

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022

LADY SHOOTER

Life Styles



SAY HELLO TO

Julia



Hello, I would like to introduce you to my new friend Julia. She will make a great addition to our group. Julia loves getting together with her friends and spending the day breaking clay targets, but don't let her good looks fool you, when it comes to breaking clays she is all business. As a friend I value that she is strong, reliable and well poised. Her famous father, Julius Caesar, taught her at an early age the benefits of competition and that you can still have fun when you are not busy running around conquering the modern world. I hope you like Julia as much as I do, she is going to be one of my trusted shooting partners for many years.

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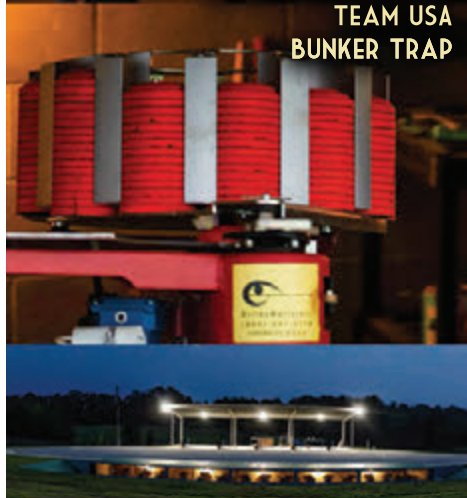
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Change. We've all certainly experienced our fair share these last two years, and LadyShooter LifeStyles has been no exception.

We're shaking things up behind the scenes again—new editors, new writers, new products and new fashion to bring you. We're building a well-rounded team to serve, educate, and entertain like-minded women who love to spend their time outdoors, and look good doing it.

Change certainly isn't easy—it can be full of unknowns and risks, and what if the end result fails? Some have always been hesitant to accept change in life, it's always felt like a negative. However, Oxford defines change as *"replace with something else, especially something of the same kind that is newer or better"*.

Well, who couldn't do with some newer and better? It's all about perspective. Change can be good. Change can be growth. Change is inevitable. Winter changes into spring. Caterpillars change into butterflies. Alan Watts said, *"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance."*

Here at LadyShooter Lifestyles, we're moving and dancing. The rebirth of this magazine in 2020 was the result of embracing change! What we've got coming will open the door for ladies to access the lifestyle they want in the manner they desire. Perhaps more importantly, we want each woman to know she is seen, heard, valued and encouraged as a member of the LadyShooter Lifestyles family. Think of this magazine as our love letter to you – happily brought to you six times a year!

Do you want to shoot traditional archery? We've got a gear bag feature on that. Do you want to learn the art and science of black powder? Check out the Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader profile. Are you looking for information to take care of your body at the most primal level? Then read about how to eat for your blood-type to maximize holistic wellness. What about that primal Mama Bear instinct? Check out the neurological "why" in this appropriately-titled write-up. Are you looking for a great hunting destination adventure with fabulous food and amazing people? Then take a look at the 2Hats Ranch Field to Table feature. Are you looking for a great "girls day out?" Then read up on a fabulous ladies day shooting excursion.

In addition to these features, we are bringing you our much-loved Leading Ladies spread – but with a twist. Here at LadyShooter Lifestyles, we want every woman to feel she has a space within the lady shooter family. We love to laugh with her, shoot with her, hunt beside her and encourage her. First, though, we need to meet her. Our Leading Ladies series this issue is about US. It's time we introduced ourselves.

We hope you peruse the pages ahead and come away happy, excited, equipped, encouraged and renewed. Stay tuned for news of the many wonderful things ahead in 2022!

Enjoy,

All of us



VICTORY RESTS IN HER HANDS

Aptly named after the Goddess of Victory, the K-20 Victoria promises women triumph in the field or on the range. Offering a beautifully designed and tailored stock for the female shooter, K-20 Victoria's graceful balance and lightweight barrels give any woman an unbeatable field companion.





WHERE TEXAS
CHARM MEETS
MIDWEST PURSUIT
BY **ANDREA BOGARD**

Are you looking for a premium outdoor experience, that satisfies both your hunger for the outdoors and appetite for delicious wild game? Then check out the brand new Field to Table program at Two Hats Ranch. Located in central Michigan, Two Hats is a wonderful blend of warm hospitality, rustic elegance, top-level range facilities and beautiful whitetails.

From the moment you walk in the massive front doors, you feel at home. Skipper and Colby Bettis, owners of Two Hats Ranch, welcome you with a warm smile, firm handshake and deliberate doff of the hat. As a fellow Michigan resident, I felt I had travelled via plane to Texas instead of by car two hours south of my Northern Michigan home.

In true Texas fashion, the Two Hats Ranch Field to Table program opens the door to hunting success. There's no pressure. No stress. Above all, there is a feeling of belonging. Like a West Texas sunset, its beauty is peacefully perceived and gratefully enjoyed.

So, what is it all about? It's about embracing the hunting experience from the field to the finished product - dinner. Partnered with Gunwerks, range time during the Field to Table event is well-instructed, impeccably equipped and ammo-plentiful. The climate-controlled shooting house is comfortable, fully-outfitted and even has a bathroom! This is a huge plus for those long range sessions.

Two Hats Ranch Field to Table





On the subject of “long,” Two Hats Ranch boasts a beautifully laid-out 1000-yard range, a tough-to-find max distance in this part of the country. There are plates and paper in 100-yard increments stretching along the rolling hills in front of the shooting house.

With good instruction, an accurized shooting system, a good spotter and a well-equipped range, even a relatively new shooter can be quickly ringed in steel at 500-1000 yards. Something important to note here: this program is for hunters of all skill and experience levels.



Whether you are a seasoned hunter and shooter or brand new to both, success can be achieved and enjoyment had at the Two Hats Field to Table program. The only prerequisites are a willingness to learn and openness to a wonderful experience with great people.

During your time at Two Hats you are paired with a guide who will be both your hunting companion and overall mentor for the program. The caliber and quality of their team is truly outstanding. Skipper and Colby Bettis have hand selected and trained an amazing group of people to create a one-of-a-kind experience for their hunters and guests.

I don’t know about you, but food (and the enjoyment found therein) is an integral part of life. The dining experience at Two Hats Ranch is definitely on point. Imagine a family holiday feast every day but without the drama. Each meal begins with grace and ends with warm conversations, lots of laughs and that utterly satisfied feeling found after enjoying great food.

While range time is a blast and food is imperative, the hunting is equally important. Many people construct a mental outcome of guaranteed success when hunting on a high-fence



“somewhere in Michigan.” When I met them that first afternoon at Two Hats they were gleefully relishing the “first time away from the kids” in a “reallllllly” long time. Kandi had her daily massages scheduled and several good books all ready to go for her time at the ranch. Nate was the hunter and she was just “coming along” to enjoy some time away.

Fast forward to the range. Nate was sending some rounds down range with the Gunwerks 6.5 PRC and walking it out to 1000 yards with the help of Chris Ashworth, the range facilitator/instructor from Gunwerks. Nate impacted at 1000 and drew away from the gun with that universally recognizable grin that indicated a successful hit. He stepped off the line with a smile and a high-five.

Chris turned to Kandi. “Your turn!” She responded with a hurried shake of the

ranch. This is absolutely not true. Two Hats Ranch is blessed with vastly diverse topography across a variety of environments. From towering hardwoods to thick swamps and sun-kissed fields, Two Hats has it all. This also means the pursuit is both authentic and challenging.

Let’s talk about the hunt. One of the great things about the Field to Table program we already mentioned is the accessibility of it. A non-hunter/non-shooter can engage successfully with full help and support in the entire process. I want to share a story with you about this.

Meet Kandi and Nate, a couple from Texas. They were out for their anniversary at a hunting banquet in Texas and placed a spontaneously bid on a Field to Table hunting experience



head and a “no, I can’t shoot. He’s here to hunt, not me.”

After some discussion, it was discovered she was blind in her right eye, right-handed and had never shot a gun outside of her concealed carry sidearm.

Now, if there is one thing I’ve learned about hunters, they pursue a problem until they harvest the solution. In less than 10 minutes, Kandi was comfortably seated behind a Gunwerks 6.5 Creedmoor and banging steel out to 1000 yards left-handed. Within 30 minutes, she was excitedly prepping for her evening sit in search of does.

That evening brought a doe for her, a doe for Nate, a toast in the skinning shed and a night of learning how to process a whitetail deer. The Field to Table program encompasses ALL aspects of bringing a harvest to consumption, including



field dressing and skinning. A professional butcher and chef were brought in to complete the circle of taking a harvest from “being to eating.”

Over the course of the next few days, Kandi continued her journey as a hunter. In addition to time in the field and the skinning shed, lots of rounds went down range on the Challenge Course, a practical scenario precision rifle course at Two Hats. Adapting beautifully to shooting left-handed, Kandi honed her newly discovered shooting skills. The last night, she harvested a beautiful buck.

This is just one success story from the Two Hats Field to Table program. The success of the program is not only dependent upon the people who take part in it, but the people who help create the experience, as well.

Two Hats Ranch provided an incredible facility and venue for learning and growth. Gunwerks brought top-level, shooter friendly precision systems and ammunition as well as a fantastic instructor/facilitator. Chef Lance Lewis of Tagged Out Kitchen dug into the breakdown process so it was relatable and easy to grasp.



take each cut from field to table yourself.

If you are looking for a first-class complete harvest experience, then put Two Hats Ranch Field to Table on the top of your list of things to do in 2022! ■

Are you looking to take your shooting to new levels? Then check out the LongRange University courses through Gunwerks. The ultimate girls trip! Contact cobarr@gunwerks.com for dates and more information.



California's First All-Female Clay Target High School Team

PRESS RELEASE
GLENDDORA, CA

In a groundbreaking development, the all girls Benedictine Catholic college preparatory school St. Lucy's Priory High School has now become the first high school in the state to have an all-female Clay Target Team. Led by Ms. Lola Fitzgerald, a sophomore student at St. Lucy's and a three-time Junior World Champion in Skeet Shooting, this new program is expected to churn out more clay shooters who can make the school proud just like Mrs. Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald continued her early career in Clay Target shooting because she wanted to share her enthusiasm for the sport with her peers at St. Lucy's and gain useful experience after being on a high school team. Fitzgerald answered to the task of starting a new athletic team, and she has now formed St. Lucy's Scholastic Clay Target Program with the help of the Administration and her father, Jay Fitzgerald (SCTP).

St. Lucy's strives for all of their students to be self-advocating, passionate young women and leaders, and she exemplifies that. Fitzgerald sponsored a table at St. Lucy's school-wide Club Day to gauge interest as soon as she received approval, and the excitement and enthusiasm were palpable. Athletes are preparing for practices and tournaments, and training sessions have already begun.

As evident, Clay Target Shooting is a growing and completely safe popular sport which is as challenging as exciting. According to gathered data, the sport of shooting clays has the lowest injury rate in high school sports. Since all High School Clay Target Programs are ADA compliant

and all-inclusive, this sport now stands as one of the most inclusive high school sports ever offered.

Since St. Lucy's Clay Target Team is a new sport, participating athletes face considerable start-up costs. Fitzgerald's greatest wish is that this team continues available to all and that no one is turned away because of the sport's expensive expense. Jay Fitzgerald is assisting his daughter in these efforts by raising funds for a MidwayUSA Foundation Team Endowment, which will ensure that the program is self-sustaining and available in the future. ■

Media Contact: Bernie Gore, St. Lucy's Director of Advancement Services, stlucys.com
Contact Number: (626) 963-0017
Email: jay@thedjaycompany.com



People who wish to support this endeavor and make a tax-deductible contribution, please email St. Lucy's Director of Advancement Services, Bernie Gore, bgore@stlucys.com or Clay Target Team Manager, Jay Fitzgerald, by calling 909-559-3705 or emailing at jay@thedjaycompany.com. St. Lucy's Federal Tax Exempt ID number is 95-2230254.

St. Lucy's Priory High School, home of *The Regents*, is an all-girls, Benedictine Catholic college preparatory school located in Glendora, California, providing academic excellence and spiritual growth to young women for almost 60 years.



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2021 Annie Oakley Tournament

REPORTED BY HARVEY SCHWARTZ

The “Annies” were formed in conjunction with The Atlanta Charity Clays tournament which raises money for Atlanta’s Children’s Charities. In 1999, Annie Oakley Day was introduced for women to shoot Sporting Clays.

In May 2004, six women got together and established a tournament of their own – *A New Tournament, A New Day, A New Cause*. The first charity benefitted The Trust for Public Land, which the event has donated approximately \$500,000. In 2016, The Annies named Sheperd Center’s – Share Military Initiative as their beneficiary. As of now, they have contributed approximately \$350,000 which includes approximately \$80,000 raised at this year’s shoot.

The Annies has grown into a diverse group of women shooters – young and not so young, professional women and stay-at-home moms, peashooters and sharpshooters. The second Monday of every month (except July and August), holiday or not, rain or shine, is Annie Monday. They offer shooting instruction at each one of these for those wishing to up their game. There are no dues to join and a typical Annie Monday will draw between 40 – 50 shooters.

At this year’s shoot, I was the guest instructor. There were four shooters who inquired about coaching. We met on one of the Plantation’s five stands. These three women and one man had not shot much, so we looked at and shot several targets. All of them continued to progress and at the end of the session, most of them felt very comfortable handling the shotgun and more importantly hitting targets.

Located in Atlanta, Georgia, Shepherd Center is a private, not-for-profit hospital specializing in medical treatment, research and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury, brain injury, stroke, multiple sclerosis, spine and

chronic pain, and other neuromuscular conditions. The SHARE Military Initiative at Shepherd Center is a comprehensive rehabilitation program that focuses on assessment and treatment for service members who have served in the U.S. military since September 11, 2001, regardless of discharge status. The program helps service members who are

experiencing symptoms of or have a diagnosis of mild to moderate traumatic brain injury or concussions and any co-occurring psychological or behavioral health concerns, including post-traumatic stress. SHARE Military Initiative provides hope, assistance, support and education to service members and their families during their recovery treatment and beyond. ■



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The fastest growing outdoor shooting sports demographic is women, throughout all disciplines: Sporting Clays, Trap, Upland or Big Game Hunting, and Rifle Shooting competitions.



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HEALTH

Holistic Health Tips

BY MICHELLE MILES

Holistic. What does that mean? Holistic refers to the belief that the parts of something are interconnected and can be explained or studied only by reference to the whole and not just as a sum of their parts. An example of holistic is health care that focuses on the treatment of the whole person, considering mental and social factors, body and mind, rather than just the symptoms of an illness or parts of the body. The entirety of the holistic approach in health and wellness does many of us good, especially in the long run when talking about a whole lifespan. Those who take this approach usually find results that last and don't counteract goals they may have throughout areas of life. Overall, this approach balances and creates a thriving atmosphere both physically and mentally.

We are all uniquely made. That means what works for one individual may or may not work as well for another. Over the years, I have experimented with all sorts of eating habits and physical fitness. To give you some background, I have been a competitive athlete since age five, healed injuries and imbalances both mentally and physically with nutrition as I aged. Now being in my 30s and a mom of three boys, my health has taken all sorts of turns I've needed to adapt to. I have struggled with a quick fix in wellness areas that treated one thing but jeopardized my health in another ways. Experiencing the wrestle to target one thing but creating another issue somewhere else, I realized I wasn't following the one thing I knew—that EVERYTHING is connected. Our bodies and our minds are meant to work together as a whole, HOLISTICALLY.

