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JUNE 2023

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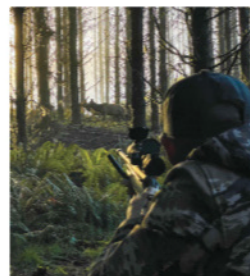
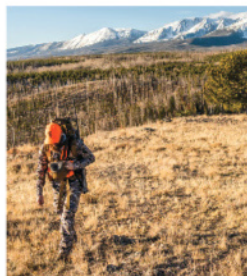
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Photographer JOHN HAFNER captured this scenic shot of a Montana bowhunting couple crossing a trailhead bridge to set another deer stand. The hunters are wearing **Browning Outdoor Clothing's** new soft shell Pahvant Pro Jacket and Pants, technical apparel built from highly wind- and water-resistant polyester fleece with SILVADUR technology for odor control, and in their proprietary Ovivx camo (available now). Both are running fully accessorized new **Hoyt** bows — a Carbon RX-7 and Eclipse — and thanks to their highly adaptable **Kifaru** packs, they'll make easy work of hauling in another **Elevate Stand Company** Ultra Hang On with Ascend climbing sticks.

PHOTO BY JOHN HAFNER

# Bowhunter





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A bowhunter's journey, from the beginning of the planning process through the execution of a plan to get within close proximity of a big game animal, is dependent on the use of the best gear we can find. Using the right stuff paves the way to success, no matter how you define it. And it also makes the journey more fun!



JOHN HATNER PHOTOS

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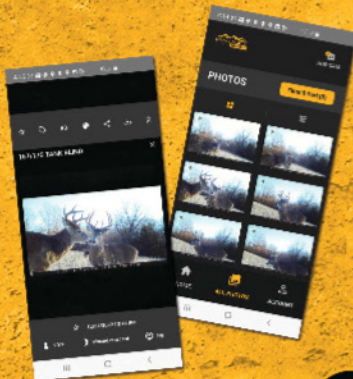


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# Editorial

BY CURT WELLS, Editor

**OUTDOOR  
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BACK IN THE '80S AND '90S, INNOVATION IN THE ARCHERY INDUSTRY WAS FRENETIC. TODAY, NOT SO MUCH.

## INNOVATION HAS SLOWED, BUT...

I REMEMBER when the word "compound" first appeared in the outdoor lexicon. I was a gun hunter, but my curiosity was piqued, and I liked what I discovered. Like many others, I added the word "bow" to hunter — a wise, life-changing decision.

In those days, innovation in archery equipment was an avalanche triggered by the advent of the compound bow. New bowhunters were the benefactors of the advancements in bows, arrows, broadheads, and all gear, including treestands, which were nonexistent in the early days.

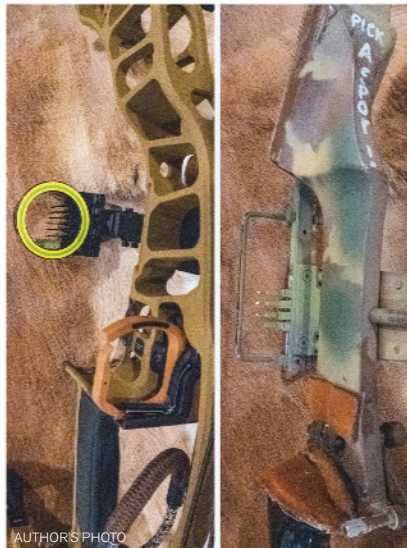
We spent weeks building callouses on our shooting fingers while experimenting with various finger-tab materials to find the best release possible. Then, we started to hear about mechanical releases, but they were considered evil, and you were considered scum if you used one.

Eventually, those of us who bowhunted in cold weather — wearing gloves with the fingers cut off, discovered we could get an excellent release while wearing warm gloves. Hmm...maybe a mechanical release wasn't so bad after all.

The rest is history, as we enjoyed the advent of faster cam designs, fiber-optic sight pins, parallel-limb bow technology, always-straight carbon arrows, more lethal broadhead designs, and the list goes on and on. It was the golden age of innovation in bowhunting, with an annual glut of new products to explore.

Now, after nearly every possible cam design has been tweaked and most accessories and gear have been engineered to the max, innovation has slowed dramatically, except for all things digital, of course. Noteworthy advancements are harder to come by, and these new technologies have made gear more expensive. This combination has caused many consumers to hang on to their bows, accessories, and other gear for another year or two, rather than chase technology — a common tact in the '90s.

All this does not mean our gear isn't getting better. It is. It's just that the increments of change are less significant to



**A striking 38-year comparison: My 2023 Hoyt VTM and my 1985 Martin Cougar Magnum, complete with brass sight pins, homemade camo paint job, and some shooting advice on the riser.**

what we were accustomed. However, if you're one who has managed to get by with your bow and other bowhunting components for two or three years, you will find the 2023 bows to be faster, quieter, and more "dead-in-hand" than the bow you are shooting now. The sights are brighter, lighter, stronger, and more easily manipulated. Arrow-rest designs create better arrow flight, and arrows are more consistent in spine and straightness. Broadheads are designed for better performance, and clothing continues to evolve, as does other gear like treestands, saddles, blinds, backpacks, trail cameras, optics, and anything else you could possibly use.

Now is the time take advantage of the high-quality products in the following pages. They are the best that have ever been available to bowhunters...until next year.

Or the year after. **BH**

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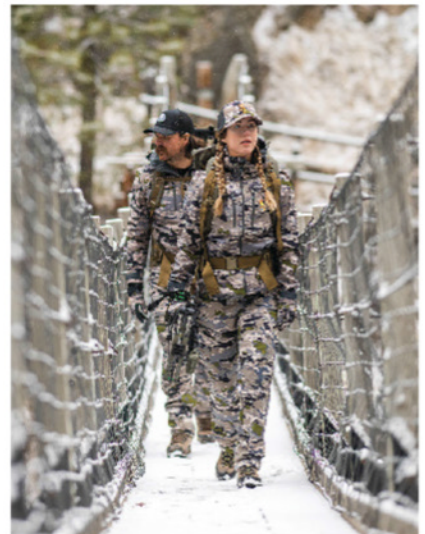
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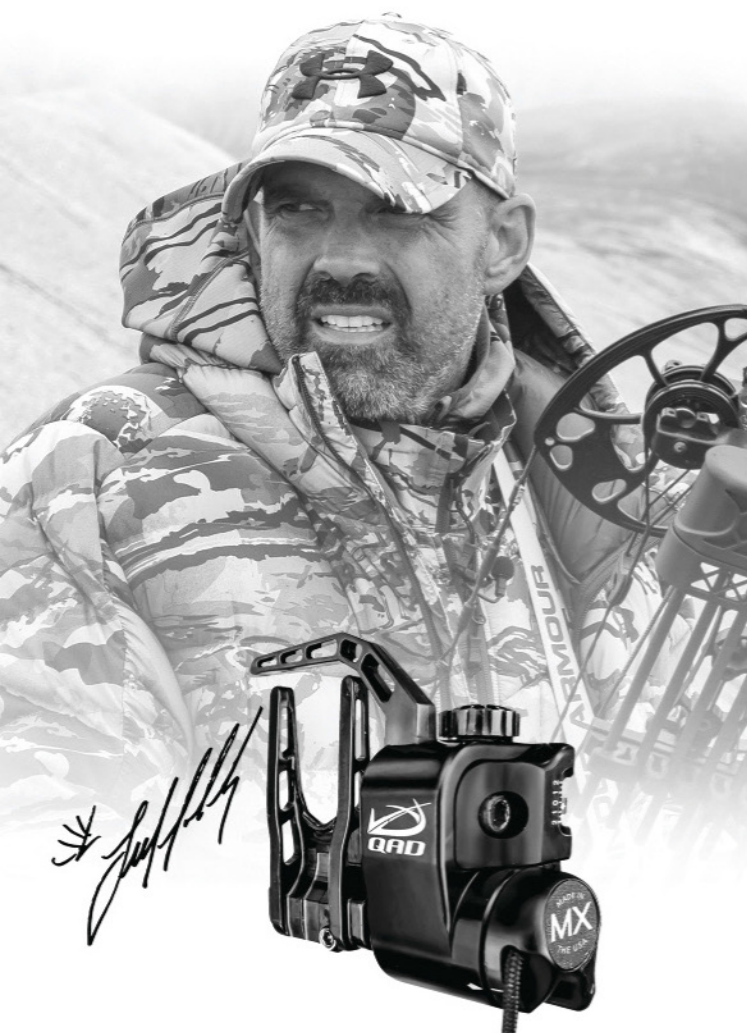
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A man in camouflage clothing and a large backpack is standing on a mountain trail, looking through binoculars. The background shows a rugged mountain landscape under a clear sky. The word "ATION" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters, with an orange and white diagonal bar to its left.

# ATION

[binge watching]



# Tried and True

## DEPENDABLE BUDGET BOWS

BY BRIAN K. STRICKLAND, Equipment Editor



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEAR ARCHERY

TODAY'S BUDGET BOWS DELIVER MORE THAN JUST A LOWER PRICE.

The first bow I ever purchased, well over two decades ago, dinged my wallet for \$369. I'll admit, I wanted to spend twice as much on the flagship bow that was hanging next to it behind the counter, but I couldn't at the time. Looking back, that affordable bow did its share of damage to numerous P&Y critters and countless others for the next decade, and I bet it would be just as effective today.

Point is, you don't need a flagship bow to find bowhunting success. Sure, they're extremely nice to shoot, and you can certainly notice some important differences when compared to bows carrying half the price tag. But like everything else, technologies that were the rage just a few years ago are now standard features on many of today's budget rigs.

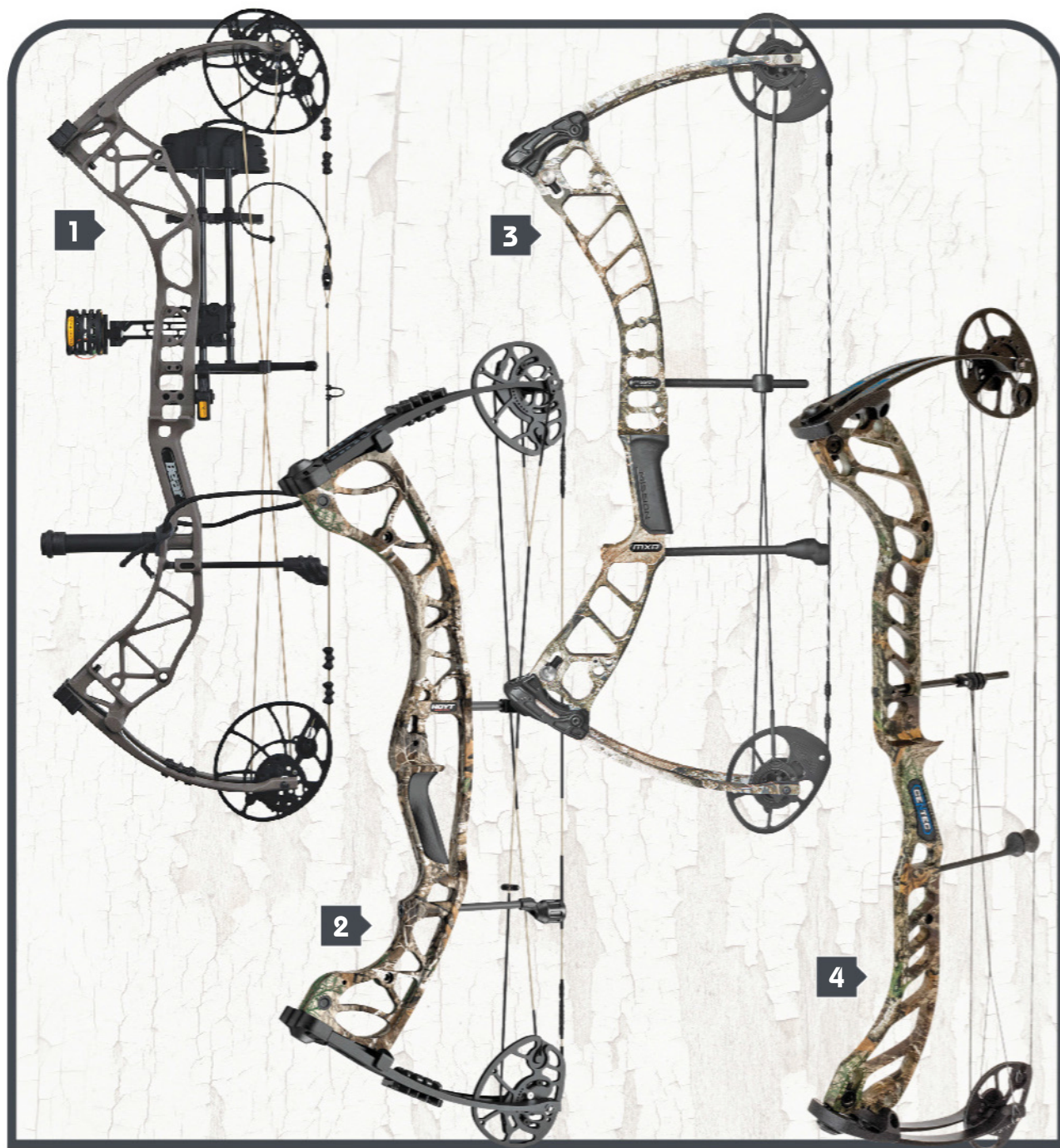
They are fast, relatively quiet, and very stable and forgiving. So, whether you're new to archery and just want to dip your toe in the bowhunting water or want a solid performer that will last for many seasons, you'll find tons of options available that will certainly get the job done.

Adding to their Legend Series is the highly adjustable [1] **Legend XR** (\$459.99) from **Bear Archery**. With a generous draw-length range of 18"–31" and adjustable draw weights of 14 to 70 lbs., the Legend XR will fit young and old bowhunters alike. This 32" bow is powered by Bear's new DHC-XR hybrid cam to deliver arrow speeds of 320 fps, and with its 85% letoff and 6¼" brace height, it's a pleasure to shoot. It's also equipped with an offset string suppressor and

Bear's KILLERwave in-limb dampeners. The Legend XR is available in a Ready To Hunt package that includes a Trophy Ridge 4-pin sight, Whisker Biscuit V rest, 5-Spot quiver, stabilizer, peep sight, and D-loop for just \$100 more.

If you're looking to buy your first rig or just upgrade what you have while saving a few bucks, the **Hoyt [2] Torrex** (\$799) is a solid option. The 30" Torrex hits a top speed of 327 fps and is powered by Hoyt's Cam & ½ System that takes advantage of the best features of single and dual-cam technology to deliver speed, power, and accuracy. It's equipped with Hoyt's proven TEC-LITE Riser with X-ACT Grip System, which ensures consistent hand placement. The Torrex has a 6" brace height with a draw length stretching from





25.5" to 30". For those needing a little extra length, the XT model pulls out to 31" with a brace height an inch deeper. Both come in at just 4 lbs., have draw weights ranging from 30 to 70 lbs., and are equipped with custom strings.

Having a big brother named Mathews has its perks, and **Mission Archery** takes full advantage of that benefit with the [3] **MXR** (\$549). The flagship in their lineup, the MXR borrows Mathews legendary Crosscentric Cam System to deliver a smooth draw cycle with a solid back wall. Its IBO rating is 324 fps, and with its torque-reducing grip and a brace height of 7", its speed is complemented

by exceptional forgiveness and accuracy. The MXR is available in draw weights ranging from 40 to 70 lbs. and sports draw-length adjustments of 23.5" to 29.5". This 30" bow comes in at just over 4 lbs., with a letoff of 80%.

