49/3-pack) is 30% brighter to ensure excellent in-flight tracking and arrow recovery. The brightest Lumenok ever produced, the HD Orange is available in numerous sizes to fit several arrow diameters, and aside from the Lumenok X (24 grains), all HD nocks weigh in at 26 grains. **BH**

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BOW ACCESSORIES

RIG ESSENTIALS

KEEP IT TIGHT AND RIG IT
RIGHT WITH THE LATEST
COMPOUND BOW ACCESSORIES.





BRIAN K. STRICKLAND ***Equipment Editor***

WHEN IT COMES down to it, we all strive to be successful in the woods. For most of us who work and have a family, the season only lasts a week or two, maybe three, with a few weekends sprinkled in between. Needless to say, we want to make the most of the time we have because there are only so many Septembers, only so many Novembers.

Certainly, having good woodsmanship skills goes a long way in that process — maybe more than we realize. But the equipment we choose to carry also plays a significant part, especially when it's time to release an arrow. Having a finely tuned bow with functional accessories, like those found in this article, is the foundation of that moment of truth. We may only get one bite of the apple in a season, so we must be prepared to make the most of it.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPOT HOGG

BOW ACCESSORIES

BOWSIGHTS

Luckily, there is no shortage of well-built, functional sights with which to outfit our rigs, and this category starts with bowsight innovator **Spot Hogg** and their latest gem — the [1] **Triple Stack System** (\$199.99). Compatible on Fast Eddie, Fast Eddie XL, Tommy Hogg and Hogg Father sights, the aperture stacks a trio of individually micro-adjustable vertical pins with three individual yardage indicators on the wheel. Simply set the gaps for all three pins, choose the right tape, and you have three aiming points to choose from. Pins are available in .010" and .019", and the aperture is equipped with Spot Hogg's signature Always Up solar wrap for enhanced low-light shooting. The 2nd and 3rd axis can be easily tweaked, and with Spot Hogg's new Quick Disconnect system, it provides a simpler, more intuitive windage adjustment while ensuring an accurate way to switch pin guards without the need to re-level the sight. It also accommodates Mathews' new Bridge Lock system.

FeraDyne Outdoors' **IQ Bowsights** line is another good example of innovation. Retina Lock Technology incorporated into IQ's new [2] **Pro Hunter 3-Pin** (\$329) enables shooters to forget about their peep: Simply align the Retina Lock dot and touch the release. It features a pair of fixed pins and a third floater pin (all .019") for longer distances. The thinner blade-style pins provide a clutter-free view and can be micro-adjusted. Enhancing accuracy even more is its tool-free micro windage/elevation adjustment, as well as 2nd and 3rd-axis adjustment.

HHA expanded its [3] **Tetra MAX** (\$419–\$529) line to fit Hoyt's In-Line mounting system, as well as Mathews' Bridge-Lock mount. It sports brass rack-and-pinion components for ultra-smooth adjustment, and its wheel-forward design eliminates worry that your quiver will get in the way when you need to dial it in quickly. The Infinite Adjustment Rail system allows you to quickly tweak 2nd and 3rd axis. The Tetra MAX comes with two removable yardage wheels for sighting in different arrow setups.

From **Trophy Ridge** comes the new [4] **Digital React** (\$359–\$379). Equipped with a highly visible LED screen, this slider has a digital readout for setting the pin to a precise distance. It sets up in minutes, with the option to use a chronograph or the traditional React method by simply sighting in at 20 and 30 yards and then letting the built-in technology do the rest. This rechargeable unit is available in single and 3-pin configurations, and offers customizable screen colors, bright-





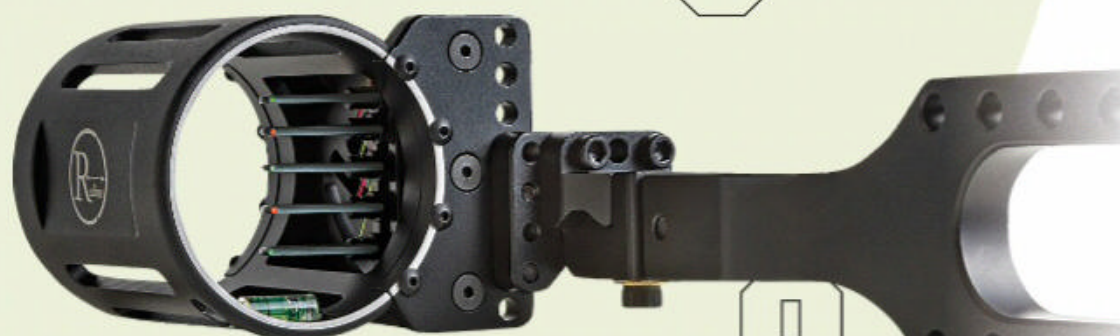
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ness settings, distance increments, and five custom profiles for different arrow setups.

Another slider to consider is the new **[5] Trek** (\$249–\$329) series from **Custom Bow Equipment**. Available in a standard mount or a carbon-fiber dovetail, they come in 1, 3, and 5-pin configurations. Versatility in all important adjustments best describes the Trek. It comes with over a dozen metal sight tapes that bolt on instead of stick, and just like many sights today, simply dial it in at 30 and 60 yards and let the tapes figure out the rest.

The **[6] Magnitude** (\$130–\$152) from **Apex** features a beefy aluminum frame with 2" aperture that's equipped with a new glow ring and implied crosshair to enhance peep alignment. Boosting its accuracy even more is easy 2nd and 3rd-axis tuning and the ability to micro-adjust windage/elevation. Gravity-Line rotational adjustment aligns pin movement for angled-shot accuracy.

Redline is sure to turn some heads with the new **[7] RL-1 Carbon Sight** (\$229). The RL-1 comes in at just over 10 oz. and features a tool-free locking adjustment knob that operates on a nonslip track. It's also equipped with 2nd and 3rd-axis leveling capabilities and comes with multiple yardage tapes and an adjustable yardage pointer.

Built on **Black Gold's** Pro Sight Platform, the new **[8] Dual Trac** (\$439) slider sight enhances target visibility with dual ultra-narrow Pro Pins for quicker target acquisition and more defined aiming points. Its Dual Indicator System has an independently adjustable top pin for your primary distance and second adjustable lower pin if you need to reach out farther. With the adjustable dual-yardage pointers and 54 yardage tapes to pick from, coupled with its ability to micro-adjust windage/elevation, 1st and 3rd axis (non-micro-adjust 2nd axis), 10-ring precision is easily achieved. It's also equipped with Black Gold's legendary PhotoChromatic shell.

Cobra Archery's new **[9] Radius 5-Pin** (\$184) is pretty sweet. Simply sight in at 20 yards with any other distance, and the Radius Technology adjusts the rest with a single turn of a screw. Besides being super simple to set up, it's also designed with machined 6061-T6 aluminum and sports 2nd-axis adjustment for better long-range accuracy.

If you're wanting to cut weight, then check out the new **[10] Armortech Lite** (\$329–\$359) from **Axcel**. With 3, 4, and 5-pin options, it sports Axcel's Accustat II Scope, which features individual pin micro-adjust, bright fire pins with 24" of flexible fiber, and an adjustable rheostat cover that lets you determine the amount of natural light that gets to the pins. It has a redesigned windage bucket with greater overall adjustment, plus true 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-axis adjustment capabilities.

BOW ACCESSORIES



Adjustability has always been the Achilles' heel with red-dot sights, but **Lakeshore Shooting Products** has solved that issue with the new **[11] Adjustable Red Dot** (starting at \$375). The ARD allows shooters to throw away peeps and kissers for quicker target acquisition and less sight and bow clutter. With each click of the dial mounting system representing a predetermined distance out to 80-plus yards, zeroing-in is a snap.

We were all wowed when **Garmin** released the Xero A1 laser-ranging bow-sight several years ago, and the updated **[12] Xero A1i Pro** (\$1,299) is sure to be a hit as well. The A1i Pro is even easier to set up than its predecessor with its Auto Calibration system. Simply dial it in at 20 yards, enter some arrow and bow data, and the sight does the rest. It also features a Dynamic Level system instead of a traditional bubble, and a quick-detach dovetail for better and safer storage. Its Flight Apex system is another nifty upgrade that generates a flashing red

dot to indicate the arrow's highest flight point to minimize deflection, and the new Xtra Distance Mode will improve your long-range accuracy.

LAUNCH PAD

Your arrow rest is obviously a key component to the shot cycle, so having a rest you can fine-tune is a definite confidence builder. **Vapor Trail** brings that confidence bubbling to the surface with the **[13] Limb Driver Pro-VX** (\$209). It incorporates the limb-driven mechanics that put them on the arrow-rest map years ago, and is equipped with a new carbon-fiber, rubber over-molded cage to ensure arrow security. With 10 cage colors to choose from, you'll turn heads at the range. Plus, it's also outfitted with new windage/elevation micro-adjustability and a built-in bubble level.

QAD continues to impress by adding a new model to its successful UltraRest Integrate line. The **[14] UltraRest Integrate R2** (\$199) mounts to the back of the riser via the Integrate Mounting

System, ensuring proper leveling during setup. However, instead of the traditional micro-adjust QAD's other Integrate rests offer, the R2 sports a grip-and-slide system that has a friction-like feel when making adjustments that perform flawlessly and is still loaded with QAD's thumb lever, Velocity Drop technology, and a system that eliminates bounce-back.

Another drop-away with the Integrated Mounting System is the new **[15] Drive IMS** (\$209) from **Ripcord**. It's a full-containment rest with a precision ball-bearing drive system with internal dampening that delivers consistent performance. Its over-molded launcher with soft rubber coating minimizes noise on the draw, and its foolproof cord-tension adjustment design can be activated from either the top or bottom limb.

Trophy Taker knows the ins and outs of what makes a quality arrow rest. Their latest is the **[16] Xtreme Pro Lock Up** (\$129–\$149), and it's available in both a standard and a micro-adjust Click mod-

EXERT

CRISP

CONTROL

PRECISION

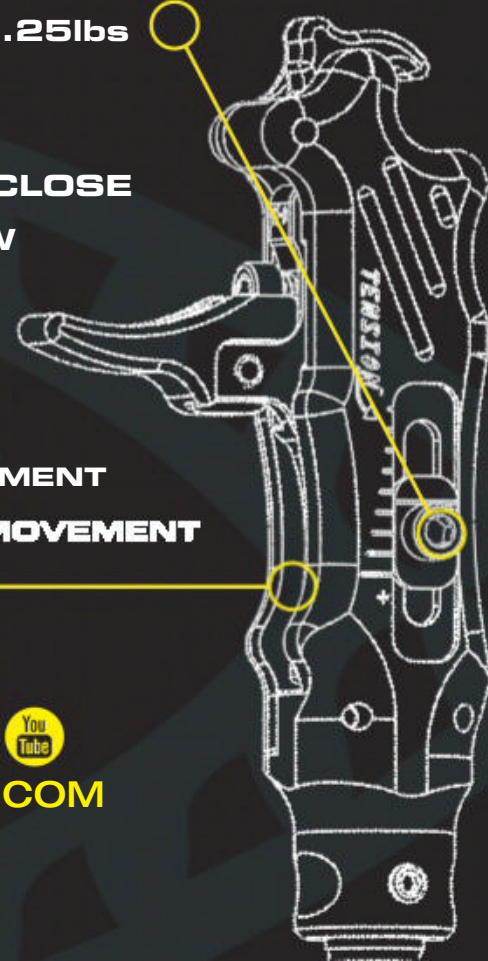
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HOOK STYLE JAW**

**OVERTRAVEL ADJUSTMENT
CONTROLS TRIGGER MOVEMENT
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BOW ACCESSORIES



el. A push lever locks the launcher into place. Upon release, the roller bearings and rubber-cushioned launcher go to work to provide quick and quiet performance. With no bow press needed to set up, both rests have windage/elevation adjustment capabilities with the Click model offering micro-adjustability.