I'm a firm believer in the fact that the body is meant to heal itself. In my opinion this starts with what I am ingesting and exposing my body and mind to as a whole. Can the body truly heal itself if we aren't nurturing it in every way? Focusing on not just what we eat, drink, and do for exercise, but also listening. Noticing and listening to the affects certain nutrients produce, the type of physical training, as well as what mental stimulation is actually producing the best results. For me, trial and error have been needed. Acknowledging when something in my wellness requires adjustment and change, takes action. I have found my job is to let nature run its course and believe that healing is happening without sabotaging the process with a "quick fix".

Personally, a holistic approach for most wellness goals brings on benefits that last and are realistic. Others I know share this experience as well. Eliminating toxic products and habits are some of the more obvious changes most of us make when setting out on a path for better living. Incorporating real foods without artificial ingredients and preservatives, drinking more water instead of sugar, and getting more exercise are pretty common adjustments we tend to make. You might even already use essential oils instead of harsh chemicals for daily living or follow a certain regiment of working out or meditating. Do you notice that slacking in one area affects another? As we have heard before, you don't know until you try. So on that note, I'm going to share a few things that have I have tried which benefited me throughout the years for total wellness from a holistic approach.

We are ever-changing. As we grow, age, and



LIFESTYLE OF ALIGNMENT

adapt to what life throws at us, our physical and spiritual bodies do too. How we nurture ourselves not only affects our appearance, but our entire being. For me, this means that my eating habits, although typically are pretty "clean", must change from time to time also. I have noticed my body doesn't do well if I eat the same things continually, my mind needs a balance of nutrients to thrive, along with physical movement that is suited for me at the time and season of life I'm in. Do you ever feel super cranky after eating sugar, or have mood swings you can't explain, maybe even memory loss? Those things can happen from toxic chemicals in food as well as physical movement that is actually stressful to a person, doing more harm than good.

Depending on my lifestyle, how active I am and what I'm exerting mental energy into are just some examples of things that pave the way to a holistic approach for my wellness. What is it I need to be eating to benefit me most for where I am in life? There are two guidelines and theories that I tend to follow. Sometimes they counteract each other, but the general guidelines from each work wonders for my body and mind. The research I have done using both methods and seeing what similarities they do have are usually spot on. These methods of holistic living are The Blood Type Diet (based off of the book *Eat Right for your Blood Type*) and The Carnivore Diet. I want to explain each theory first and then give you a run down on how I do not follow exactly what each says but use both together for total mind and body health.

Eating Right for your Blood Type basically gives examples of certain foods that different blood

types typically thrive off of. It explains the difference in the blood types, and why certain foods and exercises usually benefit someone of that genetic makeup. Given, these are general guidelines and not exactly the same for everyone.

THE BLOOD TYPE THEORY

Type A: May flourish on a vegetarian diet—it is recommended that Type As eat their foods in as natural a state as possible - pure, fresh and organic. For Type As, stress can manifest in more serious ways, causing obsessive-compulsive disorder, insulin resistance and hypothyroidism. To help balance cortisol levels, it's recommended that As limit sugar, caffeine and alcohol. Don't skip meals, especially breakfast—eating smaller, more frequent meals will also help to stabilize blood sugar levels. Heightened cortisol levels make it harder for Type As to recover from stress. Overall cortisol levels can be lowered through a regular program of exercises that provide focus and calming effects. Make these activities a regular, life saving, part of your lifestyle—Hatha Yoga, Tai Chi, Meditation and Deep Breathing Exercises.

Type B: There are certain foods that promote weight gain for Bs specifically, which are corn, wheat, chicken, peanuts, seeds. If the goal for Bs is to lose weight and inflammation, highly beneficial foods are goat, lamb, mutton, rabbit and venison along with green vegetables, eggs and low fat dairy like yogurt and cheese. B blood types need physical exercise that challenge both their body and mind. Type Bs need to balance meditative activities with more intense physical exercise. Activities that have an element of mental challenges and involve other people are helpful. Excellent forms of exercise include tennis, martial arts, cycling, hiking and golf.

Type O: Type Os have a higher level of stomach acid than the other blood types, which often results in stomach irritation and ulcers. Lean organic meats but only some vegetable and fruits are beneficial. Grassfed, red meats are best. Os should avoid wheat and dairy, caffeine and alcohol. Caffeine can be particularly harmful because of its tendency to raise adrenaline and noradrenaline, which are already high for Os. This blood type requires brisk regular exercise, taxing the cardiovascular and muscular skeletal system. Type Os thrive with a well-timed

chemical release system. The Type O who exercises regularly also has a better emotional response. More than any other blood type, Os rely on physical exercise to maintain physical health and emotional balance.

Type AB: Type AB has Type A's low stomach acid, however, they also have Type B's adaptation to meats. Type AB should avoid caffeine and alcohol. There is a wide variety of seafood for this blood type which serve as an excellent source of protein. A few highly beneficial fish are mahi-mahi, red snapper, salmon, sardines, and tuna. Some dairy is also beneficial for Type AB—especially cultured dairy such as yogurt and kefir. It's recommended to eat smaller, more frequent meals, avoiding starches and proteins in the same meal. A combination of both calming activities and more intense physical exercise helps maintain an optimal balance. For example, three days of aerobic exercise such as running or biking and two days of calming exercise such as yoga or tai chi.

CARNIVORE DIET RUN-DOWN

The Carnivore Diet basically states that as humans, we live optimally off of an animal-based diet. Our ancestors paved the way, showing us to consume the most nutrient-rich source of food, animal organs. Basically, they didn't let any part of the animal go to waste. Our ancestors endured the harshest environments and thrived consuming

an animal-based diet and limited plant-based sources. In fact, some plants are actually toxic and not intended to be ingested. Seed oils, leaves, and roots especially are to be avoided when following this theory of holistic living. The carnivore diet believes that we nourish and love the land and the animals so that they love and nourish us even more. This way of eating is believed to heal autoimmune disorders, skin conditions, mood changes and weight gain.

A simple animal-based diet guide includes things like grassfed meats, animal organs, wild caught fish, cheese, eggs, ghee, tallow, avocados, squash, green beans, cucumber, berries, oranges, and honey. How simple?!

MY PERSONAL COMBINATION

Using resources from both of these theories, I have created a very well-balanced lifestyle. I am blood type A+. While I feel pretty awesome eating a ton of veggies, I feel better with a carnivore diet in addition to that. I have tried a vegan diet in the past, though it was fine for a little while, it wasn't something I could sustain. My body was breaking down, and there were a lot of other problems that were showing up when I cut out animal products. While keeping my veggie intake, I went back to consuming animal products and couldn't be happier. Physically and mentally, I need the balance of what these theories provide in my life.

Some of what I eat include wild caught fish,



grass fed and pasture raised proteins and dairy, high quality fats such as ghee, avocados, and enjoy cooking with tallow. Adding these foods to my fruits and veggies are a must for me! I also incorporate Heart & Soil Supplements which contain animal organs for nutrient-rich supplements because that's easier for my lifestyle. This way of eating gives me energy, keeps my muscle tone, prevents injuries, and gives me mental clarity and a more balanced mood.

I completely align with the Blood Type Diet recommendations for exercise. I mentioned that I was a competitive athlete since age five, so you can imagine I have had my fair share of intense exercise and competition. I have even done body building and strenuous weight lifting with strict eating plans of what I "should do" for a specific goal. I will tell you this, although I was successful to a certain degree with competition or goal setting, I found it wasn't serving me as a whole. When I incorporated a calming, low impact activity such as yoga, meditation, or Pilates—my overall state was enhanced. I even "cheated" on eating plans substituting what I knew made my body and mind feel better. I didn't put myself through the ups and downs of stressful movement and "have to's". I took that mentality of serving both body and mind with me for other seasons of my life and haven't looked back.

Today, I live that lifestyle. I don't focus on the sum of parts to do things, but rather things as a whole, knowing everything is interconnected. Whether I am teaching, shooting, hunting, parenting, having fun, tending to my household or my creator, I am living wholly...holistically, the balance of listening and taking action to thrive in every area, not just in one. Gaining experience and understanding from a variety of theories and practices is where my holistic approach has served me well. Holistic living is NOT black or white, right or wrong, there are answers in the gray areas that are uniquely perfect for each of us. ■



Holistic Champion - Thriving from WHOLE Wellness Living

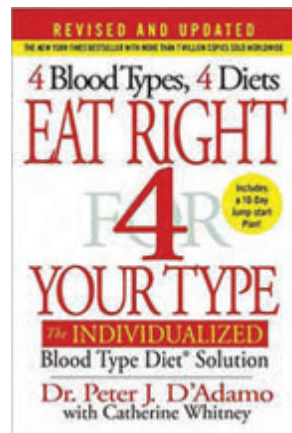
FEATURING KAREN SHEDD

Karen Shedd is a top athlete in Sporting Clays and FITASC. In fact this gal is the Captain of both 2022 Team USA Lady Sporting and FITASC Teams and is the Captain of the All-American Lady Team. She's not only the 2021 Lady US Open Champion, Winchester Lady Cup Overall Champion, but also a Gold Medalist Junior Team member at the 2021 World FITASC. I would say her holistic living style paid off last year in her achievements. Here is what Karen has to say about her new approach to success.

"Holistic living is important to my every day health. As a shooter, the mind, spirit, and physical body all connect for me to perform to the best of my ability. It has shown up and proven itself in the shooting world by allowing my mind and spirit to be clear, joyful, and appreciating the very moment that I am in. Being physically fit and pushing the mental side of a workout has helped

create a mental and physical endurance. Every aspect of holistic living has been so important to focus on becoming the best person I can be, using the talents and body that I have been given.

"Currently, I have been following a carnivore diet based off of my blood type. I have seen and felt tremendous changes in the way my body and mind feel. For me training for shooting involves more than just pulling the trigger. Feeding my body clean foods, working out regularly and pushing through extreme points mentally, all connects to my daily life and performance as a shooter. It's really important for me to do a hobby such as golf to help my mind relax and enjoy the outdoors from a different perspective. Understanding of the importance of nurturing not only my physical body, but spiritual and mental aspect as a whole has brought success and excitement to my life this past year."



Both books available on Amazon for less than \$20 each



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When Mama Bear Carries a Firearm

BY MICHELLE CERINO

My sons are 23 and 24 years old. They are both taller and stronger than me. Yet, I know should something ever happen and we were in a dangerous situation, my “mama bear” instincts would still kick in. I would do anything to protect my sons. It’s an instinct I feel in my heart, mind and soul. Perhaps something that I will have until my dying day. I believe the mama bear instinct and need to protect our children is one of the reasons some mothers make the decision to learn to shoot and eventually carry a gun.

THE MAMA BEAR INSTINCT

Many of us have used the term “mama bear” either when speaking about ourselves, a friend or a story we heard in the news. I’ve often said, “Yep, her mama bear took over” or “you don’t want to poke at that mama bear.” This started me thinking about what creates this need in a mother to protect her young? Is it a fluke, or is it something that actually happens to women that turns many of us into mama bears?

Since information is literally at our fingertips now, I decided to do some research to find an answer to my questions ... and I think I did. It’s oxytocin. A chemical in the brain sometimes referred to as the “bonding hormone” or “love drug.” This strong hormone is released in women during pregnancy and childbirth. Many experts believe an increase in oxytocin at this time helps strengthen the bond between mothers and babies. Neuroscientists have also discovered oxytocin is the secret ingredient which makes mothers stay and fight, rather than flee or freeze to protect their babies when faced with imminent danger. I’m thinking there was a lot of oxytocin released during my pregnancies.

Considering there are so many mama bears out there. It’s no wonder a great deal of them ended up part of the Second Amendment community. Making the decision to own a firearm and/or carry a pistol with children at home is not something to take lightly. It’s personal and merits careful consideration. However, if you’ve already made that decision, you may find the following information helpful in your 2A lifestyle.

MAMA BEARS AND FIREARMS

Children need to learn at a young age to respect firearms, not fear them. There’s a huge difference. Respecting a firearm means having an understanding of the power of a gun and the importance of proper training. Sure, they must learn not to touch it without an adult, but don’t keep it a secret or a mystery. That’s when



children's natural curiosity may take over and put them in an unsafe situation. A great way to introduce small children to firearms is through age-appropriate books. The following are suggestions of books I personally own and would have read to my children when they were young. Unfortunately, these weren't available at the time.

The ABCs of Guns by Yehuda Remer is a fun way to teach your children the ABCs while also teaching them a little about the Second Amendment.

Toys, Tools, Guns & Rules: A Children's Book About Gun Safety by Julie Golob helps you begin a conversation about firearms with small children.

Why Mommy Carries a Gun, American Sheepdogs by Stephanie Rogish and Lt. Col. Dave Grossman follows Mrs. Shepherd and Max as they explore the responsibilities inherent in carrying a firearm, as well as the history and societal impact of the Second Amendment.

There's Only One You: A Gun Safety Book for Children by Ryan M. Cleckner is a great tool to help teach your children the proper response when they find a gun.

Safety On by Yehuda Remer is all about gun safety. It covers the four firearm safety rules, safe gun storage and what children should do when they find a gun.

Some other online resources you may want to look into are Project ChildSafe and the NRA's Eddie Eagle program. Both offer a wealth of information, including coloring books and videos to guide you when teaching your children about firearms and firearm safety.

ON THE GO SAFETY PLAN

We often talk about having a home safety plan. Knowing where to meet if there is a fire or perhaps even what to do if someone breaks into your home. Do you have a plan with your children about what they should do if you need to draw your handgun in public? Have you ever even considered what might happen? Here are a few ideas I've heard or personally implemented over the years that you may want to consider.

Having a secret signal to let your children know you sense danger may be important in a situation where you don't want to draw any attention. I've heard of people using codewords, phrases, hand signals or even a certain squeeze on the hand. One verbal example may be saying, "I think I left my phone in the truck" when you don't actually own a truck. Regardless of what it is,

make sure your children know the importance and seriousness of it.

Next, you've given the signal, your child is aware there is danger, now what? When my children were little I didn't carry a gun, their father did. We knew that if there was a situation where he might need to draw his gun, we were to move away from him. This happened one time when we were in the city at an almost empty shopping mall. We were coming down the elevator and noticed a group of men walking toward us from the other side of the mall. Once we got down to the floor, the boys and I separated ourselves from their father and we all walked widely past the group. We didn't rejoin him until the men were on the elevator. Were they a threat? I don't know. However, we had a plan and implemented it. What would you want your children to do in a similar situation? Have you ever talked to them about the possibility?

I can go on and on mentioning different scenarios you may find yourself in with your children. What's important is for you to imagine those situations and consider how you will play them out. They say, "The body won't go where the mind's never been." Put your mind there and set yourself and your children up for success.



TRAINING

Do you hold your children's hand when you walk. Are they usually in a shopping cart or stroller? Or do you have him or her on your in a child carrier backpack? If you make the decision to carry when you have children with you, make sure you practice drawing, shooting and reholstering with the various constraints you may find yourself having. You can easily practice this at home with dry fire. (Make sure to remove all ammunition from your handgun and move it to another room. Then double check your gun again to confirm it's empty.) On the range, during live fire, you may want to practice shooting one-handed in case your other hand is holding a baby or a toddler's hand. I realize this is a lot to consider, however, imagining and practicing these scenarios may help keep the surprise out of the life-threatening event when it happens.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is no replacement for your mama bear instincts. I believe most women, regardless of whether or not they've actually given birth, have them. It is up to you to trust them and use them wisely. ■

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Leading Ladies

Get to Know the Ladies Behind
LadyShooter LifeStyles

"There is no force more powerful than a woman determined to rise."

