

MAR/APR 2021

# 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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# CONTENTS

- 7 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR
- 12 SAY HELLO TO JULIA
- 14 YOGA FOR SHOOTERS
- 16 21 THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME
- 18 ZOLI PERNICE

## FOOD

- 22 WILDERNESS TO TABLE WITH BRI VAN SCOTTER

## TIPS

- 32 COACHES CORNER
- 34 INTRO TO RIFLE



## NEWS

- 36 2ND AMENDMENT DISCUSSIONS

## FASHION

- 42 WHAT'S IN MY BAG?
- 52 FASHION CORNER

## BEAUTY

- 56 HYPERPIGMENTATION



# FEATURES

8

*Cover Story*  
**'TIL I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN**

26

**THE LONG SHOT**

38

**GABBY FRANCO: DREAMER TO ACHIEVER**

44

*Leading Ladies*  
**FASHION EDITION**





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# LADY SHOOTER LifeStyles

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# AIM TO INSPIRE

**W**ow. Ladies... I can't believe it's already March. This year has flown by already and there seems to be no end in sight to the list of things that need to be done. This is now our second full-length issue of LadyShooter LifeStyles! Thank you so much for your support—all of you that share things on social media, the comments, the feedback, it is all invaluable. We are incredibly humbled at your willingness to share and your love of this magazine. From day one, we decided that above all, we wanted a platform for ladies to feel comfortable sharing, and to draw inspiration from. I hope you'll agree we have achieved that. We are proud to announce our new motto "Aim to Inspire."

As we Aim to Inspire here at LadyShooter LifeStyles, we have put together an issue packed with inspiration—full of ladies that had big dreams and went for it, had limitations and went for it anyway. Just like us at the magazine, we had a big dream and we are proud to continue to share it with you, the readers.

We have really grown since our debut issue which was only half an issue, sharing its binding with ClayShootingUSA. We have gotten our bearings and are really starting to crank out some content.

One of our biggest additions to LadyShooter LifeStyles has been our blogs. We have a new Health & Wellness blog by Michelle Miles. She has been around shooting her whole life and as a yoga instructor and wellness coach, she has a lot to offer and share in this area. We also have

Brandy Elrod, leading our weekends with what we are now calling Fearless Fridays, where she will bring us a new inspirational story every other week from a lady shooter, including herself, that has struggled in some way to get her shooting practice going. Brandy is a para-athlete and is all too familiar with being given a physical limitation by a doctor, to which she replies "Oh, yeah? Just watch." Her blog, Whatever it Takes, will serve as a platform for her own story and other para-athletes and shooters to share their story, their struggle, and their triumph over it. I really hope you check these out.

Speaking of para-athletes, we are very excited to bring you the story of Sophia Bultema. Her self-written article details her journey from an orphanage in China, to shooting bunker trap at a championship level here in the USA.

Spring is definitely in the air, and with that comes a new and fresh layer of foliage, flowers, and fashion! I think I speak for most of us when I say, we like fashion. Who doesn't love the excitement of trying on new clothes, new gear for hunting, or even just a new shirt for shooting? In the spirit of spring and freshness we decided to give our Leading Ladies feature some flair. We interviewed Amber Haynes from McKenna Quinn, Kirstie Pike from Prois, and Mary Dixon from Primer & Co. They share their stories of how they fell into the outdoor fashion world and made some pretty cool gear built for the right purpose.

On a more technical note, our Rifle Editor, Andrea Bogard, has an amazing new series called "Till I Can Make it On My Own." If you have ever wanted to dig deeper into the world of ARs then this is a must read. Follow her journey towards building herself a custom AR. If rifles are something you have been wanting to learn more about, we also have a wonderful "Intro to Rifle" by Serena Juchnowski.

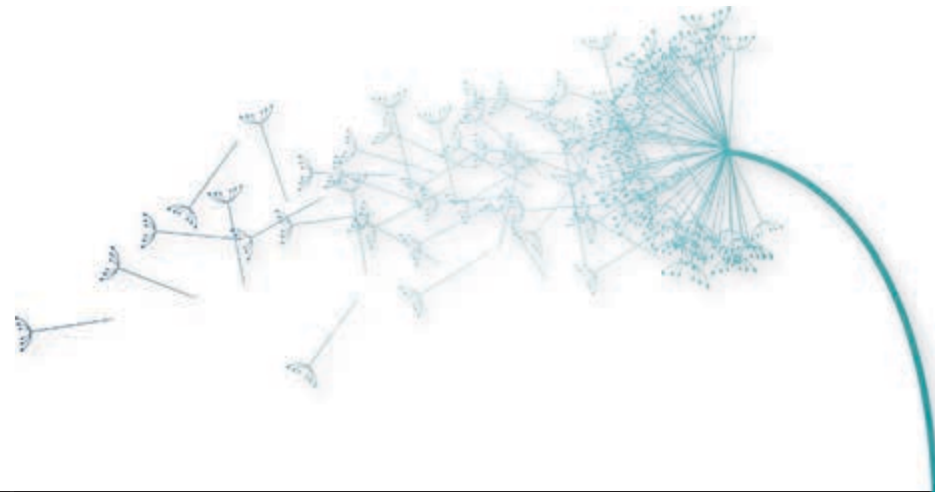
If shotguns are more your speed, Andrea wrote a detailed shotgun review of both the Zoli Pernice and the new Syren Julia. She also continues our 2A discussions with enthusiasm. I hope all of you take an interest in supporting the protection of our rights.

As we strive to bring you inspirational stories from women all over, we are proud to bring you a Q&A session with Olympian Gabby Franco, from Venezuela. She comes from a country that has seen its rights stripped away in the name of national interest, aka, socialism. Be sure to check out this insightful article.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of LadyShooter LifeStyles and are inspired to do something amazing.

Love,

*Natalia Gonzalez*







“...Til I can make it on my own.”

— The Beatles

JOIN ANDREA  
BOGARD ON THIS  
MULTI-ISSUE  
JOURNEY AS SHE  
TAKES AN AR-15 BUILD  
FROM IDEA TO  
#PEWPEW!

## Part I: The Caliber Cluster

Both references are incorrect when referring to the fundamental platform and how it got its name. ArmaLite was the company that first produced this particular style of rifle in the 1950s. The primary market focus was military but, for a variety of reasons, sales were lackluster.

In 1959, the design was sold to Colt which produced the fully-automatic M-16 for the military and the similar semi-automatic AR-15 for the non-military markets. When the exclusive license expired in the 70s, other companies picked up the AR-15 platform concept and the already successful design exploded in popularity. While other gunmakers gave the platform their own names, the AR moniker became a commonly used reference for the basic design across a variety of brands.

So, why an AR? What's the appeal? For me it's the LBD (little black dress) of guns. You've got a blank canvas to accessorize and achieve whatever look you want! Is it a strappy heels blingy necklace kind of look? Then, trick that thing out! Custom cerakote, cutting-edge optics and leveled-up aesthetics. Or, are you looking for a sandals and subtle jewelry-type of presentation? Perfect. If so, go for clean lines, simple operation and classic interface pieces.

I'm looking for something somewhere in between. I want functional, shootable, huntable, rugged and fun. I also want something with crisp optics, consistent accuracy and factory-available ammunition. As I write this, I recognize the last one might be a tough find due to the current nationwide ammo shortage.