The **[17] Epsilon** (\$249) from **Hamskea** certainly won't disappoint. It mounts directly behind the riser to achieve perfect centershot performance. This streamlined fit allows you to position the quiver closer to the riser for better balance. It comes configured for bottom-limb activation, but can be altered for top limb and cable activation as well. Its micro-adjust windage/elevation tuning with .003" per click will get you locked in, while the trio of stainless-steel bearings consistently engages the launcher to deliver repeatable accuracy.

The **[18] XV Rest** (\$159) from **Schaffer Performance Archery** gets the job done. The XV's Oilite bearings function smoothly in virtually any weather, while the cushioned V-Block containment arms lock your arrow in position either before the shot manually, or when draw-

ing your bow. The V-Block's arms quickly open at the shot to provide complete fletching clearance.

NAP's **[19] Apache Drop-Away** (\$69) rest is also worth mentioning, even though it's not "new" this year. It has 360-degree sound dampening in the housing and on the launcher, and it doesn't require any tools to make adjustments. Laser-engraved marks help with fine-tuning, and it's built to take what hard-charging bowhunters put out.

BALANCE IT OUT

If there is one accessory many bowhunters skip on, it would have to be the stabilizer. Maybe it's due to their simplicity of design, or maybe we are just being cheap. Either way, having a noisy, unbalanced bow will cost you some day.

When a company only makes stabilizers, they have obviously found their niche, which sums up what **Stokerized** has accomplished for nearly a decade. This company married the infinite adjustability of their patented Stasis All Axis Pivot point with the SS1 offset bracket and small-diameter M1 carbon tubing to develop the new **[20] M1 Sta-**

sis Stabilizer System (\$136–\$308). It's made from a stiff, high-modular carbon to significantly eliminate vibration, while also providing the best balance a stabilizer can offer.

Achieving the best balance possible while also gobbling up vibration is the **[21] MicroHex Counter Slide** (\$129–\$154) from **Bee Stinger**. Available in 10", 12", and 15" lengths and five color options, the MicroHex incorporates Countervail Technology, which is a material integrated into the carbon rod that substantially dampens noise and vibration. Its counter-slide ability coupled with the five independent 1-oz. weights allows shooters to instantly achieve perfect balance.

With multiple colors and three lengths to choose from, the new **[22] Carbon XS** (\$79–\$94) from **Dead Center** should make your short list. At its core is a micro-diameter aluminum end-cap, with an even thinner carbon shaft that delivers weight reduction without sacrificing stability. BowJax Stabilizer Silencers and dual O-rings minimize noise and vibration, and its interchangeable disk weight system makes optimum balance easy to obtain.

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BOW ACCESSORIES



Fuse Archery needs no introduction, and their [23] **Carbon Torch FX** (\$69) is one of the many reasons why. It has a carbon shaft with custom rubber dampeners that incorporate Stealth Disc and Stealth Flex Technology. They're available in 6", 8", and 10" configurations, come in at just over 7-oz., and the Stealth Discs are offered in eight colors.

For backcountry bowhunters, **Viper Archery** gives you the [24] **VHS Hunter Series** (\$49–\$79). Offered in three length configurations, the VHS Hunter sports a CNC machined-aluminum base and shaft with a ribbed, soft-rubber dampener near the tip. It comes with a 4-oz. disk weight on the tip but can be adjusted if additional weight is desired.

TruGlo is certainly no slouch when it comes to developing affordable accessories, and their [25] **Carbon Fiber**

Cadence (\$43) is a worthy candidate. At 8.5 oz. and a length of 8", its base is constructed from machined aluminum that is fitted with a carbon-fiber shaft. It's tipped with a pair of dampeners positioned along the horizontal and vertical axis. It sports TruGlo's Tru-Touch coating and has a weight-forward design to help with stability.

HOLD YOUR AMMO

Revolutionizing the whole quiver concept years ago, **TightSpot** does it again with the new [26] **Shift Lock** (\$199). Continuing the trend of keeping the quiver as tight to the bow as possible, the genius behind the Shift Lock is its infinite adjustability that creates an ultra-compact design, or you can extend the carbon-rod system to virtually secure the whole arrow for the utmost in vibration reduction. Like

all TightSpot quivers, the Shift Lock is made with premium materials and dual arrow grippers that will hold any size arrow shaft.

When weight matters, you'll appreciate what the **Redline** [27] **RL-1 Carbon Quiver** (\$159) delivers. Coming in at 9.7 oz., "lightweight" is an understatement. It holds 6 arrows no matter the size, and has a soft-touch rubber hood insert to keep things quiet. It also has over a foot of adjustment and a quick-detach mount.

Versatility best describes the new [28] **VRSA Light** (\$149) from **Trophy Ridge**. It's a one-piece quiver that holds 5 arrows (any size), and with the dual-mounting option you can either mount it on the sight bracket or to the bow's riser. It comes assembled with 16" rods, but 10" rods are also included if you desire a more compact design.

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COMING SUMMER 2022



BOW ACCESSORIES



Needing a quality quiver at a rock-bottom price, look no further than the **Bohning [29] Bruin** (\$43). Its dual-retaining grippers accommodate all arrows, and the molded hood with sound-dampening liner keeps the noise down. Helping to keep the 8-oz. Bruin on the light side is its high-impact, adjustable and removeable composite stem. It's available in multiple hood colors.

A CLEAN RELEASE

Although making your rig cool and consistent with the latest accessories is important, even more so is having a quality release aid that will help you make the most accurate shot possible.

On that note, let's start this category off with the new **[30] Centerline** (\$129) from **T.R.U. Ball**. Designed to cancel torque and deliver a smooth and crisp release every time, it sports a new Tri-Star Hook system that resets after each shot, and with its textured thumb and forefinger locations and thin profile, it delivers a more natural grip during the draw cycle. The internal stainless-steel

sears are hardened for durability, and the separate triple-travel and sensitivity adjustments give its trigger a quality feel.

Also delivering crisp performance this year is the new **[31] Exert Buckle Foldback** (\$179) from **TruFire**. Bringing target-release features to a comfortable wrist design, the Exert's precision-milled, internal dual-sear system eliminates bow-weight stack to deliver snappy performance. Trigger tension and travel are micro-adjustable. With the push of a button, you can set the trigger, and you're ready for quick hook-ups thanks to the open-hook design.

The **[32] Classic Release Series** (\$119–\$139) from **Buck Rub Gear** is built around the tried-and-true Fletcher platform. Its straightforward Over Center Trigger helps users achieve the perfect release we all strive for, and with both trigger tension and travel adjustment, you can easily find your sweet spot. Also, with its springless Auto Self Locking Gate, premature releases will be a thing of the past.

Offering 2, 3, and 4-finger configurations, the **[33] Harvester** (\$209) is **Cobra's** first-ever thumb release. The Unified Trigger System allows the thumb barrel to be adjusted for sweep, rotation, and length, and with both sensitivity and weight adjustments, you'll have no trouble finding the best feel for your shooting style. Its self-capturing hood locks into place, and with the lanyard hole directly behind the hook, you can easily align your anchor point when combined with the lanyard wrist strap.

Last but definitely not least, is **Scott Archery's** new **[34] Verge** (\$149). This release incorporates customizable features for next-level bowhunting accuracy. The adjustable 2-finger design with single-sear mechanics not only has adjustable travel settings so shooters can get the desired feel but also incorporates a pre-shot click option for really dialing things in. With its slim, open-hook design, hook-ups are quick. And it's equipped with a pivoting swivel connector with Scott's NCS adjustable strap that accommodates all hand sizes. **BH**

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BROADHEADS

CHOICE CUTS

**BROADHEAD CHOICE IS PERSONAL,
BUT YOU MUST GO WITH A DESIGN
THAT MAKES YOU BELIEVE.**



ULTIMATELY, WHAT YOU decide to thread into your arrow inserts is entirely up to you. There are piles of quality heads on the market — fixed, mechanical, and hybrid — each explicitly designed for a purpose. My advice: If you have confidence in a backstrap-getter, don't change just to change. In bowhunting, confidence in your gear is critical. If it isn't broken, don't fix it. However, if you've had some issues, it might be time to test and tinker and find a new killer broadhead.



JACE BAUSERMAN



BROADHEADS



When deciding which broadhead is right for you, it helps to jot down some notes. For instance, if you're a whitetail hunter who doesn't shoot past 40 yards, you can go with a fixed, mechanical, or hybrid model. All will be super-accurate and do what they're intended to do from 40 yards and in. When it comes to cutting diameter, I personally like a head that cuts a 1.5" to 2" hole. If you're hunting pronghorns or mule deer out west where the wind rips and shots can be long, you may want to look long and hard at a mechanical broadhead. These heads tend to be a tad more accurate and fly more like a fieldpoint. Plus, there is less surface area for the wind to push against and alter your point of impact. If heavier-boned game like elk or moose are the goal, I still heed the expandable call, but a durable fixed-blade head with razor-sharp blades is mighty hard to beat.

Premium broadhead-maker, **Iron Will**, launched its Single Bevel broadhead in 2021, and for 2022, the manufacturer is offering the head in a **[1] Left-Rotating Single Bevel** (\$109.95–\$124.95/3-pack). Why? Precision. Bowhunters who shoot a left-rotating arrow need a matching left-rotating broadhead

to ensure the head stays tight to the arrow as it drives through the animal. Engineered with industry-leading tolerances, proven A2 Tool Steel blades, and a ferrule that is Superman strong, this head is available in weight options between 125 and 250 grains.

Swacker adds another nasty sting to its line with the **[2] #257 Hybrid** (\$54.95). Building upon the company's proven wing-blade design, which deploys the primary blades internally for more consistent pass-throughs, the 100-grain Hybrid, with the addition of the 1" fixed bleeder blade, gives users four blades that ultimately cut a 1.75" hole in whatever game you are pursuing.

A well-designed mechanical broadhead that promises to create ample blood trails, **SIK's [3] SK2** (\$49.99/3-pack) also provides pinpoint accuracy. The 2" Offset Blade Design deploys on impact and cuts a severe gash. In addition to the 2" cut, the SK2 also creates a 3.25" cutting surface. Designed to cause massive trauma and blood loss, this head deserves a place in your quiver.

NAP has been filling freezers with its fixed, mechanical, and hybrid heads for decades, and this company's latest

incarnation, dubbed the **[4] Endgame** (\$54.99/3-pack), is sure to be cheered. Spin-tested to guarantee optimal flight performance, this 2-blade fixed head has a 1³/₁₆" cutting diameter, and the Bone Breaker point paves the way for the duo of .031"-thick blades. Each pack comes with a spare set of blades for practice or hunting.

We've come to expect great things from **G5 Outdoors**, and for 2022, this archery superstar beefed up its already impressive line. The new kid on the block is called the **[5] Deadmeat V2** (\$49.95/3-pack), and like its predecessor, this mechanical ensures 10-ring accuracy, toughness, and power. The 100% all-steel ferrule is bulletproof, and its build allows the broadhead to drive deep and make way for the surgical-sharp threesome of steel blades. The result is a 1.5" cutting diameter and quick deaths. The Deadmeat V2 comes with a B.M.P. (Ballistic Matched Point) engineered to mirror the actual broadhead to enhance your practice sessions. The V2 is available in 100 and 125-grain options.

Hybrid heads are getting lots of love, and designs like **Slick Trick's [6] Assailant** (\$47.99/3-pack) are a big reason



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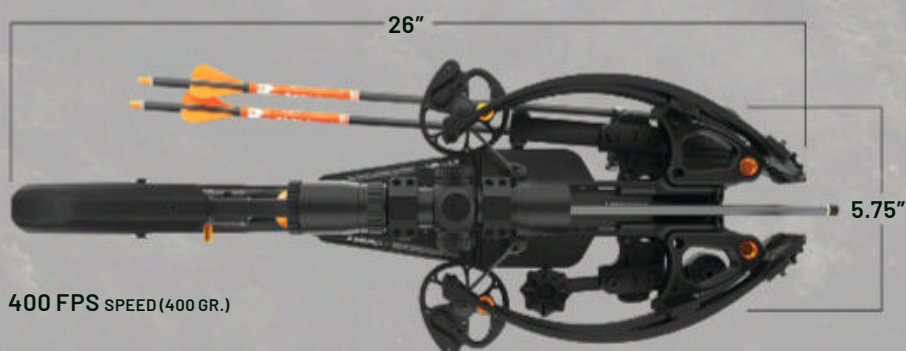
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BROADHEADS



7

8



why. With a massive cutting surface of 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ ", the Assailant blends features of the extremely popular ViperTrick and RaptorTrick. The broadhead's 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " expandable blades and $\frac{7}{8}$ " fixed bleeders wreak havoc on big game. The Assailant sports Slick Trick's proven Alcatraz Blade Lock System and weighs 100 grains.