W.E.B. DuBois

We are on the cusp of 2022. LadyShooter Lifestyles has now been in the hands, hearts and minds of women around the country for over a year. Each issue we bring you stories of ladies of all ages and from all walks of life. Their shooting, their careers, their struggles, their triumphs, their harvests and their hearts are all lovingly laid upon these pages for you to partake as a member of the LadyShooter family.

Leading Ladies has become a much-loved frame showcasing amazing women nationwide rising as hunters, shooters, creators and conservationists. We have some fantastic ladies to introduce you to in the issues ahead!

Today, we want to bring you "the" leading ladies of LadyShooter Lifestyles. These are humble, strong, fierce and determined women. They each have a story to tell. A "why" behind their "what." An "how I got here." Perhaps most importantly, they each have risen to be the incredible women they are today. Meet, our Leading Ladies.



STACEY STEPHENS
PUBLISHER

I was never introduced to firearms or hunting growing up. My mother's father and brother

hunted, my father owned several pistols and a rifle, but I was never allowed around them. I have a few memories of my dad going out with friends to shoot cabbages, and he was always open to me tagging along - but my mother wouldn't have it.

Guns weren't for girls. My mother was terrified of guns, still is—she was never exposed to them growing up and she had an uncle that sadly lost his life during a hunting accident—I suspect that is where the roots of her fear began.

So, given the lack of gun handling background—how did a 30 something mom of three who led a double life of taxi service, girl/boy scout leader and PTA treasurer end up publishing three shooting sports magazines? Sometimes, fantastic opportunities just fall in your lap. While doing what I do now certainly wasn't something I was seeking and hasn't been without its challenges, I wouldn't trade this for anything. I've been involved with the magazines since 2012 and publishing since 2017, and in that time, I have met some of the most fantastic and interesting humans on the planet. Getting more involved in the outdoors and learning to shoot (mostly clay target shooting) as a family has given us so many opportunities to mingle with so many like-minded individuals and salt-of-the-earth people we just generally want to be around them as much as possible.

And so, my husband and I purchased a fifth wheel last spring and pulled it and our youngest son (17) all over the country across several shooting events last summer, meeting so many people and honestly having a blast. Our last trip was the Grand American in Sparta, IL, in August—two weeks of trapshooting, where we all shot better than we ever had before and I finally found the dedicated shotgun for trapshooting I'd been shopping for, a gorgeous Syren Tempio combo set. Her name is Rose.

I miss Rose, I haven't shot her since that trip. Shortly after being home, the three of us (along with Thaddius, our other publisher who was also in Sparta) all came down with COVID-19. While my son and I recovered rather quickly, my husband continued to get worse, was admitted to the hospital, and after two weeks of slowly getting better, took a turn for the worst and in a matter of hours, his perfectly healthy 42 year old lungs took their last breath.

I tell you this not for sympathy. I share this, because in the last five months I've learned this massive loss is now a piece of my story—a part of who am I now and who I will be in the future. It has shaped me in ways I could never imagine.

There are days that I am sure the grief and pain will kill me, but it hasn't happened yet. Perhaps a part of me died that day with him, but the part that is left, the person I never had to be when there was an us? She has a fire burning that was never there before.

I now have the sole responsibility of protecting myself, my son and our home. My husband and I planned to get our license to carry by our anniversary, a deadline we set for ourselves as we'd been putting it off for a couple of years, for no real reason other than there were always other priorities. One day before our first anniversary apart, I walked into the training a scared, lonely widow with a pistol of my husband's that I'd never even fired. Hours later, I walked away from that proficiency test with a whole new feeling of self-reliance. I'd done something I didn't think I could do on my own—and I did it pretty dang well too!

The last five months have taught me to say "yes" to things I probably wouldn't have before. I mean, why not? As a new widow, I have nothing to lose and everything to prove - even if only to myself. So, recently I have said "yes" to my first turkey hunt, which (of course) I will share with you all. I've said "yes" to several other opportunities, that in turn open so many more avenues to living the lady shooter lifestyle. I can't wait to share more with you!





MICHELLE MILES
HEALTH & WELLNESS EDITOR

At a young age, I realized I wanted to live by my own manner and desires. From wearing moccasins roaming the desert in Tucson collecting rocks, to my first gymnastics competition at age five, I had my own plans for how I wanted to do things. I challenged the traditional patterns in sports, school, friendships and beliefs from the time I can remember. There were no “have tos” in my mind of doing things a certain way, and rules were meant to be bent.

I was usually the only girl on hunting trips with my dad and brother. Cleaning the birds was my job at age nine. I'd wear oversized t-shirts and play football with the boys at school. At the same time, I'd travel the country for dance and all-star cheerleading. This diverse adolescence was complemented by make-up, both on and off the competitive field. My eclectic personality found curiosity in everything - especially exploring wellness and what type of living habits I wanted to balance my life.



My sisters watched me create my foundation as a person. They saw me grow through my selfish, rebellious stages of life then later to realizing everything is connected. It was this discovery of connectivity that fueled my exploration of different beliefs and hobbies, challenging advice from doctors and natural medicine. I took on the mindset that doing good meant togetherness. Not just for myself, but for others and life as a whole - body, mind, and spirit.

Leaving the stressful scene of my 20s, starting family life at age 22 in Texas, I began to engage more seriously into my family sport of shooting shotguns and the lifestyle of raising kids. I started teaching yoga, meditating, studying nutrition/health coaching and finding sporting clays becoming a career path with limitless options. More than 10 years later, all of those things are still intact as pillars of my life.

Our Floridian family is thriving. Raising kids, living a holistic lifestyle, having the opportunity to connect with people and coaching shooting in a sport I love has brought such balance to our lives. Having friends of all different walks of life worldwide and being able to share my experiences with readers in this magazine has been so much fun! I hope this gives you more insight into what brought me into this community and why I am so passionate about the people and experiences within it.



BRANDY ELROD
BLOG EDITOR

Growing up in the competitive sport of rodeo and with parents that did not assist me when I was having trouble completing a task I never realized I had a “disability”. Being born with a Brachial Plexus injury to the right shoulder due to doctor malpractice is definitely life-changing. However, I think it has given me the grit, determination, dedication, and stubbornness to make anything I aspire to happen. At birth, all of my nerves were damaged thus leaving me with no mobility of the right arm. Starting at the age of four, I had a series of surgeries to gain usage of my shoulder, arm, wrist, and hands. After years of surgeries and physical therapy, the result was about 25-30% range of motion in my shoulder. Throughout my grade school years, I was able to participate in barrel racing and golf, both sports that required the usage of both arms. However, not near the mobility that a sport like shotgun requires. I did have to work much harder at these sports due to my physical impairment but I still

competed as I have always been competitive by nature.

After obtaining my Bachelors and two Masters degrees I found myself back in the world I grew up in as an AgriScience teacher. After accepting a position in a private Christian high school, I learned that a shotgun shooting sports team would be a popular sport and thus started researching what all was required to start a team. The first problem I encountered was the ability to shoot a shotgun. My husband has competed in shotgun sports so I did have some knowledge but knew that the physical requirements were hindering me. My journey started while attending a fundraising shotgun tournament to gain knowledge about running tournaments for my own personal team, where I met Larry Feland of Feland's Gunsmithing. Larry asked me why I was not shooting and I simply stated: “I physically cannot”. After explaining the physical downfall of my body, Larry invited me to his shop, and thus started the process of building my first shooting stick. The first gun took six months to create. The original idea started as a simple wooden dowel rod. I started with a 20 gauge semi-automatic and a camera monopod as my “shooting stick”. Within five months it was time to move to a 12 gauge semi-automatic, so Larry built me a new rail system and “shooting stick”. This gun proved to be a constant problem and Larry suggested I move to an over and under. The problem here was the mechanics in the forearms of many of the over and under manufacturers. Blaser has a front locking mechanism that allowed for the shooting rail to be mounted. Now seven years and four guns later I am happily shooting a Blaser F3. The shooting stick is mounted to the forearm with a rail that was designed and machined by Feland. This gave me mobility and control of the gun and now his son Nathan has taken over developing a 3-D printed shooting stick that can be easily available to others with the same needs as myself.

Along my journey of multiple guns and shooting sticks, I was also developing my coaching skills. I started with the Texas 4-H shotgun certification which specializes in sportsmanship along with shooting skills. Needing more knowledge on coaching shooting skills I attended an NRA level I shotgun class where Craig Porter was the instructor. Not only did I learn most of the coaching skills I use today, I obtained my lifelong friend and shooting coach. Before Craig, I had obtained instruction from various other coaches but none of them really

understood my physical incapacibilities. After shooting for a few years, Craig encouraged me to obtain my Level II NRA shotgun certification as well as my NSCA Level I shotgun certification. Throughout my shooting career, I seek advice from Craig about coaching youth and female shooting participants as well as the mental game of competitive shooting. I am also an active resource for shooting sports for Texas FFA having written the shooting manual used in various FFA chapters in the state of Texas as well as a resource for Texas Parks & Wildlife 4-H shooting sports and the Texas State Rifle Association Foundation. I also give workshops across the state of Texas on coaching youth shooting teams to 4-H, FFA, and SCTP coaches.

My specialty of coaching is in female shotgun competitors. I have had the privilege of leading ladies shotgun clinics across the state as well as coaching numerous high school female shotgun athletes. When starting female athletes they have preconceived notions of shooting because of their first experiences with a shotgun usually from their significant other, brother, or father. I pride myself on showing women that they can shoot a shotgun, the importance of a good fitting shotgun, and building their confidence in shooting sports. Shotgun sports is the fastest growing sport among females and I have made it my personal mission to help females achieve their shotgun sports goals.

I have always wanted to travel overseas to shoot but really never thought it possible. One day playing around on the internet I learned of Becky Noble, a female wheelchair shooter from South Dakota that represented Team USA in the para-athlete World Championships in Lonato, Italy. After tracking Becky down via social media, this began my adventure to compete on the world level. I knew I needed a coach to take me to the next level. After attending a Trap PTO in Kerrville, Texas, in August of 2020, I have since been under the coaching guidance of USA Olympian Brian Burrows. I like to call Brian the mad scientist and he has turned me into his personal science experiment. Brian is the most technical shooting athlete I have ever been coached by, but it is working. We have made significant changes to my gun, my stance, and even my shooting stick. I am lucky in the fact that I am not scared of change and Brian is not scared to tell me to try something far out of the box. This combination led me to the 2021 Team Bronze and Ladies Silver at the World Para-Trap Championships in Lonato, Italy.



Now that I have connected to para-shooters all over the world, I have opened the doors for so many shotgun enthusiasts to pursue their goals. I hope to spread awareness to other people with physical impairments that they too can partake in shooting sports and I love encouraging females of all ages to pursue their shooting sports dreams. I am also very thankful for my support system which includes my husband, family & friends, coaches, and of course my sponsors—Blaser, Feland's Gunsmithing, Rhino Chokes, TX Arsenal, Texas Shooters Optical, Able Sporting, and Soundguard Custom Hearing Protection.



Do you or someone you know have a compelling story you feel needs to be shared with other ladies?

Please contact us at
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LADY SHOOTER
Life Styles

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TRICIA JOHNSON
 ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Live big! I believe in experiencing all life has to offer and that can be best defined by my favorite quote, "And the world asked, 'Is that all you wanted?'" After graduating from Sweet Briar College, I lived all across the country—New Orleans, Hilton Head, Denver, and San Francisco—soaking up all the unique experiences of each location. I have a deep appreciation for tradition, heritage, and all things Southern (especially biscuits), and am a member of Daughters of the Confederacy. I am a two time official finisher of the JFK 50-miler (America's oldest ultramarathon), an award winning baker, and a self-proclaimed connoisseur of all things sugar. If I am not out in the field shooting at something, I can be found in the kitchen baking, outside hiking, biking, running, or more hunting, or if I am really lucky- traveling! I am a proud mama of a beautiful teenage daughter, Amelia Grace, who is my best friend and sidekick.

Although I was familiar with shooting handguns, I did not try a shotgun until about ten years ago when I was asked to serve on a local clay shoot fundraising committee for the Cystic Fibrosis Shoot For A Cure event. I quickly

decided that if I were going to be an asset, I should probably learn something about shooting clays. I asked a good friend, who happens to win almost every trophy at local shoots, if I could tag along for a round of clays at a nearby course. After a few pointers, he offered to let me try my luck at breaking a clay with his gun. BANG- I hit one. Then two. And by the third, I was hooked. I bought my first shotgun the following week and eventually joined my local chapter of GRITS.

After assisting with several successful Shoot for a Cure events, I was asked to join the Boy Scouts of America/Mason Dixon Council Clay Shoot fund-raiser committee and have served as the event co-chair for the past three years. Serving on this committee has tied together my love for sporting clays and the outdoors with providing me the opportunity to give something back to my community.

I mostly shoot sporting clays and would like to work towards shooting competitively- I am very goal oriented! My hunting experience has been mostly local deer and pheasant but my bucket list includes big game and ultimately, a safari. I'd like a trophy room- not so much for the heads (although those are nice) but for the stories and experiences that go along with the hunt!

My professional background has included various advertising and marketing positions within the publishing industry at both the local and national levels. My focus has always been helping my clients tell their stories and share what differentiates them from the competition. I am thrilled to join LadyShooter LifeStyles and feel beyond blessed to be at the place in my life where my experience and passion aligns! ■





KAYLI DEVUSSER

21 Things You didn't know ABOUT Me

- 1. I currently compete in Trap, Skeet, Sporting Clays, ZZ bird and FITASC.
- 2. My favorite colors are red, white & blue. I love wearing our great nation's colors.
- 3. *I have held two Rodeo Queen titles—2018 Little Miss Clements Jr Stampede & 2019 Miss Northern California Jr Rodeo Association.*
- 4. Along with competitive shooting, I rodeo, play volleyball, basketball and softball.
- 5. I am an avid 4-H member. I raise swine & beef.
- 6. My favorite meal is steak with a baked potato.
- 7. *2021 was my first time attending and competing at Nationals in San Antonio.*
- 8. I have been able to visit five states because of shooting competitions.
- 9. I recently moved to Central Texas.



10. My dream is to make the USA Shooting team.



- 11. One day I hope to meet and shoot with Kayle Browning.
- 12. I won my first, 1st place shooting Trap with a 93/100 at 11 years old.
- 13. When I grow up I want to instruct shooting sports and raise show steers.

14. At the 2021 Youth US Open in Las Vegas, I got 1st place in Trap, Skeet and Sporting Clays in my age division.



15. MY FAVORITE TV SHOW IS YELLOWSTONE AND I LOVE ACTION MOVIES.

- 16. I love to practice at my local club, Brownwood Claybird.

17. I would love to start an annual shooting fundraiser for Juvenile Diabetes



Research Foundation. I frequently wear blue for my cousin who is a T1 Warrior.

18. I currently shoot a Browning Citori CX Micro.



- 19. My favorite discipline is Sporting Clays.
- 20. My best sporting clay round thus far is an 89/100, I shot right here at Claybird.
- 21. I owe my success to my parents and my family.

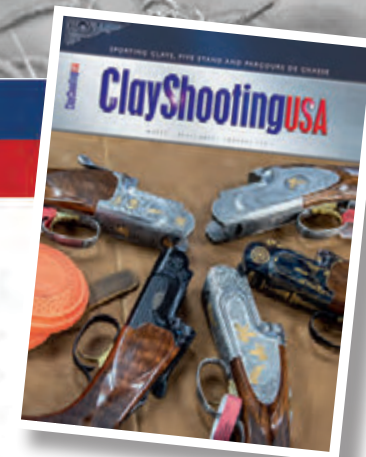
Hi! My name is Kayli DeVusser. I live in Early, a small town in Central Texas. I am 12 years old. I started shooting competitive shotgun at age 9.