When I set out to buy a new gun, I make what I call a Caliber Cluster. This is basically a disorganized written pile of goals, expectations and intended uses with a healthy dose of impracticality thrown in. Imagine something along the lines of “Well, I know that round needs

a 24-inch barrel to maximize performance, but I want a 20-inch barrel instead!” Insert foot stomp here.

Let's take a look! First, I wanted something I could hunt with. I already have several bolt-action platform rifles that cover a variety of different species. I have a .350 Rem Mag (cover) for big stuff at sub-250 yards. I have a Griffin & Howe Highlander in 6.5 Creedmoor that covers nearly everything in North America and beyond from coyotes to elk-sized animals at appropriate distances (check out the profile “I Want Moor” in the last issue!). I have a 7 mm Rem Mag that overlaps the 6.5 in many areas while sacrificing the “fun factor” – it's not as fun to blitz through a box of 7 mm Rem Mag as it is my beautifully-braked 6.5 Creedmoor. I have a .458 Win Mag – no fun factor, but effective on dangerous game (think Cape buffalo). I have a bolt-action .223 that is good for lighter game, but not overly inspiring to me (picture those super boring shoes you have in the back of the closet and never wear).

I wanted something I could hunt coyotes, bobcats, prairie dogs and miscellaneous critters with. I wanted something FUN to shoot! A plinker, if you will. But, a plinker with some teeth.

I wanted a purpose-built caliber for which factory ammo was readily available. While I know how to handload, I don't have as much time or desire at this particular stage of life. I want to walk into my local sporting goods store and buy a case of ammo and drive to the range or woods.

Accuracy. This is critical! It's no fun if you can't connect. I wanted a rifle/caliber that could shoot a wide enough range of bullets to both play and hunt as well as have a barrel configuration that would stabilize them all.

I needed a round that could be chambered in





6.5 Creedmoor Griffin & Howe Highlander

an AR-style platform. There are a lot of factors that play into this. Basically, it boils down to the right bullet/case/magazine size relationship to feed and function properly. Don't worry, we'll talk more about this in the next installment!

Additionally, I wanted something I could shoot A LOT and not have it burn through barrels. Some rounds are hotter or more

7mm Rem Mag



destructive to barrel integrity than others. I didn't want to have to buy a new barrel every 1,000 rounds.

Here's the most important part to me: I wanted something I could build. I didn't want to go to a store and buy one off the rack. I wanted to learn to put the pieces together. With a firm commitment to help from a good friend who is a machinist, I wrapped my rather shaky math skills (and equally questionable mechanical abilities) in confidence and said, "I'll make it myself."

WHAT'S THE RESULT OF THE CALIBER CLUSTER?

.204 Ruger

The .204 Ruger is a purpose-built cartridge



conceived in 2004 in a combined effort between Hornady and Ruger. The purpose? To be the first large-scale, commercially-produced .20 caliber cartridge. The pros? It's accurate, low-recoil, flat-shooting, factory available and fits the AR-15 platform — all the parameters in my Caliber Cluster.

Here are some fun facts: In factory ammo, it's available in 24- to 40-grain bullets. Velocities range from 4,400 fps to 3,581 FPS leading to maximum muzzle energy of 1,351 ft lbs. The cartridge is a .222 Rem Mag necked down for a .204 bullet with a few other dimensional changes.

I found something functionally-fun, shootable, huntable and with factory-available ammunition. It's time to get started!!! Check back in our next installment for a primer on the parts we need (and how to find them), a glossary of terms and an introduction to what a Bridgeport is. Are you excited?? I am! Because I'm going to "Make it on my Own."

And so can you. ■



# THE FUTURE OF OUR SPORT WON'T GROW ITSELF.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO GROW THE SHOOTING SPORTS.

If just 1 in 3 hunters and target shooters introduce one new person to the shooting sports, we'll secure a strong future for generations to come. The +ONE<sup>SM</sup> Movement is a mission to do exactly that. We need your help to spread the word about the single most unifying force in the shooting sports today. Together we'll ignite the passion of millions of new hunters and recreational shooters. And build the future of the way of life we love.



**Be the one. Join the +ONE Movement.**  
**Visit [nssf.org/plusone](http://nssf.org/plusone).**





# Say Hello to Julia

ANDREA BOGARD INTRODUCES US TO SYREN'S LATEST SPORTING SHOTGUN FOR WOMEN

In a time of social distancing, no visible facial expressions, Zoom meetings and elbow bumps, the art of the introduction has gone somewhat by the wayside. Syren USA has brought back this lost art a bit. Let's say hello to Julia.

Julia introduces herself in rich hues, strong textures and dulcet aesthetic tones. Her namesake is Julia, daughter of Caesar, and means "beauty and virtue." Julia was his only child over the course of his life. So, say hello to Julia. The only child of shotguns as it were.

When that UPS package arrived, I eagerly slit the tape and slid the iconic hard, white gun case out. I clicked the latches and lifted the lid. I was greeted with purple velvet slip covers emblazoned with the distinctive swoopy Syren "S."

I slid the stock out of its velvet nest and took in the engraving on the high finish, case color receiver. The intricate laser-

dandelions. This was viewed somewhat wistfully because it was 17 degrees below zero outside my window.

The wood was rich, dark, full of figure and finished to a beautiful oiled lustre. The adjustable comb was perfectly streamlined with the rest of the stock. The detail on the case color receiver and lever was offset with a unique violet design that sparkled in the cold winter

Huge thank you to all those who answered!

Read on to get to know Julia, based on what's important to you in a shotgun:

**How smooth is the trigger?** The trigger is smooth, but has a little more felt take-up than some of the Syrens I have shot. Good news! The trigger is adjustable both forward and back within the trigger guard, but also in weight and travel. Due to time constraints, I did not adjust the trigger. It was positioned in the rear setting, leaving length of pull at factory spec.

**How smooth does it break open? Eject shells?** It breaks open as you'd expect from a brand new gun. You've heard of the "new car smell?" This is the "new gun" feel – stiff. I look at this as an indicator of Syren quality and manufacturing tolerances. It breaks smooth, but with crisp resistance. It ejects shells with alacrity and consistency. Standing in the same location and ejecting shells in a common direction yielded a nice little pile in the snow behind me. This tells me the ejectors are uniform and well-timed.

**How does it feel?** The Julia feels solid,

sunlight.

Okay, we've said hello to Julia. She's beautiful and

elegantly put together. What's next? Let's get to know

the Syren beneath the surface.

Upon sitting down to tell you about Julia, I first posed the question in both personal and social media contexts: "When you sit down to get to know a shotgun, what is it you want to know?"

engraved surface sparkled in hues of gold and depicted a woman's profile blowing what appeared to be a cloud of



smooth and strong. She also feels warm. Sometimes I've picked up a gun and felt a chilly disconnect. Not the Julia. I picked her up and she felt natural, warm, connected and ready to engage. Imagine meeting a person and getting a warm approachable vibe vs. a chilly standoffish feeling. Think warm fuzzies vs. cold pricklies (we all know the feeling). The Julia is warm.

**Grip size? If it's made for a woman, is it scaled down in size?** The grip size is not what I would call scaled down, but it maintains the critical smaller grip radius, an important measurement in fit. Many women have long fingers and larger hands, thus needing a full-sized (non-scaled-back) gun. Syren has many shotguns in their line-up that are more petite in proportion with slenderized components and diminished weights. The Julia is not one of them. She is designed to stand toe-to-toe with the non-women specific shotguns on the market and look absolutely beautiful doing it.