With their goal being to build the best possible compound bow at an entry level price, **Quest** offers the [4] **Centec** (\$579.99). With a 32" length and arrow speeds topping 325 fps, it offers far more than a welcomed price. It has the same smooth cam system (sans split string tracks) as many of parent company Prime's bows do. The Centec also gets positive marks with its generous

draw length that stretches from 25.5" to 31" (half-inch increments). Plus, with its center-grip riser design, shooters can get on target quicker and stay there longer to ensure 10-ring performance.

The [5] **Turmoil RZ** (\$699.99) from **Obsession** is the fastest in this column. Powered by their Hybrid RZ Cam, it launches arrows up to 350 fps while also providing modular draw-length adjustments ranging from 26.5" to 30". Anchoring its blazing speed is Obsession's split-limb design with all-new FX Limb Pockets and signature FX Riser for enhanced stability and accuracy. It has an axle-to-axle length of just over



**GEAR**  
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33", an overall weight of 3.8 lbs., and is available in a package with Trophy Taker accessories.

The [6] **Terrain** (\$699.99) from **Elite Archery** is one to be reckoned with. The muscle behind its 325-fps speed is its smooth-drawing hybrid cam system that features a rock-solid back wall. A rotating mod allows for 25.5" to 31" draw-length adjustments in half-inch increments. Tipping the scales at just under 4 lbs., the Terrain's Riser Cage technology coupled with its slim Precision Grip enhances stability, balance, and vibration reduction. The Terrain's 32.5" length and 7" brace height is the ideal setup for most shooters.

**Bowtech** is always a crowd favorite, as is their popular [7] **Carbon Zion** (\$799). At 3.3 lbs., it's one of the lightest bows in their lineup. This bow is a snap to tune and delivers speeds reaching 335 fps. FlipDisc technology allows shooters to choose between Performance and Comfort settings to match their style of shooting — a feature also found on Bowtech's top-line models. Adding to its overall performance is an improved torque-eliminating grip, a forgiving brace height of 6.625", and a maneuverable 31" length. It offers a max draw weight of 50, 60, and 70 lbs., and its 25.5"–30.5" draw length can be changed without a press.

Touted as the most technically advanced bow they have ever developed, **Diamond Archery** gives us the [8] **Deploy SB** (\$849). Certainly at the top edge of the budget-bow category, the Deploy SB comes in at 3.2 lbs. and features an aerospace-inspired carbon riser that's equipped with their synchronized Binary Cam system. Launching arrows up to 330 fps, the rotating modules allow you to make draw-length adjustments from 26"–30.5". It's available as a standalone or equipped as a package with premium Octane accessories.

**PSE** knows a few things about bows, and the latest addition to their Core Se-

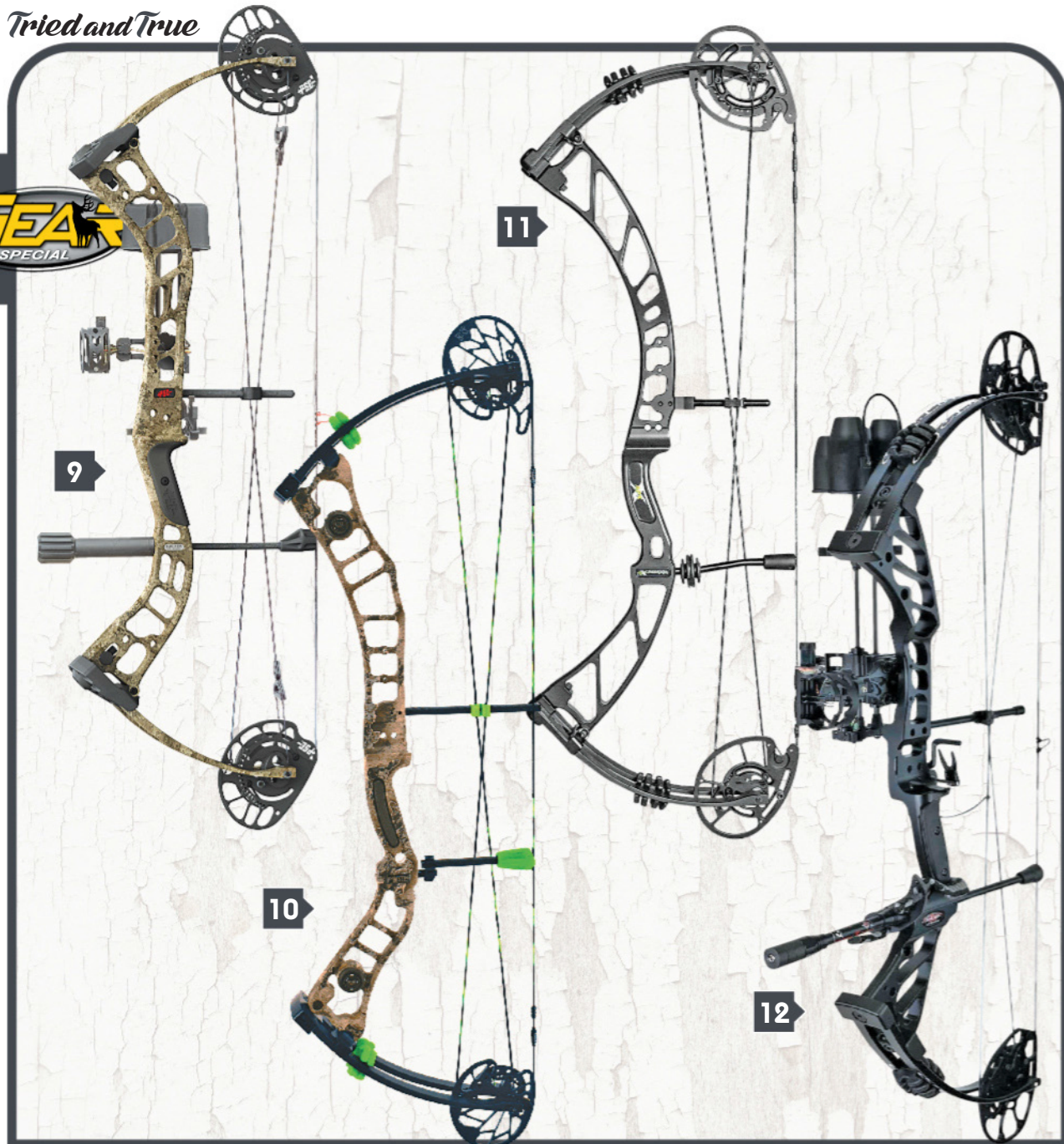




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ries is the [9] **Brute ATK** (\$599–\$699). With several generations of Brute bows behind it, the ATK is the flagship in the current series and the crown jewel in the long line of previous models. It comes in at 4.1 lbs., has a 32" length, and a brace height of nearly 7". And when it comes to speed, the 80% letoff AF binary cam system can spit arrows up to 329 fps. The icing on the cake is PSE's Precision Buss Tuning System and over-molded grip, making it an excellent choice for any and all bowhunters. Other notables include the adjustable 23"–30.5" draw length and various peak draw weights. It can be purchased bow-only, or in two different accessorized packages.

The [10] **MAXX 33** (\$779) takes the top spot in **Martin Archery's** budget-friendly line. At 3.75 lbs., it sports the RRAD System, so shooters can easily distribute weight throughout the riser for enhanced balance. Simple to tune, the MAXX 33 sends arrows downrange at roughly 333 fps. Rounding out the specs, the MAXX 33 has an axle-to-axle length of 33.5", draw lengths of 24"–27" or 27"–30", and a letoff from 65 to 85%.

The [11] **APX** (\$699.99) from **Xpedition Archery** is 33" long and its brace height is 6.75". This aluminum-riser rig has a modular cam that enables you to adjust draw length from 26" to 30". With

the additional limb stops and 75% letoff, it holds solid and is deadly quiet.

Last but certainly not least is the [12] **Cyclone** (\$689.99) from **Darton Archery**. It delivers speeds touching 335 fps with length adjustments of 27"–30" (24"–28" on the SD model). It comes in at just 4 lbs., and with an adjustable draw stop on the perimeter of the cam stops, shooters can fine-tune their draw length and letoff, while the DualSync Cam's stabilization system eliminates cam lean. Other notables include a 7" brace height, compact 30" length, and draw weights of 40, 50, 60, and 70 lbs. The Cyclone is also offered in a Ready-To-Hunt model (\$949) with premium accessories. **BH**





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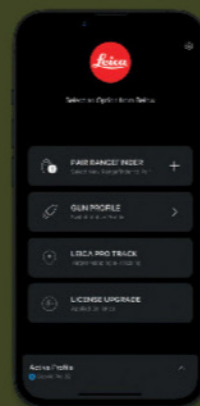
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# Flagship

BY BRIAN K. STRICKLAND, Equipment Editor

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATHEWS, INC







**THE LAUNCH** OF THE LATEST BOWS IS ALWAYS A CROWD-PLEASER, SO HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO THIS SEASON.

# Rigs

**T**HERE ARE TWO TIMES a year that every serious bowhunter looks forward to the most: When it's time to head out on the first hunt of the season, and when the latest flagship bows are unveiled for all to see. I'll admit that it's a toss-up for me as to which one I anticipate the most. Luckily, they are at opposite ends of the season, so I get to relish each one equally.

This year is no different. As the latest models began to launch around November and the ATA Show rolled out the red carpet in January so you could put your hands on some of them, it was time to start slinging arrows to see what the latest bows had to offer. Whether it's a significant innovation or just a tweak here or there from the previous hot model, I'm always impressed with what bow manufacturers come up with to make the shooting experience more enjoyable.





Whether you're looking for a new rig this season or just want to kick the tires at your local pro shop, here are some new bows that have earned the coveted flagship position. Touted as the most silent hunting bow they have ever developed, the all-new [1] **Phase4** (\$1,299–\$1,399) from **Mathews**, will certainly grab its share of the market this season. Built with their all-new Resistance Phase Damping Technology coupled with the completely redesigned Bridge-Lock Stabilizers, vibration is drastically reduced at the source, resulting in a bow that is 13% quieter with 37% less vibration. Available in both 29" and 33" axle-to-axle platforms, the Phase4 is powered by the ultra-smooth Cross-centric Cam with SwitchWeight Technology that delivers zippy arrow speeds touching 340 and 336 fps with draw lengths from 25.5"–30" and 27"–31.5", respectively. Like previous Mathews' bows, it incorporates their Bridge-Lock Technology, as well as an integrated dovetail rest mount and LowPro quiver system to ensure the best possible balance and accuracy.

Another flagship taking silence to the next level is the [2] **VTM** (\$1,349) from **Hoyt**. With three years of development behind it, the VTM is the quietest bow Hoyt has ever developed. It features an updated riser design and Hoyt's all-new Hole Shot V2 string silencer that results in 31% less sound than their Ventum Pro. When coupled with Hoyt's Inline Accessory System, it offers a nearly 60% reduction in residual vibration and is 11% quieter. Powered by Hoyt's HBX Pro Cam System, the VTM 31 (342 fps) and VTM 34 (334 fps) feature an improved centershot and sight picture while also offering better tune-ability thanks to a pair of modules that cover draws ranging from 25" to 31". Other notables include the riser's Drop Cord Slot that's specifically designed to run the cord of a cable-driven rest, as well as a host of integrated dampeners to include Hoyt's tried-and-true Limb Shot, Stealth Shot string stop, and Shock Pod Technology.

**Prime** continues to be a fan favorite, and the company's





3

new [3] **REVEX** (\$1,299–\$1,399) should certainly be at the top of your test-drive list. Offering the same legendary stability that Prime's exclusive center-grip riser design has delivered for years, the REVEX is powered by the all-new CORE Cam System that features draw-length-specific modules to ensure solid performance with each drop of the string. I was able to spend some time with it at the ATA Show, and the bow proved to be smooth, stable, and quiet. With lengths of 32", 34", and 36" that deliver arrow speeds touching 338, 340, and 330 fps, respectively, the REVEX had plenty of zip. To reduce torque while also enhancing accuracy, Prime incorporates its cam-balancing technology to keep the strings and cables in line during the draw cycle. Additionally, Prime also teamed up with Hamskea to develop a limb-driven arrow rest that integrates directly to the riser, as well as with TightSpot to develop a specialized bracket that ensures the quiver has a tight fit for exceptional balance.

4

Bear Archery's new [4] **Execute** (\$1,199) was also one I was able to play with at ATA this year, and it's hard not to like anything that's associated with the father of the sport we all love. Building upon nine decades of bow-building experience, the flagship Execute has a new riser and parallel-limb design with wider Gordon limbs with efficient limb pockets for perfect riser-to-limb alignment. Plus, with the all-new Shock Management System, the Execute is Bear's quietest hunting bow to date, and that was certainly something I noticed on the range. Other notables include an adjustable back wall for a customized feel, a riser-integrated slim grip or a new soft-touch grip, letoff ranging from 75% to 90%, and Align Lok Technology that helps to efficiently tune your sight's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> axis. The proven EKO cam system delivers speeds touching 340 fps, and the bow is available in axle-to-axle platforms of 30" and 32" that accommodate draw lengths from 26.5" to 30.5."

Touted as the most technologically engineered carbon bow



5



6



ever developed, **Bowtech** plows new ground in the carbon bow space with the [5] **Carbon One** (\$1,799). Grabbing the attention of the ATA Show faithful, it stood out in the crowd, and after shooting it a few times myself, I quickly realized that the smooth-drawing Carbon One shoots as good as it looks. With an advanced carbon-riser design coupled with Bowtech's easy tuning Deadlock Cam System and strategically positioned Orbit Dampeners, it delivers what Bowtech considers to be the most dead-in-the-hand carbon bow ever developed. Reaching IBO speeds of 335 fps, it has plenty of punch, and with other features like the torque-reducing Clutch Performance Grip, Dual Lock Pockets, and Bowtech's customizable FlipDisc system that lets shooters choose their draw cycle, the Carbon One is sure to raise some eyebrows this season. This bow also features a compact 30" length, an integrated mounting system in the riser, and rotating modules that accommodate draw lengths of 25.5" to 30.5".

Another bow company jumping into the carbon bow space is **Elite Archery**, and they hold nothing back with the new [6] **Era** (\$1,699). Specifically designed with Elite's signature Dual-Cage Riser, it combines state-of-the-art manufacturing by adding rigidity and strength while incorporating the benefits of premium carbon to deliver a bow that weighs in at 3.95 lbs. Light in the hand and super smooth when pressed into service, the Era has an axle-to-axle length of 31.25" and, with the all-new synchronized high-performance SP Cam System, it delivers arrow speeds of 336 fps. The cam also features the V2 Micro Mod Let-Off Adjustment, so shooters can infinitely fine-tune the holding weight while also providing precise quarter-inch draw adjustments from 25.5" to 31". Offering speed, performance, and forgiveness, the Era has a 7¼" brace height coupled with wider limbs, the option of cable or limb stops to find your back wall, and S.E.T. (Simplified. Exact. Tuning.) technology.



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Taking a page from the success of last year's Nock-On Carbon Levitate, PSE adds another carbon gem to its lineup with the [7] **Mach 34** (\$1,799). Although it's a lightweight at just 3.65 lbs., it's anything but a lightweight when it comes to innovation. Designed with PSE's Dead Frequency Carbon Riser, noise and vibration isn't an issue, and with the new Full Draw Stability System, it actively resists torque at full draw to ensure a solid platform and better overall accuracy. When it comes to fine-tuning, the Mach 34 is equipped with the all-new EZ220 Snap Spacer System, which allows spacers to be easily removed or repositioned in precise .02" increments for quicker tuning and cam-lean adjustment. Additional highlights include PSE's Limb Vise Pocket System to maintain perfect limb-to-riser alignment, and both a traditional rest mount and dovetail mount designed to accommodate the QAD Integrate or Hamskea Epsilon arrow rests. With IBO speed at 340 fps and an axle-to-axle length of 34", you can

see why it earned the Mach 34 logo. It's available in three cam options (E2, S2 and EC) that deliver generous draw lengths of 26.5" to 33".