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Where, Oh Where Has All the Ammo Gone?

AN AMMUNITION UPDATE FROM MATTHEW GAY

As we turn the corner on two years in this pandemic the question remains ever-present in many of our minds, do we have enough ammunition and/or reloading components for the next shooting or hunting season? The shortage of shotgun, rifle and pistol ammunition is clearly creating consternation among those in the shooting and hunting community. One only must look to social media pages to see everything from people posting their most recent "score" from the local box store or gun shop, to some posting screenshots of ammunition being sold online at absurd levels. I saw evidence of this while watching a sale unfold on one of the online sites. A flat of entry level shotgun ammunition which would normally sell for about \$58.00, sold on this site for more than a dollar a round. I've watched large rifle primers, which are typically \$80.00 for a thousand, selling for more than twice that. Whether it be because they simply do not know, or that they are just afraid of not having enough, it's absolutely insane what some people are paying for ammunition and components.

For those of us who have been around a while, this kind of shortage is not unprecedented, but it is more severe when compared to ammunition shortages of the last couple decades. This time around there are multiple factors that have contributed to this shortage, a perfect storm if you will. I spent quite a bit of time researching these factors so that I could put things in perspective for our readers. Maybe this article can quell a little of the "panic" out there among shooters, as they have seen once plentiful ammo shelves completely decimated and barren over the past two years.

FIRST TIME GUN OWNERS AND HUNTERS

With as much grief and worry that has resulted from the current ammunition shortage, one of the causes for the current state of the market is actually a very positive thing for the industry and community. In 2020, the National Shooting Sports Foundation's revised estimate concludes that at least 8.4 million new gun owners have been added to the fold. Two points of the extrapolated data also reveal a positive trend. Fifty percent of these first-time buyers were women, and of first-time buyers more than fifty percent were seeking professional firearms training. These numbers indicate a positive and

welcome trend in numbers of new participants in the hunting and shooting sports.

One lingering reality from 2020, which held true in 2021 is that hunting participation increased significantly as a result of COVID lockdowns and cancellations is pertinent to this discussion. In my home state of Michigan, hunting participation overall was up 121.61% in 2020. That is a crazy number considering for the last few decades hunting advocacy groups have been trying to figure out how to recruit and retain new hunters. With those additional hunters comes additional market demand for ammunition. Conservatively with a 121.61% increase it could be estimated that demand for hunting ammo at least doubled from 2019.



Table with columns: Year, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, Totals. Rows from 1998 to 2021 showing monthly and total ammunition sales data.

A SOCIALLY DISTANT SPORT

In one of my previous articles in another publication I addressed COVID as an opportunity to expand participation in the shooting sports and hunting community. I believe we have and will continue to see this as a trend. The level of angst about the actual impact of COVID varies greatly from one individual to another. I know a few people that have hardly left their house in the past two years and some who have continued to live their lives without change. Either way, the impact of regulations coming out of this thing will undoubtedly impact more traditional sports and recreational activities, for a while going forward.

The college where I coach offers traditional collegiate sports and has followed all the guidelines for testing, contact tracing and good hygienic practices. These guidelines define the sport's risk in three ways; high risk, medium risk and low risk. Shooting, as a whole, is low risk. In fact, it's very low risk in terms of exposure to communicable disease. This realization is likely to create an environment where more educational institutions, serving all ages, embrace this sport. If this prediction holds true that would lead to increased participation and consequently increased demand for ammunition. The same projected growth could occur with hunting pursuits, as its naturally socially distanced.

RAW MATERIALS

I know this is not news to anyone reading this, but ammunition requires various raw materials in

order to produce a finished product. Just prior to COVID's worldwide pandemic status the country of Chile, which produces one third of the world's copper, experienced a national strike by most workers in the country. While the copper mines were not completely shut down, shipping of materials in and out of the country largely halted. This impacted some of the ammunition and component market in the US, initially evident with metallic cartridges.

Lead is another necessity in the production of shotgun ammunition. While the ammunition industry only consumes about three percent of the lead in the United States, competition for lead is on the rise. The increase in applications for mobile sources of power being the primary driver of this demand combined with slow reductions in

NICS Firearm Background Checks: Month/Year by State. Year 2020. January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020. Table with columns: State/Territory, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec, Totals. Rows for all US states and territories.

NOTE: These statistics represent the number of firearm background checks initiated through the NICS. They do not represent the number of firearms sold. Based on varying state laws and purchase scenarios, a one-to-one correlation cannot be made between a firearm background check and a firearm sale.

domestic production of the raw material itself is driving the price higher, which will ultimately find its way to the consumer.

REMINGTON AMMUNITION

On July 27, 2019, the Remington Arms Company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and was ultimately sold in pieces. The oldest gunmaker in the United States failed for multiple reasons but none are relevant to this topic. This shuttered the manufacturing of one of the major suppliers of ammunition and reloading components in the United States. Fortunately, Vista Outdoor Inc. of Minnesota purchased Remington's ammunition business for the bargain price of 81.4 million dollars. Vista (also the owner of Federal, CCI and Speer) released a statement indicating that they intend to resume production of the iconic Remington brand while allowing the Remington brand to exchange notes with other product lines in their portfolio to produce an even better product, yet maintaining the uniqueness of the longstanding successful Remington products.

That press release was dated November 15th of 2020. Currently the Remington plant in Lonoke, Arkansas is "Full steam ahead" with production, as communicated by Nick Sachse, Remington director of product development. While there is no way to recoup the down time, the reinstatement of manufacturing capacity is welcome news to consumers. The impact is not instant as many have noticed. We are seeing stuff trickle in and inventory is getting re-stocked, albeit at a slower pace than many would like to see.

NICS Firearm Background Checks: Month/Year by State													
Year 2021 January 1, 2021 - February 28, 2021													
State / Territory	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Alabama	105,002	74,719											180,312
Alaska	9,033	6,697											15,685
Arizona	66,549	45,496											106,044
Arkansas	30,085	18,916											49,001
California	134,432	119,744											254,216
Colorado	65,051	50,485											115,536
Connecticut	25,009	19,746											45,354
Delaware	7,400	5,245											12,653
District of Columbia	1,076	920											1,996
Florida	190,817	138,870											329,687
Georgia	92,903	73,120											166,023
Guam	304	301											605
Hawaii	1,504	1,597											3,111
Idaho	28,243	21,223											49,466
Illinois	1,002,115	902,020											1,904,135
Indiana	262,694	195,162											457,846
Iowa	34,313	30,572											64,885
Kansas	26,195	17,526											43,721
Kentucky	421,790	378,499											800,289
Louisiana	40,265	26,669											66,933
Maine	13,693	8,985											22,678
Marshall Islands	27	16											43
Maryland	31,014	23,931											54,945
Massachusetts	29,570	23,711											53,281
Michigan	120,227	80,944											201,171
Minnesota	87,583	75,998											163,481
Mississippi	34,093	20,971											55,064
Missouri	72,234	48,646											120,880
Montana	18,154	11,876											30,030
Nebraska	16,509	7,870											18,379
Nevada	19,266	15,615											34,881
New Hampshire	19,214	12,651											31,865
New Jersey	28,230	20,242											48,472
New Mexico	19,689	15,609											35,298
New York	49,184	36,115											85,299
North Carolina	86,917	72,430											159,447
North Dakota	8,662	6,957											14,719
Ohio	90,851	68,106											166,757
Oklahoma	48,276	29,606											77,284
Oregon	49,765	34,957											84,712
Pennsylvania	168,116	114,482											274,598
Puerto Rico	4,377	4,339											8,716
Rhode Island	5,190	3,998											9,188
South Carolina	52,822	40,032											92,854
South Dakota	12,971	9,504											21,776
Tennessee	94,262	62,346											156,608
Texas	212,208	134,319											346,519
Utah	101,167	89,891											191,058
Vermont	6,012	3,874											9,886
Virgin Islands	152	159											311
Virginia	72,451	53,222											125,673
Washington	73,369	61,409											134,778
West Virginia	26,624	17,914											44,548
Wisconsin	73,836	52,251											126,087
Wyoming	9,264	6,382											15,646

NOTE: These statistics represent the number of firearm background checks initiated through the NICS. They do not represent the number of firearms sold. Based on varying state laws and purchase scenarios, a one-to-one correlation cannot be made between a firearm background check and a firearm sale.



MANUFACTURING DURING COVID

All industries have been impacted by COVID to one extent or another. Manufacturing has seen new guidelines for mitigation of COVID transmission amongst employees within their facilities. From state to state these guidelines vary significantly. This has led to some decreases in efficiency and total production numbers as a result of protocols, increased absence or mandated quarantines in the event of workforce exposure. While these circumstances have dealt a blow to production, they have also facilitated new ways to conduct business for manufacturers. The initial uncertainty caused some interruption in production but has been mostly integrated into work processes by now. But remember, even a

two, or four-week interruption in production translates to a reduction of four to eight percent of ammunition produced annually. This may seem insignificant but with all the other forces hampering production, this number is very impactful.

PANIC BUYING

Panic buying by people has been a constant, dominant factor in the past ammo shortages and this is no different. I've always said politicians who propose gun control are the best gun and ammunition salespeople ever. This fear spawned by these pandering politicians drives people to buy more and in some cases hoard ammunition for fear of new regulation. The current crop of bombastic talking heads upped the ante with a threat of a 30% tax on firearms and a 50% tax on ammunition. This has led to panic buying and hoarding galore, which I neither support nor discourage. The result in the market though is challenging for those of us that consume larger quantities of ammunition for tournament shooting or practice regimens. The good news is that panic buying has a shelf life and doesn't last forever. This too shall pass.



RELOADING COMPONENTS

Where in the world are all the primers? After some communication with the folks at Vista Outdoor Inc., my suspicions were confirmed. The primary function of an ammunition company is to make ammunition (I know... "thank you Captain Obvious"). But these manufacturers also build components for reloaders, such as primers. When the demand for ammunition increases, the ammunition company puts all its efforts and resources into producing ammunition...including the primers, that in a normal market would be found on the retail shelf. With Vista owning CCI, Federal and Remington its pretty clear to me that primers will still be challenging to bring to market so long as demand is high for finished ammunition. The CEO of Vista Outdoor Inc., Jason Vanderbrink stated that in the 99-year history of Federal Ammunition, they have produced more ammunition in 2020 than in any other year. This means primers will become more available as this shortage wanes.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

We find ourselves in this perfect storm of sorts in terms of ammo availability. COVID shudders manufacturing and transportation of ammunition. The ensuing safety protocols for employees temporarily slow down production. Raw materials get harder to find and more expensive. Everyone needs to be socially distant, so we see participation in the shooting sports or hunting worlds grow exponentially. One of the

biggest ammo manufacturers files for bankruptcy while politicians throw gasoline on a brush fire, leading to panic buying and upwards of five million new ammunition consumers. International shipping has been a major challenge and now we face a domestic shipping crisis with limited access for some truckers to parts of North America. That's a lot of stress to put on one industry.

Just to clarify, the manufacturers are working at full capacity now and shipping product daily to retail outlets. Prior to the advent of all the factors mentioned above, the ammunition industry's capacity was sized in such a way that it could handle all normal demand from its customers and distributors, while simultaneously maintaining inventory for high demand and niche products for future orders.

Ammunition may not be as accessible as we are used to, but hey, 2020 left a mark and even though better, 2021's new gun owners increased demand for ammunition. Federal and Winchester have programs to assist youth shooting organizations with getting needed ammunition for their respective seasons. Gun clubs have been working to make ammunition available for events with an eye to returning to a state of normalcy in 2022. My best advice is...relax, it will all work out. Maximize the practice you can get in and we'll get through this together, five million gun owners stronger than we were in 2020. ■

Editor's note: Matthew Gay is a shooting instructor from Michigan, the Head Coach of the Olivet College Clay Target Team, Vice-President of the Michigan Scholastic Clay Target Program Board of Directors, a bunker trap junkie and Master Class Sporting Clays competitor.



The Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader System



WHERE PRIMITIVE PROCESS MEETS MODERN PRECISION BY ANDREA BOGARD

When I first heard about the Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader, a sub-MOA muzzleloader to 500 yards, my first impression was “wow!” I don’t know about you, but the word “muzzleloader” brings to mind Gone with the Wind plot lines, muskets and Civil War mid-terms.

Let’s explore the 45-cal Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader System!

For those that follow along, you know how much I LOVE gun delivery days. It’s so exciting to get those beautiful cardboard boxes shielding the magical hard cases of fun. I love it. It’s like Christmas, ballistically speaking.

I got the SKB case out and flipped open the clasps. A side note about SKB cases – if you fly much with long guns, you learn very quickly that a high-quality case is imperative for adventure success. The SKB cases are ultra user-friendly. The padlock holes accommodate the non-TSA locks comfortably (this is important—read the regulations on [TSA.gov](https://www.tsa.gov)) and the empty weight is slightly lighter than other leading brands currently on the market for comparable sizes. This is critical purchasing information when you’re hauling your body weight in gear and guns through the airport.

The case is open. I don’t know about you, but I always take a moment of silence when I open a gun case. It’s about respect, perception and openness. Think of it like telling your kids, “if your mouth is moving—you’re not listening.”

A gun will tell you a lot if you stop to listen. I stared down at the open case and waited. Here’s what I came away with.

The engineering is beautiful. From the



recessed ram rod assembly to the in-letted sling swivel ports, every detail has been carefully curated.

The pistol grip crisply radiused, but smoothly finished.

The carbon fiber stock smooth and velvety to the touch.

It appears solid, yet stream-lined.

The overall impression? It looks like a precision bolt rifle, with a twist.

Let’s talk about that. This muzzleloader is built on a Remington-patterned proprietary Gunwerks action with a Trigger Tech Primary trigger group and two-position Remington style safety. The ergonomically friendly bolt cycles with a smooth, eloquent throw.

After verifying the chamber was empty, I pulled it up, dialed the scope down to its lowest power and focused out my kitchen window at a tree in the yard. The Leupold Mark V 3.6-18 x 44 Front Focal Plane scope brought the branches into tack sharp focus. This clarity was quickly offset by my arms starting to shake. The system reviewed with scope, bi-pod and ramrod weighed in at 11 pounds, 8 ounces. *This may not be your first choice for a long stalk, but is definitely a go-to for a long shot.*

Let’s talk mechanics. Muzzleloaders can have a certain mystique, an intimidation factor even. A muzzleloader is basically a firearm that doesn’t use a traditionally assembled cartridge or shell. You need to load the powder, projectile and primer individually. Let’s put it together!

The Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader uses 100 grains by weight, not volume (this is extremely important) of BlackHorn 209 powder (considered a super-magnum charge). The



measured charge is poured into an un-primed barrel from the muzzle end. This is step one in the loading process.

The projectile is a 285-grain PowerBelt ELR (Extended Long Range) Aerotip bullet in 45-caliber. The bullet is inserted, base first (pointy end up), in the muzzle end of the barrel after the powder has been poured in. This is the second step in the loading process. But wait, there’s a part two to this! Going back to how much it looks like a precision rifle, you may or may not have missed the sleek, two-piece ramrod assembly nestled discreetly in the carbon fiber fore-end. With a twist, swoosh and snap, they are removed and put together. Now you’re ready to press the projectile down on top of the powder you just poured in. Press firmly.

Withdraw the ram rod and set aside. At this



point, we know we're going to do some shooting so I'd leave it out. If you were in the field and taking off on a stalk, you'd take it apart and replace in the foreend. A side note here: magnificent engineering and tight tolerances can sometimes be a double-edged sword. Replacing the two-piece ram rod the first couple of times takes a delicate touch and some finesse to get it lined up just right. It's kind of like putting arrow shafts back in those little honeycomb display boards at the archery shop.