**Length of pull?** The length of pull is measured from the trigger in the rear position with the factory installed pad. It comes in at 13.9." The construction of the monte carlo as well as the inletting of the adjustable comb permit addition length adjustment if desired.

**One or two triggers?** The Julia, in keeping with her intended purpose of competitive sporting clays applications, has one trigger. It is adjustable and selective.

**Screw in choke options?** She comes with six Maxis competition chokes. These are the same chokes used in the Caesar Guerini competition over-under lines and pattern on the tighter side.

**How's the balance?** The balance is textbook, with the balance point located directly on the hinge pin. However, perceived balance varies by shooter due to form, mount and fit dimensions.

**Does it feel alive in the hands?** This is one of my personal favorites. Have you ever picked up a gun and felt like you just hefted a two by four or a piece of rorod? I have. It's not fun to shoot, carry or swing. The Julia feels eager, alive, nimble and ready to take on the world at the call of "pull."

**Chrome lined barrels or no?** The barrels are chrome lined and are available standard in 30" configuration and special order in 32" length.

**Barrel heavy or stock heavy?** This one goes back to perceived balance. To me, she felt concentrated close to my body and the barrels required very little input from me to move. One person I handed her to said she felt somewhat barrel heavy, but their ideal length of pull measurement was shorter than the Julia's dimensions.

**How is it for a left-handed shooter?** The Julia is readily available in a left-handed configuration with a slight upcharge.

**Weight? If I'm shooting all day, is it heavy?** The Julia with the adjustable comb hardware and finish work weighs in at 8 lbs 5 oz. With the standard 30" barrels and monte carlo, the advertised weight is 7 lbs 15 oz. This is a gun designed to be comfortably shot all day on the clays course with standard 12 ga loads. This not a trapeise through the pheasant fields for 15 miles firearm.

**Adjustability?** The Syren Julia is a lady with options. She offers an adjustable comb option providing comb, pitch and cast corrections to get that "just right" fit.

**How does it drive? I feel some people like Ferraris and some people like Tahoes...** **How does the gun drive?** I have always loved cars. The headlight game was one of my favorites on road trips as a kid. When this question was posed, it really resonated. The Julia reminds me of an extended Cadillac Escalade. She's sleek, shiny, elegant and boldly sculpted with plenty of horsepower.

Now you've gotten to know the Syren Julia a bit. Here's what I came away with from some quality time on the range with her. Julia is far more than a beautiful gun. She is a true pinnacle symbol of Syren's dedication to bringing exceptional quality, purpose built, application driven, high performance shotguns to the female shooter. In her they created the ultimate syren – enticing to acquire and dangerous to her target.

Check out [www.syrenusa.com](http://www.syrenusa.com) for more information and to find a dealer near you! ■

#sayhellotojulia





# Yoga for Shooters



Welcome back! For those reading this for the first time, my name is Michelle Miles. While I love shooting sporting clays, I am also super passionate about health and wellness. I own a yoga studio in South Florida and practice daily. In the last article I shared a few simple stretches laying down on your back to help relieve tension and feel your best. It is so easy to be distracted with muscle aches caused by emotional build up. Incorporating stretching can make a big difference in your life and your shooting performance. I hope that you read, learn, and practice. Every day counts! This month I decided to feature some standing postures, their benefits, and tips that may make them more accessible to you.

Remember, stretching in a safe way will depend on you and your body that day. Adjust as needed and avoid anything that creates intense pinching, pulling, or piercing. Cultivating deep breathing is not only helpful, it is essential. Try taking long deep breaths, slowly through your nose. Try leaving the lips sealed and imagine sipping in air with an imaginary straw between the collarbones, constricting the back of the throat slightly, and creating an oceanic audible breath. Allow your breath to be full, expanding your ribs and lungs fully on the inhales, and completely emptying out on the exhales.

If that feels like too much, no worries, just breath regularly being mindful of taking full breaths. Nostril breathing, mouth breathing, it's all good. Just breathe and oxygenate your body! Which brings me to our standing poses and why they are wonderful. These poses have specific benefits of posture correction, hormonal imbalances, and brain function by nurturing blood/oxygen flow; all of which I find are highly important for life and playing at the gun club!

Check out my blog on our website for more health and wellness related topics including exclusive quotes and insight from some champion lady shooters! ■



1

**1. Standing Forward Fold (rag doll pose):**  
Benefits: Stretches the entire backside of the body from head to heels. Soothes the nervous system, decompresses the spine, calms the body and mind encouraging introspection while toning, and stimulate the internal organs.

**HOW TO:** Start standing with feet hip distance apart and parallel to each other, hiding the heels directly behind toes. Have a slight bend in the knees and fold at the hips. Keep the hips in line with the ankles and allow the head to draw near the floor. Hence the "rag doll term" Pouring your weight forward into the toes allowing the crown of the head to hang heavy. Grab elbow to elbow. Relax the neck and nod the head in a "yes" and no" motion to release tension and decompress the spine.

*\*Tip: The more you bend the knees the more you release the low back. If the legs can't straighten fully, that's okay! Imagine lengthening the back of the legs and take 20 rounds of deeps breaths in and out of the nose observing tension dripping off the body. You may also use blocks or a chair to put your hands on if you need more support and the back of the legs are extra tight. Do what you can, and remember not to let the hips go behind the heels, you can even stand with your heels against a wall to insure good form and proper stretching.*

**TIP:** Have your best gal pal read the instructions to you and check your alignment with my photos. Then return the favor and you will have a yoga buddy to stretch with.

**2. Half-way Lift Flat Back Pose:**  
Benefits: Helps maintain healthy curvature of your spine. Lengthens spinal muscles, hamstrings, and calf muscles. Strengthens back, core, and thigh muscles. Helps prepare your body for deeper forward folds.

**HOW TO:** Begin in Uttanasana (Standing Forward Bend) with your feet either together or hip-width distance apart. Place your palms to your shins with your fingers pointed straight down if that helps you find more length in your spine. As you inhale, straighten your arms and lift your chest away from your thighs. Reach the crown of the head forward aligning shoulders and hips, keeping the core engaged. Look slightly forward without compressing your neck. Keep your core strong and avoid rounding your spine. You can bend your knees if that helps you find more length. As you exhale, release back into forward fold "rag doll."