Writing the next chapter for **Xpedition Archery** is their [8] **Xlite** (\$1,949–\$1,999) series. Available in 31" and 33" lengths, the Xlite is designed with a proprietary alloy Magnite riser that is 33% lighter than 6061 aluminum, as well as stronger and stiffer to guarantee shooters will have the most stable platform possible with significantly less vibration. Both feature a longer riser design with shorter, more parallel limbs that result in enhanced long-range accuracy. With the all-new XB1 dual-cam system, arrow speeds top 336 and 338 fps with draw lengths measuring 25.5" to 30.5" and 26" to 31", respectively.

Grabbing the flagship position for **Athens Archery** this year is the new [9] **Elevate** (\$1,199), and after pressing one into service at the 2023 ATA Show, I was impressed



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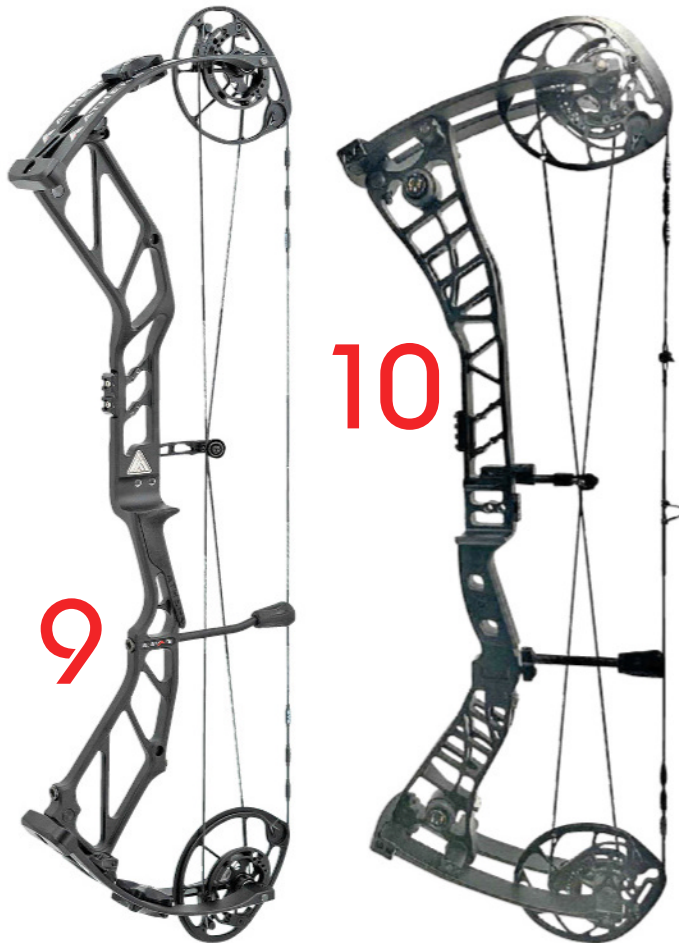
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with the feel it offered. For starters, its draw cycle was silky smooth with the RT-X cam system and Rev 2 Module, and according to Athens, it's one of the most stable, repeatable, and adjustable hunting bows they have ever developed. Not only does its updated cam system flex its muscle with an IBO speed topping 345 fps, but it also provides adjustable draw lengths of 24.5" to 30.5" (half-inch increments), as well as letoffs of 70% and 90%. Adding even more adjustment is their new TCS (Tunable Cable System) roller guard, which allows for lateral adjustment, and with its Limb-Lok pocket design, the Elevate's 1" split limbs are locked in place to eliminate lateral movement. Rounding out this 32" gem is the new low-profile molded grip, Picatinny rail sight mount, integrated dovetail rest mount, and low-profile X-Out limb dampeners that gobble up noise and vibration.

The new [10] **MTX 29** (\$1,199) takes the top spot in the **Martin Archery** lineup and is loaded with features that have earned the Martin Technology Extreme (MTX) name. Designed with their new NTX Cam, it creates arrow speeds up to 347 fps. Martin's weight-distribution system on the riser provides optimal balance and stability. Touted to deliver zero hand shock and cam lean, the MTX is as smooth to shoot as it is to tune and can be set with either dual limb stops or dual mod stops. Its 29 $\frac{3}{8}$ " length makes it extremely maneuverable, and their patented Helix Groove Technology with new Long Draw or Short Draw rotating-mod system accommodates draw lengths ranging from 25" to 30". Rounding out the MTX 29 is its removable molded grip for finding that perfect hold, their TriLock System



**MORE THAN A BOW.**







11



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for added stability, and angled rear stabilizer mounts for tweaking balance. It's available in draw weights from 45 to 75 pounds and comes in 10 finish options.

Flying below the radar but sure to be a hit with the **Darton** faithful is the new [11] *Prelude E 32* (\$1,149). Delivering tack-driving accuracy in a 32" axle-to-axle package, it features screaming arrow speeds up to 347 fps, and although we all like speed, consistent performance is where the rubber meets the road when it's time to punch the 10-ring. The Prelude E 32 features an all-new riser design that's constructed from a stiffer, high-grade, pre-stressed aluminum that minimizes riser flex for a more stable platform, plus Darton's exclusive Equalizer Cable System that achieves even pressure on both axles. It also features adjustable draw modules that offer length adjustments from 25.5" to 31", and an adjustable roller guard for fine-tuning while also accepting QAD's Integrated Rest.

Taking the top spot in the **Obsession** line this year is the [12] *31" Nitro Ghost* (\$987), and it is the only rig in this flagship lineup coming in under a grand. Featuring a beefier fully-bridged riser, the Nitro Ghost sports Obsession's industry first two-track dual binary cam system with a rotating mod, and when pressed into service, it delivers an IBO speed reaching 353 fps. Like many bows trending with inline mounting capabilities, the Nitro Ghost has a Picatinny sight rail mount, as well as pre-drilled holes for mounting Hamskea's C.O.R. Mount Riser Interface for their Epsilon rest. The smooth-drawing Nitro Ghost is available in an impressive assortment of colors and camo options and was a real pleasure to shoot at the ATA Show. **BH**



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# Better Arrows & Bro

BY JACE BAUSERMAN

PHOTO BY TIMOTHY G. KENT





**FIND THE PROPER** PAIRING, PUNCH MORE LUNGS,  
AND PUT MORE MEAT ON THE TABLE IN 2023.

**T**HE ONLY THING that excites me more than the annual launch of new bows is the unveiling of new arrows and broadheads... I'm not joking! Why? Because the arrow/broadhead combination is ultimately responsible for putting an animal down quickly and humanely.

During my archery tenure, I've shot a pile of different arrow/broadhead combos — some I loved, and some will never see my quiver again. The key to finding the right pairing is matching that pairing to your hunting style and shooting expectations. Suppose you roam the West in search of pronghorns and mule deer and typically find your shots are a tad longer and oftentimes taken in stiff crosswinds. In that case, you want to turn your attention to a micro-diameter shaft and a low-profile fixed head or mechanical. If you're a call-them-close elk guru or Midwest white-tail hunter, a more economical, standard-sized arrow tipped with a sharp fixed-blade may be your go-to.

Here are some great 2023 options to consider.

*adheads*





## Arrows

**Carbon Express** has crafted some stone-cold killers over the years. Dubbed the [1] *Maxima Photon SD* (\$134.99/half-dozen fletched) and available in spines of 300, 350, and 400, this arrow was created mainly to help boost consistency. How? Carbon Express engineers used a 30-ton weave of custom carbon, and testing by CX has shown they recover up to 25% faster out of the bow than other shafts. The .203" inner diameter helps to eliminate wind-drag, enabling it to track directly behind broadheads upon impact.

**Easton's** Sonic 6.0 was a hit in 2022, and this year, Easton crafted the arrow in a [2] *6.0 Sonic Match Grade* (\$117.99/half-dozen) version. A fire-breather with a  $\pm .001$ " straightness rating, the Sonic 6.0 Match Grades go through an Acu-Carbon process, which ensures precise weight and spine consistency. As is typically the case, Easton gives bowhunters plenty of spine options, making it possible for most shooters to sling these great shafts that come helical-fletched from the factory.

Another from Easton is the [3] *5MM Legacy Fred Eichler Signature Arrow* (\$105.99/half-dozen). Recurve shooters will love the dark teakwood flare finish, not to mention its ability to cut the wind. It's offered in spine sizes from 340 to 700, and the white crest and hand-fletched, 4" left-helical natural turkey feathers further add to its beauty.

A new winner from the minds at **Gold Tip** is the [4] *Pierce LRT* (\$229.99/dozen). Built off the platform of the tried-and-true Pierce, the LRT promises tighter tolerances and improved components for remarkable downrange accuracy. As with all "skinny" arrows, wind drift is reduced, and the arrow can track friction-free behind a quality broadhead for more pass-throughs. The one-piece component system means easy installation and guaranteed straightness. The slick coating further enhances penetration, making arrow removal from stubborn foam targets easier. The Pierce LRT is available in multiple spine sizes and two fletching options.

**Victory** has made some fantastic arrows over the years, and they've always offered versions at various price points. The ICE NANO coating is a feature that needs to be noticed on the [5] *VAP TKO* (\$174.99–\$214.99/dozen). This technology makes for easy arrow removal from targets while also improving penetration. Engineered to reduce torsional deflection at launch, TKO's stabilize fast and drive deep. The TKO Series comes in three models: the Elite/V1, Gamer/V3, and Sport/V6. Victory also has crafted a new 50-grain outsert to up the F.O.C. of all these shafts.

When you think of **G5**, you think of broadheads — and justifiably so. Recently, this broadhead kingpin has also decided to craft a pair of arrows — the [6] *Mark 203 and Mark 244* (\$114.95–\$94.95/half-dozen). While the numbers reflect each arrow's diameter, G5's goal was to create shafts that would work from east to west, and everywhere in between. Each arrow has three-layer carbon construction, and the outer layer is crafted from a 3K weave of carbon. The 203 features a machined-aluminum half-out insert paired with an aluminum sleeve for added protection, and the 244 has a machined-aluminum insert for easy installation.

A 100% carbon shaft, **Black Eagle's** [7] *X-Impact Fletched Arrows* (\$110.99–\$118.99) are lightweight shafts that allow archers to add more weight up front to achieve exceptional arrow flight at all ranges and improved penetration. Black Eagle provides multiple spines to accommodate a wide range of draw weights, and the arrows come with orange Micro-Nocks, 2" vanes, and black-anodized outserts.





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## Broadheads

If you haven't slung a **Rage**, you need to. These broadheads fly true, which puts meat in the freezer and horns on the wall. For 2023, Rage took some of its classics and fitted them with NC (No Collar) Technology, which means no clips or O-rings required to keep the blades secure in the ferrule until they are needed to expand into action. If I were to recommend one of the new NC heads, it probably would be the [8] **NC Cut On Contact** (\$39.99/3-pack). This mechanical sports a .039" tip followed by a pair of .035"-thick steel blades that combine to give you a 2" cut. It's offered in 100 grains.

Accurate, rugged, and sharp out of the gate, **Iron Will's** [9] **Single Bevel Broadheads** (\$119.95/3-pack) help your arrows maintain rotational spin throughout impact. Added bleeder blades create a rectangular cut, and rectangular wounds are hard to close, meaning animals hit properly will expire quicker.

New **Archery Products** [10] **Ignite Series** (\$39.99/3-pack) has bowhunters

buzzing. NAP has produced some good ones over the years, and I have no doubt the **Ignite Series** will follow suit. Built around a one-piece titanium ferrule, strength is boosted, and the cut-on-contact point is exceptionally sharp. Available in two blade configurations (both with .031"-thick blades), these fixed heads should make a lot of bowhunters happy.

**Swacker** took the popular features of their #202, added a few improvements, and the [11] **#282 Hank Parker Signature Series** (\$43.95/3-pack) was born. Blade-Lock Technology allows shooters to practice with the same heads they're going to use for hunting. When set in "practice mode," blades will not deploy and become dull. Once the setscrew is removed and the Hunt-Ready Plug is added, this 125-grain head opens to a whopping 2.25".

Matching the length of the **QAD** [12] **Exodus** (\$40/3-pack) ferrule to a field-point and extending the blades back over the ferrule, this tri-blade mechani-

cal provides precision accuracy and solid penetration. With a blade thickness of .040" and a cut-on-contact SST tip, the **Exodus** promises a 1.25" cut. Available grain options are 85, 100, and 125.

A great 2-blade expandable that also allows users to practice with it is **SEVR's** [13] **Titanium 1.5** (\$15.99/per head). A setscrew in the ferrule prevents the blades from opening during practice. When you're ready to hunt, remove the screw and hit the woods. The non-barbed blades are fully contained in the ferrule, lock open upon impact, and can pivot to keep things moving straight ahead.

From **REK** comes a 4-blade fixed head dubbed the [14] **FX-4** (\$46.99/3-pack). The hardened stainless-steel tip of this head leads the path for the 1.25" main blade and a .750" bleeder blade. The total cutting surface is 1.875", and the company bills the 100-grain head as being remarkably accurate.

A slim mechanical that looks like a pair of scissors held together at the tips



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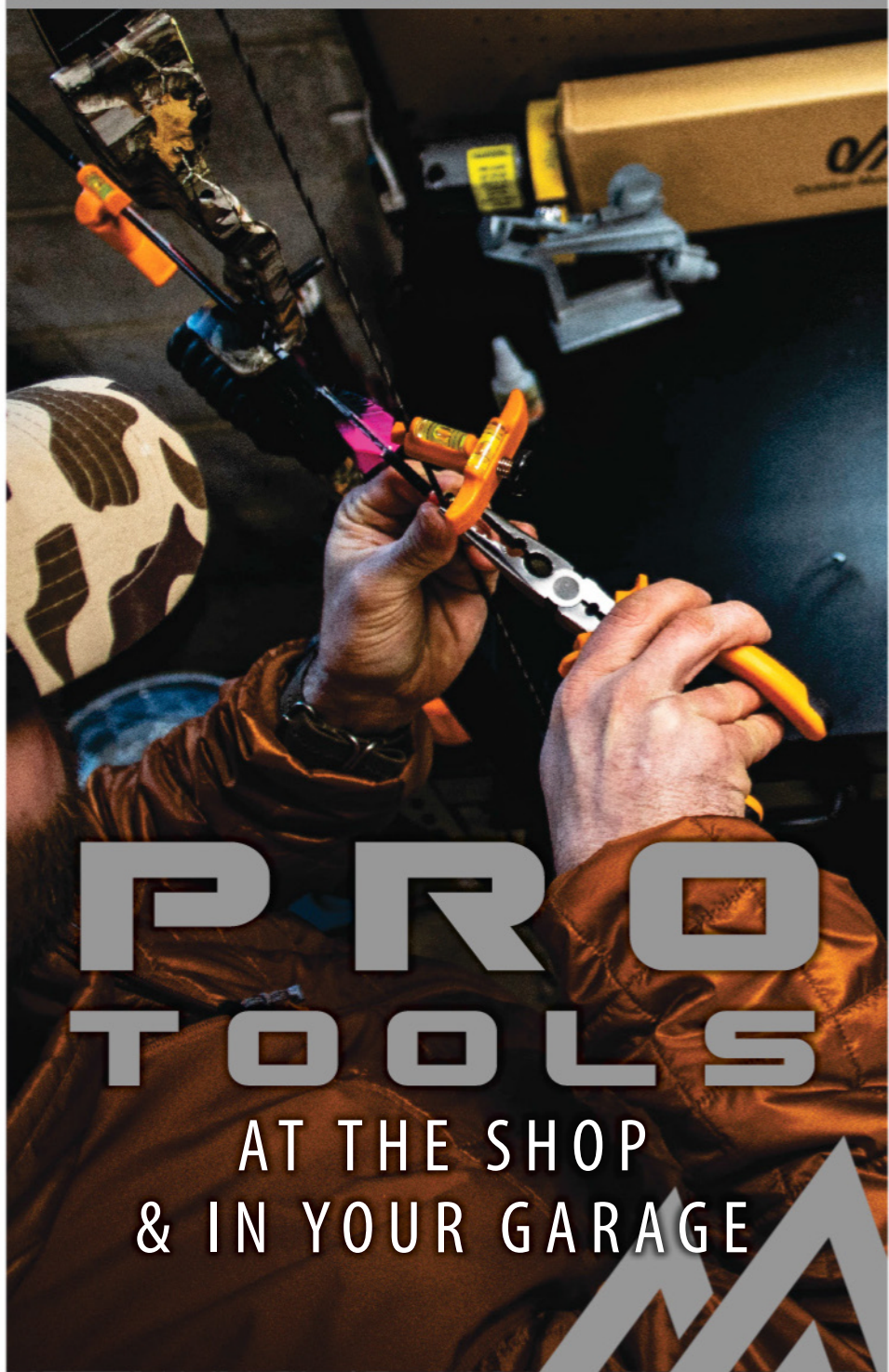
by a rubberband, **Fire-N-The-Hole's** [15] **Slang Blade** (\$39.97/3-pack) is said to create an entrance hole of 1", but because of the scissor-action blades, produces exit holes over 4". A beveled-blade design allows air to pass over one edge and under the other to create spin. It's offered in 100 grains.