We have our powder and our projectile. Now we just need our primer. Many muzzleloaders utilize a 209 primer typically found in shotgun shells. This is then dropped into a port or hole in the action of the muzzleloader to await a firing pin strike and subsequent powder ignition.

Here's where Gunwerks takes it to a whole new level of technical excellence. Utilizing Remington Ultimate Muzzleloader pre-primed brass, Gunwerks streamlines and supercharges the priming process. Simply drop the primed brass into the action, slide the bolt home and you're ready to go. The two-position safety gives you the familiarity of your favorite bolt gun with the primal satisfaction of a muzzleloader.

We're ready to shoot! Depending on your form and shooting mechanics, a 285-grain projectile pushed by the powder/primer combination described above can be somewhat cringe-worthy. Here's where Gunwerks once again brings to the fore-front their engineering capabilities.

Do you remember that 11 plus pounds we talked about a little while ago? Solid weight, superb balance and a well-crafted muzzle brake



combine to create an extremely shootable ensemble. The clean, crisp trigger broke at 3.5 pounds. I squinted to see my 100-yard target. It wasn't recoil or muzzle rise that caused me to lose sight of the bullseye, it was the brief smoky haze inherent to a muzzleloader. Pretty cool. I felt like I had just experienced a "Back to the Future" type moment. A few more shots downrange yielded a strong, sub-MOA group.

The mission of the Gunwerks muzzleloader was not to be a paper punching princess, though. It is a highly-sophisticated hunting focused instrument in a primitive platform. Let's go hunt!

Here in Northern Michigan, we have a short muzzleloader season, followed by a late antlerless firearm season that is private land only. I took to the woods to see what I could find. I prefer a spot and stalk type hunt vs. a blind. That's great with

my scoped 8 pound 6.5 Creedmoor, but a bit more of a chore with an 11 1/2 pound muzzleloader. Add a carbon fiber tripod and pack of hunting necessities and we're talking some decent weight.

After days in the woods in snow, rain and cold, the Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader over a shoulder, I had no deer on the ground, but had developed a healthy appreciation for the essence and experience of a primitive firearm. My woods stalks were different somehow. There was a kinship to men and women of decades before pursuing game for pure sustenance.

For those of you in "optics-free" hunt areas, this package includes a custom calibrated front and rear iron sight system. I have to hit for a brief moment on the Pelican micro case the assembly comes in. Seriously adorable.

The rear sight unit is a peep with a calibrated elevation dial, just like your scope. Read that again. Just. Like. Your. Scope. But irons! The front sight assembly is a well-engineered adjustable globe style sight. Both front and rear offer interchangeable apertures. The system under review had a post and dot presentation.

The Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader System is the bridge between primal pursuit and precision performance. From the precision features of a carbon wrapped barrel, custom action, high-quality projectile and top-grade optic to a custom ballistic turret, it truly is the whole package. We know it can successfully hold sub-MOA groups to 500 yards. But, do we know, in the moment what to dial/where to hold to make the whole package come together?

That's where the Revic BR4 comes in. This is a cutting-edge ballistic rangefinder that comes programmed with all the DOPE you need to successfully acquire and engage targets and game with your Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader System. Simply range your target, push the button and look for the numbers on the internal screen. Dial your turret accordingly and the rest is on you, the shooter. Want to learn more about the *Revic BR4*? Check it out on Gunwerks' website, under rangefinder products for more information!

The Gunwerks Magnus Muzzleloader System is a beautifully designed and elegantly executed example of a modern twist on a primitive hunting tool. You can "extend your season and your range" all while reconnecting with that inner-plaid clad hunter of days past. Check out www.gunwerks.com to build your own Gunwerks Muzzleloader System! ■



wilderness
to
table



FOOD | Venison Wellington

BY CHEF BRI VAN SCOTTER OF WILDERNESS TO TABLE

Servings: 6
Prep Time: 1 hour
Cook Time: 45 minutes

FOR THE DUXELLES:

3 pints (1 1/2 pounds) white button mushrooms
2 shallots, peeled and roughly chopped
4 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
2 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves only
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE VENISON:

One 3-pound venison backstrap
Extra-virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
12 thin slices prosciutto
6 sprigs of fresh thyme, leaves only
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
Flour, for rolling out puff pastry
1 pound puff pastry, thawed if using frozen
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt

Directions:

Add mushrooms, shallots, garlic, and thyme to a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Add butter and olive oil to a large saute pan and set over medium heat. Add the shallot and mushroom mixture and saute for 8 to 10 minutes until most of the liquid has evaporated. Season with salt and pepper and set aside to cool.

To prepare the venison drizzle the backstrap with olive oil, then season with salt and pepper and sear all over, including the ends, in a hot, heavy based skillet lightly coated with olive oil - about 2 to 3 minutes.

Meanwhile set out your prosciutto on a sheet of plastic wrap (plastic needs to be about a foot and a half in length so you can wrap and tie the backstrap up in it) on top of your cutting board. Shingle the prosciutto so it forms a rectangle that is big enough to encompass the entire backstrap. Using a rubber spatula cover evenly with a thin layer of duxelles. Season the surface of the duxelles with salt and pepper and sprinkle with fresh thyme leaves.

When the backstrap is seared, remove from heat and smear lightly all over with Dijon mustard. Allow to cool slightly, then roll up in the duxelles covered prosciutto using the plastic wrap to tie it



up nice and tight. Tuck in the ends of the prosciutto as you roll to completely encompass the venison. Roll it up tightly in plastic wrap and twist the ends to seal it completely and hold it in a nice log shape.

Set in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to ensure it maintains its shape.

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the puff pastry out to about a 1/4-inch. Depending on the size of your sheets you may have to overlap 2 sheets and press them together. Remove the venison from refrigerator and cut off the plastic. Set the venison in the center of the pastry and fold over the longer sides, brushing with egg wash to seal. Trim ends if necessary then brush with egg wash and fold over to completely seal the venison. Top with coarse sea salt.

Place the venison seam side down on a baking sheet. Brush the top of the pastry with egg wash then make a couple of slits in the top of the pastry using the tip of a paring knife, this creates vents that will allow the steam to escape when cooking.

Bake for 40 to 45 minutes until pastry is golden brown and venison registers 125-130 degrees F on an instant-read thermometer. Remove from oven and rest before cutting into thick slices. ■



Life Is But A Dream

BY JUDY RHODES



When my husband, Sam, suggested we go on safari to South Africa with Cynthia and Kinsley Desch, I knew exactly what trophy I wanted to bag since this was going to be my 21st safari to the “Dark Continent.” Hippo! Yep, Hippo! I wanted a Hippo! Don’t ask me why as I never wanted to bag an elephant, lion, or leopard. I am a social shooter. I had rather have big adventures.

Sam strongly suggested I take a Cape Buffalo, or “Black Death” as known in the hunting world. Cape Buffalo? Oh heck no, I am too scared from listening to hunters and watching videos of Cape Buffalo hunting, the most feared animal in Africa. They are *the* aggressor in the bush while I am the aggressor on the range, field, or store!

Sam would not back down, as he wanted me to have the hunt of a lifetime and to experience taking a Cape Buffalo, or Dagga Boy, the oldest toughest bull in the bush. Reluctantly, and with fear in my heart, I agreed. I was going Cape Buffalo hunting! My first course of action for my big adventure was to revisit the book “The Perfect Shot”. Shot placement is SO important when shooting big game. I know that I have never been on safari without it, and all my trophies have been one shot! Vitals on African game are different from North American animals. Buffalo vitals are a lot lower, and frontal shots in the brisket are difficult to fully penetrate. The quest for Big Dagga Boy means up close and personal shots.

For the next five months, during our morning coffee, Sam would strongly suggest I look at “the” book, so I did. Then we began playing, much to my dismay...a shot placement game. If the buffalo was quartered, where would I make the shot and so on? This went on for months. I knew more about where the vitals on the buffalo are than I knew where all my scars are on my body!

Making matters complicated with dangerous

game, I elected to rent a big rifle to ease traveling through Europe. How could I practice with groupings with a Remington .375 that I had never fired, plus, buy bullets at \$5 a piece? Now, I was going to have to really believe in myself, my breathing, squeezing, as well as shot placement. Did I have a prayer?

Landing in Johannesburg, South Africa and joining Cynthia and Kinsley at Zulu Nyla Lodge, my dream hunt—or Sam’s—was fast becoming a reality. I was scared on the inside but played the cool and calm huntress role with the swagger of a true Texan. The two-hour ride from Johannesburg to Mabula Pro Safari Lodge was calming with great anticipation of our friends’ first safari, and scenery resembling South Texas.

First order of the afternoon, after a fabulous African game lunch, was sighting in guns...I’ll take two shots (\$10 worth) for good measure! BANG! BANG! Perfect shots at 100 yards! I am psyched! I am stoked! My guide, Jurie, was delighted with my marksmanship. He had been unsure what to anticipate with his first female huntress, plus Christo Gomes, professional hunter (PH) and owner of Mabula Pro Safaris, shared wild outrageous stories prior to my arrival about Lynn Dowdle and me on our last encounter in camp. It has been said by many a South African, “You do not meet Judy Rhodes, you experience her!”

Our next step was for all four of us to load up in the Land Cruiser and begin glassing for Cape Buffalo and assorted plains games. Getting the lay of the land and recognizing horns and antlers is very important on the hoof in Africa. Game is very plentiful at Christo’s, you are only limited by your checkbook. Kinsley was in shooter’s position while driving through the bush. BANG! He took a very nice gold medal Eland. We spotted several nice Cape Buffalo, but hunting in Africa can become a waiting game for the big one...or not! I

was there for the trophy and an adventure of a lifetime for one of the Big Five! (The Big Five has recently become the Big Six consisting of Elephant, Rhino, Cape Buffalo, Lion, Leopard, and now, Hippo). What a great beginning to our first afternoon in camp!

My first full day of a ten-day hunt for Cape Buffalo began very civilized...coffee and a light breakfast. We loaded up in two Land Cruisers: Cynthia and Kinsley with Ruan in one, and Sam and myself with Jurie in the other. We both had native Shona Tribesmen—one of the many tribes in South Africa. Shorty and Phelemon were my driver and tracker. After hugging Cynthia and wishing each other good luck, we were off like a herd of buffalo leaving a contrail on the ground. Our mission was not impossible! Look for the big one and come back to camp with bragging rights, so I thought. Silly me!

We spotted about 60 buffalo in five different herds. I thought they were a bit too small with broken horns for my trophy of a lifetime. Jurie agreed. He suggested we speak to Christo about



The Dagga Boy—a 12-year-old bull that had been moved to a separate 7,500 acre pasture for fighting and damaging the horns of the other trophy bulls we had just seen. The only problem Sam foresees, it was the *only* buffalo amongst 30 different plains game, zebras, wild boars and rhinos. Oh my, the hunt was now going to be like looking for a needle in a haystack. No herds? Darn...this was going to be difficult!

After glassing and glassing, we spotted him, about 75 yards away—The Big Dagga Boy! Walking toward him, he saw us immediately. Once we locked eyes, he was off! Driving for almost an hour we spotted him again hiding in thick trees and brush. Jurie handed me the rifle and three bullets. “Load your gun and let’s go!” Giving Sam the thumbs up...I quickly followed with my heart racing like I was about to see Elvis in the flesh! I have not felt such an adrenalin rush in quiet sometime. I could feel the clamminess of my hand and suddenly the threat of danger became apparent. Acquiring the perfect broadside shot, and before I could pull the trigger, we heard a shot ring out from miles and miles away. My buffalo reared his head as to signal the race was on. Off he sped into the brush as if he was on fire!

Sam remained behind with Shorty, the driver, in the Land Cruiser. One look at my face he could tell I had not been successful. “What happened? I heard a solid shot!” Sam asked. It was another hunter miles away. Spooked and hoofing it!

We never did spot him the rest of the day.

Relaxed and unhurried mornings were a passing fancy...we were out for The Dagga Boy. The second morning we glassed and drove all day except stopping for a quick lunch—many times covering the same territory over and over again...with no luck! Jurie had a wonderful idea. Cut a tree and drag it behind the Land Cruiser dividing the bush into quadrants to see where the buffalo had crossed into other areas. After a couple hours of dragging and looking we sent the tracker into the tall grass. He had spotted him. Following him...we only saw bull spore where he had been and they were loose. I knew from being a rancher’s daughter the bull was stressed. Heck, so was I! No Bull or should I say no Buffalo! Jurie suggested we walk...oh bull crap! Getting off the back of the Land Cruiser and stepping in the bush, I began to cry. You see the grass was almost as tall as me and I am 5’9”. I could not see one foot in front of me, and the vision of the perfect shot began to vanish. After walking for ten miles, we called it a day. Jurie informed me he never



Darting and testing sables

shot a Cape Buffalo after 5pm with dusk coming quickly and he did not want to wound a big animal. I agreed. Jurie reminded to keep shooting until Dagga Boy was on the ground and that could take up to seven to nine shots. Now, I had to rethink three bullets, I may need more! Once again the buffalo and I were both in stress mode.

The third day, we walked the trail we had brushed the day before and no tracks of buffalo. Many signs of smaller hooves, but none the size we were after—Dagga Boy! We knew he had to be here...but where? My stress level began to skyrocket. I needed a break! During lunch, Christo suggested we tag along to dart sable. He had hired a helicopter and veterinary to dart and test the origins of the five sable on his property. Darting prevents stress to sable bulls. With the entourage in place, let the testing begin, five in all...wild game vet, trackers to blindfold, trackers to tie down and release and me. Christo was hoping the sables were a pure bloodline from Namibia as their numbers had dwindled from poaching. It is hard to tell with the cross breeding in South Africa and conservation efforts like Christo’s help keep the herd strong and plentiful. Hunters are conservationists...we only take the old and mature bulls. Darting...what a unique opportunity in the outdoors!

Returning to the bush...a new plan. Phelemon had seen buffalo tracks crossing to another area, he was on the move. “Let’s go, load up!” Same three bullets and we were off! Once again I was nervous and began to cry...emotions running! I cranked up my Pro Ears so I could hear the cracking of limbs, whispering of guides and hand signals of the tracker. Once again the grass was

higher than a cat’s back! “Keep walking and be ready,” strongly suggested Jurie! I was locked and loaded. I kept repeating to myself, “Breathe and squeeze and reload,” with every step. Ten miles later we had seen nothing and returned to the cruiser for sundowners! Bless the nectar of the Gods.

Conversations around the campfire are the best! Support was bellowing from friends as we relived everyone’s day’s hunt and adventures. Now, my hunt of a lifetime was fast becoming an inner-reflection of my outdoor resources!

Taking worries and concerns of The Dagga Boy hunt to my suite...I began to question my bravery and purpose of this adventure. I have always bragged to the many friends I have been on safari with that you find your soul! Heck, I experienced this 20 safaris ago and have had a born again experience several times. Was there a lesson to be learned this time?

Restless and glancing at my alarm, it was 2am. I need to sleep! I need rest! Finally, I dozed off. Deep in a dreaming state, I had a visit from a friend, Jerry Fufts, who had been on safari with me and ten other friends four years earlier. The same year he passed away in his sleep while on a mule deer hunt in Colorado. Jerry was a wonderful, thoughtful, giving man gone too soon and I still miss him!