Fitted with a trio of hand-sharpened steel blades, SYKD's new **[7] Hunt Endurance** (\$29.99/3-pack) was engineered to work when fired from horizontal and

vertical bows alike. Built on a bulletproof ferrule, this three-blade features a bone-crushing steel head that boosts penetration, and the blades lock into place from the front end to prevent any blade rattle or movement. Each SYKD Hunt Endurance head is made to perform, endure, and most importantly, blow through whatever is in its way.

Tooth of the Arrow is a fixed-blade broadhead manufacturer growing in popularity with the bowhunting

crowd, and its new **[8] S-Series** (\$44.95–\$49.99/3-pack) is sure to strengthen its already loyal following. The S-Series is an ultra-durable 4-blade head available in 1" and 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ " options with weights ranging from 100 to 175 grains. The S-Series is fully machined and heat-treated — Tooth of the Arrow took no shortcuts — and each broadhead is made in the USA.

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9



10



11



VIP Archery adds the **[9] Bomber** (\$39.99/3-pack) and **Combat Veteran** (\$39.99–\$49.99/3-pack) to its razor-sharp family. The Bomber is a three-blade fixed head that produces a cutting width of 1.2", and the head comes in 100 and 125 grains. The Combat Veteran is a 4-blade mechanical created using Momentum Management and Flexcut technologies. This mechanical comes in grain options of 100, 125, and 175, and pokes a 2" hole.

Wasp's 100-grain **[10] Z-Force** (\$41.99/3-pack) is a compact mechanical designed for accuracy. Made with a unique ball-bearing system for precise blade deployment, the Z-Force cuts a 1 5/8" hole, and the surgical-sharp blades work in tandem with the solid-steel ferule to improve overall performance and toughness.

Rage solved the "collar" issue on its famed Trypan in 2021, and the design, thank God, is back for 2022. A 2"-cut

killer, the **[11] Trypan NC** (\$44.99/3-pack) is fitted with .039"-thick blades that are both sharp and durable, and the super swept-back blade angle helps increase penetration. No Collar technology, though, is the big success story. The design eliminates the need for Rage's Shock Collars, which means its blades won't come open in your quiver, or while loading an arrow. With NC technology, blades only open when they are supposed to.

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BROADHEADS



12



13



14

Always looking for ways to refine their lung-punching line of mechanical heads, SEVR's **[12] Titanium 2.0** (\$13.99 per head) now features an improved chisel tip to bolster overall broadhead strength upon impact. Renowned for its fieldpoint accuracy and ability to zip through game and create large wound channels, SEVR has become a top choice of many bowhunters. The head still features SEVR's patented rear-deploy, locking-pivoting blade technology, and

it can be set to Practice Mode via the addition of a small setscrew.

Matching the length of the QAD **[13] Exodus** (\$40/3-pack) ferrule to a field-point and extending the razor-sharp blades back over the ferrule, this 3-blade provides precision accuracy and maximum penetration. With a blade thickness of .040" and a cut-on-contact hardened SST Tip, the Exodus promises a 1.25" cut and red-carpet blood trails. Available grain options are 85, 100, and 125.

The name says it all, and although the Muzzy **[14] One** (\$47.99/3-pack) fixed-blade was launched in 2020, it continues to be a favorite of those who demand sharp blades, broadhead durability, and accuracy. Machined from a single piece of high-grade stainless steel, tolerances are tight, and the hybrid chisel cut-on-contact tip blended with three .046"-thick blades drives the broadhead deep into game. The Muzzy One is available in 85, 100, and 125-grain options. **BH**

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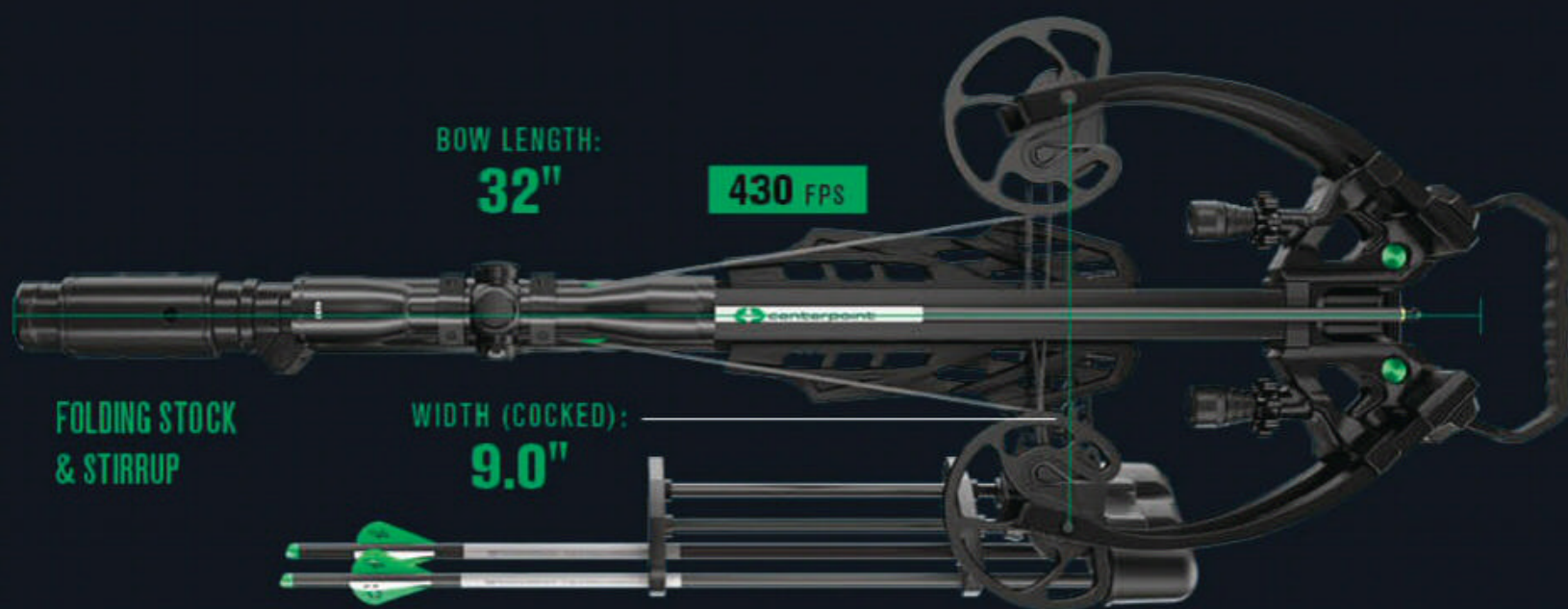
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THE BASICS OF

WHEN I WAS A KID, I was enamored with trapping, survival, and anything to do with sustaining myself in the wild with next to nothing. I read books, talked to “experts,” and practiced everything I could in case living off the land was ever needed.

Fast-forward a few decades and several near-death experiences later, and my outlook on survival and the outdoors has changed dramatically. Now, there’s nothing wrong with having a skillset to survive with a pocketknife and a few feet of paracord, but in my opinion, if I’m to a point of building wicker baskets and gill nets to stay alive, then something has gone terribly wrong.

One of the first things that I’ve come to realize is the difference between survival, sustainment, and thriving. When I’m on an extended backpack hunt (10–14 days), my goal is to thrive while trying to put an animal on the ground. If something went wrong while I was there (major injury, altitude sickness, hypothermia, etc.), then that would be in the category of survival. If I had broken a major law, the Russians attacked with an EMP, etc., that would be sustainment with the hopes of potentially thriving.

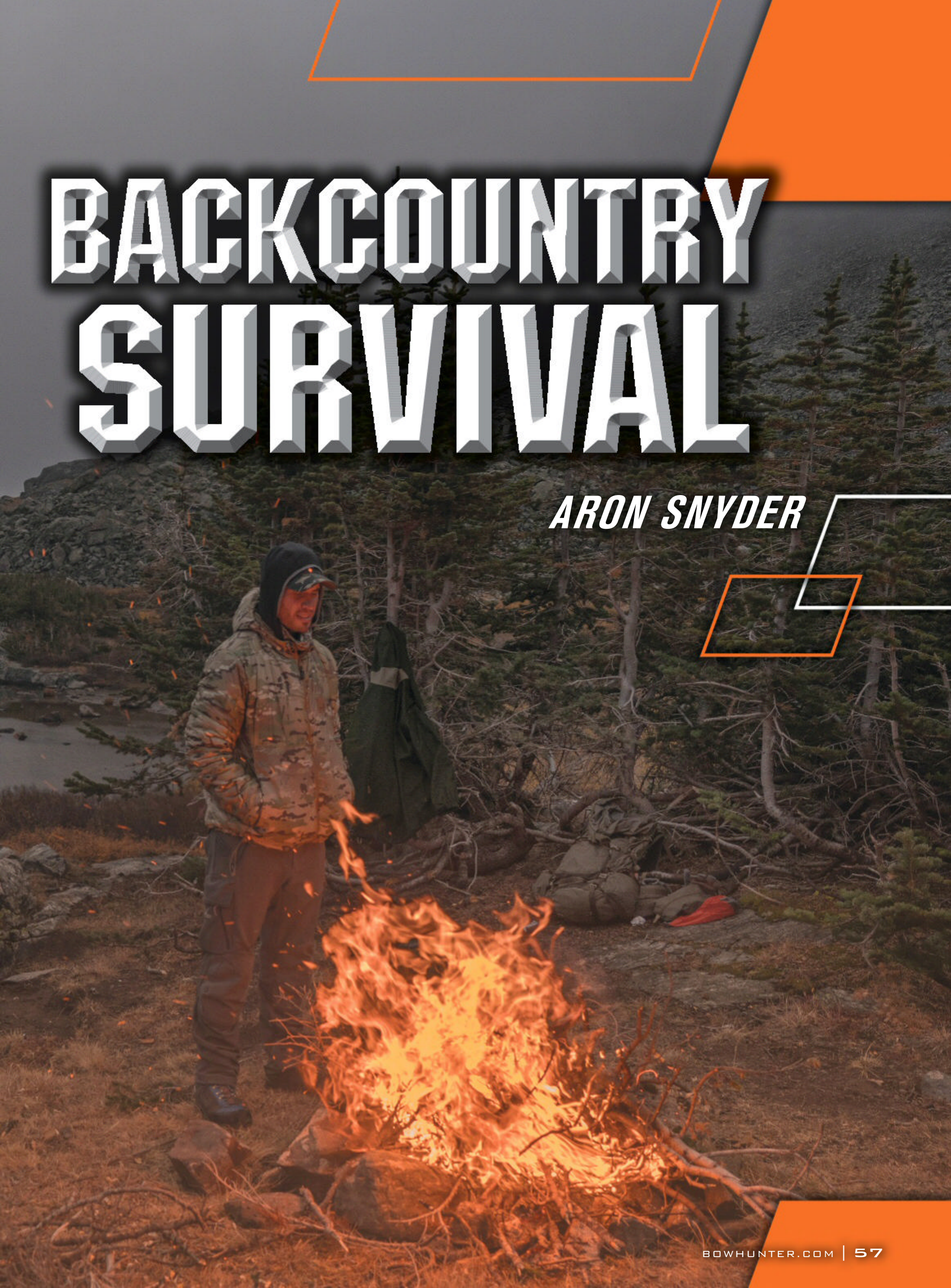
So, let’s look at the reality of what you’ll be dealing with on a backpack hunt, and what you will need to know, as well as what gear will be needed to help you survive, but more importantly, thrive.

When you get to the meat and potatoes of living in the wilderness for a couple weeks, food and water are going to be dang important, considering a human can only survive a couple days without water and 2–3 weeks without food. Having said that, let’s cover what I consider to be the most important items first.

IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE A WILDERNESS BOWHUNT, THEN YOU’D BEST COME PREPARED.

BACKCOUNTRY SURVIVAL

ARON SNYDER





No element is more important than clean water. Use a Steripen (upper left), tablets or drops (lower left), or a filter pump to sanitize your water. Drinking unfiltered water is risky.

WATER

I believe that the normal human should take in 80 to 120 oz. of water each day, and that shouldn't change when you're in the wilderness. So how and what do I use to consume that much water in a day? It's somewhat anticlimactic when you look at all the options for purification and filtration systems.

The **(1) Steripen Classic** has stood above everything else I've tested for my day-to-day purification system. It's lightweight, simple, and very effective in almost every situation. It doesn't have filtration, so you'll need some type of filter if you find water with a lot of debris, but that's an easy fix if you think ahead (coffee filters or a bandana work great). The Steripen is basically a small wand device that emits ultraviolet light that kills everything from Hepatitis to Giardia. Anytime I find a water source throughout the day,

I just fill up my Nalgene bottle, hit a button on the Steripen, and swirl the wand around for the proper amount of time (90 seconds for 32 oz.) and it's ready to drink. The Classic operates on 4 AA batteries, but I've never had an issue with this.

The water-purification systems that are my primary go-to for large amounts of water (3–6 liters) are **(2) Aqua Tabs** or **Aqua Mira**. These two options are even simpler than the Steripen, and I strongly suggest you have one of these products with you at all times. The Aqua Tabs are small pills that weigh next to nothing, and Aqua Mira is a two-part system that looks like a small bottle of eyedrops. One Aqua Tab will purify 32 oz. of water in about 30 minutes. Seven drops from each container of Aqua Mira will do the same.

Other options include pump filters and gravity filtering systems. Both work

fine but are heavier and bulkier than the options mentioned above. Most importantly, do not drink unfiltered water, or you will likely regret it.

FOOD

I could write a book on food for the wilderness, but to keep it short and simple, make sure whatever food items that go into your pack offer a minimum of 100 calories for every ounce of weight. If the package weighs 4 oz., it should have at least 400 calories. This is just a general rule, as you'll want to get the biggest bang for your buck when packing food on your back.

After that, you want to make sure that you'll actually enjoy eating what goes into your pack. This seems obvious, but you'd be surprised at how many people don't try the food they're taking ahead of time. They have no idea how many calo-



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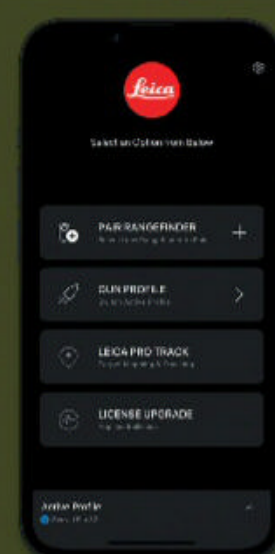
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SURVIVAL GEAR/STRATEGY



Put in the effort and research to develop a food system that will keep you thriving on a backcountry hunt, or save your life in a survival situation. My approach has served me well.

ries per day they need, and basically end up stuffing a bunch of food into a bag with no real plan.

Here's what I do to keep from over or under eating each day.

For each day of the trip, I pack a 1-gallon Ziplock bag. If I'm going on a 10-day trip, I'll have 10 bags — each containing between 3,200–3,500 calories and weighing around 2 lbs. (100 calories per ounce minimum). On the days I'm really getting after it physically, I'll eat everything in the bag; on easier days, I'll save a little in case I need to extend my trip or need a little extra for a real butt-kicker of a day.

Following these guidelines does take a bit of effort to dial in, but once you know what you like to eat and how many calories you actually need, you will have a much lighter pack and a lot more energy each day.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Having a good communication device will not only save your life but potentially save your marriage and job as well. I've been lucky enough to use just about every option on the market, and there are a couple that stand out above the rest for reliability, weight, and ease of use.

The **ZOLEO** and **Garmin inReach** are two different devices that work as a hotspot with your smartphone and connect to satellites anywhere in the world. So not only can you text message anywhere in the world, but you can also use them as a GPS, SAR beacon, and much more. You will need to download an app to your phone to use them, and there's a monthly/yearly charge for each. These devices will keep you in touch with the outside world should you find yourself in a bad spot. The only thing I would add to this is to learn the ins and outs of

both devices BEFORE heading into the wilderness, and make sure everything is connected and working properly! There's a ton of info online, and a quick search will give you lots of information on whichever device you decide on.

FIRE

Building a fire with a hand drill, bow drill, or fire plough may seem cool, but if I find myself in a situation where I'm forced to build a fire with these methods, something has gone terribly wrong. This is not to say you shouldn't learn how to use these methods, but I prefer a more practical fire-starter system when I'm backpack hunting.

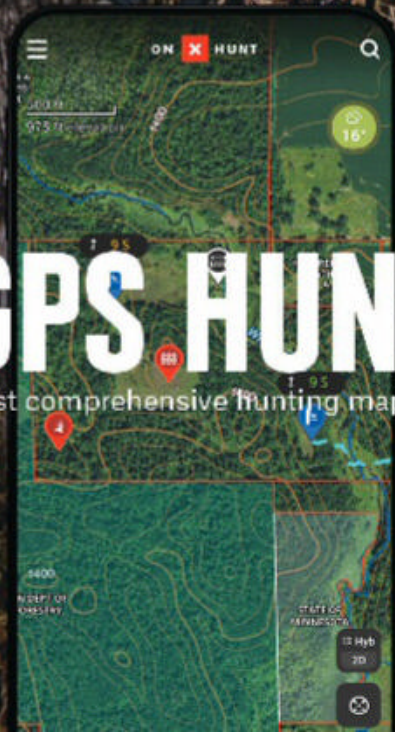
Now, when I say, "fire starter," I don't just mean something that makes a spark; I mean something that will light and burn at a good temperature for a decent period of time.

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SURVIVAL GEAR/STRATEGY



Fire can be a critical element for keeping you alive, or at the least, comfortable. Make sure you always carry a primary and a back-up method for creating fire.

My main goal is to be able to start a fire in any condition as fast as possible, and with the least amount of weight in my pack. I also want one or even two backup systems in case my primary one goes down. Most people's primary system isn't the most durable, so a secondary is a must-have either way. Just remember that fire is life, and a few extra ounces isn't much to bear if things go sideways.

Primary: Bic lighter/Trioxane tablets.

Secondary: Wolf and Grizzly Ferro rod and striker/Pyro Putty

Alternate: Waterproof matches/cotton balls in Vaseline

GPS/NAVIGATION

As mentioned above, communication devices can be used as a GPS, but having a wristwatch with GPS, a compass, a map — and the knowledge to use them — will not only keep you safe but also make you a more effective hunter. The wristwatch options are very convenient and quick. While they don't have the frills of an actual handheld GPS,



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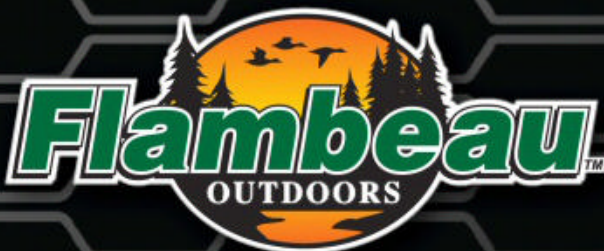
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SURVIVAL GEAR/STRATEGY



they offer far more than you will need when used correctly.

As much as I'd like to do a full-on dissertation on land navigation, I don't have enough space in this article. I do, however, have enough room to tell you what options and tools would be needed to get started. After that, it's on you to do the research and become proficient with whatever product you choose to use.

(3) Garmin Instinct Solar watches and the **(4) Garmin 601** have served me well and are both relatively simple to use. The 601 uses AAA batteries, and the Instinct is rechargeable. I don't use the Instinct on extended trips because of the battery life issues, but either will work fine, depending on the situation. Both offer a lot of options, but learning how to read/understand an 8 or 10-digit UTM grid coordinate and how to plot it on a map will definitely help you get the full potential out of your watch when it comes to navigation.

When it comes to compasses, my personal favorite for the way I navigate is a **(5) Suunto M9** wrist compass. This

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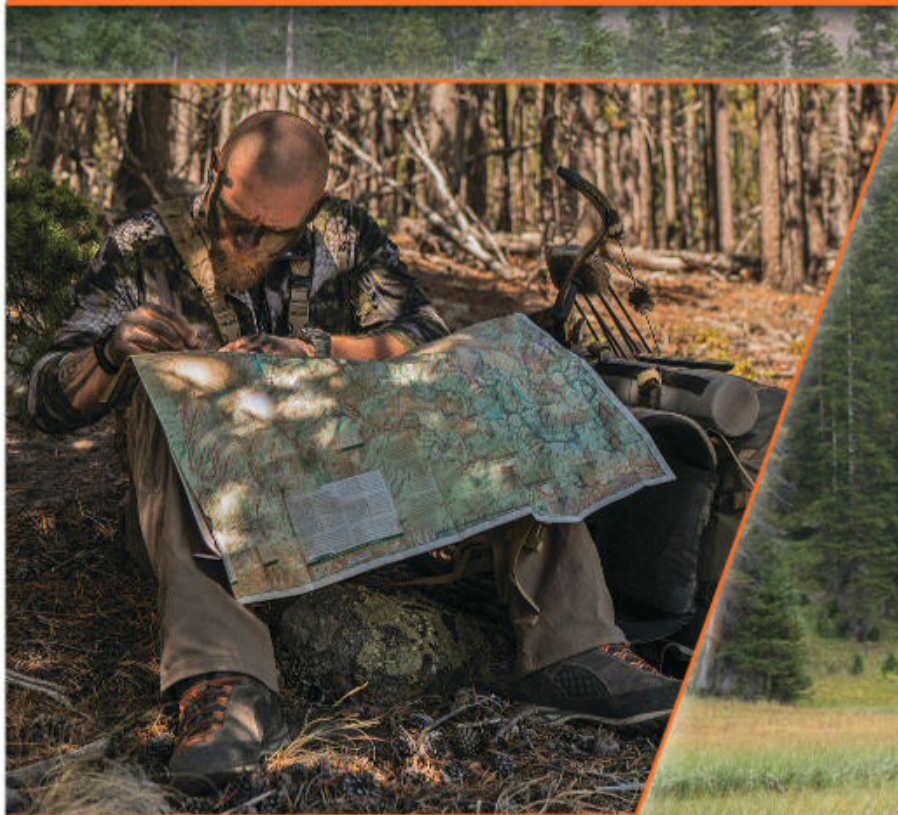
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SURVIVAL GEAR / STRATEGY



Using the necessary survival skills, ranging from staying nourished to reading maps, will help you safely reach your goal of completing a successful hunt.



little gadget has saved me lots of miles on several occasions but is also invaluable for stalking animals. Like anything I've talked about in this article, you will need to learn how to use it and how it pertains to the GPS, UTM grid coordinates, and how to implement them when reading a map.

Maps are a little more complex, with way too much info to go over in a quick paragraph, but maps are vital in navigation and at times can be far better than the smartphone apps for a variety of reasons.

While the navigation apps available today are state of the art and super handy, a smartphone screen is very small and difficult to read when compared to an actual map. Maps also don't have batteries, can be put on a wall, are easily duplicated, and when used correctly with the tools listed above will never be wrong.

The maps from **Nat Geo Maps**, which you can find in just about any outdoor store or online, have been my go-to for several years. They are waterproof, offer UTM grid lines, and are the scale I prefer for navigation. Just be sure to learn how

to read a map (scale, declination diagram, contour interval, etc.) before you go too crazy with purchasing them.

FIRST AID

I'm not the best person to go into depth with first aid, but I do know what's worked best for me and has kept me put-together and alive. My kit is extremely small and lightweight for backpack hunting, so some of you may choose to add a few things to your own personal system.

I wish I'd known about **Leuko Tape** years ago, because it would have saved me and my feet from a lot of pain and suffering. It can be used on anything, but putting it overtop of potential hotspots and blister areas ahead of time will do wonders for your feet. I also pair it with large bandages after getting a blister (Leuko on top of the Band-Aid). As you can imagine, I've also used it for gear repair, cuts, and anything else you could think of.