Repeat this series of flat back to forward fold 5 times

*\*Tip: You may also place hands to hips, thighs or shins to flatten your back with more support. If you are able to place hands or fingertips on the floor while flattening your back and lifting up half way, you may keep a slight bend in the knees if needed, or fully straighten your legs without locking out your knees.*



2



3

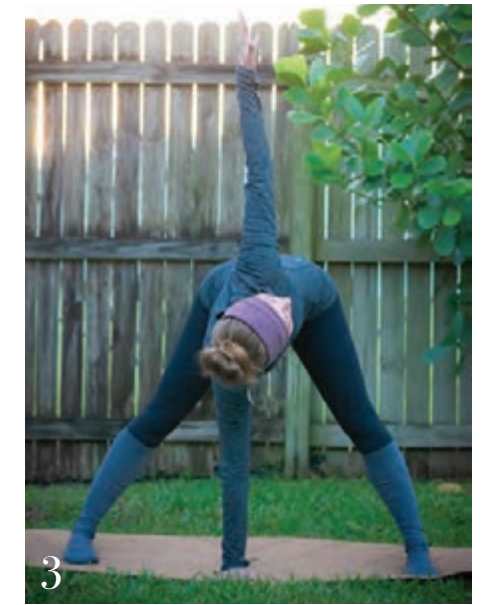
**3. Revolved Wide-Legged Standing Forward Fold :** A calming yoga twist that stretches the whole body. It helps to detoxify the digestive organs, while also soothing the mind, improving full-body coordination. It is a rotated variation of the pose that stretched hamstrings, calves, hips, low back, and spine while lengthening and strengthening upper back/shoulders. You may find relief from stress, anxiety, and mild depression and shoulder/neck tension. In addition, twisting through the torso keeps the spine healthy by rotating the spinal joints and their surrounding muscles. This improves spinal flexibility and nourishes the spinal discs by helping them remain moist. Twisting the torso also massages the organs of the abdomen, including the liver, kidneys, and spleen. This cleanses and tones the organs, improving their ability to release toxins. It also helps to improve and regulate digestion and metabolism.

**CAUTION:** Do not practice this pose (3) if you are currently experiencing low blood pressure, migraines, or vertigo. Also avoid this pose if you have a herniated disc or sciatica. Those with neck injuries should not turn their heads to face the top hand.

**HOW TO:**  
1. Begin standing with hands on your hips. Step your feet wide apart. Turn your toes slightly in & heels slightly out, so the edges of your feet are parallel. Align your heels.  
2. Inhale and lengthen your torso, reaching the crown of your head up toward the ceiling. Exhaling, fold forward at the hips. Keep a flat back, lower your head and gaze softly  
3. Bring your hands to rest on the floor in front of or between your legs. If your hands do not come to the floor, rest them on yoga blocks or chair.  
4. Bring your left hand down, directly under your chest. Bring your right hand to your right hip. Keep your spine and neck elongated  
5. With an exhalation, straighten your right arm and reach toward the ceiling. Your arm should be vertical and your fingertips should point to the ceiling. Keep your hips as level as possible, twisting through the torso instead of the hips. Press into the outer parts of your feet evenly.  
6. Turn your head to gaze up at your right thumb if neck permits.  
7. To release, slowly unwind and return both hands to the floor. Then, bring your right hand to the center and repeat the twist to the left for the same amount of time. Return to center. Then, bring your hands to your hips. On an inhalation, slowly return to standing with a flat back.



4



3

*\*Tip- If your hands don't easily reach the floor when you fold forward, place each hand on a yoga block. Move one of the blocks to the center between your feet for the twist. If your head easily touches the floor when you fold forward, narrow your stance. If your hamstrings are very tight, bend your knees.*



@downtoearthystudioofl

**4. Downward Facing Dog :** This stretch cultivates blood flow and oxygenates the entire body resulting in many benefits including overall wellness in the joints, muscles, organs, and most of the body systems. The important one here is the benefits to functioning eyesight & sensory organs by supplying blood and nourishment to the ENT region. While it enhances proper brain function, the right practice of this stretch is known to improve memory power, intelligence, and mental functions. Your hamstrings and entire back side of the legs will be released resulting in less back pain, varicose veins, or joint pain.

**HOW TO:** start in a plank. Lift your hips high and press the floor away attempting to press your belly back towards your thighs and heels to the ground. They do not have to touch as you create an "A" shape from the hands, hips, feet. Widen your fingers and press into the middle knuckles to relieve pressure on the wrists. Relax your head and draw shoulder blades down your back so the neck is long. Think about lifting your knee caps engaging your thighs to help sink the weight in to the heels. Your hands and feet should have the same amount of weight.

*\*Tip: BEND YOUR KNEES and open your arm pits to reach your belly back further towards your thighs. WALK your feet closer to your hands if needed. Think about turning the inside of your elbows (eye of the elbow) toward your fingertips so your shoulders draw own the back. ENGAGE your abdominal muscles and pull the ribs towards one another to support over extension and protect the spine. The tailbone should be high to the sky and pressing backwards toward your heels while the feet are parallel to each other. Widen your feet if you need to.*





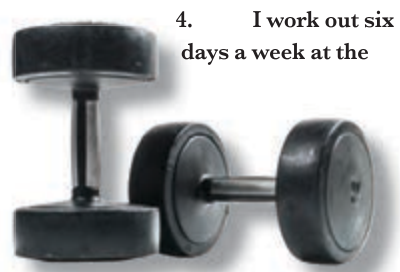
MADISON SHARPE

# 21 Things You *didn't* know ABOUT Me

1. I have a 13 year old little sister who shoots.

2. My best friend is also named Madison.

3. My favorite Netflix shows are Outer Banks and Grey's Anatomy.



4. I work out six days a week at the gym.

5. I don't like chocolate, candy, or any other sweets.

6. I have always shot in the same sun visor.



7. My celebrity crush is Morgan Wallen.

8. ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND IN 2018, I WAS SHOT IN THE DOVE FIELD.

9. I was born without 3 ribs on the right side of my body.

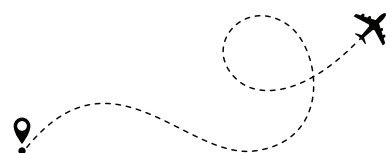
10. Around home I go by "Maddy" or "Mat".

11. I gave up playing soccer to shoot when I was 11.



12. My entire life I have lived on a farm.

13. One thing that I want to check off of my bucket list is getting my pilot's license.



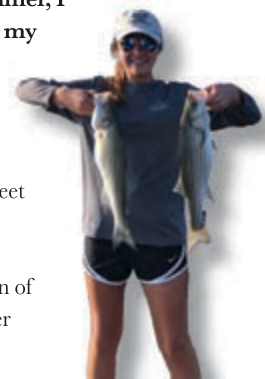
14. I have a yellow lab named Lilly that loves to go duck and dove hunting.



15. I have vacationed in 13 Caribbean islands with my grandparents.

16. I love to travel, which is a perk of shooting!

17. During the summer, I enjoy spending my time fishing at the coast or lake.



18. I hate shooting skeet and trap.

19. My favorite season of the year is summer because I am cold natured.

20. I am a part of a college Bible study group.

21. I am majoring in Food Science and Human Nutrition at Clemson University and furthering my education at pharmacy school.

My name is Madison Sharpe, I am 20 years old, and from South Carolina. I began shooting at the age of 11 and have been shooting ever since. I first shot in the youth shoots and eventually started shooting NSCA tournaments. I currently compete in the college shoots, where I am a member of the Clemson Shotgun Team. In 2019, I finished runner-up at the NSCA National Championships and have been the South Carolina State Ladies HOA for the past four years. I have been fortunate to win a few other titles as well. I could not do this without the people who support me—my parents, Pure Gold Chokes, Woody's Pawn and Jewelry, Copelan's Custom Gunstocks, and 3Dragons.

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# Zoli Pernice



THE PERFECT PAIRING

BY ANDREA BOGARD

The intensity of a “birdy” dog; the flutter of wingbeats; the rush of adrenaline and the report of a shotgun. This sequence is one loved by bird hunters the world over. A bird in the bag is frequently secondary to the love of the process.