For 2023, **Ramcat** combined its Airfoil technology with Firenock's Aero Concentric Technology (F.A.C.T.) when making the **Hemo-shock** and [16] **Hemo-shock DP** (\$44.99/3-pack). With a cutting surface of  $2\frac{3}{4}$ ", the most significant difference between the two is the DP was specifically designed to give increased penetration, regardless of draw weight or produced energy.

It's been a "hot minute" since **Trophy Taker** added a new member to its legendary T-LOK family, but the [17] **T-LOK Maverick** (\$44.99/3-pack) looks to be worth the wait. The Maverick is the original T-LOK on steroids — a fourth blade increases the overall cutting surface to  $1\frac{3}{16}$ ".



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Single-bevel broadheads have been a hit as of late, hence Slick Trick's [18] **Torch** (\$49.99/3-pack). The Torch features a double-faceted internal mechanism that locks its rear-deploying blades, thus nixing the need for collars, bands, or O-rings. The ferrule is slim but durable, and its transition to the Silver Tip is streamlined. On impact, the blades create a massive 2" hole.

Wasp wanted to answer the call of the traditional crowd and those compound shooters obsessed with shooting a heavy arrow. And they did so with the [19] **SharpShooter 200** (\$59/3-pack). This 200-grain, single-bevel broadhead was built to add weight to the front of your arrow, thus improving kinetic energy to maximize penetration on game.

Helix is creating waves with the fixed-blade crowd. The manufacturer's 2023 broadhead incarnation — the [20] **FJ4** (\$74.99/3-pack) — takes a standard single-bevel blade and adds a pair of smaller bleeders that insert directly into the ferrule. This addition gives the FJ4 an

21



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extra  $\frac{1}{16}$ " in cutting diameter. It's available in 100 and 175 grains.

### *Important Extras*

Bohning's [21] **Frontier Jig** (\$75.77) allows you to fletch any diameter arrow or bolt, and versatility like this makes the jig a hot commodity amongst the DIY crowd. The jig is easy to assemble, and a little Acetone wipe-down is all that's needed for a quick cleaning. The Frontier fletches 3-degree right helical, and Bohning offers a variety of other inserts. This portable/packable jig is the perfect size for the home bow shop, or for taking to camp.

Easy to use and capable of creating three (120 degrees) and four-fletched (75 and 105 degrees) shafts, is OMP's [22] **Phoenix** (\$111.19). This diecast/machined-aluminum jig sports an oversized base plate with four rubber feet. The Phoenix allows for 5 degrees of offset adjustment — right or left in 1-degree increments — and four accessory cutouts keep both glue and fletchings close at hand. **BH**



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# Conquer Their Blind Spot

BY BRIAN K. STRICKLAND, Equipment Editor

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN K. STRICKLAND





**HERE'S YOUR UPDATE** ON THE LATEST TREESTANDS, SADDLES, AND BLINDS FOR THIS SEASON.

**IT'S NO SECRET:** If you expect to consistently drag a whitetail buck out of the woods, you need to hunt their blind spots. Whether that means sight, sound, or smell, you can't get away with much when a whitetail is in sight. Obviously, if they smell you the gig is pretty much up, but if they consistently pick you off as well, it often equals the same results. That said, being perched high in a tree or in a well-hidden blind is the first defense against being spotted, and luckily for us, there's no shortage of options to pick from to prevent this from happening.





## Stands

Summit's unique [1] *Dual Axis Hang-On* (\$279) is an all-aluminum stand weighing 16 lbs. It sports a spacious 24" x 34" platform and patented seat design that can be locked in the up/down position for exceptional comfort when sitting, or as a comfortable pommel to lean against when it's primetime and you want to minimize movement.

A new kid on the treestand block is *Elevate Stand Company*, and their [2] *Element Ultra* (\$419) is just one of the reasons why. At just over 6 lbs., it takes mobility to the next level, and when married to their *Ascend Climbing Sticks* (\$299/3-pack) that weigh 1.75 lbs. each and secure to the stand for transport, the *Element Ultra* is the complete package for those planning deep strikes in out-of-the-way places. The stand has a 17" x 23.75" platform and a 10" x 8" seat with leveling capabilities for those leaning trees.

XOP adds yet another gem to their lineup with the [3] *Cold World* (\$449). Coming in at 7.5 lbs., it's a hang-on for those look-

ing to perch off the beaten path. It couples a 4-point bracket with an adjustable 26" x 17.5" platform and memory foam seat, so you can safely attach it to a variety of trees. The seat locks horizontally while in transport to eliminate noise and doubles as a shelf to better support a pack that's strapped to the platform while hiking in.

Another quality hang-on is the [4] *M7 Microlite* (\$257) from *Millennium Outdoors*. At just 8.5 lbs., it's an easy hauler with Millennium's *ComfortMax* contoured sling seat. It has a 20.5" x 26" powder-coated platform, and with Millennium's exclusive *CamLock Receiver* system, you can have multiple locations prepped for quiet, quick setups.

Recently acquired by *FeraDyne Outdoors*, *Rhino* and their simple yet comfortable [5] *RTH-100* (\$110) is a great hunt-hard option that's also affordable. With leveling capabilities to expand your tree options for hanging, it combines a mesh seat with a large 32" x 24" platform. And with a seat height of 21", it fits taller bowhunters like a glove. At just over 23 lbs., its dual-strap system prevents it from shifting.





At 18 lbs., **Vertical's** impressive [6] **Overland** (\$365) isn't the lightest in this lineup, but with its generous 22.25" x 31.25" leveling platform and UV-protected 16.25" x 14" self-leveling mesh seat, it's a quiet Cadillac that makes it easy to stay elevated all day long. It's constructed with T6 aluminum enhanced with a pre-solvent treatment before powder-coating to protect it against the harshest elements. The patent-pending AIS System gives hunters the ability to easily change accessories. It comes with straps that are 15% longer than most stands.

Taking their "Hunt From Above" motto to its core, **Hawk** designed their [7] **Mega Combat Hang-On** (\$209). Featuring all-steel construction, it comes in at 17 lbs. and tops a solid 24" x 30" platform with a comfortable 3"-thick foam seat that you can also level. The platform is welded at each contact point, while the Teflon washers with over-molded attachment hooks add to its quietness. Tree Digger teeth eliminate shifting, while the powder-coated "mud" finish adds durability and concealment.

The [8] **D'Acquisto Series .5 Public Land Hang-On** (\$499) from **Lone Wolf Custom Gear** comes in at just 5.7 lbs. However, what makes it the cat's meow is its ability to be customized when ordering. Whether you want a 22" seat or a standard 18" — or different seat sizes ranging from standard, medium, or large for a little extra weight — it will perform as advertised. It carries a unique hard-coat finish for added concealment and traction, plus leveling capabilities on both the seat and platform. The company's lightweight **Double Step Sticks** (\$109) are easily attached for packing in.

Bringing the benefits of a lightweight hang-on in a ladder-stand package, **Novix** offers the [9] **Raider** (\$799). It weighs 47 lbs., making it one of the lightest ladders I know of, and with the VersaLinks connection system on the ladder, there is no noisy metal-to-metal contact. Standing at 18', it's taller than many in this category, and it sports a 30" x 24" platform, a sling-style seat, and a Frost Coat finish for concealment and texture when climbing.





Designed with bowhunters in mind, the [10] **Bowman** (\$269) from **Rivers Edge** stands nearly 20' tall and features a flip-up mesh seat that is complemented by a 27"-deep platform, so you can move around freely. Like all treestands stamped with the Rivers Edge brand, it's rock-solid for those users weighing up to 300 lbs. and fits tight to the tree for better concealment.

The [11] **Striker XL** (\$229) is the latest ladder from **Big Game Treestands**, and it also features a flip-up contoured seat with backrest and a 17" x 22" platform. It stands just over 17' and is constructed from solid steel to ensure it stands tall for many seasons.

## Saddles

Although treestands are still the norm for most bowhunters, it's easy to see the benefits that tree saddles bring to the table. As their popularity has increased, so have the innovations, and the [12] **Venatic** (\$299) from **Trophyline** is a shining example. Combining the quality and comfort that the OG of saddles has delivered for decades, the Venatic weighs 20 oz. without the bridge/carabiner, and just 30 oz. when they are added. Minimized weight doesn't mean minimized

comfort with the Venatic — a Trophyline trademark for years now — and with the non-slip rubberized waistband, it stays where you want it to when hiking in and ascending the tree. When paired with their **Onyx Platform** (\$229) and **Double Step Mini Sticks** (\$269), you have the complete mobile bowhunting system.

**Tethrd** is another major player, and their new [13] **LockDown** (\$399) will certainly draw the attention of the saddle crowd. The LockDown takes a different approach to deliver an all-in-one system that many say is "tops" in the industry. The first things you'll notice is the new yoke-suspension system for handling more weight, and the large, one-handed operational pockets on each side for hauling additional gear. This extra space allows users to ditch the pack, if desired. It also incorporates a new customizable expansion system that delivers over 5" of adjustment to the sling, and with the Gen 2 UtiliBridge that expands Tethrd's Comfort Channel System from 3 to 7 points of adjustment, the LockDown brings a new level of customizable comfort.

**Cruze** is another company making headway in this category, and their [14] **XC** (\$260) is just one reason why. As the flagship in their line, it has a stiffer design that seems to mold





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to the user's body, and with three sizes to choose from, as well as the Xpansion Chamber built into the sling, the XC offers next-level comfort for those all-day hunts. It comes standard with their adjustable AmSteel-Blue Bridge, as well as two rows of Molle loops and quick-release buckles.

Latitude Outdoors complements their original Method saddle with the [15] **Method 2** (\$299). A unique two-panel system allows users to find their sweet spot for those all-day pursuits. Coming in at just over 30 oz., the updated bridge system is lighter and easier to adjust, and with the new removable leg straps and magnet system, the two panels stack together when hiking in but expand with a simple pull when it's time to climb. Plus, with their contoured vertical support system and the ability to adjust the upper panel once settled in the tree, you might just find yourself falling asleep at the most inopportune times.

H2 Saddles adds some enhancements to the [16] **2.0** (\$198) version with a great price point. Available in multiple colors, the 2.0 features larger linemen's loops and reinforced bridge loops for added strength and stiffness. It's equipped with both loose and tight Molle webbing along the top and bottom, plus additional gear loops below the seat that are perfectly positioned for accessing steps when ascending the tree. It comes

standard with a tubular web bridge but can be upgraded to a fully adjustable TriAd AmSteel bridge.

### Blinds

Today's hub-style and hard-sided blinds certainly make it easy and more efficient when you want to hunt face to face. That said, there are drawbacks, and one of the worst during the early season is the lack of ventilation.

Primal Outdoors has eliminated that with [17] **The Breeze** (\$189). Instead of limiting air when most of the windows are closed to stay concealed, the Breeze enhances it by pairing a gapped, umbrella-style roof with airflow vents on the bottom of each panel that allows air to funnel through the blind with ease while keeping you hidden. It also features 5 silent, mesh windows and has a 55" x 55" footprint that's 72" tall.

Taking the simple hub-style blind design to the next level, the [18] **Rhino 180** (\$212) from FeraDyne Outdoors features a 2-way mesh material on 2 sides that allows you to see completely through the blind while preventing game from seeing you inside. Enjoy the 270 degrees of adjustable silent-slide windows and Rhino's oversized zipper-less door, which lets you quietly slip into the blind. It's 75" from hub to hub on the inside, with a height of 66".





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If you would like to stand to shoot from inside a blind, then check out **Browning's [19] Envy** (\$399). With a center height of 82" and a width of 74", it's a beast. It's constructed from a durable 600D fabric with a blackout interior that incorporates stealth operation via their Silent-Trac window system and a QuickConnect door that uses magnets instead of noisy zippers. Other notables include 180-degree window openings and a pair of camera ports for filming your hunt.

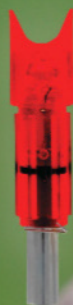
Building upon the blind that started it all, **Primos** offers the [20] **Double Bull Surroundview Double Wide** (\$499). With 300 degrees of one-way viewing, nothing will slip in

without your noticing, and with the expansive and zipperless door, slipping in and out is also a breeze — even when carrying your gear. It provides users with 180-degree, full-front silent windows and a built-in blackout curtain to eliminate your silhouette.

When the temperatures dip and the snow flies, the [21] **Pro Series Thermal Blind** (\$499) from **Ameristep** is a great mobile option. A first of its kind in the soft-sided blind space, the Thermal is constructed from a stout quilted fabric on all sides that's designed to keep the cold out and warmth in. At just 24 lbs., it's fairly portable. There are 12 large windows with a silent-slide window/mesh system and

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a full-size door, so you can easily access the blind when wearing bulky clothing. The pentagon-shaped footprint provides additional floor space for storing extra late-season gear.

For scent, thermal, noise, and wind control, it's hard to beat the benefits of a quality hard-sided blind. **Muddy's [22] Bull Box Blind** (\$2,999) easily defeats the elements and more while offering 360 degrees of complete hunting performance. It has 4-layer Thermo-Tek panel walls, a carpeted wood floor, and a molded-plastic roof. The EZ window design allows for quiet one-hand operation, and with both vertical and horizontal windows, it's built for both bowhunters and their gun-toting

brethren. You can leave it on the ground or get vertical by adding the 5' or 10' tower to the package.