I'm not a doctor, and I definitely don't want to impersonate Rambo, so stitching myself up isn't a real option. Surgical glue



like **Dermabond**, on the other hand, is pretty much idiotproof, and with a little common sense can be used on most cuts — even large ones. Just be sure to clean the cut before pouring glue on top, and do a little research ahead of time.

When **QuikClot Gauze** first came out, it wasn't something I recommended because it basically caused chemical burns to the skin. Lucky for us, technology is amazing, and the new **QuikClot Gauze** works wonders without the chemical burns of old. As you can imagine, with all the surgical blades out on the market today, having this is a must — and it fits in your front pocket.

In summary, the most important things you can carry with you into the wilderness are hard work, physical fitness, common sense, and knowledge/wisdom. All the high-tech gear in the world won't save you if you haven't prepared or educated yourself. And most importantly, discipline yourself to make conscious, reasonable decisions when the situation demands it. **BH**

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CLOTHING / BOOTS / PACKS

**THE BACKCOUNTRY REQUIRES THE
RIGHT MINDSET AND EQUIPMENT.
THE LATTER CAN BE FOUND HERE.**

THE RIGHT STUFF

THERE'S A SAYING I often hear in Idaho that goes like this: "You don't like the weather? Wait five minutes and it will change." This is due to the fact that in the mountains of the West, especially during the spring and fall hunting seasons, Mother Nature can change things in the span of a day.

I lived this reality fully on a two-week Wyoming elk hunt last fall, when the weather ran the full gamut on me. When my hunt started, I wasn't even wearing a jacket after getting out of my sleeping bag in the morning. Come the middle portion of my hunt, after several days of low temps and constant snow and rain, I broke down and rented a room at a nearby lodge one night, just so I could warm up and dry out. A few days later, it was back to bluebird skies and warm temps.

Luckily, as I have gotten older and somewhat wiser, my clothing and boot choices have evolved to the point where I generally have the necessary gear to get me through a hunt, regardless of what Mother Nature throws at me.

This is important on all types of hunts, from day hunts where you come back to your vehicle or base camp at night to extended wilderness hunts. Choosing the right gear for a backpack hunt becomes even more critical when both pack space and weight are limited and crucial.

ZACH BOWHAY



CLOTHING / BOOTS / PACKS



One thing to keep in mind, specifically when buying clothing, is that you are building a “kit,” and that kit should be built on a layering system. Clothing bought from one manufacturer is usually made with this concept in mind. Seams are often designed so they don’t align in the same spots on different pieces to keep them from stacking up and becoming uncomfortable. Certain pieces are often made to fit slimmer or looser, depending on where they are worn. Sometimes you need to size up or size down with different garments to achieve optimal fit and performance within your kit. You get the picture. So do your part through extensive research, starting with this article.

CLOTHING

If an active insulation layer is on your wish list, be sure to check out the redesigned and upgraded **Kenai** line from **KUIU** that consists of the **[1] Hooded Jacket** (\$259) and **[2] Pant** (\$199), as well as the 14.2-oz. **Jacket** (\$219) and 9.4-oz. **Vest** (\$159). The Kenai series outer layer is K-DWR treated to resist light rain and moisture, and the DWR 3DeFX+ active insulation features siliconized fibers

that help resist saturation while maintaining insulation in wet conditions. Each piece is also body mapped to put more insulation in needed areas around the core, and lighter insulation on the sides for breathability. You’ll appreciate the streamlined fit and the new quilt-free design that eliminates unnecessary stitch holes to maintain durability and water resistance.

Base layers are the foundation of any good hunter’s kit, and you’d be hard-pressed to find a better one than the **[3] Men’s Wick LS Crew** (\$85) from **First Lite**. This next-to-skin top is made from ultralight 150 Aerowool, which combines the finest 17.5-micron Merino wool with activated nylon fabrics. These garments are UV-absorbent to eliminate shine, have flatlock seams for comfortable wear, and modified raglan sleeves that move said seams out from under where your pack rides for even more comfort.

Sitka has released some interesting new stuff that will be beneficial to anyone who hunts where ticks are an issue. They also wick moisture, control your odor, and keep your skin protected from the sun. I’m referring to their **[4] Equi-**

nox Guard Hoody (\$149), **Pants** (\$229), and **Gloves** (\$50). The Hoody has a built-in breathable facemask and a long tail that you tuck into the Pants, which have internal leg gaiters for slipping into your socks to keep insects out, zippered leg vents to help expel heat, a dedicated knife pocket, and hidden suspender attachment points. The Gloves have nylon Cordura built into the fingertips and in between the fingers for durability and long cuffs for protection from insects when worn with the Hoody.

Any full kit has some sort of packable insulation layer, and the **Browning [5] Puffer Jacket** (\$209) fits that bill. Made from a PrimaLoft water-repellent-treated 640 Silver down blend and a 100% polyester micro-ripstop fabric, this top is durable, lightweight, and packable. The hood and elastic binding on the waist allow you to really suck the jacket down around you when conditions are at their worst. The Silvadur technology helps with odor control, and the jacket stuffs into its own pocket. In addition, make sure to check out their **[6] Early Season Pants** (\$84). The lightweight ripstop holds up well, and the articulated knees and gusseted

5



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7



crotch will keep you nimble on even the most difficult stalks.

On that early season note, I also highly recommend the **ASIO Gear [7] Lightweight Hoodie** (\$95). This is a perfect warm-weather piece made from a breathable/lightweight mesh material. The fabric is quick to dry, has antimicrobial qualities, and is DWR-treated to shed moisture. This quarter-zip top has a hood and built-in facemask, and the fabric's UPF 50+ rating will prevent you from getting sunburnt.

BOOTS

It seems more and more boot companies are starting to make hunting footwear like the **[8] Altitude GTX** (\$330) from **Crispi**. The Altitude is built with a technical fit that's breathable, lightweight, and comfortable but also robust enough to handle heavier loads when the need arises. Made from an ultra-soft leather with a synthetic upper, the Crispi Thermo Wire Technology and full PU-coated leather rand will stand

up to pretty much any conditions you could ever possibly encounter on a hunt. While they may not be the top choice for a multi-day backcountry bowhunter, I guarantee they are perfect for those in need of an ultra-comfortable boot that will help them quickly cover ground when needed.

The **Kenetrek [9] Corrie II** (\$300) is a great option for those looking for a nice lightweight hiker. This 7" boot has lace-to-the-toe design uppers with ankle

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support “k” straps and comfort padding, plus a 5mm nylon midsole for support in rough terrain. Rubber toe and heel guards provide extra abrasion resistance, and the waterproof Windtex membrane keeps your feet both warm and dry. Last but not least, the Grapon outsoles prevent you from slipping and sliding in less-than-ideal conditions.

If you’re watching your pennies, then it would behoove you to slip on a pair of **Irish Setter [10] VaprTrek Men’s 8” Waterproof Leather Insulated Camo Boots** (\$189). The 400-gram PrimaLoft insulation is made from fibers recycled from plastic bottles. This unique construction maintains loft and traps body heat, even when compressed. The CUSHIN Comfort tongue minimizes the pressure many feel from the top of the boot tongue on their shins. The Ultradry construction keeps your feet dry and warm. Lastly, the ARMATEC XT is placed in high-wear areas to dramatically preserve and lengthen the life of the boots.

The **Salomon [11] Quest 4 Gore-Tex** (\$230) is a top choice among hikers and warrants serious consideration by bowhunters. The Mud Contagrip is built to thrive in loose, soft, and rugged terrain;

the 4D Advanced Chassis uses two different midsoles for enhanced foot control and comfort. The Gore-Tex lining keeps your feet dry while simultaneously allowing them to breathe, and the EnergyCell EVA foam provides maximum shock absorption. The upper is made from NuBuck leather and a soft and breathable textile lining.

Lowa made an already great boot even better with the **[12] Camino EVO GTX** (\$335). It has an ankle “patch” area that allows more flex when hiking in steep terrain. The DuraPU midsole enhances stability and comfort, and the Vibram APPTRAIL outsole grips the terrain to keep your feet firmly underneath you. The 800-gram insulation and Gore-Tex lining means warm and dry feet. Like many Lowa boots, this one has a topnotch lacing system that prevents pressure points for all-day comfort.

PACKS

The **[13] Method Pack System** (\$NA) by **Forloh** is made up of three parts: the Method CXLite Frame and Suspension, Method 4400 Pack Body, and Method 1600 Dry Bag. The CXLite Frame lays flat against your back, and carbon-fiber

construction ensures superior strength. The Dry Bag is a roll-top made from military grade, 210 HD diamond rip-stop nylon that’s TPU-coated for noise reduction. The 4400 Pack Body is also made from the same ripstop material and has four separate compartments, and the bottom bathtub design is fully submersible. The adjustable waist belt has convenient hip pouches and side compression straps for lashing your gear securely in place. The Method System can be used as just a frame, as well as with both the pack and dry bag — or with each individually.

New from **ALPS OutdoorZ** is the **[14] Elite Frame +1800 Pack** (\$449). The new frame boasts 30% more weight with 30% more strength to help with carrying heavy loads. The removable shoulder straps make it easy to adjust to six different torso positions, and the waist belt’s MOLLE system with removable pouches allows for full customization. The contoured anti-slip lumbar pad ensures elite level support and comfort. Each frame also has an integrated, adjustable lashing system.

The Pack Bag is made from 500D Cordura, with a spacious main com-



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CLOTHING / BOOTS / PACKS

14



15



partment with five mesh organizational pockets. The top zippered pocket provides quick access to valuables. There is also a provided raincover, rifle/bow drop-down pocket, and hydration compatibility. When successful on a hunt, you can stash meat or other gear between the frame and the bag. For those wanting a slightly bigger pack, a 3800 Pack Bag can be purchased instead of the 1800 for an additional \$50.

Those planning a multi-day trip in the backcountry should consider the **Stone Glacier [15] Xcurve Frame & Sky Archer 6400** (\$669). The main bag gives you 5,900 cu. in. of space plus a 500 cu. in. lid. The 30" side-zip access panel provides easy entry to the pack's interior. Inside are tri-slide buckles for attaching organizational swing-out and/or camp pockets. This pack has two side pockets — the left pocket is for an arrow tube or tripod, and the right is for additional

storage. There is an internal spotting scope pocket, and the center compression straps on the outside of the pack have added length and dual adjustable buckles. You'll appreciate the 2,500 cu. in. of load-shelf expansion for carrying meat or extra gear.