Jerry appeared in my dream wearing a white starched shirt and wrangler jeans driving a white Rolls. Opening the passenger door, Jerry asked me to get in. I was excited to see him but I knew by the look on his face he was my angel on a mission from God. I informed him I had too many things I still need to accomplish—my two



sons needed me and DIVA WOW was still a huge vision. Walking into a small farmhouse with Jerry following, I began to recognize many friends outside a window walking by crying and consoling each other. I asked Jerry why were they so upset. He quietly told me they were mourning me! Then it dawned on me...I had no choice...it was my time. I suggested he give me three hours to get myself together. He agreed and I began to work and accomplish many tasks that began to overwhelm me. Glancing out the window of the small farmhouse, I noticed Jerry was in the Rolls and motioned for me to come. Slowly and reluctantly I walked toward the car noticing several other women were already awaiting me to get in. Jerry smiled and said it was time to go, I nodded and said I was ready. A faint voice began talking to Jerry. The next voice I heard was Jerry saying, "Judy you can get out! I have others to pick up and you have more to accomplish and great things to do." I had a new focus!

Next thing I remember was the alarm going off! Was I really dreaming or had I just been given a renewed direction? I was a little dazed but then it dawned on me...I was going to be okay!

Dressing quickly and going to an early breakfast I felt at peace within myself. My guide looked at me, as I had a calmness over my whole being, and ask me if I was okay. It is amazing how you get to really know someone when in the field, as your attitudes and values cannot be camouflaged. I informed Jurie that I had had a dream and I was not scared anymore. He asked me to share and I said after the buffalo was down I would.

Loading up into the Land Cruiser for the 4th day's adventure for The Dagga Boy, Sam seemed a little amazed at my new found confidence.

Driving to the bush, Sam mentioned why don't you ask for more bullets in case you get separated from Jurie. I agreed. I smiled and informed him, I was not scared anymore. Sam seemed relieved. Some hunts are just a roller coaster of emotions, dangerous or not.

Glassing again and locating fresh buffalo tracks, we stopped at tall grass and heavy brushy area. Loading my gun and picking up my shooting stick, I asked Jurie for more bullets. Now I had seven. I knew Cape Buffalo were hard to bring down and Christo told me the night before to keep shooting until he was down. Realization had now become a reality! The last thing I heard from Sam as he gave me a thumbs up was, "Do not wound him!"

Walking in tall grass was now the challenge of the hunt. After walking about 15 miles, Jurie and I split from our tracker, Phelemon, so we could cover more ground. Phelemon spotted him in a different quadrant and quickly returned and showed us the way he had last seen him. Covering a lot of ground we spotted him 50 yards away... with Phelemon quickly setting up shooting sticks. I did not have a clear shot even though he was standing broadside. I could only see one eye, no horns, no shoulder, no perfect shot. I informed Jurie I would not take a shot! He and Phelemon were disappointed but agreed I made the right decision. Back to the drawing board—walking and stalking! Once again we were stressing the buffalo and I remained calm! We heard seven shots miles away, pushing the buffalo further into the bush. Time was now getting nigh and Jurie again informed me he did not shoot after 5pm with dusk coming quickly. We radioed Sam and Shorty in the Cruiser to pick us up. Upon arrival, Sam looked worried and exhausted. He said he

thought the seven shots had come from me and began to worry that I had wounded the buffalo or had gotten in trouble. Relieved, Sam needed a drink to settle his nerves!

Jurie informed me the day was over and I unloaded my rifle. Disappointment in the air, we began driving back to the lodge and taking another route when Shorty spotted the buffalo hiding in the brush 60 yards away. Quickly coming to a brisk stop and backing up for a better look, commotion became the challenge at the moment. "Load your rifle," whispered Jurie quickly as he was pointing to The Dagga Boy. All I could say was "Are you sure that is my buffalo we have been tracking for days?" Jurie nodded and I began to get into position...perfect quartering shot but behind the brush. While in position, I noticed Jurie was shaking and suggested I now take a head-on shot. Phelemon was pointing as if he was conducting an orchestra. Their hands were tied...it was all up to me! Jurie whistled and the buffalo left the brush to face me head-on...calmly breathing and squeezing—BANG!—reloading...you could see the buffalo begin to crumple. He quickly turned and dropped like a rock. Down! Sam told me to wait for the death bellow...I did and Dagga Boy delivered.

Celebrating and quickly noticing the time...it was 5pm! We were burning daylight for pictures. As I handed Jurie the remaining six bullets I noticed blood running down my face, I had been kissed by the scope—or was it from God? On the return to the lodge I recalled my dream and Jurie informed me he had a similar dream two nights before where we both died from a wounded buffalo.

Big Adventures come from the paths you least expect.

Go be a part of the great outdoors...I'll see you there! ■

Judy with Dagga Boy



If you're interested in learning more about Judy and her organization, visit the Divas at:



divawow



judyprhodes

divawow.org



diva wow



DIVAOutdoors

Girls' Day Out

*Lunch, Shopping and Shooting?
Oh yeah!*

BY
MAGGIE
KELCH

It all started when I was talking to Paul Weaver, one of the owners of a new shooting range called Airport Ridge Sporting Clays that was about to open in Ohio. This new club is located in Ohio's Amish Country, an area that attracts more than 5 million tourists each year.

Paul described the new club to me, "It's absolutely beautiful. We have two brand new courses that wind through the woods and farm fields. The scenery is fantastic. We're located right in the heart of Ohio's Amish Country with all the restaurants and shops. And we're adjacent to the airport so it will be convenient for tourists."

"Wow! There are restaurants, shops and a sporting clays club? Sounds like the perfect Girls' Day Out to me," I replied.

"Well, yes, I'd never thought of that as a Girls' Day Out, but it certainly could be," he added.

The next week, the plan started to come together at Ladies' Night at our gun club. Hill 'n Dale Club in Medina, Ohio has been holding Ladies' Night on Tuesday nights for years. Each week, a group of ladies gathers to shoot and get great instruction from three top level local coaches.

We'd come off the sporting clays courses and gathered for happy hour at the pavilion when the conversation turned to the news that a new sporting clays club was opening in Ohio's Amish Country. I passed the Airport Ridge brochure around for everyone to read and the conversation got livelier.

"So, it's right in Amish Country with all the restaurants and shops?"



"What do they charge for 100 targets? Do they have golf carts we can rent?"

"How long does it take to get there?"

"When are we going?"

One of our coaches, Bill Mayer (nine time Ohio state champion and a member of the Ohio Sporting Clays Hall of Fame) was featured in the brochure as the club pro. So, naturally, we had to ask him for the inside scoop.

"Ladies, it's absolutely beautiful. You definitely have to go there," he said.

With that endorsement, the deal was sealed. We were soon all looking at calendars and planning our adventure.

I called Paul back the next day and he had Julie Williams, the Clubhouse Manager, get in touch with me to set everything up. That night, I mentioned the Girls' Day Out plans to my daughter, Jessica Pardee. She has been to Amish Country many times to shop for everything from food to furniture. Best of all, she is a shooter too and had been to Ladies' Night with me in the past.

"Well," Jessica said, "You can count me in. I'll help navigate around the area and I can't wait to shoot there!"

On Monday, August 16, six of us took the scenic, windy roads through the Ohio countryside to Millersburg and Airport Ridge Sporting Club. The Girls' Day Out Squad included me and Jessica, along with Lynne Clements, Lynn Kennedy, Terri Campbell and Beverly Dequinze. We've all shot together at Ladies' Night and even shot a few registered shoots together. We'd talked about taking a road trip together but this was the first time we put a plan into action.

We arrived at Airport Ridge and were immediately struck by the beauty of the setting. The Lodge at Airport Ridge resembles a large white barn perched on a hillside overlooking farm fields and woods. A large white pavilion and another white barn are adjacent to The Lodge. A



new, enclosed all weather 5-Stand building is within walking distance. We had to pause for a moment to admire the stunning views before we went into the building.

As we entered the Lodge, we couldn't help but be impressed. We emitted a chorus of oohs and aahs as we admired the stunning woodwork, high rafters and spacious interior. Having driven the winding country back roads for over an hour, our first stop, of course, was the restrooms.

As shooters and hunters, we don't often have the luxury of finding first class accommodations on our adventures. However, the restrooms (and all of the facilities) at Airport Ridge were a refreshing change. Everything, from the clean, well-stocked restrooms to the beautiful and spacious banquet/meeting rooms to the new and well-equipped golf carts, is first class.

Bev may have summed it up best when she saw the interior of the Lodge. "Wow! Oh my gosh, I absolutely love all of this knotty pine. This has to be the most beautiful club I've ever visited," she said.

The first room you enter in the Lodge is a large meeting room with round tables and chairs. It features a stunning rock fireplace and has a second story balcony that is reached by walking up a curving wooden staircase. A collection of big game mounts resides on a landing near the top of the stairs.

This room is also the reception area for the sporting clays course and Julie Williams, warmly welcomed us at the registration counter. She had



everything ready for us to go for the day including our Long Range target cards and release forms for everyone to sign before we went out on the course.

But first, she led us to the adjacent banquet room where she introduced us to Paul Weaver and Mike Taylor, two of the owners of Airport Ridge and her husband, Doug Williams, who is Club Manager.

The room was set up with dozens of round

banquet tables and chairs and shared the same rustic wood décor as the reception area. As the Lodge is perched on the hillside, this room is actually two stories above ground and double doors led to a balcony that overlooked the fields and sporting clays courses below. Our squad was really impressed by the beauty of the room and how it could be used for so many events.

"Wow! Beautiful."

"Can you imagine having a party here?"

"It would be beautiful for a wedding."

We sat down for a few minutes to chat with Paul, Mike and Doug about the club, shooting sporting clays, hunting, dogs and even more importantly, how places like Airport Ridge are so important to building friendships, easing stress and having fun.

The idea for Airport Ridge actually originated with Paul Weaver, a local businessman, who enlisted the help of two friends who are also businessmen in the area. Paul is the retired owner of Weaver Leather. He is a recreational sporting clays shooter and bird hunter of 30 years. He asked his friends Mike Taylor (a retired accountant/consultant) and James Troyer (owner of Troyer Cheese Company) to join him in the new venture.

Paul owned a farm adjacent to the Holmes County Airport and had a vision to build a first class sporting clays facility on the property. In 2020, the partners purchased the Flying Ridge Hunt Club event center next to the farm and



Airport Ridge Sporting Clays was born. They hired Doug (who used to own his own business) and Julie (formerly an RN) to run the operations of the club and the clubhouse for them.

"I've always thought I'd like to have a sporting clays club - one that is not perfect, but is excellent. And so when this facility became available, I realized that this setting is meant for this," Paul told us. "The property has woods, fields and drastic elevation changes. It kind of simulates what you'd get on a grouse hunt or something like that."

Lynne and Terri's ears perked up at this, as both are upland game hunters. Soon, we were all sidetracked in a discussion about hunting dogs, pheasants and days in the field.

When we got the conversation back to Airport Ridge, we learned that it covers 137 acres and that there are two sporting clays courses which were designed by well-known course designer, Gordon Phillips. There are a total of 30 shooting stations on the two courses which feature a variety of backgrounds including farm fields, woods, ravines and open fields. The Orange course has 12 stations with two traps on each. The Black course has 18 stations with three traps on each so that sporting clays or super sporting can be shot there. There's also a brand new enclosed 5-Stand that can be used year round.

While we learned a lot about how the club was started and what traps (Atlas) and target management system (Long Range) they are using, it was Paul's comments about why they really wanted to start the club that really resonated with all of us.

"I guess the one thing that that we want you to know is that we have we have a kind of a bigger purpose than just having a sporting play course. We believe that people in today's world don't get together much and just have fun and laugh. It's a pretty somber time in our country, and everybody's life right now, especially with Covid. And we think this is one place that people can come for a morning, or whatever, and just have fun, and communicate with other men or women," he explained.

"So to me, it has a lot to do with forming new relationships, and strengthening old ones. So that's one of the big things that has at the heart and soul of this club, is to get people together. You know, everybody's got junk in their life. And in order to share that, you need to have other people. And so to me, it's just a good way to bring people together," he added.

We couldn't have said it better. Paul pretty



summed up the purpose of our Girls' Day Out! With those words in mind, it was time to head out onto the sporting clays course and have some fun.

Doug brought out three golf carts for us and we loaded up our guns and shotgun shells. All were brand new carts fully outfitted with gun racks and front cargo baskets which made it easy to take everything we needed. Perhaps the most important accessories we took along were our umbrellas. We had driven to Millersburg in a steady drizzle and, unfortunately, it continued to rain off and on during our time on the course. But, we were determined to not let the rain get in the way of having a good time together.

Heading onto the cart path that cut through the cornfields, Terri exclaimed, "Look, it's a sporting clays Field of Dreams."

She was right, it was just like the classic baseball movie and we were heading through the corn fields to enjoy a first class course in a beautiful setting.

Doug and Mike led the way and took us on a tour of the Black course, which wended its way through the woods and fields below the Lodge. Since the club had only been open for a few weeks, part of the course was still under construction and they proudly showed us the next phase that they were getting ready to roll out.

They stayed to show us the ropes at the first couple of stations. Since their signs indicating the position of the traps were not yet in place, they explained the signage system to us.

Actually, we suspected that they were tagging

along to be sure we knew what we were doing on the course. Truth be told, we're all experienced sporting clays shooters and, in fact, Lynne and Bev are both NSCA Level I certified instructors. (Lynne actually teaches new shooters.) After watching us smash targets on the first couple of stations, they headed back to the Lodge.

With umbrellas held overhead, we each took our turn in the stations. The course had a good mix of target presentations with some being more challenging than others. One of the things that I really enjoy about sporting clays is that it is a social sport. There were lots of oohs and aahs as we watched new target presentations for the first time. And, cheers and applause erupted when anyone broke targets.

As a group, we help to encourage each other and help each other figure out how to break more difficult targets. It's really a great opportunity to support and encourage each other at a sport that we all enjoy.

Before we knew it, we were at the end of the Black course and once again back at the Lodge. Since we had lunch plans in Millersburg, we didn't have time to explore the Orange course. We returned our golf carts and headed back into the Lodge to do settle our accounts and do a little shopping there. After all, who's going to believe you've been there and done that if you don't buy the tee shirt?

Our time at Airport Ridge was first class all the way. From the beautiful Lodge to the scenic and challenging course and the friendly welcome



from the owners and staff, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Everyone agreed that it was a blast. The squad members all commented on the beauty of the facilities, how well organized and run it is and how friendly everyone was. Terri may have summed it up best when she said: "Shooting at Airport Ridge is like eating potato chips. Just give me one more!"

No Girls' Day Out would be complete without lunch and shopping. Jessica led the way and we headed into Millersburg for lunch at Bag's Sports Pub. Our lunch was made even more special as we were joined by Shannon Carter, the Marketing Manager for the Holmes County Chamber of Commerce and Judy Lamp, the Executive Director of Historic Downtown Millersburg.

Shannon filled us in on the tremendous shopping opportunities in Millersburg and the nearby communities of Berlin and Sugar creek. Judy shared some of the history of the quaint town with us and pointed out some of the historical buildings including the Holmes County Courthouse that was built in the 19th Century. The beautiful sandstone building features a copper roof and statue of Lad Liberty that are being renovated.

After lunch, we headed out to explore some of the many charming shops in town and even made a few purchases along the way. We wrapped our visit in town by stopping in the Millersburg Creamery for an ice cream treat.

We then headed out of town for one last stop. No trip to Amish Country would be complete without a stop at Troyer's Country Market. Though we did not get to meet James Troyer at

Airport Ridge, we did get to do some shopping in his iconic store. It features bulk food items, hundreds of different types of cheese and a plethora of Amish baked goods, canned goods and noodles.