Another hard-sided option is the [23] **Game Changer Platinum 360** (\$4,599) from **Redneck Blinds**. Built for the elements, as well as a crowd, it measures 6' x 8', so it can easily handle up to four people. And with the exterior walls built from durable fiberglass with a gel-coat finish, it definitely can withstand the elements. Tightly sealed for scent-containment, it also boasts acoustic foam along the walls and ceiling that is coupled with plush carpet over a dense foam underlay for noise reduction and warmth. Also, with windows galore that open silently, nothing will slip past unnoticed. **BH**

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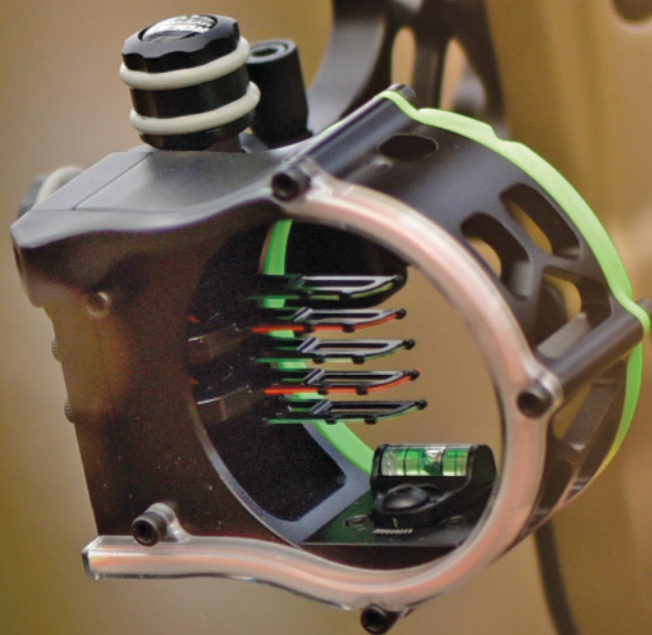




# Ready... Aim... Launch

BY ZACH BOWHAY

PHOTO BY TIMOTHY G. KENT







**PINPOINT ACCURACY** CAN  
BE ACHIEVED WITH QUALITY  
SIGHTS AND RESTS.

### **REMEMBER SEVERAL**

years ago an archery rep at a local pro shop told me that bows nowadays were nearly as efficient as an electric motor, and that innovation would start to happen slower than in years past. He mentioned that bows would have minor tweaks to performance, quietness, and vibration-dampening, but huge advancements in bow performance, like yesteryear, would be rare to nonexistent. Ultimately, that rep's words were somewhat true, because while today's bows are better than ever, they just don't appear to be breaking the mold like they used to.

The same cannot be said for bow accessories, and one reason why is the evolving partnerships between accessory manufacturers and bow manufacturers, many of which were made in an effort to improve your overall shooting experience.





Accessory companies are smart to work with bow companies to provide their loyal customers with gear made specifically for the new bow they are considering purchasing. Although many accessories seem to be headed in that direction, there are still plenty of great new sights and rests being made to fit just about any bow — and budget.

### Stay On Target

Black Gold has configured their [1] *Pro Hunter HD* (\$340) to fit on Hoyt bows that feature their In-Line System, as well as other bows that have a Picatinny sight mount. Available in 3 and 5-pin options with .019" Pro Pins and a 1.75" housing, the overall weight comes in at

8.5 oz. Windage, elevation, and 2<sup>nd</sup> axis are standard adjustments, while both 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> axis are micro-adjustable. This sight also comes with Black Gold favorites like the PhotoChromatic shell that adapts pin brightness to the ambient conditions, and the Dial of Death with Dual Indicator lets you acquire the perfect aiming point with short and long-range references.

The [2] *Trek Pro* (\$330) from CBE is a dovetail sight built on a carbon-fiber extension that has a ball detent that clicks into different positions. Available in three pin-configuration options, with either .010" or .019" pins, each comes with engraved aluminum sight tapes. With micro-adjustable blade pins, adjustable

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> axis, as well as multiple mounting positions for elevation/windage, the *Trek Pro* is highly customizable.

If you are torn between a single-pin slider and a fixed-pin sight, why not check out the [3] *Canyon Pounder* (\$600–\$620) from Option Archery. Available in two configurations, the CP3 features two fixed pins and one slider, and the CP5 has four fixed pins and one slider. When set to shoot fixed pins, it works like any standard fixed sight. When you want to dial yardage, you flip the fixed-pin portion out of the way to unveil the single horizontal slider pin that stays centered in the housing, unlike previous Option sights. It's offered in several mounting options to fit most bows.





If unique is your thing, look no further than **Dialed Archery** and their [4] **Arxos Sights** (\$500). The design allows archers to achieve greater distances before running into fletching-clearance issues. By angling the elevation rail, sight tapes are shorter and less travel is needed on the dial to adjust yardages. The bubble level is on top, which cleans up the sight picture and allows shooters to get more distance with multi-pin setups. Users can choose to have their tape on the outside-facing wheel or the inside, so it can be seen while at full draw. This sight can be purchased with a dovetail or rail mount, and all the important stuff is adjustable.

For the budget-conscious shooter, check out the **Rocky Mountain** [5] **Horizon 5-Pin** (\$100). This simple sight has a 2.123" plastic sight housing and full-capture .019" pins. The Horizon is ambidextrous, and adjustments can be made without tools. Other features are laser-etched windage/elevation marks and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-axis adjustments.

The [6] **RL-4** (\$75) by **Redline** is also a great, affordable choice for those wanting a quality sight. Weighing 6.2 oz., this is a very lightweight sight for a direct-mount setup. Its four .019" pins have an enclosed fiber hub to keep fibers protected. The tool-less locking adjustment

knob is a nice feature. Also included is a bubble level and a rheostat light.

**Cobra Archery's** [7] **Radius 5-Pin** (\$198) is one of the easiest rigs for sighting-in. Super simple and minimal is the idea, and they nailed it. Once you sight-in your 20-yard pin, you just slide the dial to automatically set the remaining pins. Made from 6061 T6 aluminum and with minimal moving parts, this sight will help you create a robust bow setup. The .019" pins are green and red and protected by a 2" housing. The Radius is capable of 2<sup>nd</sup>-axis adjustments and has manual macro adjustments and micro gang adjustments.

# REDI FOR EVERY DAY

It took over three years of R&D to create the first Havalon EDC. The REDI features the all new REDI-Lock replaceable blade system, which lets you easily swap between styles of semi-permanent AUS-8 steel blades. Unlike the original Piranta line, REDI blades are designed for extended use and abuse, and can even be re-sharpened. The REDI is also the first Havalon to have spring assist for smooth, one hand opening, further proving that it is REDI for any adventure.

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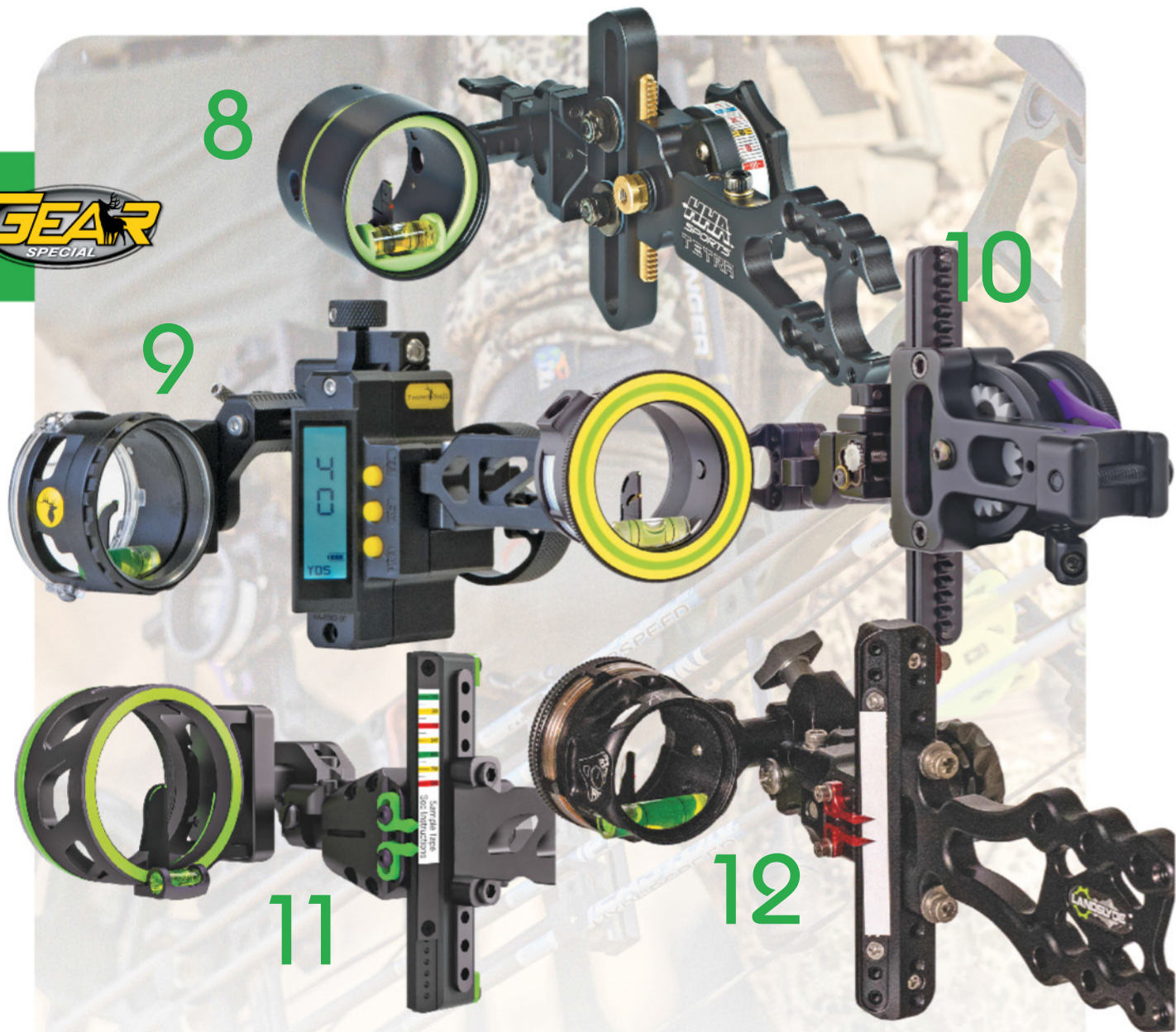


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If long distance is your thing, the new [8] **Tetra RYZ** (\$320–\$340) from HHA might be right for you. It boasts a smooth 2.1" of travel and comes with long-range sight tapes for stretching things out. This single-pin sight has a green primary pin, plus a red or yellow secondary aiming point that is great for when animals move unexpectedly and you're short on time. Pin sizes are .010" and .019", and they are found within a 1.625" housing that has a sight ring and integrated bubble level.

**Trophy Ridge** released a new version of their popular Digital React sights — the [9] **Digital React One Pin w/Mathews Bridge-Lock** (\$400). This one functions just like last year's model but fits Mathews bows that have the Bridge-Lock system. All you have to do is sight-in your 20-yard pin, power-up the sight, enter a verified bow speed,

and the rest of the distances are automatically ready to go to work. A customizable screen allows you to change pin colors, brightness, and distance increments, and up to five unique arrow profiles can be stored.

For years, the Fast Eddie has been a staple in the **Spot Hogg** lineup. This year, they released the [10] **Fast Eddie PM** (\$320–\$445), which is a standard Fast Eddie with a Pic-mount bar that attaches directly to the front of any bow wearing a Picatinny rail. This system reduces weight and helps keep your bow more balanced. It's available in single-pin, double-pin, triple-stack, and 3, 5, or 7-pin housings, in your choice of .010" or .019", and micro-adjustable 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> axis.

If a clean single-pin setup is what you're after, take a look at the [11] **Aegis 1 Light 19/5 Position** (\$180) by **Apex Gear**. This dovetail design has a multi-

position, detachable bracket that's great for those who wish to remove their sight while traveling. The 1.8" housing with a glow ring and fixed level has a single .019" vertical pin, and the helical-elevation gear makes for smooth adjustments as well as dual-yardage pointers and dual-travel stops.

Bridging the gap between tournament and hunting sights is the [12] **Landslide Plus Carbon Pro Slider w/Ranger Double Pin** (\$525) by **Axcel**. Built with the Axcel advanced carbon-composite bar, all axis adjustments are true and made independently. Eight metal sight tapes with 16 scales are included. The Rapid knob is perfect for precise/fast yardage tweaks, and the Dead Spot allows you to find your home mark easily when the time arises. Another great feature is two individually adjustable pointers for quick references



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in the field. You can choose between .010" and .019" fiber optics.

### *Missile Guides*

The [13] **Epsilon** (\$275) by **Hamskea Archery** is available in three models — standard bracket, Mathews-approved bracket, and C.O.R. bracket. Each rest can be configured as either cable or limb-driven and attached to either the top or bottom limb. New on the Epsilon is micro-click elevation/windage adjustments at .003" per click. The containment bracket makes for easy loading and keeps your arrow secure, while the launcher further keeps your arrow in place. This rest also has torsion spring and launcher-angle adjustment, and attaches in-line behind the riser to help eliminate quiver interference.

The limb-driven [14] **Gen Integrate 8X** (\$250) by **Vapor Trail** is made to fit integrate systems and is their most compact rest to date. Available in 14 interchangeable colors, the full-capture cage w/side gate is easy to load, and arrows won't come out unless you want them out. The micro-adjustable windage/elevation are done with a hex head, and there are no "clicks" to ensure that you can get the rest exactly where you want it, then use the lock screw to cinch it down. The free-floating launcher arm keeps arrows supported through 70% of the shot cycle. It can be activated by the top or bottom limb.

If a fall-away isn't your style, you might consider the [15] **Whisker Biscuit V Max** (\$90) by **Trophy Ridge**. This full-capture rest has a V-shaped design that centers arrows via two points of contact, thus eliminating side-to-side arrow movement with consistent arrow trajectory. Rubber arrow guides provide silent loading. When adjustments are needed, they are tool-less with laser-engraved reference marks.



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Trophy Taker expanded their popular Smackdown series with the addition of the [16] *Smackdown Lockup Click* (\$150). This rest sports a no-brainer loading gate, and the rubber-coated, steel containment ring keeps your ammo up and at the ready. Windage/elevation knobs make it easy to tune in the field.

Although the [17] *Integrate MX* (\$250) from QAD isn't necessarily new, its popularity and quality are worth mentioning. QAD has worked closely with many top bow manufacturers to build a rest that uses the integrate system in place of standard attachments. This puts the rest more in line with the riser to keep it out of the way of quivers while also balancing your bow for improved accuracy. Its full-capture design keeps arrows up and in place for quiet drawing and shooting. Windage/elevation adjustments are done at .019" per click.

The *Ripcord* [18] *Drive Cage* (\$170–\$190) is available in standard Drive

Cage and Drive Cage Micro versions. The ball-bearing drive is smooth, and the internal dampening reduces noise and shock. The Ripcage keeps arrows contained and ready at all times, and the launcher arm is quiet and adjustable. The Drive Cage can be attached to the bottom or top limb, making tuning in the field possible. The micro version, as the name implies, has micro-adjustments for elevation/windage.

You might look at the CBE [19] *Defy Micro* (\$170) if you're in need of a new rest. This cable-driven rest uses ball bearings that are smooth and quiet. The Internal BounceBack Prevention System ensures arrow clearance and reduces noise/vibration. The Gravity Lock System keeps your arrow fully contained throughout the draw cycle and only drops when the bow is fired. The Defy Micro is streamlined and has micro-windage/elevation adjustments and a cable clamp for easy installation. **BH**





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# Dress Your



**BY BRIAN K. STRICKLAND, Equipment Editor**

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HOT OR COLD, HAVING THE RIGHT GEAR CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

# Best

# H

AVING THE RIGHT equipment can make or break a bowhunt. Although we dedicate a lot of energy toward our bow-and-arrow setup, staying warm, dry, and comfortable in the field is a close second. Whether you're chasing elk in the high country and have to battle a storm that suddenly erupts, or simply hunting close to home come November, being decked out for the conditions will keep you focused and in the game longer.

## Clothing

That said, today would certainly be the "good ol' days" of quality hunting apparel, and a favorite for many in the Western bowhunting crowd would have to be KUIU. Headlining for them this season is their [1] *Proximity Jacket* (\$299) and *Pants* (\$259), which are a perfect combination for bowhunters wanting to stay whisper-quiet in the elements. Developed using a proprietary technology, it combines a polyester-knit brushed shell with a wind-resistant membrane coated with what they have coined as "Syntha-Cell foam." Other details include proven body-mapped insulation as well as a polyester-knit liner with anti-odor treatment. Both garments feature multiple large pockets, a water-resistant finish, and for treestand hunters, the jacket has a safety harness port as well.