Kifaru is always a smart pick when shopping for a serious hunting pack, and the **[16] Gnargali** (\$362) is another top choice from this reputable manufacturer — especially for those planning to “dis-

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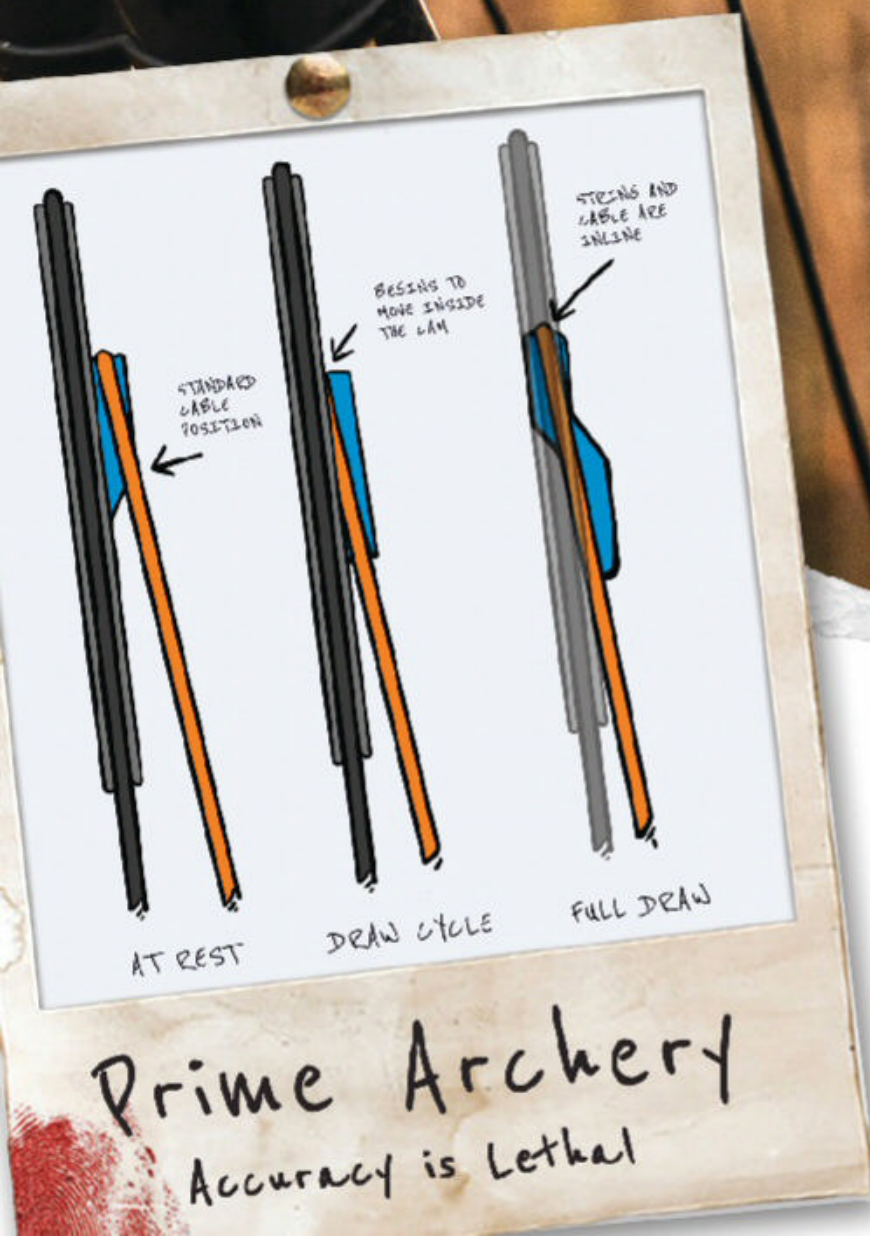


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CLOTHING / BOOTS / PACKS

16



17



appear” into the wilderness for extended periods of time. This bag is constructed from a 500D/VX21S Xpac material, which puts abrasion-resistant technical fabrics in all the right places. Side and top straps are made from a stout material to make sure your weapon, tripod, and other valuables remain securely in place while hiking. This bag is a top-load-only pack, with no side access to the bag’s inner compartment. Three belt-pouch matrixes help keep things organized and

at the ready, at all times. There are also dual hydro ports and an internal bladder pocket, as well as an integrated load shelf that you can expand for additional carrying capacity. This is a bag only and will work with your existing Kifaru frame, or you can purchase the whole kit and caboodle at once.

Built off their Guide Lite frame, the **[17] Beartooth 80** (\$585) from **Mystery Ranch** is made for those who value organization and varied options for access-

ing their essential gear. This pack means business, with big load-hauling capabilities via the Overload features that provides expandability with the load sling between the pack and frame. The bag is made from 330D Lite Cordura, is 5,185 cu. in., and has an overall pack weight of 6.7 lbs. Other features include side-stretch pockets, telescoping yoke for custom torso fit, zippered inner pockets, lightweight SJ Autolock buckles, and a removable lid with zippered pockets. **BH**

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POINTS OF AMBUSH

AS A WESTERN HUNTER, I wasn't used to life 20' up a tree, but I had plans. My mule deer scouting turned up a couple of solid whitetail bucks using the same dry creek system as the muleys. One of the bucks was a gagger — 160-plus — and I'd glassed him walking by the same cottonwood multiple times.

That afternoon, I drove three hours to the nearest box-chain sporting goods store and bought a dozen screw-in steps and the cheapest treestand I could find. That was my first mistake. The walk in to my cottonwood was a hair over a mile, and the stand was big and heavy. I had a heck of a time toting the stand, steps, and all my hunt gear. My second mistake was purchasing a stand without adjustments. Have you ever tried hanging a heavy, monster-sized treestand without platform and seat adjustments in a gnarled cottonwood? It's not fun.

Long story short: I did get that stand in the tree, a mere 8' off the ground. You know how this story is going to end. The buck busted me before he was ever in bow range. I've done a lot of whitetail hunting all over the country since that day, and I've spent oodles of time in stands and blinds.

What I've learned is there are certain stands for certain situations, and when you match your stand to your style of hunting, your success rates will go up. The same goes for ground blinds. Here are some great options for 2022.

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JACE BAUSERMAN



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BLINDS

Sporting an elevated shooting enclosure that's ideal for bowhunters, Millennium's **[1] Q-250 Solo Buck Hut** (\$699.99) ensures maximum comfort from the season's first day to its last. The reinforced tripod design makes the hut super stable, and Millennium's Steel-TOUGH construction ups longevity. The rugged exterior shell is a heavy duty water-resistant fabric, and the ladder sports nonslip steps. The door doubles as a window, and black tinting combined with an all-black interior provides maximum concealment. The blind is roomy,

and the 7' inside height allows for standing shots. This is the type of blind bowhunters want to put on privately owned or leased ground in a location they know they will hunt often.

The new **[2] Rhino 180 See Through Blind** (\$249) from **Outdoor Product Innovations** (OPI) gives bowhunters who like the wide-open view from a tree-stand a good reason to give blind hunting a try. The unique fabric of this blind allows you to see out a full 180 degrees while preventing game from being able to see in. Even when using the sewn-in loops on top and bottom to brush in this

blind, you can still see out well enough to spot incoming game. There's lots of room with a 66" ceiling and 75" of space from hub to hub — enough to accommodate three people — and silence is the word with a large, zipper-less door and Rhino's silent-slide window technology. This blind comes in both Realtree EDGE and Mossy Oak Break-Up Country.

A versatile all-weather blind that promises concealment, stealth, and scent control, **Shadow Hunter's [3] 6x8 Octagon** (\$3,499.99) sports panel construction and a ShadowTech multi-layer wall system that boosts insulation to



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4



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6



keep you warm. The ShadowMesh floor keeps the critters out, and the blind's design and window system work for vertical bows. Cloaked in Vengeance camo, this all-season blind will accommodate up to four hunters. Purposefully placed shelves, hooks, and a built-in weapon holder provide plenty of room for necessary gear. This is another great whitetail option for bowhunters who want to put a permanent blind in a big-buck hotspot.

A soft-sided ground fort that's portable, the **[4] Fore Runner** (\$1,199) was designed by hunters for hunters to hold up to brutal late-season elements while remaining super user-friendly. An integrated hitch system allows the blind to be towed by your ATV or side-by-side. The wheels engage and disengage easily, and the aluminum frame stands up to Mother

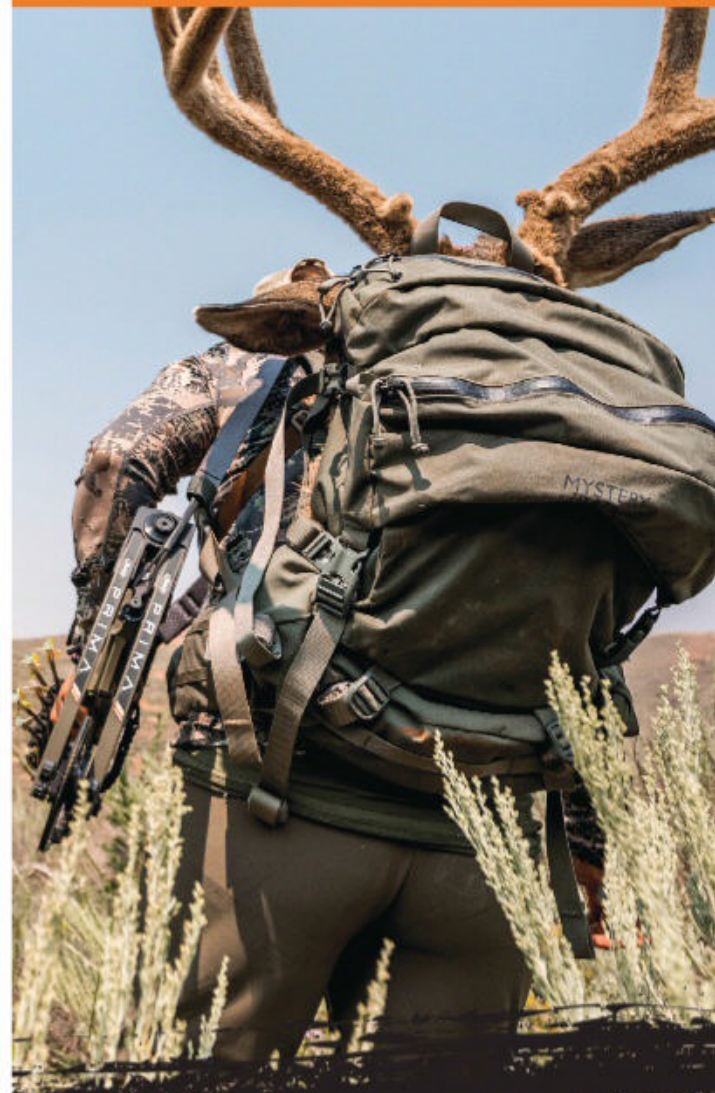
Nature's worst moods. The blind is fitted with horizontal and vertical windows and accommodates four people.

Primos' legendary Double Bull line is well-established in bowhunting lore, and for 2022 this ground-fort line gets a little sweeter. Dubbed the **[5] Roughneck** (\$299.99), this pack-and-go blind system promises uber-easy transport, as well as Double Bull's tried-and-true hub system, which adds support, boosts longevity, and ensures easy setup and breakdown. This is a great run-and-gun deer system that works equally well for springtime turkey missions.

Raising the bar in ground-blind performance is **Ameristep's [6] Pro Series Thermal Blind** (\$499.99). This five-hub fort blends flawlessly into any setting and is wrapped in warmth. The heavy duty



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welded fabric boosts insulation on every exposed surface to keep you comfortable and in the woods. Inside the blind is extra floor space, and all-new silent-slide windows promise stealth. Plus, with 12 windows to shoot from and extra depth, you'll have no trouble making that once-in-a-lifetime shot.

An authentic whitetail castle, Redneck's **[7] Buck Palace Platinum 360° 6x6 Blind** (\$2,599.99) promises season-after-season durability and absolute comfort. This spacious deer ambush comfortably holds three adults, or two adults and two children. The blind is fitted with 46"-tall vertical windows, and window functionality is second to none. The fiberglass body with its gel-coat finish is highly durable, and the inte-

rior features a closed-cell foam insulated ceiling, acoustical foam-covered walls, and a high-density foam pad set underneath the marine-carpeted floor. The blind can be mounted to Redneck's steel stands, trailer stand, or blind sled.

Hunters who put a premium on in-the-blind maneuverability and concealment should give **Browning's new [8] Envy Blind** (\$349.99) a go. The blind stands 6' 10" at its center and provides 74" of shooting width. This means compound shooters can stand and shoot, and those with longer, traditional-style bows can shoot from a seated position without fretting over limb clearance. Silent-Trac windows grace the blind, and the QuickConnect door system uses magnets along the door seams to ensure

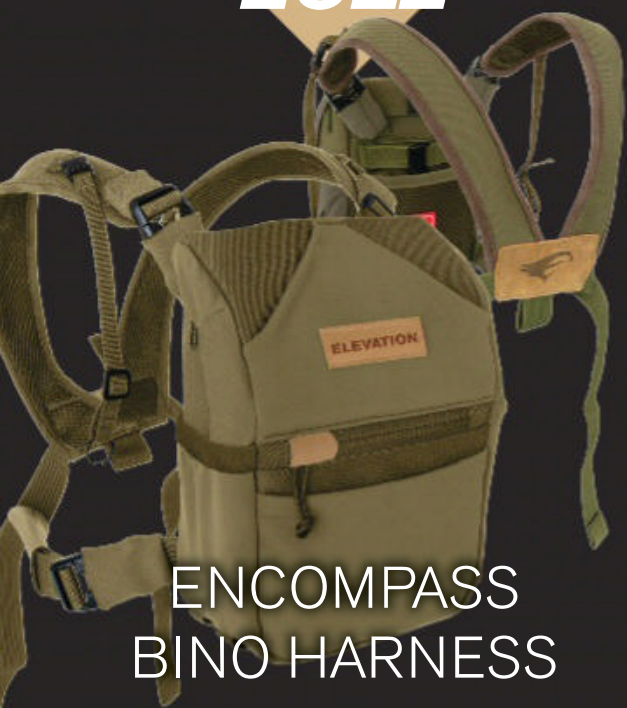


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9



10



11

a hushed entry and exit. Quality hooks prevent the door from opening or creating game-spooking noise, even during periods of high wind.