Bird hunting is all about pairings – crisp leaves and warm fall sunlight; happy dogs and feathers in strange places; a good cigar and a glass of bourbon following a successful hunt and especially, the intoxicating aroma of that “first shot” of the morning and a freshly-oiled shotgun. The most recent addition to this perfect pairing is the Zoli Pernice in 28 gauge and .410.

I had the honor of taking to the woods and the clays course this fall with the Pernice in hand. Come along with me as we learn about this magnificent Italian shotgun and what makes her the perfect pairing for days afield.

The Pernice is a round-body, purpose-built shotgun. When I first saw her, the first thing that struck me was the receiver. In a world of gold inlays and elaborate bird-hunting inspired motifs, the Pernice receiver is an elegant and transfixing tapestry of low relief, high contrast scrollwork on a case-colored backdrop. It's both classic and elaborate, with seemingly no beginning and no end.

the beauty of the *Acanthus spinosus* leaves and creating an infinite and flowing connection to the forest. The Boss receiver was the first built with no flat sides – its surfaces were rounded and flow seamlessly into one another.

The Boss over-under action is another component that truly pairs beautifully with the Pernice. The emphasis on optimum geometry for flawless function complements the flowing aesthetic of the Pernice. This action was perfected in the 1900s and is based on a trunnion rather than hinge concept. Utilizing an underlug closing system in lieu of a hinge, the Pernice has both engineering strength and longevity.

Along the lines of geometry, the Pernice boasts the unique Churchill style rib. This is a great feature in the field because it creates a dynamic effect of visual point ability through taper and shadow. The use of this rib style gives the shooter an optical path to the bird or target based on a vanishing-type effect. Traditionally matted out and higher at the rear, the Churchill style rib is a great

lines of the receiver, wood structure and streamlined barrels, all feel rounded and soft. See what I mean by “purpose-built?” Let's check out some specs:

I was able to take the 28 gauge / .410 two-barrel set through one beautiful fall afield. Here's what I found. I loved having the option of a 28 or .410. Honestly, the Pernice had me at “28 gauge.” I am a devout lover of sub gauges and the fun to be had both afield and on the course.

Initially, I put the 28-gauge barrels on and double checked the chokes. Both barrel sets come with a full set of screw-in chokes! This is a fantastic bonus that enhances the blend of classic beauty with modern advantage. With a Skeet choke in the bottom and an Improved Cylinder in the top, I grabbed a box of shells and hit the clays course.

The 30-inch barrels swung beautifully and I was amazed at the balance, even with an overly-long (for me) length of pull. After a box of shells, it was time to swap barrels. The 20-gauge frame balanced just as well with the .410 barrels. It was time to see how she shot.

Wow. Never before have I experienced a .410 possessed of such fluid and effortless movement.

I had found my go-to bird gun. Over the next few months, I carried her through countless covers and miles of trails. Birds went up and some went in the bag.

The Zoli



addition to this bespoke shotgun.

The engraving for the Pernice was a joining of visions for Zoli and Bottego Incisioni, the world-renowned engraving studio. Their vision revolved around

The cornerstone of the vision for the Pernice is beauty afield. The word “Pernice” actually means “partridge” in Italian. A partridge is a “round, brown bird,” according to the Webster dictionary definition. The rounded



Pernice in .410 was proving to be a wonderful pairing in the woods. Here are a few things to keep in mind. With 30-inch barrels, it may be a bit long for some covers, but is magnificently pointable and well-balanced. With a rounded fore-end and Prince of Wales stock configuration, it is comfortable to hold and quick in the hand.



The rich, oiled-finish Turkish walnut is accented with delicate, yet effective, checkering upon the grip and fore-end.

The solid beauty is complemented by strong construction. With the 28 gauge weighing in at 6 lbs. 8.9 oz and the .410 at 6 lbs. 14.7 oz, the Zoli Pernice balances beautifully in the hand. In true Zoli style, the Pernice is built to be yours. The stock dimensions are designed to offer the owner the maximum canvas for customization. Once you decide the Zoli Pernice is right for you and the order is placed with a Zoli dealer, just wait for the call that your new bird hunting companion is ready for fitting.

The next step? A trip to their USA headquarters in Texas to have a complete

gunfitting done to make the Zoli Pernice truly an extension of yourself. The fitting and subsequent work is all included in the Zoli investment.

The efficacy of the Pernice doesn't stop in the field. To connect consistently in the woods and avoid dirty looks from your bird dog, a bit of cross-training is necessary. The Pernice is just as fun in the clays stand as it is in that aspen stand pushed last fall.

The longer, smooth swinging barrels make those 40-yard crossers as hittable as the short-window partridge simulations. The Zoli Pernice in 28 gauge and .410 is the perfect pairing of iconic bird hunting culture and effective clays shooting fun! Check out [zoliusa.com](http://zoliusa.com) today for more information on this perfect pairing! ■

# THE FAMILY CONNECTION



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## FOOD | Venison Recipes

BY CHEF BRI VAN SCOTTER  
OF WILDERNESS TO TABLE

I'm a big advocate of knowing what you want to make with your harvest before you go into the field. Why? Well that helps you to butcher in ways that will give you the cuts and dishes you desire. Having a plan on how you would like to utilize the animal is one of the best things you can do. If you don't have a culinary game plan before you enter the field, then you are subjected to dishes that are dictated by your processor, and there's more to venison than ground meat and jerky. Like these beautiful dishes, a herb crusted rack of venison and venison harissa osso bucco. Shanks are often the forgotten cuts that are truly delicious. And the ribs are often overlooked because of the prized backstrap. If you didn't plan on making these dishes beforehand chances are you might have just tossed these cuts away. These are definitely underutilized cuts but after you makes these recipes, you will forever have a changed mind, and most of all you're using more of the animal. This is why having your culinary game plan is so important, don't let the season go by without looking like a rockstar in your kitchen!



Enjoying Bri's recipes?  
Checkout her new cookbook  
available on Amazon.



### Herb Crusted Rack of Venison

Servings: 8

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

- 2 ½ – 3 pound rack of venison, frenched
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 5 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 8 cloves of garlic, peeled
- ¾ cup panko bread crumbs
- 1 small bunch of parsley, large stems removed
- ¼ cup fresh chives, rough chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh sage, rough chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, rough chopped
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons whole grain Dijon mustard

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Season the venison with salt and pepper. In a large cast iron pan set over high heat, add the grapeseed oil. When the pan is hot sear the venison on both sides, about 3-4 minutes each side. Then remove the rack and set on a baking sheet to cool. While the venison is cooling, in the bowl of a food processor, combine the garlic, panko bread crumbs, parsley, chives, sage, rosemary and parmesan cheese. Pulse the mixture until well combined and everything is in small pieces. Brush all the sides of the venison rack with the Dijon mustard. Then coat all the sides with the breadcrumb mixture to create a thick crust. Roast in the oven for 25 minutes. Once cooked allow the venison rack to sit for 5-8 minutes before slicing.

When you really want to make a dish that is a show stopper, this is it! And the best thing is this dish is actually easy to make and doesn't take much time to make as well. This is the perfect dish for holiday gathering or celebrations or even on those days you just want to feel like a bad ass chef. This recipe is all about the venison and fresh herbs. So, feel free to make this recipe your own and add different herbs to change it up. Want a Latin flare, try using cilantro, red pepper flakes and a little red onion. And if you really want to go all out, smoke this rack on the grill!