The new *Pahvant* collection from **Browning** is also a good choice for bowhunters looking for quality while keeping some money in their wallets. The [2] *Pro Jacket* (\$179) has a durable 4-way stretch polyester softshell fabric bonded to a microfleece liner. It's equipped with numerous large pockets, adjustable hood, treestand harness port, and heat-dumping 14" underarm vents. The *Pro Pants* (\$99) feature a durable polyester double-weave fabric with multiple pockets and 13" vents. Both are outfitted with YKK zippers, a wind/water-resistant DWR finish, and are available in Browning's Ovis camo pattern or a solid carbon or brown.

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ScentLok raises the bar with the new [3] *Paradigm Jacket* and *Pants* (\$289 each). Designed for those midseason applications when Mother Nature begins to wake up from her summer slumber, they offer ScentLok's proven Carbon Alloy, Silver Alloy, and Fusix scent-killing/absorption technologies. Engineered for warmth and versatility, the collection features a quiet, windproof and water-resistant fabric with a DWR-treated micro-tricot outer shell that's bonded to a micro-grid fleece lining for added warmth. The Paradigm collection comes in Mossy Oak and Realtree camo patterns.

Stone Glacier adds a lightweight version to the mix with the [4] *Cirque Lite Jacket* (\$239). Great for the early season or as a layering piece later in the year, it's warm, breathable, and highly packable. It features a durable weather-resistant face fabric with a PrimaLoft Gold synthetic insulated core. The micro-grid fleece side panels have an odor-control finish that also purges sweat.

Designed with active breathability and warmth before the harsh late season sets in, the **Code of Silence** [5] *Hoodie* (\$140) and *Pants* (\$130) combo are made from a quiet, polyester/wool fleece-blended outer shell with a flatter fleece design that's

paired with an anti-odor tricot lining. The top has tapered sleeves that move with you for reduced bulk, a lined kangaroo pocket, and an adjustable hood. The bottoms have articulated knees and leg panels that make them easy to tuck into your boots or expand around them.

A pioneer in performance-hunting apparel for nearly two decades, Sitka adds something else that's sure to be a pleaser with the [6] *Ambient Jacket* (\$299). Engineered to adapt to changing weather conditions, as well as various levels of activity, it's constructed from recycled PrimaLoft Evolve insulation and a 20D ripstop nylon outer fabric with DWR finish for enhanced weather protection. PrimaLoft Evolve mimics the properties found in animal fur of different lengths, maximizing airflow when on the move and trapping heat when at rest.

With an ultra-quiet design and heat-retention attributes for mid to late-season hunts, the weather won't be the reason you head in early with ASIO's [7] *Windproof Sherpa Lined Jacket* (\$215) and *Pants* (\$195). You'll appreciate the company's signature brushed-fleece outer shell that is bonded to a Sherpa fleece lining, not to mention the heavy DWR water-resistant





finish and antimicrobial qualities to minimize your funk. The jacket has handwarming pockets and underarm stretch gussets, so you can easily draw your bow. The pants have zippers on the sides for releasing heat, as well as cargo pockets. They are available in ASIO's Raptor pattern and Mossy Oak's Elements Terra Gila.

It's all about the elements when it comes to a late-season bowhunt, and **Huntworth's Saskatoon Series** is your answer. Equipped with their unique Heat Boost Graphene lining, it absorbs your body heat and then releases it back to keep you warm — with much less bulk than you'd expect. It works overtime by providing moisture-wicking/antimicrobial qualities, and with its quiet, 4-way stretch shell and DWR finish, it defends against both wind and water. The Saskatoon Series is available in a [8] **Pants, Jacket** (\$189 each), and **Vest** (\$139) combination in their unique Disruption and Tarnen camo patterns.

When Mother Nature barrels in, look to **Nomad's [9] Cottonwood NTX Collection** (\$200 each). This three-layer system combines an ultra-quiet Sherpa fleece shell with a breathable, water/wind-resistant membrane that's bonded to a fleece inte-

rior. This jacket and pants combo is ultra-warm, and with the added DWR finish with Nomad's Silver-Z Scent Suppression, it sheds moisture and minimizes your scent. The jacket has a lined kangaroo pocket, while the pants feature a pair of lined hand pockets and a pair of fleece-lined cargo pockets positioned on top of your thighs for easy access while sitting.

Although made with turkey hunters in mind, **Blocker Outdoor's** new [10] **Finisher Jacket and Pants** (\$129 each) could certainly double for early season deer hunts. Both include a hexagonal micro-fleece interior that's bonded to a quiet polyester shell. Durable overlays are added to the back, elbows, forearms, and seat areas, while the hood offers multiple adjustments to help maintain visibility. A silver antimicrobial treatment helps prevent odor.

For the ladies, **DSG Outerwear** launches the new [11] **Breanna 2.0 Collection** (\$129 each). This midseason fleece pull-over and bib combo features a quiet, water-resistant shell that's bonded to a fleece interior. The pullover gives you a spacious kangaroo handwarming pocket with a hook-and-loop closure, while the bibs incorporate an adjustable snap inseam, a drop seat for when nature calls, and a large thigh pocket.



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## Boots

Nothing makes for a miserable hunt quicker than cold, wet feet. A boot company that meets the grade when it comes to happy feet is **Kenetrek**, and their new [12] *Slide Rock Hiker* (\$325) is a great crossover option if you're looking for an early season boot for out West or in a treestand. The 7" Slide Rock weighs 3.6 lbs. per pair and boasts all-leather construction from lace to toe, and reinforced rubber toe and heel guards for extra toughness. They are waterproof/breathable, and with their Super-Gripping Garçon outsole, they are fantastic in rugged terrain.

No boot company worth its salt just throws something together to look good, and after five years on the drawing board and countless days beating them up across the globe, **LaCrosse** once again delivers with the [13] *Ursa MS* (\$300). Built for long days and tough conditions, the new Ursa MS is designed with TecTuff PU-infused leather uppers with breathable SuperFabric quarter panels and gussets that have proven time and again to be extremely abrasion-resistant and durable. Adding to this gem is their iconic Vibram MONT outsole for optimized traction, and the large Hexguard rubber rand has been cemented and double-stitched to guarantee many seasons of use.

Another boot for difficult terrain is the [14] *DOGMA GTX* (\$499) from **AKU**. Handmade in Italy and tested in extreme conditions, the uppers are constructed from a Perwanger 3mm PU Tech leather and Ballistic fabric along the shaft. This combo provides resistance, protection, and comfort. It sports a Vibram sole for optimal grip and a GORE-TEX membrane for waterproofing and breathability. They are anatomically fit for better stability and weight distribution across the sole.

**Irish Setter** unveils the [15] *Elk Tracker XD* (\$249). With full-leather camo uppers and leather-cushioned gusset overlays and wraparound rubber rands, the Elk Tracker XD is

nearly impervious to abrasion. Its aggressive outsole ensures stability in the mountains, and when coupled with the lightweight, EnerG midsole and resilient EVA memory foam footbed, your feet stay fresh throughout the hunt. Rounding things out is the UltraDry lining and TempSens technology, which wick moisture while creating a thermal barrier when there's a chill.

Time-tested and still providing exceptional performance is what the **Danner** [16] *Pronghorn* (\$270–\$300) continues to deliver after nearly 20 years. It was the first quality boot I ever owned, and five generations later, they are still one of the most popular among bowhunters. An ideal crossover for those who divide their time between lonely ridges and treestands, Danner couples its Vibram SPE midsole and TERRA FORCE NEXT platform to give wearers superior comfort, arch support, and torsion control. The full-grain leather uppers are tough, while the breathable GORE-TEX liner does what we all know it will do in wet conditions. The Pronghorn is available with no insulation, or with 1,200-gram PrimaLoft insulation.

**Crispi** is a favorite among many Western bowhunters, and their [17] *Altitude GTX* (\$365) is just one of the many reasons why. At just 1.45 lbs. each, these lightweight wonders are great at absorbing impact and keeping you upright when carrying a meat-laden pack. They provide just enough flex up front as to not be too stiff — with more torsional stability toward the shank and heel — and when you add in the ultra-soft leather and synthetic uppers, a PU-coated leather rand, and 8" of solid ankle support plus much more, the Altitude GTX will endure whatever you need it to.

Built to take a bite and give you confidence, **Rocky** launches the [18] *Lynx Snake* (\$255) this year. With 16" of



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serpent protection, the Lynx has full-grain leather trims enhanced by an abrasion-resistant Mossy Oak nylon material. An aggressive all-terrain outsole with an EVA midsole that is combined with Rocky's Rebound footbed, propels users to the next level while keeping their feet dry and comfortable.

Rubbers are a must in the whitetail woods, and **Muck Boot** is arguably the king of the hill in this category. Their new [19] **Pathfinder** (\$NA) is just another example as to why. Building upon the success of their Apex Pro, the waterproof Pathfinder is equipped with flex notches for added comfort, and with the reinforced toe/heel coupled with an aggressive outsole, it delivers phenomenal durability, traction, and support. An air-mesh lining enhances breathability, while the neoprene offers natural insulation qualities and couples with a stretch-fit topline binding to lock in the heat.

Another brand grabbing its share of the rubber-boot space is **Dryshod**, and their new [20] **Evalusion** (\$189) is sure to grab more this season. This all-season boot features a dense 5mm insulated foam bootie, while the nano-scale hydrophobic coating repels mud and water. To minimize overheating, they also feature a four-way stretch air-mesh lining, and with the new aggressive Dureva outsole, they offer stable footing in all conditions.

More than once I've been met with swollen creeks that my 16" boots couldn't handle, so having some hip waders in the truck has been handy. **Frogg Toggs**'s [21] **Cascade Elites** (\$149) have a thin rubber layer bonded on each side by a pair of nylon jersey layers for durability. Their 200-gram Thinsulate Insulation takes the chill off when you have to take the plunge on the way to your deer stand.

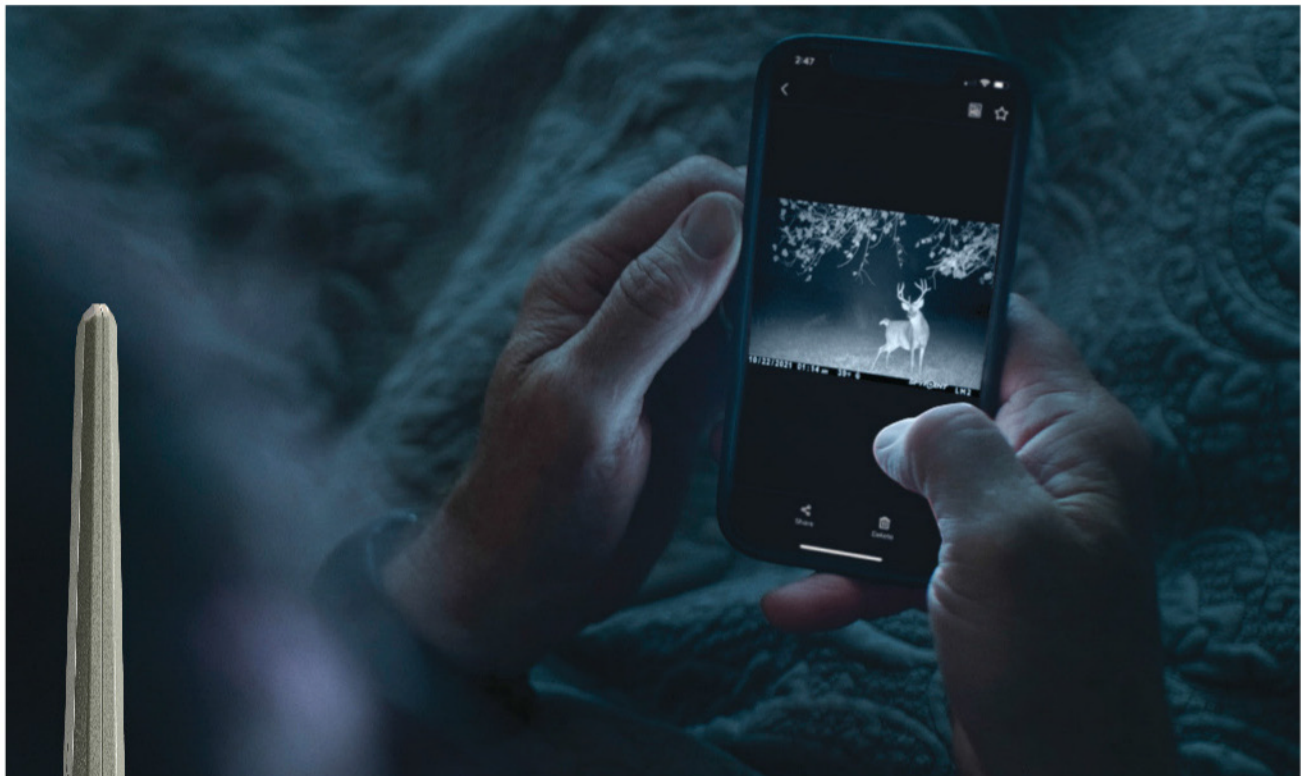
## Packs

**Kifar** has packs for every situation, and one that truly deserves attention is the [22] **Kutthroat** (\$514). Weighing 4 lbs., it's large and light enough for a multi-day trip but also offers ample space for whitetail enthusiasts. It's constructed from a DWR-coated Cordura fabric, and the internal frame, shoulder straps, and waist belt provide real comfort when hauling heavy stuff. It has exterior pockets on the front, a chamber pocket inside, and two external water-bottle pockets on the side. It's also equipped with a hydration-bladder sleeve and a snow-collar lid.

Another pack that won't disappoint is the new [23] **Pop Up 40** (\$425) from **Mystery Ranch**. Doubling as a low-profile daypack for your essentials and a meat-hauler when your hard work finally pays off, its unique frame includes a load sling that carries up to 80 lbs. Storage space is 2,440 cu. in. and weight is 5.3 lbs. Other notables of this quality pack — available for both men and women — include top-load and side-zipper access, dual stretch-woven side pockets, compression straps, attachment loops, and a removable/adjustable lid.

**ALPS OutdoorZ** never disappoints, and their [24] **Elite 3800** (\$199.99, bag/\$249.99, frame) is further testament. The frame is made from a thermoplastic-composite material that is lightweight and strong. Comfort comes courtesy of its contoured lumbar support, adjustable torso length, and load-lifters with anti-sway waist straps. Use the frame as a standalone, or in combination with the 3800 bag (or the 1800/\$149.99), so you can haul meat and gear together. Both bags feature a main compartment with five internal mesh organizers, an external top compartment, three exterior pockets w/buckle straps, and a drop-down bow/gun holder. **BH**





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# Topnotch Cameras

BY JACE BAUSERMAN

AUTHOR'S PHOTO



## THE TRAIL-CAMERA WORLD HAS COME A LONG WAY.



**4 YEARS AGO**, when I was a young, budding bowhunter, someone told me trail cameras, which were film at the time, were cheating. The individual went on to rant about how the devices take away woodsmanship and provide hunters with an unfair advantage.

For a short time, I listened.

What a mistake. Trail cameras are not only fantastic scouting tools, but they're so fun to use. Over the years, my cameras have snapped images of deer, elk, pronghorns, turkeys, black bears, mountain lions, coyotes, etc. I've caught bull and cow elk doing the hibbity dibbity, whitetail bucks cracking horns, a hen turkey laying eggs, and a big buck pronghorn that decided to swim in a cattle pond. My trail cameras have proven invaluable, and today I have a healthy arsenal of both digital and cellular cameras.

Where legal, you can't beat a quality cell cam. I love having images dumped to my smartphone the second a camera snaps them, and I enjoy, especially during whitetail season, not having to set foot in the woods to change settings. Battery life, on most makes, is remarkable.

If you've been hesitant to jump in the trail-camera game or are a camera addict looking to boost your arsenal, we're here to help your addiction by providing intel on several top-tier 2023 scouters. Enjoy.