When you're waiting out a spring gobbler or a rutting whitetail, comfort is critical, and the all-new **ALPS [9] Triad 360-Degree Swivel Stool** (\$149.99) delivers it in spades. An 8 lb., 10 oz. stool that will hold 300 lbs., this ground blind must-have has a range of motion of 360 degrees. Hushed and easy to set up, the Triad is built on a powder-coated steel frame and its legs adjust independently for height to provide a level seat on uneven terrain.

Sometimes, when you find that big-buck spot, there isn't a suitable tree nearby. Time is of the essence, so you need to go the pop-up blind way. While waiting Mr. Big out, comfort and stealth are ultra-important. Enter the **[10] G-400-00 Ground Blind Chair - 4 Leg** (\$NA) from

Millennium. The ComfortMax contoured seat is La-Z-Boy-like, and each leg is adjustable for keeping you level on uneven terrain. The seat is quiet and rotates 360 degrees.

TREESTANDS

For many whitetail fanatics, diving in deep on tracts of public dirt is very appealing, and this crowd demands a particular set of gear. Enter **Hawk's** all-new **[11] Rival Micro** (\$249.99). Based on a minimized 20.5" x 17.5" platform complete with a flip-up seat, this 10.1-lb. stand is a breeze to tote and set up. This aluminum lock-on showcases four platform height levels, so it's capable of being hung in even the gnarliest of trees. Plus, the stand comes complete with a full-body safety harness and a pair of ratchet tree straps.

An innovative new climber from **Summit**, the **[12] Viper Level Pro SD**

6260_22

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(\$529.99) comes in at 26 lbs. and is branded with a weight rating of 300 lbs. The big story with this stand is its patent-pending EasyLevel dials. While the top and bottom parts of the climber are attached to the tree, these dials allow you to make finite adjustments to ensure perfect leveling — a feature worth its weight in gold. The FastTrack and redesigned Quick Draw Pro Cable system makes going up and down fast and efficient. Other notables include SummitLokt, RapidClimb, DeadMetal technologies, and a wraparound arm pad.

It's hard to improve on treestand perfection, and for this reason **Muddy** has decided to fly its **[13] Boss XL** (\$199.99) stand once again in 2022. A 20-lb. lock-on, the Boss XL is fitted with a 3" Tri-Plex foam seat that provides comfort and stands up to the elements. The Boss XL was designed to pack together with several Muddy Climbing

Systems, and it comes with a full-body safety harness.

Lone Wolf doesn't do anything half-way, and it has built a monstrous following of whitetail fanatics. For 2022, this stand-builder ups the bar with its **[14] D'Acquisto Series 2.0 Hang-on** (\$599.99). With a fighting weight of just 10.5 lbs., this hang-on is crafted from 6061 American Made Metal and is fitted with grip points for easy hanging. Lone Wolf's patented Frame Lock system lets you tote additional gear, and the center support utility system adds stability. The stand comes with backpack straps, and I recommend pairing it with the company's **D'Acquisto Compact Climbing Sticks** (\$97.99).

Bowhunters love options, and that translates to multiple treestand sites placed with a mind toward changing wind direction and deer travel patterns. That makes an economical hang-on

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TREESTANDS / BLINDS / SADDLES



stand like the **Rhino [15] RTH-100** (\$124.99) an excellent choice. This stand features a Comfort Mesh Flip-Up Seat, and both the seat and the platform can be leveled when hanging the RTH-100 in those pesky leaning trees. A two-strap attachment system creates excellent platform stability.

Giving you the ability to prep a tree and trim shooting lanes in minutes is **Hooyman's [16] Lithium-Ion Pole Saw** (\$293.99). Weighing under 10 lbs., the saw is fitted with a 10' extendable handle, and the 40V lithium-ion battery charges in just 60 minutes and provides fade-free power for a long time. The battery easily snaps in and out of the saw and is fitted with a charge indicator for power-level checks. This whitetail must-have boasts an aluminum-handle construction and a built-in oil reservoir.

A tried-and-true favorite of treestand-goers, **Hunter Safety System's [17] ProSeries** (\$159.99) has been reintroduced with some solid new features. Treated with ElimiShield Scent Control Technology, this safety vest works to kill human odor before it forms, and HSS says the technology will work for the life of the harness. Forty percent lighter than the original, thanks to new lightweight fabrics and ventilating mesh, the ProSeries also features a built-in USB port. Those who cheered the bino straps and eight pockets can rest easy, as these features remain on the new design.



SADDLE SYSTEMS

Crafted carefully from customer feedback, Trophyr Line's [18] *Covert Lite Kit* (\$329.99) is laced with new features that make it the perfect saddle for all mobile hunters. Whether you're a saddle newbie or a sage veteran, the Lite bridges the gap in the market between a minimalistic light-weight profile and a saddle built with maximum comfort in mind. A taller design, the 33" adjustable rope bridge and additional adjustability within the saddle creates better lower back and bottom support.

Everything you need to hang-and-hunt with ease and stealth, Tethrd's [19] *Phantom Starter Kit* (\$364.97) comes with the Phantom Saddle, Lineman Belt, Tether, and optional Platform. With this kit, you'll have everything you need to wander public and private tracts looking for that perfect 18'-high ambush point. Once you find it, this system will have you safely and comfortably up the tree in no time. The saddle fits waist sizes ranging from 28" to 40". **BH**

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- Improved wide-mouth magnetic access
- Comfortable over-the-shoulder hauling
- Resists punctures and won't leak

Yeti listened to their customers, and based on that feedback created the Hopper M30 2.0 (\$350). It has new MagShield™ access that stays open for loading and then seals tight with a gentle tap of your hand to lock in the cold for days. The DryHyde™ shell is puncture-resistant and the bucket-like liner will never leak. Carry it over your shoulder or by hand — whatever works best. Contact: YETI, yeti.com.

WORK SHARP® PRECISION ADJUST ELITE™

- Angle-adjustable system
- Safe rod and clamp design
- Carry case and storage rack

The Precision Adjust ELITE (\$119.99) is an angle adjustable, seven-abrasive-grit knife sharpener that delivers precision honing. Sharpening angles can be adjusted from 15 to 30 degrees in 1-degree increments to accommodate virtually all blades. Two Tri-Brasive® handles provide five diamond grit plates and a fine ceramic to repair, sharpen, and hone. Then the leather strop refines and polishes your edge. There's even a ceramic rod for serrations. The carry case with Tri-Brasive storage rack keeps the abrasives and the sharpener organized and ready for use. Contact: Work Sharp, worksharptools.com.



CODE BLUE® ROPE-A-DOPE™

- Weather-resistant rope
- Effective all season long
- Easily attaches to licking branch

Bucks deposit scent from their glands on low-hanging limbs by licking and rubbing them to mark their territory. The Rope-A-Dope (\$19.99) combo helps amplify the action. The included 2-oz. bottle of Rack Rub™ gel is the ultimate forehead gland and preorbital scent for stimulating rub activity. The gel is durable and provides smooth, even coverage on the included rope. Use it all season long over both natural and mock scrapes. Contact: Code Blue, codebluescents.com.



WICKED RIDGE® FURY 410™ DE-COCK

- Ultra-compact and fast
- Smooth, two-stage trigger
- Well-balanced and quiet

The reverse-draw Fury 410 De-Cock (\$1,049.99) is a perfectly balanced crossbow that measures an ultra-compact 29" long, 9" wide, and shoots up to 410 fps. The ACUdraw™ De-Cock reduces the effort required to cock the crossbow to just 5 lbs. The D-1™ Trigger is smooth and delivers a consistently crisp 3.5-lb. pull. The simple push of a button moves the trigger to "de-cock" mode and allows you to safely disarm the crossbow. It's available only as a complete ready-to-hunt package that includes the ACUdraw De-Cock, scope, three carbon arrows, string stop system, and a quiver. Contact: Wicked Ridge, wickedridgecrossbows.com.



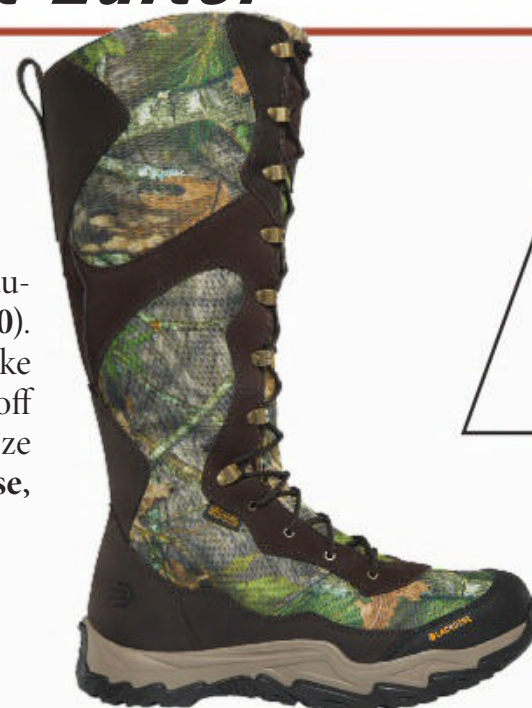
BRIAN FORTENBAUGH

Assistant Editor

LACROSSE® VENOM II™

- Total snakebite protection
- 100% waterproof lining
- Athletic feel for men and women

There's no such thing as a bad snake. That said, some serpents do require a little extra "caution" on your part, which is why you'd be wise to pick up a pair of Venom II boots (\$230). Men and women alike will appreciate these lightweight, waterproof boots that feel more like an athletic shoe than a hunting boot once you slip them on with the help of the easy on/off side zippers. The Venom II is not your run-of-the-mill snake boot, and you can find the size that fits you best in both solid colors and Mossy Oak® Obsession® camo. Contact: LaCrosse, lacrossefootwear.com.



NOMAD® HARVESTER™ NXT JACKET & PANTS

- Windproof, Sherpa fleece-lined
- Four-way stretch for mobility
- Multiple zippered pockets

The Harvester NXT Jacket and Pants (\$150 each) are wind-resistant and quiet, and feature a high-piled, Sherpa fleece lining for warmth without bulk. The Jacket has 4-way stretch fabric and 4-way gusseted underarm panels for exceptional range of motion. A 3-piece adjustable drop hood helps block out the cold. The Pants are designed to be incredibly comfortable for moderate activities and all-day sits. An adjustable waistband, zippered leg openings, and plenty of pockets are just a few of the Pants highlights. Contact: Nomad, nomadoutdoors.com.

RAVIN® R26X™

- Frictionless Flight System™
- Trac-Trigger™ Firing System
- Capable of speeds up to 400 fps

The R26X (\$2,049.99) takes the compact R26 platform with HeliCoil™ Technology and adds the highly desired silent cocking feature to give you a whisper-quiet draw every single time. Axle-to-axle width is 9.25" (5.75" cocked), and it weighs 6.5 lbs. The blazing 400 fps speed and slim frame make this crossbow a killer, and there's even a new color — all black. Contact: Ravin Crossbows, ravincrossbows.com.



OUTDOOR EDGE® FIELDLITE™

- Sturdy lock-back design
- Durable glass/nylon handle
- Corrosion/wear-resistant blade

Outdoor Edge introduces the FieldLite (\$29.95) — a true everyday carry blade for town or off the beaten path. Its glass/nylon handle is lightweight and rubberized for a secure grip in all conditions. The 3.3" 8Cr13MoV blade contains 14.5% chromium, making it a true stainless-steel blade with great corrosion and wear-resistance, not to mention a maximum Rockwell hardness of 62HRC. Contact: Outdoor Edge, outdooredge.com.