## Gray's Shotgun Cache



### *Venison Harissa Osso Bucco*

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 2 hours

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, small diced
- 2 carrots, small diced
- 2 celery stalks, small diced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons Harissa
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- All-Purpose flour for dredging
- 4 venison shanks
- 2 cups red wine
- 2 cups beef stock
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 1 fresh bay leaf

In a large Dutch oven (6-8 qt), heat the vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Once the pot is hot, add the onion, carrots and celery. Cook the vegetables until they are slightly brown and caramelized, about 10 minutes. Once the

vegetables have cooked, add the tomato paste, harissa and cinnamon to the pot and cook for 2 more minutes. Place the flour in a bowl and lightly dredge the shanks in the flour. Then place the shanks in the pan and turn the heat to high. Gently brown the shanks on the top and bottom for about 2 minutes on each side. After the shanks have browned, add the wine, beef stock, rosemary, thyme and bay leaf. Simmer on low-medium heat, covered, for about 1 ½ hours to 2 hours or until the meat is falling off the bone. Serve with creamy polenta or mashed potatoes.

Osso Bucco is definitely one of those classic Italian dishes that everyone loves! I mean what's not to love? It's rich, decadent and comforting. I like to change the classic up a bit and use Harissa. Harissa is actually a Tunisian chili pepper paste that is made with roasted red peppers and a mixture of spices. It adds an element of heat and spice to this dish that I find utterly delicious. If you love spicy food this is right up your alley—if spice is not your thing, you can either reduce the quantity of Harissa or eliminate it, but I highly recommend adding some, even if it's only one teaspoon. ■



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# The Long Shot

SOPHIA BULTEMA TAKES US ON HER JOURNEY FROM AN ORPHANAGE IN CHINA TO THE PARALYMPICS

I snapped the gun up and rested the warm wood against my cheek. The orange light on the mic turned on and I called for the clay. I only saw a blur of orange before the clay skyrocketed to the left. I followed the clay with my eyes and the gun moved with me as I pulled the trigger. It dusted. And with that the 2020 Para-Trap Nationals had finally come to an end. Having won first place, I had little time to celebrate before my mind focused on the next thing, World Championships. But my story doesn't start there.

I was born in China. At a time where being a girl or handicapped meant you were likely to be put into an orphanage, I was born as both, a girl with a limb difference, but I'll explain this later. I spent the first five and a half years of my life in an orphanage and I remember having little of my own. The clothes were durable, thick and hot, but not very pretty and definitely not my taste. I remember the food basically being watery rice and greens, and I shared a room with three other toddlers.

The day I was adopted I was given a Barbie doll from my nanny Ting Ting. I knew it was a parting gift, I knew I was moving out of the orphanage, I knew I was getting adopted, but I didn't know what "getting adopted" really meant. I was given photos of the family that was adopting me. One of the pictures was a family photo with all six of my new siblings (Hans, Sven, Jarred, Brianna, Annika, and Ellora) but all I saw was some random family. "They have two other girls adopted from China, too!" my nannies excitedly pointed to Annika and Ellora. But what does this have to do with me? I thought. The oldest brother from the family, Hans, had even come to visit me in the orphanage a year before I was adopted. He had lived in China for a number of years, fluent in Mandarin Chinese, and explained to me that soon I would be living in America. Still, the reality didn't set in until, suddenly, the people in the pictures that were supposedly my "family" were right there, standing in front of me.

Because of the language barrier, when they tried to speak to me their words were foreign and incoherent. They looked, dressed, and talked differently, even the facial expressions they made seemed alien to me. Our first day together ended with me crying until I fell asleep in my new mom's arms, utterly exhausted by this whole new world. Little did I know, this was just the start.

Once we arrived at a hotel, where we would stay for several days while my adoption papers were finalized, I asked Hans, "Is this America?" He was the only one I could communicate with at the time and he laughed as he explained that America was so far away we'd have to travel in the sky to get there. We went to the swimming pool at the hotel and Hans asked me, "Do you know how to swim?" I answered, "Of course I know how to swim," and with that I jumped into the pool and sank straight to the bottom. My dad dived in after me, saving me from certain death. "I thought you knew how to swim?" Hans asked as I gasped for air. "I was swimming," I said



naively. It turns out I didn't even know what swimming was and it hadn't occurred to me that America was an entirely different country from China. My world was so small and controlled that even the concept of drowning didn't exist.

So, as we flew in the sky to get home, to Colorado Springs, my world grew significantly. When we pulled up to our house I asked "How many families live here?" In China, I would've expected two or three families in a house this size, but in America, I couldn't believe the house was





all for one family. Walking in, I wanted to touch everything I saw—I jumped on the couches, banged on the piano, and wreaked what little havoc I could, being that I was both sleep deprived and scared. I was so exhausted that night that when I finally got ready to go to sleep, I vomited all over my new bed. Despite my new and exciting life, I missed the familiarity of my orphanage. My mom tells me I would cry myself to sleep every night for months and I would often watch Chinese TV shows when I felt homesick. But I knew that the tighter I held on to things that remind me of my old life the harder it would be to embrace the new one.

I started going to all-day kindergarten shortly after we returned because my parents wanted me to be fully immersed in English, hoping that I would pick it up quicker. Much to their dismay, and mine, I struggled with adjusting to everyone and everything. I remember my old elementary school friends telling me that I used to pull them aside and speak rather angrily at them in

Chinese. I would come home every afternoon exhausted and frustrated, wishing I could tell my parents about my day at school or tell my friends about what I did over the weekend. As my English improved I began to lose my Chinese skills. I couldn't talk to Hans in Chinese anymore and it was sometimes difficult to understand the characters in Chinese movies I watched. I also started to be more and more adventurous with my new family. I liked to wear princess dresses around the house and eat hot cheetos and I was always pushing everyone's buttons. I changed from being the shy new sibling to the



rambunctious sister. My family learned that even though my life started with a lot of challenges, I was a force to be reckoned with.

Our first Christmas together was filled with all the traditional holiday things: stockings over the mantle, gingerbread houses, snow angels, but what I'll always remember was the Nerf shotgun I got from my dad.

My dad has been shooting since he was a little boy. He grew up hunting and shooting competitively, taught all my siblings how to shoot, and would eventually take me to the gun range to shoot a gun for the first time when I was nine years old. However, at the age of six, I had only seen guns in movies and I remember opening my gift hoping it was a big Barbie or a very long puppy. To my surprise, it was a side by side plastic Nerf gun. I pulled the trigger twice and two foam darts popped out and stuck to the wall. I felt powerful wielding this weapon of ultimate destruction! As my siblings and I ran around the house having a Nerf gun fight in our pajamas, everyone was surprised by how easily I pelted them with my bullets. Even though some of them were armed with two guns, I still got them with my one.

Like I mentioned earlier, I was born without a left arm, from the elbow down to be exact. It's a common limb defect and although it has presented its challenges, I've never felt it has limited me. I've also learned that, for many people, my missing arm can make them uncomfortable. For some, when they see my

missing arm that's all they can see. I've had many conversations with people and they all ask the same questions "what happened? Does it make life difficult? Do you wish you had a hand?" I try to tell people that instead of seeing it as a disadvantage or unfortunate circumstance, I simply see it as the way I was born. I was born in China, a society where being able-bodied is an advantage and having a limb difference means you face a lot more difficulties in life. Although I grew up learning how to do things without an arm, I knew that I would face challenges because of it.