For 2023, **Browning** adds the [1] *Defender Pro Scout MAX Extreme* (\$139.99) to its lineup. More economical, this compact beauty has a .25-second trigger speed (one of the industry's fastest), and the Auto-Detect feature allows the camera to recognize what signal (AT&T or Verizon) is the best in your hunting area. Better yet, you don't have to fuss with microscopic SIM cards — Browning has installed them for you — so you're good to go from the moment you pull this camera out of the box. This cell cam has 22MP image capability and 1080p HD video with sound settings. The Radiant 6 Night Illumination delivers crisp day/night images and video.

**Bushnell** gives its award-winning CelluCORE 20 an upgrade with the [2] *Cel-luCORE 20 Solar* (\$243.45). Battery life is significantly increased thanks to the addition of a solar panel that detaches and positions easily to absorb the most available sunlight. The panel sports a rechargeable lithium-ion battery and can maintain a full charge for up to 70 images per day with direct sunlight.

A complaint of digital/cellular camera users is often battery life. For this reason, **SpyPoint** fitted the [3] *Flex-S* (\$189.99) with an integrated solar panel that charges its internal lithium battery. Eight AA batteries or the LIT-22 battery pack can be used for backups. A Constant Capture feature means photos and videos can be taken, even when in a non-transmitting mode. The Flex-S will connect with the most substantial network available. Another marvel is the *LM2* (\$99.99). Its 20MP photos provide exceptional detail, and the half-second trigger time with a 90' detection range means very few missed photo ops.

**Moultrie Mobile's** [4] *Edge Pro* (\$179.99) raises the cellular bar with new technology that allows you to set it to identify and capture only what you want it to. Using the Moultrie app, you can select triggering based on custom detection zones. Each camera operates off the strongest cell signal in the area to help guarantee you get the best in camera/phone functionality. Built-in memory means no SD card is required, so no more fretting over whether you're using the right card.





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Covert's redesigned [5] **WC20** (\$129.99) promises to be easy to deploy and conceal. Add the ultra-sensitive .30-second trigger, and you can bet the farm that more subjects than not will be centered in the frame. Forty infrared LEDs provide a 100' flash range for even illumination. MaXimum Silence Image capture means what you think it does — no noise — and setup is simple thanks to the 1.5" color screen. Coverage plans for both AT&T and Verizon are available.

Built on a minimalistic platform to make them easier to conceal in tight locations, Cuddeback's [6] **Tracks Cellular Camera** (\$149.99) is one to check out. Cuddeback has produced some winners over the years, and this instant-gratifier is another homerun. Dual-paddle antennas pull every ounce of service available, so those areas with limited service are less of a problem. Cuddeback's Tracks uses an advanced IR-cut image sensor for exceptional image clarity and quality, and the D-cell batteries provide more extended life.

**Spartan**, a cellular-camera kingpin, ups the game with its

[7] **GoLive 2 4G/LTE** (\$449.95). This scouter sports 30 frames-per-second live stream ability and .4-second trigger speed. The Dual Blackout Infrared Flash is invisible to animals, and the internal lithium battery means months of operation without unnecessary trips to the woods for you. Other notables include a wide-angle lens and a design that's virtually impervious to Mother Nature.

New this year from Tactacam is the [8] **Reveal X-Pro** (\$149.99), and cellular lovers will cheer this camera's compact nature, antenna slot, and adjustable 80'-plus nighttime illumination. The X-Pro is capable of detecting critters out to 96', and the camera has been tested in every weather condition possible. False triggers are few and far between. Users should know the camera requires a Tactacam, SanDisk, or Lexar Class 10, U3 SD card in either 16 or 32 GB to ensure top-level performance.

Reconyx's [9] **HyperFire 2 Cellular Covert IR** (\$599.99) will only help this brand grow. Reconyx took its HyperFire 2 and gave it a 4G LTE boost. The camera provides one year or



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5,000-image battery life, and the .2-second trigger speed is remarkable. The 150' invisible-flash range sweetens the pot, as does its 1080p Wide Screen or 3MP Standard Image Resolution. A webbed strap is included for mounting it to trees and posts.

**Stealth Cam** has been making trail cameras for over two decades, and during that tenure, the manufacturer has put out some fantastic units. For 2023, its new [10] **Deceptor** (\$149.99) merges two networks — Verizon and AT&T — so you don't have to match coverage to your phone's digital plan. One camera covers them both. Through Stealth Cam's Command Pro App, users can adjust camera settings from their devices and request a real-time photo or video of a hunting area before entering the area to check weather conditions and possible game presence. The Deceptor is branded with a trigger speed of .4 seconds and has an illumination/detection range of 80'. Another cellular from Stealth Cam is the **Fusion X-Pro** (\$129.99). It monitors signal strength to locate the carrier putting out the

strongest signal, and then it connects to provide the best transmission to your mobile device.

**Muddy** has added trail cameras to its fine list of products. Dubbed the [11] **Matrix Cellular Camera** (\$129.99), this dual-network scouter provides high-resolution 36MP imaging, 1080p full-HD video with audio, and an 80' detection range. The Matrix is compatible with Stealth Cam's Command Pro App, providing right-now access to cameras anywhere, anytime.

**Wildgame's** [12] **Encounter XT** (\$119.99) comes fitted with pre-installed SIM cards for both AT&T and Verizon, and the camera can auto-detect the strongest signal offered in its location. Compatible with Wildgame's HuntSmart App, you can access your camera and adjust settings in the blink of an eye. The Encounter XT has a sub-.5-second trigger speed, can be mounted in multiple ways, and has photo-burst capabilities. Image resolution has numerous settings, and audio/video can be set for 720p HD. **BH**

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# Best In Glass

BY ZACH BOWHAY

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*W*ESTERN HUNTERS live and die by our optics because much of the land we hunt is open, and having the right spotting scope or binoculars is paramount to our success. Additionally, in pressured areas or warm weather, animal movement can often be limited to those times of day when light is low — hence the need for good glass.

Conversely, glassing in the whitetail woods is often in tighter conditions better suited for smaller, lower-magnification optics than those used in the West. Still, clear optics that bring in maximum light are always a good idea.

When it comes to knowing shot distances, hunters have no excuses. Today's rangefinders not only give us exact horizontal distances but also angle-compensated ranges — and they're readily available in nearly every price range. Some hunters don't want to carry both binoculars and a rangefinder. For that crowd, rangefinding binoculars might be the perfect choice.

When it comes to optics and rangefinders, you truly almost always get what you pay for. If money is no issue, then buy the best on the market. Trust me... you won't be sorry. If your pockets aren't quite as deep, you'll still find a ton of worthy options. Either way, check out the optics listed here and go with whatever best fits your hunting style in any situation.



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## Two Eyes

For almost any bowhunter, a quality pair of binos like the **Zeiss [1] SFL 8x40** (\$1,800) fit the bill. They provide plenty of magnification, a nice field of view at 1,000 meters, and a close-focusing distance of 1.5 meters. They're ultra-lightweight and compact, and they deliver a sharp glassing experience. The focus wheel is perfectly placed for ease of use, even while wearing gloves. The lens coating ensures good viewing in any weather.

Available in 10x50 and 12x50 options, the **[2] B.6** (\$1,050–\$1,100) by **Maven** delivers a top-end glassing experience at an affordable price. Fully multi-coated lenses with a 50mm objective provide a bright picture in all light conditions. A magnesium frame translates to a weight of just 30.7 oz.

For the budget-minded out there, check out the **[3] Vantage 10x50** (\$199) by **Hawke Optics**. Made from a rubber-coated polycarbonate frame, these lightweights are very affordable. Lenses are coated, and the barrels are nitrogen-purged to keep

them waterproof/fogproof. The included covers keep the lenses in good shape over the life of the optic.

Although technically new in 2022, the **Meopta [4] MeoPro HD Plus 10x42** (\$750) is worth mentioning. Weighing 24.7 oz., its magnesium body is protected by a layer of rubber. Using fluoride-optical elements, they have great clarity and high-color fidelity.

A top-end optic is the **GPO [5] Passion HD 12.5x50** (\$1,360). With a larger field of view than most 15X binos, this 12.5X strikes a perfect balance whether handheld or on a tripod. The magnesium micro-bridge body with aluminum eyecups make for a lightweight optic, and the GPO lens coatings provide a wonderfully crisp viewing experience. They're fully waterproof/fogproof.

If spotting scopes aren't your thing, but you want a little more power, you should check out the **Athlon Optics [6] Cronus G2 HD 15x56** (\$875). The extra-low dispersion UHD glass provides sharp edge-to-edge clarity, and the ESP (Enhanced





Spectral Prism) dielectric coating reflects 99% of the light through its prism assembly. It weighs 45 oz., which for a pair of 15's is very manageable. With a field of view of 235' at 1,000 yards, you can cover plenty of territory while picking apart terrain.

**Tract Optics [7] Toric UHD 10x42 HT Hunting Binoculars** (\$694) are made to flourish just about anywhere. Schott High Transmission glass and flat multi-coating increase light transmission over a wider spectrum than most. The enhanced ocular design creates a wider field of view and long eye relief that minimizes black-out when your eyes are perfectly aligned in the eyecups. It weighs 27 oz., which is perfect for the mountains.

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- The Hazards of Whitetail Hunting





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## Long Distance

Swarovski makes top-tier optics, and the [8] **ATC and STC 17-40x56 Spotting Scopes** (\$2,721) are their newest offering. For those who want a high-quality spotter without all the weight (34.2 oz.), these scopes fit the bill. The ATC is an angled version, and the STC is for those who prefer a straight spotting scope. The focus wheel is placed on the body of the scope where your hand naturally rests. Although not a huge-powered scope, it's a Swarovski...

The Kowa [9] **Prominar TSN 88 Series 88MM Spotting Scope** (\$3,450) is pretty sweet — especially if money truly is no issue. The unique optical coatings applied to both the lenses and the prism provide a very high level of light transmission and clarity to users. The fluorite-crystal objective lens provides a remarkable glassing experience.

If you want to spot them way out, take a look through the **Leupold [10] SX-5 Santiam HD** (\$1,800). This 27-55x80mm zoom scope has the power you need to

find animals far off or pick apart that closer hillside, and the 80mm objective lens gathers precious light at the most crucial times of the day. It's oversized eyepiece makes long glassing sessions more comfortable, and scratch/smudge-resistant coatings provide HD clarity. The durable housing's protective armor is easy to grip, and it's waterproof/fogproof.

The [11] **Diamondback HD 16-48x65mm** (\$500) from **Vortex Optics** is a great scope option in these trying times. With many features similar to its bigger brother — the **Razor HD** — most users will find this one a joy to use. A scratch-resistant coating and armored body keeps this scope well protected. The focus wheel is placed on the body, and the power adjustments are placed on the eyepiece.

## Make It A Combo

The **Bushnell [12] Fusion X 10x42 Rangefinding Binocular** (\$700) is a do-it-all setup sold at a great price. It's capable of ranging reflective targets out to 1,760



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yards (deer out to 700), and ARC gives you accurate shooting distances for shots at any angle. High-quality BK7 prisms provide a clear picture at dawn and dusk. Lenses are coated with the EXO Barrier, which repels water, fog, dust, and debris.

Leupold has long been a player in both the binocular and the rangefinding game, and the new [13] **BX-4 Range HD TBRW 10x42** (\$1,600) combines the two technologies. With a maximum range on deer out to 1,100 yards, and a minimum of 12 yards, it's sure to do all you need from ranging landmarks to knowing exactly how far to shoot when the chips are down. The reversible Power Button means it can be operated with either hand. These optics drastically reduce glare in harsh light while also providing great light transmission.

Leica hit another home run with the [14] **Geovid Pro 32 Rangefinding Binoculars** (\$2,900). Available in both 8x32 and 10x32, Leica combines superb clarity with 2,500-yard ranging capabilities. Weighing 30.7 oz., the Pros are very lightweight considering their dual-purpose capabilities. This optic is perfect

for bowhunting, as it is accurate to within a half-yard from distances of 10–219 yards. Made with a magnesium housing that's nitrogen-filled to keep them fog-free, the lenses are fully multi-coated.

## Small But Accurate

Vortex has released several new rangefinders as of late, and the [15] **Viper HD 3000** (\$600) is a dandy. At only 4.2"x 1.7" and 9.1 oz., it can be operated easily with one hand, and the 7x25mm view delivers an up-close look — even at distant targets. This model gives users the choice of straight-line or angle-compensated ranging, plus four target modes.

The [16] **Broadhead Laser Rangefinder** (\$300) by Bushnell was designed for bowhunters. With finite accuracy out to 150 yards, making a good shot is up to you. The reticle auto-adjusts for maximum visibility and contrast in varying conditions. ARC technology compensates for uphill/downhill shots. The multi-coated lenses give you bright images when you need clarity the most.

The [17] **XLR1600** (\$250) by HALO is a quality product at a good price. The



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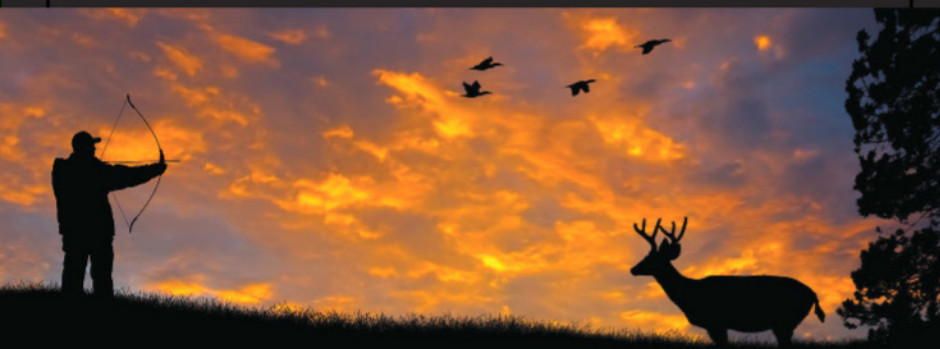
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6X optics coupled with a 1,600-yard ranging capability will please almost any hunter. Angle intelligence delivers an instantaneous angle-compensated range for taking shots on uneven terrain. This model is accurate to +/-1 yard, is water-resistant, and has a scan mode that locks in multiple targets at different yardages.

### Something Different

If you're willing to try something outside the norm, then you'll likely be pleasantly surprised with the [18] **ZULU6 HDX Binoculars** (\$900-\$1,200) by SIG. Available in four models, with the 10X having 30mm



18

objective lenses and the 12, 16, and 20X versions having 42mm objectives. With the flip of a switch, they transform from normal binos to a glassing experience with Optical Image stabilization. Translation: You can effectively glass for game without the aid of a tripod. The leg-up this one has over the original ZULU6 is the HDX-Glass, which offers superior light gathering, resolution, and definition.

Covert Optics says the [19] **ThermX HS1 Handheld Scanner** (\$1,100)



19

is like having a bloodhound in your pocket. For bowhunters at the end of a sparse blood trail, the heat-seeking optic provides a helping hand in game recovery. Featuring a four-color OLED display, the compact, 4.3 oz. HS1 stows easily in a pocket or pack. Be sure to check state regs before using this helpful tool. **BH**





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# What's New

## THE REST OF THE BEST GEAR

BY BRIAN FORTENBAUGH, Assistant Editor

### Wildlife Research Center® Active-Branch™

- Mock scrapes made simple
- Innovative branch holder
- Attracts during daylight

The Active-Branch Mock Scrape Kit (\$47.99) takes the guesswork out of making realistic mock scrapes in your favorite hunting areas. It mounts to trees/wooden posts, and allows you to easily affix an interaction branch at the perfect height, and a second, higher branch on which to hang your Magnum Scrape-Dripper®. The dripper drops rut scents to the ground only during daylight hours and helps condition whitetails to investigate during legal shooting hours. The Kit includes a Branch Holder, Mounting Strap, Magnum Scrape-Dripper, and 4 oz. of Golden Scrape®. Contact: Wildlife Research Center, [wildlife.com](http://wildlife.com).