With full shopping bags in hand, we headed out the door and into our cars for the ride home. The Amish treats we purchased would bring back tasty memories of our trip for a few more days.

All in all, our Girls' Day Out was a tremendous success. I asked everyone to tell me what they enjoyed the most about the day. Lynn summed it up well when she said: "Loved the venue, great facility and sporting clays course. I cannot wait for the rest of the Black course to



open! Definitely would go back, hopefully in better weather."

"Thanks to Paul and Mike for creating such a wonderful venue for all to enjoy. Doug and Julie you were the best," she added.

Looking back at the day, I think Paul and Mike have accomplished what they set out to do when they had a vision for Airport Ridge. They have created a place that enables people to get together, have fun and build friendships. That certainly is what we did on our Girls' Day Out.

Now, we just have to figure out when the Squad is going back and which restaurant and shops we should check out next time.

After all, they are adding to the Black course and we didn't even get to try out the Orange course or the 5-stand! And I'm almost out of Amish noodles and cheese. ■



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Snapshot or A Movie?



BY VICKI ASH

The thinking brain is 3/10 of a second behind real time so if you are thinking about the shot or the lead what you see is not really the correct picture. It's old news and that is why it doesn't work repeatedly. It takes 3/10 of a second for the eyes to get the information to the hands and that is why it is so important to know that you are going the same speed. That is also why having the gun and target going the same speed at the end allows the picture to be real. Many shooters fall into the trap of seeing the last 10-15% of the shot as a snapshot when it should be a movie.

A key part of consistent high-level performances is the ability to visualize what you are about to do. The more detailed the visual process, the easier it becomes for the brain to give you exactly what you visualize.

Be very specific as to what side of the gun the target should be on, match the speed and then see

the movie of that happening. This practice is what enables you to not think during the shot and let things happen time and time again.

This vivid mental picture of the shot from beginning to end allows for the brain to better program the timing of the shot. The lead becomes a product of how the shot comes together which makes it repeatable and correctable.

The brain cannot do anything unless it first has a picture and when the correct picture is planted in the brain shooters have better success and easier corrections. All the thoughts of lead, focal point and breakpoint have to be thought about in your pre-shot routine. As the gun is closed, there should not be any thoughts going through your mind. Instead, there should only be the vivid movie of what is going to happen once you close the gun and call pull. ■



2022 Sea to Shining Sea Tour!

April 23 – 24	Bass Pro Shops	Olathe, KS
May 14 – 15	Cabela's	Grand Junction, CO
June 4 – 5	Bass Pro Shops	Reno, NV
June 25 – 26	Cabela's	Springfield, OR
July 9 – 10	Cabela's	Tulalip, WA
July 21 – 24	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Mountain Festival	Park City, UT
August 6 – 7	Bass Pro Shops	Auburn Hills, MI
August 20 – 21	Cabela's	Columbus, OH
September 3 – 4	Cabela's	Hamburg, PA
September 15 – 18	Bristol Motor Speedway	NASCAR Event
October 1 – 2	Bass Pro Shops	Morgantown, WV
October 15 – 16	Cabela's	Round Rock, TX
November 5 – 6	Cabela's	Glendale, AZ



USA Shooting: Making the Team



BY
MATTHEW GAY
WITH SUPPORT
FROM STACEY
STEPHENS

Amber English
2021 Gold in Olympic Skeet



A small but dedicated (and growing) number of shooters have become interested in the Olympic shooting disciplines, driven by the challenge of the game and the hope of one day making a National or Olympic team. The USA Shooting Olympic team had their best performance in the 2021 Tokyo Olympic since 1964. Our increased quota spots and phenomenal athletes won three gold medals, two silver medals and one bronze. Among the shooting sports medals was the “one-two” gold medal punch from Vincent Hancock in Men’s skeet and Amber English in Women’s skeet. In trap, Kayle Browning won the individual silver medal, and Maddy Bernau partnered with Brian Burrows earned bronze in the Trap Mixed team event.

The question is, how does one make a National or Olympic team? It’s not as complicated as it sounds but we are going to break down how the selection process works and what one must do in order to chase their Olympic dream.



Sam Simonton

ELIGIBILITY

Generally speaking, all shooters are eligible to participate in the selection matches provided they have registered with USA Shooting and are U.S. citizens. Shooters must sign and abide by the USA Shooting Code of Conduct. Athletes must also adhere to all anti-doping protocols, policies and procedures promulgated by the International Olympic Committee, the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, World Anti-Doping Agency and the U.S. Olympic Committee. The Junior division is open to athletes under 20 years of age. Shooters of all ages are eligible to make the National team if their performance places them in the top six overall.

THE JUNIOR NATIONAL TEAM

The National Junior Olympic Program provides access to young sport shooting athletes and has become a pipeline for aspiring Olympians. They host multiple events and sanctioned state qualifiers throughout the country. Performance at the various USA Shooting events can translate to an invite to the National Junior Olympic Championship. For shooters who put in the work, this path can catapult them to an appointment to the Junior National team.

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

This team is composed of promising athletes who have yet to meet the Performance Standard Average or the Individual Performance Scores but either place in the top three at the National Championships or are nominated and approved by a committee of coaches, athlete representatives and the Executive Director. Members of the Development team are eligible to travel and represent the United States in international competition.

THE NATIONAL TEAM

The U.S. National team consists of the top six scoring athletes based on their performance at the selection matches. The National team represents the U.S. at events around the world including World Cup events, the Continental



Maddy Bernau
2021 Bronze Trap Mixed Team

Championship of the Americas, World Championships and the Olympic games. These team members have earned their spot based on a scoring calculation at qualifying selection events.

For 2022 the selection process consists of two events. The first was held at the Tucson Trap and Skeet Club in January. The calculation is made by adding the qualification score to the final points awarded based on placement (three points for first place, two points for second place and one point for third place). For example, if a shooter posts a qualification score of 247 and finishes the event in first place, the aggregate score for that shooter would be 250. The top six aggregate scores will achieve National team status.

The second National team selection event of 2022 will be held from July 18th through August 7th at Hillsdale College's John A. Halter Shooting Center in Michigan (Home of the USA Shooting National Team). In this event the aggregate score from the Tucson selection match is carried over and added to the qualification score from Hillsdale, then combined with placement points from the finals at Hillsdale. For example, if the above-mentioned shooter posted an aggregate score from Tucson of 250, then at Hillsdale shoots a qualification score of 246 and ends in second place the total aggregate score for that athlete would be 498.

HOW TO GET STARTED

For a shooter who wants to compete in the international disciplines and is a US citizen, the first step is to join USA Shooting. The membership application can be found at usashooting.org or at the QR code below:



The USA Shooting website has a vast array of resources available for prospective shooters to learn about the rules, events, coaching resources and other topics of concern.

Any National Team member would confirm that making the team is no easy task. The amount of dedication and commitment to excellence and training is unparalleled and quite intense. USA Shooting employs the complete athlete approach to training and development. From sport psychology to nutrition, every aspect of performance is carefully applied to produce the best possible representation for the United States on the international stage. One of the best



Kayle Browning
2021 Silver in Women's Trap



Julia Stallings



Dania Vizzi

memes available on the internet questions why someone would not be into football, asserting that it is the "most American sport ever." The caption underneath a group of men dressed in western garb responds, "Our national sport, gentlemen, is shooting, always will be". A sentiment I vehemently share. ■

Editor's note: Matthew Gay is a shooting instructor from Michigan, the Head Coach of the Olivet College Clay Target Team, Vice-President of the Michigan Scholastic Clay Target Program Board of Directors, a bunker trap junkie and Master class sporting clays competitor.



Brandy Elrod

Have you been to a range and seen someone in a wheelchair, missing a limb, or have an adaptive device on their gun so they can shoot? They are classified as a para-athlete. Since 2017 Para-trap has been a part of the World Shooting Para Sports. Para-trap started many years before this, however this was the year of the first World Cup in Lonato, Italy and the first World Championships occurred in 2018. The USA was represented by Becky Noble in 2018 at the World Championships in Lonato, Italy and 4 athletes in 2021 where the first team medal was won in Para-trap for the USA by team members: Sophia Bultema, Brandy Elrod, and Sam Rudloff.

Para-trap follows the same rules for the actual shooting of international trap. The targets, the flow of the competition, and the bunkers are the same. The differentiation lies in the athlete classification, equipment, qualifying scores for a competition, as well as a few rules during competition. Para-athletes go through a series of classification qualifications for their impairments and their equipment before they can compete for score and awards. Athletes must first provide a medical diagnostic form outlining their impairment and signed by a doctor. In some instances the World Shooting Para Sport may require more diagnostic testing to rule an athlete with an impairment. There is a minimum impairment criteria in order to compete as a para-athlete. The minimum impairment criteria uses a point system to determine if the athlete has a limb deficiency, loss of muscle power, loss of range of motion, or leg length difference.

In order for an athlete to be classified as a para-athlete they must be classified by an official international qualifier during an event in order to compete on a World level. Athletes are classified into three sport classes for shotgun: SG-S (seated), SG-U (upper), SG-L (lower). SG-S are wheelchair athletes that compete seated in a wheelchair or on

Para-Trap

BY BRANDY ELROD

stool. The athlete must compete with their back on the backrest and they can be strapped to the backrest. Their buttocks must remain in contact with the chair throughout the movement of shooting. Their feet must be placed on a rest and cannot be placed on the ground. SG-U are athletes that must be in the standing position that have good balance and trunk function but have an upper body impairment in the non-shooting arm. The impairment can be a missing limb, a brachial plexus injury, or any other varying factor that limits the movement of the non shooting arm. SG-L are athletes with good balance and trunk function competing from a standing position, that have an impairment in the lower limb, but cannot have any limitations in the upper limbs. SG-L and SG-U athletes cannot have any device to help them maintain a standing position. The classification follows the athlete for an indefinite length of time unless a review is needed. An athlete can classify in more than one class but cannot compete in multiple classes at a single event.

Adaptive devices may also be used in a safe manner by SG-U athletes. For example, currently on the USA Para-trap team there are three athletes with upper body impairments that all have either adaptive devices on their forearms, barrels, or a custom molded forearm in order to move and control the shotgun. During the classification evaluation process the classification committee must determine if the device is necessary in order for the athlete to fire the shotgun as well as move the shotgun in a safe manner. Once the device is determined safe and necessary the item is listed on the athlete's classification paperwork and follows the duration of classification for the athlete. SG-U athletes can also use loading stands to help load their gun safely. The most common device is a u-shaped metal stand that an athlete places their shotgun barrel in to close the shotgun. Again this must be stated on the athletes classification paperwork in order for the athlete to utilize a loading stand.

Other areas that carry differences for Para-athletes include length of time between stations, minimum qualifying score, and awards. During a normal match athletes have 12 seconds at each station on the line if there are five or more athletes. In the Para world the athletes have 15 seconds at each station if there are five or more athletes on the line. This allows for more time for athletes in a wheelchair, athletes that may need extra time opening or closing their gun, as well as athletes with lower impairments to move from station to station. In reference to awards there are no separate awards based on gender, both genders compete for the same awards in each sport class. There are also awards for team events which are your top three scoring athletes for each sport class. At the 2021 World Para-Trap Championships the mixed team category was introduced on an exhibition level. The rules are not fully set, however during the exhibition a male and female from different sport classes were paired together. Each sport class has a different minimum qualifying score to attend World Cups and the World Championships.

The USA Para-trap team is in the beginning stages and is looking to add members. If you are interested in joining the team and/or you are wondering if you can be categorized into one of the sport classes contact Don Stith the USA Shooting Paralympic Manager at don.stith@usashooting.org



Sophia Bultema

Amy's First Deer

AS TOLD BY HARVEY SCHWARTZ

Amy, a lifelong Georgia resident, is a Registered Nurse at Piedmont Hospital in Newnan, Georgia. She is married to Jay, a Department of Education employee and an avid sporting clays shooter. They reside in Sharpsburg, Georgia and belong to Big Red Oak Shooting Preserve in Gay, Georgia. She is a very outdoorsy person, participating in Competitive Dressage and Fox Hunts on horseback.

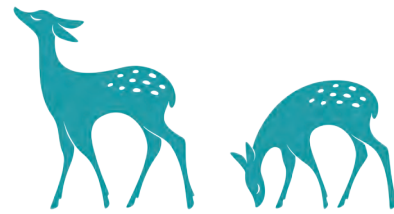
Eighteen months ago, Amy had researched deer hunting as a result of exposure from a lot of people. The second force driving her was to put meat in the freezer. After her research, it was time to go to the range. A date was set with Mike Bashaw at Big Red Oak. They met on the rifle range with Mike bringing several rifles of different calibers. After discussing the mechanics of rifle shooting, Amy took her first shot. She was both nervous and excited. Her first shots were taken off the sled. Her next few rounds were taken from a bench rest and shooting table. She then moved to shooting sticks. After eight trips to the range, she was ready for the hunt. Her gun is a Browning X-bolt 270 caliber with a Athlon Argos scope

Her first hunt, she saw several deer, but none she wanted to harvest. Hunts two and three were not successful either. On hunt number four, she saw a small doe. Soon after she spotted the first deer—a large doe appeared at 70 – 80 yards. She got the sticks out and made a perfect shot, with the deer traveling on 10-15 yards after her first shot. Now they had meat in the freezer.

Mike taught her how to field dress the deer as she wanted to learn the whole process from start to finish. She watched YouTube how-to videos on the hunting portion, field dressing and processing of the deer. She also practiced dry-firing her rifle in her back yard utilizing her shooting sticks.

Amy gives credit to Mike for giving her the guidance to achieve her goal. The result of this story is we have someone who wanted to learn how to hunt. She put in the range time and had

the patience in the deer stand to take her first deer. She now has the desire to hunt larger game. She has also taken up sporting clays with her husband. As she said, "If I can do it, anyone can". ■



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	Walther Getaway, July 10-14 Ft. Smith, AR	
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	Fall Fest, Sept. 30-Oct. 2 Cross Timbers, MO	
	Upland Adventure, Nov. 30-Dec. 3 Greensburg, KS	

Mental Game

FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE
OF AN ATHLETE
BY BRANDY ELROD

As I write this article, I am on a plane heading back from the USA Shooting Winter Selection Match in Tucson, Arizona. The terrain at the Tucson Trap and Skeet range makes for an unforgiving background and very much a challenge for your eyes. Your vision is one of the most important aspects of shooting sports and when your background is a challenge for your eyes, your mental game needs to be a tool in your bag to work through these challenges. I have been very blessed to shoot all over the United States and even in Italy as a member of the United States Para-trap team and I quickly learned competing at this level that your mental game is very important to give you that winning edge.

I have been shooting for the better part of eight years and within the last three years of my shooting career, I really started learning the value of my mental game. I have read various books and listened to various podcasts on mental training—being your best self, being a winning athlete, mental toughness, and the list goes on. It was not until I came across a free webinar by Dawn Grant that I found the missing link to my mental training. There are so many mental training books out there, but many do not speak the shooting sports language. Dawn's free webinar introduces you to her shooting sports mental training courses and hypnosis audios. During this webinar, she discusses the surface of who she is, how she got started with mental training, what to expect in the four courses of the mental training program as well as the professional athletes that use her program.

Mental training is not a one size fits all solution. You need to see what works for you as an athlete, and therefore, this is why Dawn Grant's program worked for me. Dawn's program is broken into four parts. She starts with how the brain works and how our brains process information. In my early years, I had mantras as part of my pre-shot routine before I called pull.