Once I was adopted, I really wanted a prosthetic. It was a priority to make myself "perfect" and I thought that by living in America I could get my very own arm. It was my American Dream. I got my first arm the same week I had come home. My arm, which I called my "Barbie" arm, was a pretty hand and it matched my skin. However, like a Barbie doll, it didn't do much. The next arm I got after that I called "Big Bob," which was much more functional than my "Barbie" arm. The index and middle fingers moved and allowed me to grip things, like the handle of a bike, but I didn't like it because it was bulky and I felt like it made me stand out even more. Then, in third grade, I got my myoelectric arm. Unlike my last two, this was a major technological step forward. It had electrodes that sensed nerve impulses to open and close a robotic hand. It looked good like "Barbie" and it functioned even better than "Big Bob", but



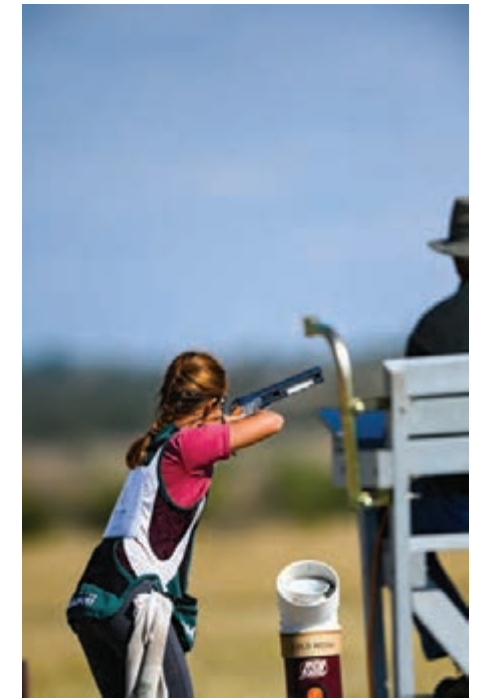
it wasn't very durable. As a 4th grader, I loved playing on the playground during recess and jumping rope with my friends but the arm would always break. To fix it, the arm would be sent away and it would often take weeks to get back. By the end of the year, I got to the point where I just decided it was better to not have a prosthetic arm. It wouldn't be until years later that I would want to take up the challenge of learning how to use a prosthetic again. In 2017 I went back to China to visit my orphanage with my mom, Hans, and a family friend. When we arrived, my mom noticed that I was hiding my arm when we went out. She could tell that being back in China brought back the shame I used to feel about only having one arm so she started researching about the fast growing world in prosthetics.

Since my first myoelectric arm, there have been some big advances in arm prosthetics. I set aside my desire to have a "real looking hand" and went full-on high tech. The iLimb Ultra, my current arm from Touch Bionics, is similar to the myoelectric arm in that they respond to muscle movement. Unlike the myoelectric arm, my iLimb can move at the wrist. I can control each finger individually and use an app on my phone to control finger settings. My dad calls it my "Luke Skywalker" arm. Plus, my arm has gotten me lots of attention. (I mean it is a \$140,000 arm.) People want to know about it, how it works, what I can do with it, and why I need it. Life changer, am I right? I went from trying to hide that I'm missing an arm, to showing it off.



Even with an amazing high tech prosthetic there are still a lot of things that are challenging for me, specifically sports. My parents have always told me to not think of myself as "handicapped" but "handicapable." They've always encouraged me to push myself and adapt, whether it be softball in third grade or swimming in fourth or soccer, running, and climbing in middle school. They believe I can do anything I put my mind to. But positive attitudes and encouraging words could only get me so far, I've still faced my fair share of obstacles.

In middle school, I tried playing volleyball



and basketball. (Emphasis on tried.) The kids on the team were helpful and everyone celebrated when I did something right but it never felt like something I was good at. Not only was it a physical struggle for me to dribble the ball across the court or pass the volleyball to a teammate, but I also struggled with overcoming a mental block. It felt like no matter how hard I tried, my missing arm would always put me at a disadvantage.

I first heard about St. Mary's shooting team in 8th grade. Unlike my previous attempts at sports, it didn't seem like such a disadvantage to not have a hand in trapshooting. My dad was stoked to





hear that I was interested in shooting, and on the first day of practice, I took my 28-gauge shotgun and scored a grand total score of zero. Despite the coaches encouragement and the extra shooting practice I would do with my dad on the weekends, I needed all the help I could get. At first, I was lucky to break even one clay. It was a very intense balancing act, between keeping my “nub” in the correct position as well as staying focused, to shoot even a couple shots. Overtime, I learned how to adapt my shooting style to fit my needs and my scores began to improve.

Since I don't use any assistive devices when I shoot, I use my “nub” to help support the gun all the way back by the trigger guard on the receiver. Because of my missing arm, supporting the weight of the gun often puts a lot of strain on my body. I have to adjust my stance in order to distribute the weight more evenly, so, compared to other shooters my left shoulder is angled farther forward. My brother Sven also made me a glove that prevents my arm from chaffing. It's been a continuous process of developing the muscles in my left arm, shoulder, and back but I've always had help from my coaches and family.

Many of the coaches I've met have been through USA Shooting. Three months into joining St. Mary's American Trapshooting team, a USA Shooting representative approached my coach at a shooting team fundraiser banquet. They had heard about my improvement as a shooter and were interested in training me to compete in Bunker Trap in the Paralympics. Para-rifle and pistol have been Paralympic sports for quite some time but Para-Trap is new to the stage, especially in the US. I was introduced to

two Team USA shooters, Dale Royer and Caitlin Conner, and started the process of being officially “sanctioned” with USA Shooting as a Para-Trap athlete. I would be competing in Para-Trap, the para-adaptation of Olympic Bunker, and was surprised to learn that American and Bunker Trap were two completely different types of shooting.

Bunker Trap, also known as International Trap, is different from American Trap in a lot of ways. But, to make it easy, basically take whatever makes Trap difficult, increase the difficulty, and you have Bunker.

In addition to my regular school shooting practices, I started competing in local competitions and noticed not only how few Parathletes attended the events but also how few women there were in these competitions. At one of my competitions during the summer of 2020, I shot on a squad with three other women on it. It was a hot day and I was sweating so much that it would get in my eyes. Wearing hats or visors would get in my line of vision and distract me, and I didn't have any sweat bands on hand (pun intended). One of the women helped me come



PHOTO CREDIT: MARK DEWOIFE

up with a solution. We figured out a way to turn my visor upside down so it would work as a headband, keep the sun out, and stay out of my line of sight. I looked pretty silly wearing it but thanked her. “Us ladies gotta stick together.” And on that day, my ladies and I became queens of the trap competition.

Being the only woman, or one of only a few, in a sport is not uncommon, let alone in trapshooting. On the St. Mary's shooting team, there are only four girls on the team out of the twenty. This one-to-four ratio is pretty representative of a majority of the competitions I've attended. Like my outlook on my limb difference, when I go to competitions and see I'm the only female among the shooters, I see it as an opportunity to surprise people with my abilities and be unique.