WHAT'S NEW



ROCKY® ELK STALKER™

- *Waterproof full-grain leather*
- *Comfortable, removable footbed*
- *Rugged design for harsh terrain*

As its name suggests, the Rocky Elk Stalker (\$230) was created for bowhunters who like to hike deep into the wilderness with one goal in mind — a freezer full of delicious wild game meat.

This 10", non-insulated boot is made of waterproof full-grain leather with a removable Terra™ Suspension footbed and a Vibram® outsole. Its Brush Guard Kiltie is also removable. It's available in sizes 8–12, 13, and 14. Contact: **Rocky**, rockyboots.com.

RINEHART® BIG HORN SHEEP™

- *Quality self-healing foam*
- *Replaceable core insert*
- *Weatherproof/UV-resistant*

Whether you're lucky enough to draw a dream tag or just want to add variety to your practice, Rinehart's new Big Horn Sheep (\$NA) is guaranteed to help your shooting skills. Measuring 54" tall, this larger-than-life ram will keep you well prepared with multiple scoring rings available. Like all Rinehart Competition Series targets, the Big Horn Sheep is sculpted with Rinehart's self-healing foam, which stops both broadheads and fieldpoints with easy arrow removal. Should you happen to destroy the target down the road, you can replace its core insert (sold separately). Contact: **Rinehart Targets**, rinehart3d.com.



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TINK'S® #69 DOE-IN-RUT SCENT PODS™

- Disperses scent for hours
- No spill/no mess design
- Hangs virtually anywhere

Tink's #69 Doe-In-Rut might just be the most recognizable whitetail-attractant scent on the planet, and now you can get it, and use it, without worry of coming home stinking like deer pee thanks to Tink's new Scent Pods (\$9.99/3-pack). Preloaded with Tink's #69 Doe-In-Rut, the unique pod design allows you to peel and hang them virtually anywhere. Just pull the tab out less than an inch and the #69 soaks the felt pad. Hang the pod and the alluring scent will disperse downwind for up to 8 hours. Contact: **Tink's**, tinks.com.



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SYKD® VINDICATE™ XVC

- Shoots up to 380 fps
- 185-lb. draw weight
- Ambidextrous safety

SYKD's affordable new Vindicate XVC crossbow (\$529.99) sports an axle-to-axle width of 17¾" (14½" cocked). You'll appreciate the 4.5-lb. trigger pull and advertised speed of 380 fps. The ambidextrous safety mechanism eliminates any worry of dry-fires. It weighs 7.95 lbs. and is sold in a package that includes a 4x32 illuminated scope, five-bolt quiver, three 22" bolts w/fieldpoints, rope cocking aid, and wax/rail lube. Contact: SYKD, getsykd.com.



OZONICS® MICRO3™

- Cleans all vehicles of odors
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With the MICRO3 (\$49.99), you can now harness the power of ozone to deodorize the vehicle that takes you to and from your favorite hunting areas. The production of ozone molecules from the MICRO3 aggressively sanitizes your unoccupied vehicle's interior by attacking bacteria, viruses, mold spores, and more. It automatically shuts off after running for 20 minutes. To run a second cycle, simply unplug and re-insert it into the lighter. A green LED light indicates when it is in operation. Contact: Ozonics, ozonics hunting.com.

FLAMBEAU® FORMULA BOW CASE

- Fits bows up to 43" in length
- Adjustable Bow Security System™
- Internal rack holds up to 8 arrows

From Flambeau Outdoors comes the ultimate in protection for the traveling bowhunter — the Formula Bow Case (\$189.99). Instead of traditional foam layers and straps, this one has a foamless chassis assembly that allows the cams, sight, and other components to free-float in order to prevent damage. This Adjustable Bow Security features two chassis sleds that your bow's limbs rest against while Nite Ize Mega Gear Ties™ lock the riser in place on the sled. It comes with a removable accessory pouch and tie-down slots for securing it to ATV racks and more. Contact: Flambeau Outdoors, flambeauoutdoors.com.



BOWHUNTER TV

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

► **Bowhunter TV** Host Curt Wells had a great hunt in Southeast South Dakota in November 2020. He was the guest of Jae Koletzky, who owns some spectacular white-tail ground, and his hunting buddy Matt "Turk" Tereshinski. Curt took this fine buck one morning just before heading home for Thanksgiving. Don't miss this exciting episode the TV week of May 16!

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Q MY BOW CONTINUES TO PAPER-TUNE WITH A TAIL-LEFT TEAR. I'VE TRIED MOVING MY REST TO THE RIGHT, TO THE LEFT, AND I'VE ADJUSTED THE STRING-YOKE HARNESSSES AS SUGGESTED BY A FRIEND. BUT I'M STILL GETTING A RAGGED TEAR AND LOUSY BROADHEAD FLIGHT. CAN YOU HELP? —ALEX D., via e-mail

A BOWS THAT DON'T TUNE EASY can be frustrating, and I've even had a few that wouldn't tune at all! However, modern-day bows are manufactured with exceedingly close tolerances, so it's a matter of making a few small adjustments to solve the problem. It could be as easy as resetting the cams, so they are synchronized and rotating plumb with the bowstring. Or you may have to move one or both cams to a different position along the axle by adding shims (small spacers) to one side of the cam and removing from the other.



of how the cams are oriented. By laying an arrow across the surface of the cam, you can determine if the cam is in line with the bowstring. If the arrow points off-center to the left or right, then cam lean is present. If a draw board is not available, draw your bow and have a friend assess the cams' positioning. To fix cam lean, adjust the string-yoke harness by twisting one side and untwisting the other, allowing the limb's tip to equalize the load.

If the left tear persists, try moving your rest to the right, but oftentimes this only works for a very small left tear. Rest adjustments are better

Such steps are often referred to as "super-tuning," but these actions simply place the bow's powerstroke directly in line with the arrow. Shooting style varies, so although the bow may tune perfectly in a shooting machine, this may not be the case for a particular archer.

To perform these tuning steps, you need to have access to a quality press and some basic archery tools so you can work systematically until the flight issue is cured.

When tuning a bow, don't skip the basics. With a persistent tear like yours, be sure to first check for fletching contact. Spray aerosol foot-powder across the arrow's fletching area, then shoot it into a firm backstop. Any "smears" of the white powder indicate vane contact with the rest, cables, or riser — a common culprit of poor arrow flight. Also, don't tune a bow without using several shafts to see if the tears remain the same. If spine varies from one arrow to the next (trust me, not every arrow is made the same), you'll see various types of tears. Twisting the nock in one-quarter increments could also produce different tears.

Once the basics are covered, move on to synchronizing the cams. The cables should strike the cable stops at the exact same time. Next, assess each cam's vertical position while at full draw. Cam lean is checked by using a bow-drawing device (or draw board) to allow an easy evaluation

for "micro-tuning" groups downrange and adjusting the points of impact for fieldpoints and broadheads. Overall, it's better to maintain the proper arrow centershot position as recommended by the bow's manufacturer. This provides improved vane clearance and allows the arrow to stay in the center of the bow's riser, limbs, and grip for optimum performance.

With large or persistent tears, shimming one or both cams will eventually eliminate the tear (I prefer to yoke-tune first). When repositioning the cam, always move it in the direction of the tear. Depending on your bow's spacers, you may have to purchase new shims with varying thicknesses to make the necessary horizontal adjustments. Lancaster Archery and Last Chance Archery sell relatively inexpensive spacer kits and tools for this type of tuning.

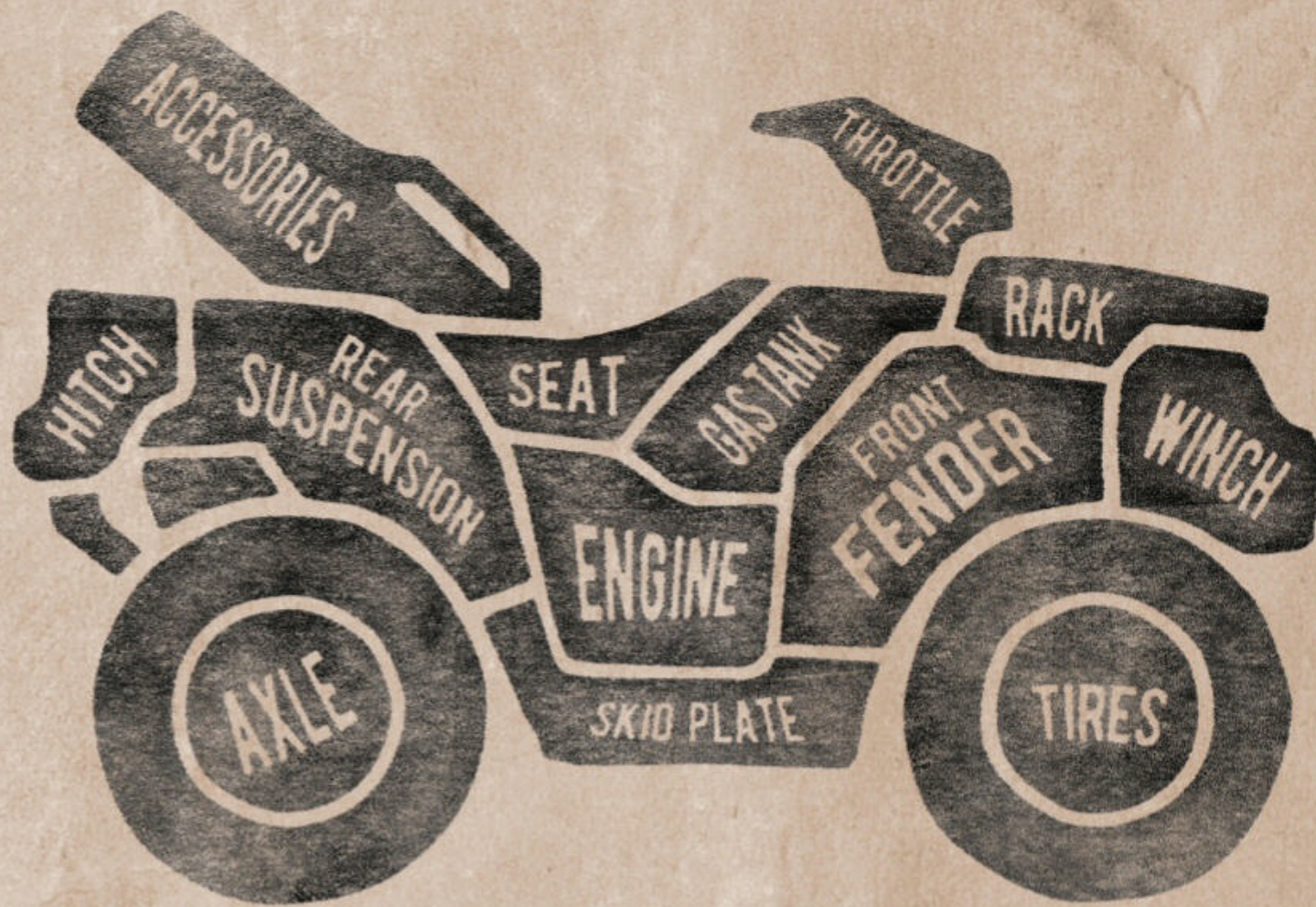
There are several ways to tune a bow, but I believe paper-tuning is the most precise way to capture irregularities in arrow flight because it examines flight issues only a few feet from the bow. To improve paper-tuning even more, try using a bare shaft. To simulate the weight of vanes, wrap the rear of the shaft with a piece of electrical tape. The bare shaft will expose the smallest rips in paper so you can improve consistency downrange. Any small accuracy adjustments at this point are resolved by moving the rest or D-loop in $\frac{1}{16}$ " or $\frac{3}{32}$ " increments until maximum accuracy is achieved. **BH**



Every bow requires some degree of tuning to achieve maximum forgiveness and accuracy. Performing additional super-tuning steps, such as yoke-tuning or moving the cam's position on the axle, can truly boost arrow-flight performance and your confidence as a bowhunter.

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