### Easton® BowTruk™

- Three sizes to fit compounds/recurves
- Repositionable bow-anchor strap
- Abrasion/tear-resistant fabric

The BowTruk (\$462.99) has all of the qualities of its predecessor, and more. Its hybrid hard/softshell exterior is TPU-coated and capable of withstanding airline baggage handlers. The accessory/arrow compartments can be reached from the outside. The main compartment is roomy enough for additional clothing/accessories. A dual-seatbelt system anchors your bow, and three internal pockets organize gear. Heavy duty wheels and a "trailer-hitch" strap for attaching a duffle bag further enhance airport travel. It comes in three size configurations: 36", 40", and 47". Contact: Easton, [eastonarchery.com](http://eastonarchery.com).

### Lumenok® Red Crossbow Nock

- No magnets/glue needed
- Ultra-bright in any light
- Available for most bolts

New for 2023 is the Lumenok Red Crossbow Nock (\$34.95/3-pack). These come with all of the same great features that every Lumenok crossbow nock has, including replaceable batteries. The nocks will be available in all of the popular sizes of both flat and crescent configurations. Plus, you can buy them in complete bolt packs. Contact: Lumenok, [lumenok.com](http://lumenok.com).



### TruFire® Edge FT™

- Forward-trigger design
- Adjustable length
- Leather buckle strap

The Edge FT (\$89.99) is a forward-trigger release engineered to maximize draw length (by 1") and improve accuracy. With the FT, users can find their optimal anchor point without sacrificing trigger pull or hand position. The release's auto-closing trigger and dual-caliper head work together for a wonderfully clean break. Tension and travel adjustments are customizable and simple to make. The ultra-comfortable leather buckle strap is available in olive green or black and features a FoldBack™ design that keeps the release out of the way when not in use. Contact: TruFire, [feradyne.com/brands/trufire/](http://feradyne.com/brands/trufire/).



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## YETI® LoadOut® GoBox 60 Gear Case

- Dust/waterproof design
- HeftyHauler™ carry handles
- Endless storage options

The LoadOut GoBox 60 Gear Case (\$300) holds everything, including the kitchen sink. Right at home in the bed of your truck, this is exactly what you need for extended camping and hunting trips. It has reinforced latches and YETI's virtually bombproof Wildproof™ design, so you know it will endure years of snow, mud, dust, saltwater, etc. Additional highlights include a removable cargo tray and divider. It's available in several colors. Contact: YETI, [yeti.com](http://yeti.com).



## Ozonics® HR500™

- Perfect for stands/blinds
- Long battery life in all temps
- Eliminates all odors

A year after its inception, the HR500 (\$599.99) deserves a repeat spotlight — ask any of our staff members, because we've been using this active scent-eliminator for years. Quieter than previous models in its amped-up Boost and Hyperboost modes, it also offers significant performance enhancements including a nifty Bluetooth®-enabled app that gives you discreet operational control of the unit via smartphones plus important data like battery life, current weather conditions, and more. It's also a gem at "washing" your clothes in camp. Contact: Ozonics, [ozonics hunting.com](http://ozonics hunting.com).



## Montana Decoy® Muley Buck™

- Fools any/all mule deer
- Fast & simple set up
- Highly portable

The Muley Buck (\$129.99) is one of several new offerings from Montana Decoy. With an actual photo of a mule deer buck printed on both sides, this ultra-lightweight 2-D deke is perfect for both mobile bowhunters and those who like to sit and wait. It folds/unfolds quickly, and the posture and size of buck it represents is sure to attract bucks and does of all ages and sizes. Contact: Montana Decoy, [montanadecoy.com](http://montanadecoy.com).

## Flambeau® Formula™ Bow Case

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

Traveling bowhunters will love Flambeau's Formula Bow Case (\$189.99). Instead of foam and straps, this one has a chassis that allows everything to "float" to prevent damage. Bow limbs rest against two chassis sleds, while Nite Ize Mega Gear Ties™ lock the riser in place. It comes with a removable accessory pouch and tie-down slots for securing it to ATV racks and more. Contact: Flambeau Outdoors, [flambeaoutdoors.com](http://flambeaoutdoors.com).







### TenPoint® Viper 430™

- Comfortable, two-piece stock
- Ships in a decked-out package
- Sentry Bowhanger™ for stand hunters

The Viper 430 crossbow (\$1,699.99–\$1,799.99) shoots bolts at 430 fps. It's 6.5" wide with a 13" power stroke. The revolutionary cables generate great downrange accuracy. The RangeMaster® 100 Scope is a variable optic with new reticles. The ACUslide™ System features a patented Auto-Brake Gear System™, which eliminates any fears during cocking/de-cocking. Throw in the crisp S1™ trigger and a host of other important goodies, and you've got yourself a quality crossbow. Contact: **TenPoint**, [tenpointcrossbows.com](http://tenpointcrossbows.com).



### MonsterBuck® Clover Mix™

- Attracts whitetails and more
- Years of quality forage
- Easy to plant

Enhance your whitetail food plots with MonsterBuck's Clover Mix (\$34.99–\$109.99). Five different clovers make up this blend. As a perennial, most should experience lush growth for 3–5 years in the proper conditions. Clover plots are a great way to attract deer during the months of October/November. You can frost-seed Clover Mix during March/April, but its planting schedule is very flexible. It can hit the ground at any time throughout the summer months and is available in three sizes to meet your needs. Contact: **MonsterBuck**, [monsterbuck.com](http://monsterbuck.com).

### The Provider® Seasonings

- Enhances meat flavor
- Specially blended rubs
- Makes cooking fun

Lest anyone tell you different, the number-one reason we hunt/fish is because we love to eat healthy protein, the origin of which we're intimately familiar. So, why not further spice things up prior to serving it to friends and family? With The Provider line of rubs (starting at \$12.50), you can do just that. From fish to chicken to beef to our favorite — venison — this company has your tastebuds covered. Contact: **The Provider**, [theproviderlife.com](http://theproviderlife.com).



### Havalon® REDI™

- Two blade styles
- One blade holder
- Military-grade handle

From Havalon comes the REDI (\$54.99). This all-purpose knife has two semi-permanent, drop-point blades (one partially serrated) that are made to be resharpened yet quickly swap out depending on the circumstances. Push the button, slide the fitment, and the blade unlocks. A spring-assist affords one-handed opening for both righties and lefties, and you can attach it to whatever via its pocket clip. Contact: **Havalon**, [havalon.com](http://havalon.com).



### Wicked Ridge® Blackhawk XT™

- Easy to handle length/weight
- Fully integrated cocking device
- Ultra-crisp, safe trigger system

The Blackhawk XT (\$449.99–\$549.99) offers premium cocking devices at low prices — and is made in America. This narrow (15" wide), 175-lb. crossbow is effortless for hunters of any age to load/unload and carry in the field. It delivers speeds up to 380 fps. Safety is at the forefront of this model, with too many safety features to mention. Pre-sighted for 20 yards, the Blackhawk XT has a black stock and PEAK™ camo limbs. It includes a 4x32 scope, 3 Alpha-Nock™ carbon bolts, cocking device, and a quiver. Contact: **Wicked Ridge**, [wickedridgecrossbows.com](http://wickedridgecrossbows.com).





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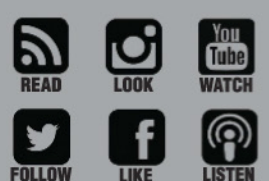
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## Scientific Discovery Stuns Doctors

# Biblical Bush Relieves Joint Discomfort in as Little as 5 Days

*Legendary “special herb” gives new life to old joints without clobbering you. So safe you can take it every day without worry.*

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 54 million Americans are suffering from joint discomfort.

This epidemic rise in aching joints has led to a search for alternative treatments—as many sufferers want relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Leading the way from nature’s pharmacy is the new “King of Oils” that pioneering Florida MD and anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

Biblical scholars treasured this “holy oil.” Ancient healers valued it more than gold for its medicinal properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And Ayurvedic practitioners, to this day, rely on it for healing and detoxification.

Yet what really caught Dr. Sears’ attention is how modern medical findings now prove this “King of Oils” can powerfully...

### Deactivate 400 Agony-Causing Genes

If you want genuine, long-lasting relief for joint discomfort, you must address inflammation. Too much inflammation will wreak havoc on joints, break down cartilage and cause unending discomfort. This is why so many natural joint relief solutions try to stop one of the main inflammatory genes called COX-2.

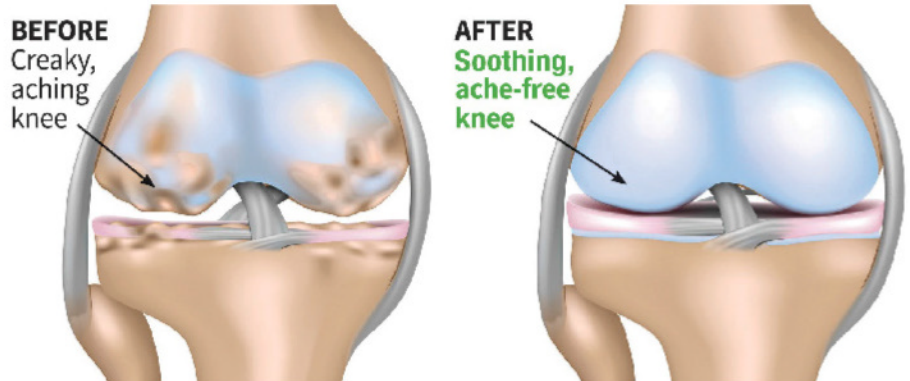
But the truth is, there are hundreds of agony-causing genes like COX-2, 5-LOX, iNOS, TNF, Interleukin 1,6,8 and many more—and stopping just one of them won’t give you all the relief you need.

Doctors and scientists now confirm the “King of Oils”—Indian Frankincense—deactivates not one but 400 agony-causing genes. It does so by shutting down the inflammation command center called Nuclear Factor Kappa Beta.

NK-Kappa B is like a switch that can turn 400 inflammatory genes “on” or “off.” A study in Journal of Food Lipids reports that Indian Frankincense powerfully deactivates NF-Kappa B. This journal adds that Indian Frankincense is “so powerful it shuts down the pathway triggering aching joints.”

### Relief That’s 10 Times Faster... and in Just 5 Days

Many joint sufferers prefer natural solutions but say they work too slowly. Take the best-seller glucosamine. Good as it is, the National Institutes



*The active ingredient in Mobilify soothes aching joints in as little as 5 days*

of Health reports that glucosamine takes as long as eight weeks to work.

Yet in a study published in the International Journal of Medical Sciences, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian Frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian Frankincense “significantly improved joint function and relieved discomfort in as early as five days.” That’s relief that is 10 times faster than glucosamine.

### 78% Better Relief Than the Most Popular Joint Solution

In another study, people suffering from discomfort took a formula containing Indian Frankincense and another natural substance or a popular man-made joint solution every day for 12 weeks.

The results? Stunning! At the end of the study, 64% of those taking the Indian Frankincense formula saw their joint discomfort go from moderate or severe to mild or no discomfort. Only 28% of those taking the placebo got the relief they wanted. So Indian Frankincense delivered relief at a 78% better clip than the popular man-made formula.

In addition, in a randomized, double blind, placebo controlled study, patients suffering from knee discomfort took Indian Frankincense or a placebo daily for eight weeks. Then the groups switched and got the opposite intervention. Every one of the patients taking Indian Frankincense got relief. That’s a 100% success rate—numbers unseen by typical solutions.

In addition, BMJ (formerly the British Medical Journal) reports that Indian Frankincense is safe for joint relief — so safe and natural you can take it every day.

Because of clinically proven results like this, Dr. Sears has made Indian Frankincense the centerpiece of a new natural joint relief formula called **Mobilify**.

### Great Results for Knees, Hips, Shoulders and Joints

Joni D. says, “**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness and mild temporary pain. The day after taking it, I was completely back to normal—so fast.” Shirley M. adds, “Two weeks after taking **Mobilify**, I had no knee discomfort and could go up and down the staircase.” Larry M. says, “After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness and minor aches went away... it’s almost like being reborn.” And avid golfer Dennis H. says, “I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried.”

### How to Get Mobilify

To secure the hot, new **Mobilify** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-463-0613** TODAY. “It’s not available in retail stores yet,” says Dr. Sears. “The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer.” Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Mobilify**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I’ll send you all your money back.”

Use Promo Code **MBBH0523** when you call to secure your supply of **Mobilify**. Lines are frequently busy and due to heightened demand, supplies are limited. To secure your supply today, call **1-800-463-0613**.



# Ask Bowhunter

BY JOE BELL, Technical Editor



BCY's 62XS center-serving material is extremely strong, durable, and versatile. It serves across bowstring fibers smoothly, with positive gripping qualities to prevent the fibers from slipping and deforming — common problems that lead to tuning and accuracy issues.

**Q** I just learned how to apply a center serving to a bowstring. However, I have questions about the serving material and diameter. What type/size are best for 3-D and hunting? I also plan to replace my D-loop, as it's pretty worn. I noticed there are various types of loop material available as well. What are your preferences, and why? — **John L., via e-mail**

**A** These are great questions. As you know, the bowstring's D-loop and center serving receive more wear than any other part of the bow. For this reason, both are prone to failure. To prevent fiber slippage and tuning problems, the center serving should be applied with very firm tension, eliminating the chance for serving gaps. BCY has been our go-to source for do-it-yourself bowstring materials and accessories, because they offer the most comprehensive selection on the market.

For center servings, BCY's 62XS is hard to beat. It's made from a special blend of Spectra or Dyneema (both are considered high-modulus polyethylene material) with outstanding strength, durability, and low-creep properties. Additionally, the material grips the bowstring extremely well, which prevents the fibers from slipping, deforming, and altering your nock's position.

Most custom bowstring manufacturers use 62XS as their center serving of choice. Powergrip and Halo are two other options to consider. Powergrip is made from Spectra and nylon yarn. This blend produces relentless grip, but it's

not quite as strong or durable as 62XS. Halo, on the other hand, is BCY's strongest center-serving material. It is a favorite among fingers shooters, since it provides a super-slick surface when served tightly; however, in my opinion it doesn't grip the bowstring fibers quite as well as 62XS or Powergrip. Overall, 62XS is my favorite due to its unbeatable versatility.

I suggest using either .021" or .025" center-serving diameter, depending on the bowstring thickness and the arrow's nock-throat size. You should purchase both sizes to see what fits best. Use a serving tool to temporarily lay down 2" of serving material, then clip the arrow nock over the material to assess its fit. The nock should snap on with a distinctive "click," but it shouldn't be so tight that it can't slide up and down the serving with a little bit of pressure. The diameter of the serving should also fill the nock's throat, preventing any side-to-side wobble. Such features will ensure a smooth, consistent arrow take-off on each shot — increasing accuracy. Rarely have I used .018"-size serving to accommodate smaller arrow nocks, because .021" or .025" usually does the trick.

For making D-loops, BCY's 23 and 24 braided-polyester loop rope are ideal. The 23 material is smaller in diameter (.062") and more flexible. It is preferable when shooting a T-handle thumb or hinge-style release, since it minimizes torque caused from twisting the release handle slightly to achieve a positive anchor. This material produces a smooth, forgiving shot. The downside is that it doesn't hold its shape quite as well as thicker loop material, and its small diameter tends to wear a bit faster.

The 24 rope, on the other hand, is larger diameter (.079"), making it ideal for archers preferring a semi-firm, easy-to-engage loop when using a standard, wrist-strap-style release that causes little to no torque at full draw. This material is also easy to work with since it produces oversize "balls" when burning the ends. I would encourage you to experiment with both materials, depending on your shooting preferences. I've found the 24 braided-loop rope to be flexible enough, regardless of my release choice. However, when using a T-handle release, I'll increase the length of the loop to  $\frac{5}{8}$ " wide — sometimes longer. I hope this helps. **BH**



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