This mantra was very long, full of mental notes I would tell myself to prepare for the targets. It usually involved three or four sentences and a lot of head noise & brain fog. Our brain only processes one item at a time, so telling my brain multiple phrases left me thinking while I was trying to shoot. I have now started with a short three-word phrase so my brain processes fast. Yes, this phrase changes throughout a round for me, but it is always short, said at the same time in my pre-shot routine, and this always forces my brain to keep it simple, so I do not create a lot of noise in my head. Shooting with a clear mind can be very important so your only focus is the target.

The next two courses, I learned tools to add to my mental training bag to get myself out of a bind if I am dropping targets, if I am having trouble focusing, as well as what to do moving from station to station. My favorite technique I use is a breathing technique where I inhale for eight seconds, hold for two seconds, and then count down from five to one while exhaling. During this time, I am always thinking about

something that makes me happy and brings me back to the present. You will also see me sniff my shells from time to time, yes weird I know—but that smell brings me back to the present mind. Shooting in the present mindset is where we achieve peak performance. Peak performance is where we achieve our ultimate mental mindset of shooting in the zone. The zone does exist, the zone is when your shooting is effortless, your moves are perfect for you, the target is breaking every time, you have no head noise, your pre-shot routine is the same every time, and everything just feels right. I can honestly say I have experienced the zone more often since taking Dawn's course. Can I put myself in the zone whenever I want? No, but I now have the tools to achieve the zone and know what it feels like to be in the zone.

As an athlete in Olympic trap, also known as bunker, I am very methodical in everything I do. I am very robotic and that includes my pre-shot and post-shot routine. My pre-shot routine always includes a short mantra, using my fingers to set my eyes, and making sure I am in the present—all



tools I learned in the third course. As I delved into course three, I also learned about post-shot routine. Formerly I always thought about my last shot, and I would carry that over to the next station and create a lot of head noise. Now as I walk between stations, I think about what went well in my last shot, wipe any negativity from my brain before stepping into my next station and start my pre-shot routine all over again. When I start thinking about the shots I miss, it shows in my score. Poor body language and a scowl on my face shows in my score. A lot of times if I miss a target, you will see me laugh and put a smile on my face to trick my brain into thinking I am happy and to move on. All tips I learned in courses three and four of the program.

Mental training is not a tool that works overnight, it is also not a tool that you can learn once and expect greatness every time. You must train your brain and work on mental training just as if you were learning any new skill. I recently attended the World Para-Trap Championships in Lonato, Italy, where I was at the peak of my mental and physical training. I had been training very hard for six months on my mental training. When I returned home, I took a break from shooting to give my mind and body a rest. I stopped my mental training for three months and thus I came into the Winter Selection match with only having worked on my mental training for a few weeks. Normally this would not have affected me, but I was also not physically ready either, battling sickness through the entire week. I used every ounce of my mental training to make it through the week. Each day I was physically and mentally exhausted, but my five to one breathing technique kept me sane on the line and helped me through my brain fog.

Dawn Grant's program was a game changer for me. Dawn is not just some random person providing shooting advice, she is a shooting athlete, owns her own range, but also has spent many years researching and perfecting mental training to pass on to shooting sports enthusiasts. My composure on the line even when the score is not there has helped turned me into a competitive athlete in para-shooting sports. Dawn has helped many professional athletes, but her courses are not just for top athletes. They are for the new shooter, the hobby shooter, and those looking to move up to the next level. Dawn has full courses and hypnosis audios for every aspect of shooting. I use all parts of her program and thoroughly encourage anyone to at least watch her free webinar on her site dawngrant.com ■



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Susan Nattrass

A
TRAILBLAZER
IN
TRAPSHOOTING

SAYS
KARLA
HARRISON

For decades, Susan Nattrass has shot holes in the glass ceiling and proven there should be no limits for women when competing in shotgun sports. Her accomplishments at the provincial, national and global levels of clay target shooting have opened venues not only for her to compete on a personal level, but to create a new culture of diversity for female shooters.

The 2020 Olympic Summer Games were postponed to 2021 in Tokyo, Japan. Nattrass knows about Olympic shooting—she is just one of very few shooters to have competed in at least six Olympic games.

Her international competitions began in 1969, and during her career, in conjunction with the Olympics, she has competed in six Pan American Games; five Commonwealth Games; 35 plus World Championships; numerous World Cup competitions; all in addition to ATA trapshooting in both Canada and the United States.

It was in 1976, at age 25, that Nattrass was the very first and only woman to shoot trap at the Olympics, which were held in her home country of Canada that year. She placed 25th overall against 50 men. She qualified in 1988 to compete in Seoul, Korea, finishing 30th against the men but



was a gold U.I.T. woman's medalist. In 1992, Nattrass traveled to Barcelona, Spain, placing 21st against the men and first among the women.

Nattrass has worked tirelessly to allow women to compete in separate female only events within the Olympic trap and skeet venues. From 1992-1997, she took surveys, held meetings, wrote letters and circulated petitions to present to the governing bodies.

In 1997, the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) received the decision from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to make changes for the betterment of gender equality. The 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia was the first time that separate women's trap and skeet events were sanctioned. Nattrass finished 9th in Trap and 15th in Double Trap.

Her 2004 Olympic appearance at Athens, Greece, was where she recorded her personal best Olympic finish of 6th place. In the 2008 games in Beijing, China, she placed 11th. She wasn't done yet...after another 10 years (2007-2017) of her campaigning for equality, women were finally allowed to start firing at the same number of targets as their male counterparts beginning in 2018.

This past summer, the first Olympic medals awarded will go to the winners in a women's only shooting event. Six competitions allowed women only, six were for men only—however, for the first time, the rifle, pistol and double trap events featured mixed gender teams.

The path to qualifying for an Olympic team takes years of hard work, dedication and a natural talent. Born in Medicine Hat, Alberta,

Canada, Susan Marie Nattrass, the daughter of Floyd and Marie Nattrass and sister to Brian and Gary, has a champion's bloodline. Her father placed 12th in trap at the 1964 Olympics. He also competed in World Championships in 1958, 1962, and 1969. His introduction of trap to his daughter at age 12 carried through and her mother, Marie began coaching her in 1969. Mother and daughter traveled together around to various World Championships until 2007. As a gift, Nattrass won her 7th World Championship on her mother's 86th birthday in 2006.

Her extensive education and passion for helping women has led Nattrass to Vashon Island, near Seattle, WA, where she joined the Pacific Medical Center as a researcher, became Director of Research (2007-2013) followed by ownership



in the Puget Sound Osteoporosis Center since 2002. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education from the University of Alberta in 1972, a Master of Arts degree in 1974 and a Doctorate in Physical Education and Sport Sciences in 1987. Today she continues her research, clinical trials and studies in the fields of osteoporosis and bone density testing.

Recognition of Natrass' shooting excellence is reflected in many honors and memberships into multiple Halls of Fame. She was designated as an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1981, the highest civilian honor her country bestows.

She was inducted into the Canadian Olympic Association HOF (1975), Canadian Sports HOF (1977), the Alberta Sports HOF and the Alberta Trapshooting HOF (1980), the Edmonton Sports HOF (2000) and most recently, the Washington State HOF in 2017.

A well-deserved placement in the Trapshooting Hall of Fame came in 1998. Ceremonies were held in Vandalia, Ohio where she joined Bob Andrews, Jr., Leo Harrison III, and Marjorie Smith as the 30th incoming group of inductees.

Her international competition began in 1969 and five years later, Susan Natrass became a world record holder.

Over the course of 40 years, Natrass won Gold medals seven times in Women's World Championships in Switzerland, Germany, France, Korea, Italy, Argentina and Croatia. She also added four Silver medals and four Bronze, including one team, to her trophy collection.

Her World Cup career began in 1986 and eventually earned her two Gold medals in Double Trap as well as one Silver and three Bronze medals in Trap.

Three Pan American medals have come home with Natrass. Her first medal was a Silver



finish in 1995—then in 2003, she earned a Bronze. Gold came in 2007 from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, when she followed the tradition of claiming Gold after serving as her country's flag bearer in the opening ceremony.

The Commonwealth Games showcased her once again as her country's flag bearer in 2014. Over the years she has claimed two Silver and four Bronze medals.

In 1969, the not yet 20-year-old laid claim to five Ladies' Grand American awards, including the High All Around. She repeated her HAA title in 1972-1976 and 1979. She was High Over All Ladies Champion in 1972-1974 and 1976. In addition, this femme phenom earned Grand American Championship Doubles trophies in 1972 and 1996. In 1977 and again in 1979, she captured the Grand's Clay Target Ladies' crowns. Her list of ATA trophies would fill volumes—she has garnered championships in her adopted home of Washington State and her most recent award was earned at the 2021 Spring Grand American.

Closer to home, in 1968, Natrass led the field in the Canadian Championship Handicap event. She repeated her Handicap victory in 1969, along with the High Over All. 1980 saw her awarded the Doubles and HAA. In 1982, she won HOA and HAA. 1983 trophies included the Handicap, HOA and HAA. 1987 placed the HAA and Doubles honors under her name. She added the Canadian Women's Doubles trophy in 2018. Multiple years of (open) championships are credited to Natrass from Alberta and Ontario, as well as titles from the Atlantic



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Susan Natrass has been named to 15 ATA All-American teams from 1970 through the present. She co-captained the 1973 team and was the solo captain from 1974 through 1978. A Lady II All-American Team placement was added to her list after the category was established.

Her resume of honors and awards is nearly endless but at the top for Natrass is the Lou Marsh Trophy, awarded in 1981, as Canada's Athlete of the Year. She was selected for the Velma Springstead Trophy as Canada's Female Athlete of the Year twice, the Shooting Federation of Canada's Female Athlete of the Year many times, the Field & Stream magazine's Rookie of the Year, the Premier's Award, Gladstone Award and the Great Canadian Award.

Today, Dr. Susan Natrass O.C. PhD continues to pursue her medical work and as time allows, takes along her favored Perazzi shotguns to worldwide tournaments. Her passion for coaching individuals and groups at clinics in Canada, United States and on the international field may someday expand to include coaching at the Olympics. At the present, Natrass is the only ISSF certified, A-Coach (shotgun) in North America. Her advice to students, "Make sure the gun fits, see the target, and have fun...enjoy it!" ■

FROM BEHIND THE STRING!

What's in My Shooting Bag?

Hello! My name is Marsha Riley and I am a traditional archer. Over the last 50 years, I have hunted 18 states and four countries for a variety of game. Traditional archery is a passion that requires more focus than accessories.

The following is my kit for day hunting whitetails in my home area of Kansas City. As a traditional archer, I normally do not carry a range finder. I always carry a spare shooting glove in my vehicle.

- Grunt call and a rattle call (used during pre and active rut)
- Bag with toilet paper and panty liners (when you got to go, you got to go)

Fourth Row

- Bow and 4 arrows in a bow quiver – this is a Timber Hawk recurve
- Fanny pack

I also always have my cell phone with me, ICE loaded. Someone always knows where I am hunting and when I expect to come out of the woods. I always check in when I am done hunting. I do not normally carry anything as far as food or water with me. I do not want the distractions and noise. I always have some in my vehicle. I always carry spare batteries for my lights. I am very attentive to my scent, always washing hunting clothes, boots, and body in scent free soap. I carry a small wallet with tags, pencil, and zip ties (in the fanny pack). ■

MY TRADITIONAL HUNTING KIT

Top Row (L to R)

- Gilly Suit, 3 leg chair – used for ground hunting, stays in the vehicle if I am in a ladder stand
- Body harness for use in a ladder stand

Second Row

- Pull up rope, can be used as a drag rope
- Cleaning gloves
- The 4 knives I normally carry, including a bone saw, one knife is on my hip
- Wind direction indicator, home made
- Garmin
- First aid kit

Third Row

- Bow stringer
- Binos – compact
- Two flashlights, one of which can be used as a head lamp
- Scent spray – stays in the vehicle, spray just before I head in



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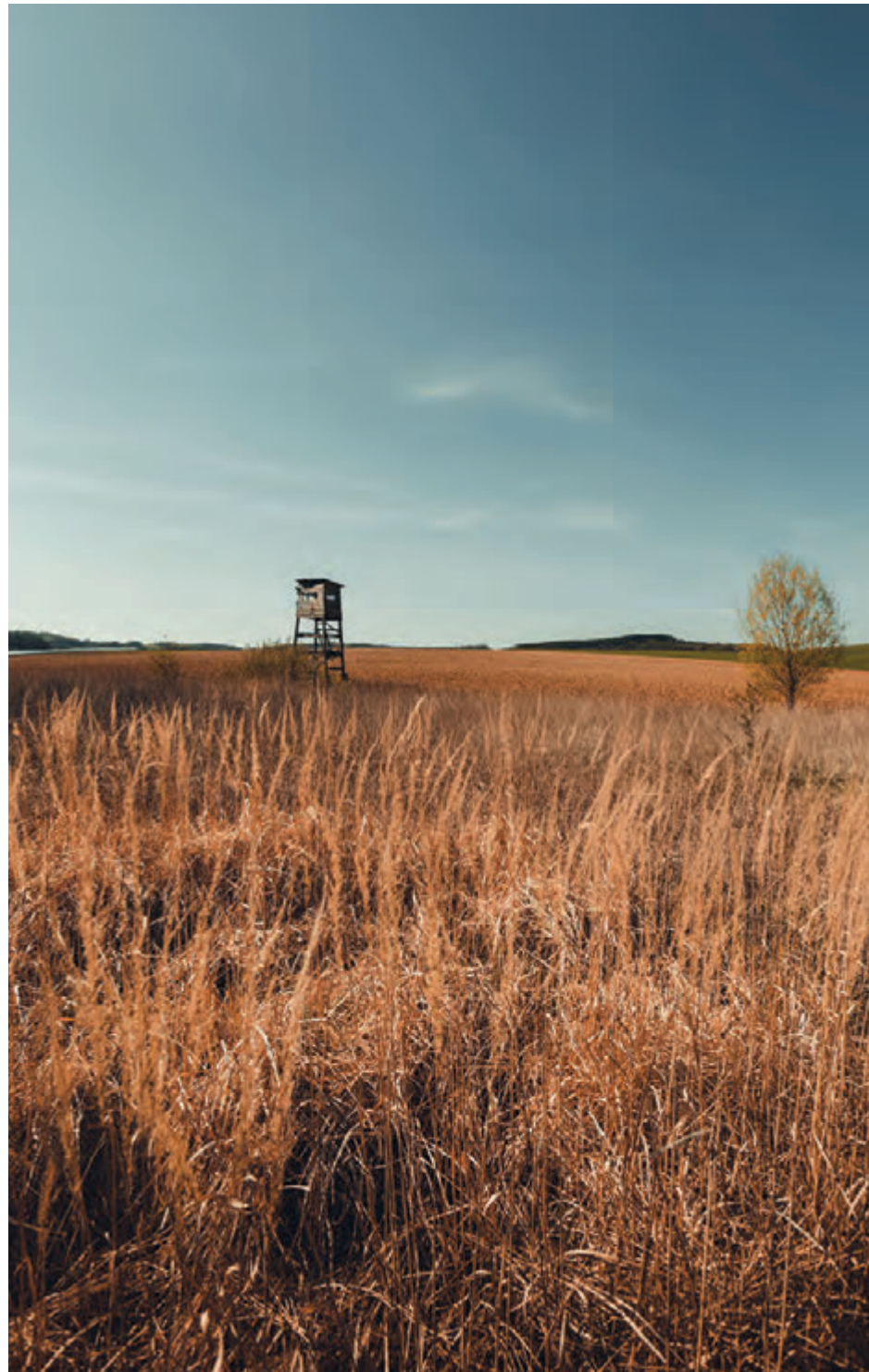
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