As I work towards the Para-Trap World Championships in Lenato, Italy in September, and continue to shoot with my high school team, I will also train to compete at a level that wins me a spot on the Junior Olympic team as a regular, able-bodied Bunker shooter. Although I still have a long process of raising support and sponsors for

American vs. Bunker Trap

	American	Bunker
<b>Speed of Clays</b>	45 mph	74 mph
<b>Angle</b>	22°	45°
<b>Trajectory</b>	Set	Varied

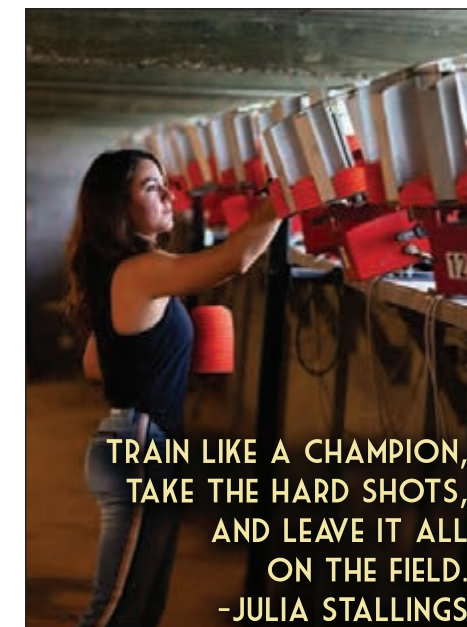


travel, training, and all the costs involved with my competitive path moving forward, I am very fortunate to be a pioneer in the sport of Para-Trap. When I think back to where I started, five-year-old me never would've dreamed I would have done as much as I have today; getting adopted, moving to America, learning English, getting a prosthetic arm, and finding a sense of belonging in the shooting community. Shooting has encouraged me to embrace who I am and it is because of the support of my family, friends, and coaches, that I have been able to develop my skills. What others might see as a disadvantage, like missing an arm or being the only female on the range, I have come to understand it is an opportunity; a chance to overcome the obstacles

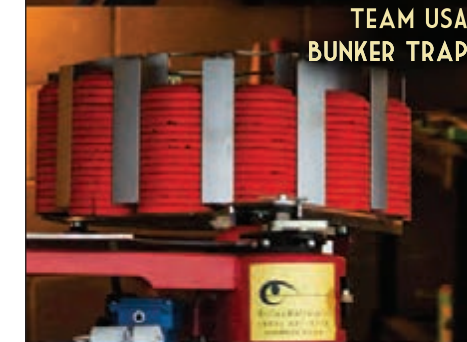
life has thrown at me and show off my skills. Just like my parents have always said, I'm not handicapped, I'm handicapped. ■

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TAKE THE HARD SHOTS,  
AND LEAVE IT ALL  
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# Process Thinking



BY VICKI ASH

**W**e get this question a lot from students: *I shot great the first day but the second day I crashed and burned.* So, what happened to the person who was there the first day?

The first day you were having fun shooting the event with no expectations. Just walking through the course, making a plan and shooting the plan. Your break points were all correct and on top of that, you were committed to breaking the first target of each pair in the correct point, then eyes first, then the gun and the gun went to where your eyes were looking and the target broke. You were focused on the process of shooting—make the plan and shoot the plan.

Your score was a result of making good plans and trusting your hands to put the gun in the right place. All you had to do was just focus on the target and work the plan and you had FUN doing what you had been practicing.

The second day you felt good about your shooting with maybe a little too much expectation of how good you were shooting and that's when you left the process part of the plan out. You began the round "shooting not to miss" instead

of shooting the break point. You began to feel emotional about the misses and then you began to evaluate your performance which put you in the conscious part of your brain. You have switched from the subconscious brain to the conscious evaluating brain. The more you TRIED to shoot well the worse the round got. Your rhythm got out of sequence and you began to hurry through the stand. All of a sudden it wasn't fun anymore. It's at this point you have to stop and realize what is going on and get back to the PROCESS of shooting the plan which you had practiced and gave you a good performance yesterday.

The process of making the plan and shooting the plan keeps you in the present and the conscious mind has something to occupy itself, then the subconscious brain can take over the shooting part. Both parts must have something to do or you will become conflicted with indecision which means you have taken yourself out of the game.

Stay with the PROCESS of planning then execute the shot.

Let me know if there is anything you want to read about at [vicki@ospschool.com](mailto:vicki@ospschool.com) ■



## HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH SHOTGUN IS RIGHT FOR YOU?



The fastest growing outdoor shooting sports demographic is women. It is being seen in all disciplines—Sporting Clays, Trap, Upland or Big Game Hunting and Rifle Shooting competitions.

These women want to improve their shooting performance and are tired of feeling beat up and bruised. Many are often frustrated with all the feedback they receive, but yet nothing helps improve their experience.

They want a gun that will fit them, but most are not sure what that even looks or feels like.

Passionate Outlaws is owned by a woman who specializes in shotgun fit for women and offers multiple shotguns that have been created specifically for a woman.

Call today to schedule an appointment to demo or be fit for a shotgun!

Join our Facebook page to find out how to earn a FREE or DISCOUNTED shotgun!

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# Introduction to Rifle

BY SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

**A**nnie Oakley – the name assigned nearly every female shooter. I've always considered it an honor – both for me as a shooter and homage to the legend herself, who set the stage for females in the outdoors today.

Learning marksmanship is key to success. Many people miss this integral part, instead confusing the sound of a shot and the recoil of a firearm with “shooting.” New shooters especially become victim to this when introduced by someone who isn't a true marksman. The focus falls on the sole process of firing the gun rather than on taking accurate shots.

Marksmanship is important because it is critical not only to self-defense but teaches you skills you can carry throughout your life. Think of it as the difference between throwing a bunch of random ingredients together and hoping for the best versus following an actual recipe with an end goal. You may not choose to compete, and that is ok. Becoming a rifleman, or rifewoman, is all about learning about yourself and how to be a more accurate shot while adhering to the basic rules of firearm safety.

It is easier than one might think to get started. I think rifle shooting is the entry-way to all types of marksmanship. Nearly everyone can handle the minimal recoil of a .22 lr and prior to recently, the ammo was readily available and relatively inexpensive – hopefully we will return to that point again someday. There is also an abundance of competitive disciplines centered around .22 lr rifles including NRL 22, smallbore, silhouette, and rimfire sporter.

The first step is to find a mentor or group dedicated to helping you learn. Contact your local sportsmen's clubs and associations. Also consult club listings from entities like the Civilian Marksmanship Program and National Rifle Association. It may sound a bit ominous, but there is no better way to learn than by having someone there to teach you and show you

firsthand. Find someone you can trust. Firearm safety should always be paramount. Many clubs and different disciplines have programs specifically designed for new shooters or even those who are experienced but eager to learn more.

My true first shots were with a rifle. I shot BB guns when I was in elementary school, but lost interest because it was too difficult for me to pump. The beauty of the .22 is the variety of models available that can fit all shapes and sizes.

I never realized until I began competing how



important rifle fit is to success. I learned firearm safety first of all, but then began working on technique. I started in silhouette, moved into high power service rifle, and most recently into long range. I have taken the skills I learned from my first day of shooting in my backyard and built upon them.

Shooting has no report card. Success means different things to different people and at the end of the day is about learning something and remaining safe. One of my mentors defines it as leaving with the same number of holes you arrived with. You learn self-discipline, patience, and self-confidence while honing a skill that you can use for the rest of your life. These skills can be carried over from targets and competition, to self-defense and hunting. For me it is also a connection to history and to being a true American. Learning how to shoot and to shoot well is a fulfilling feeling that is nearly indescribable, and well within reach.

You do not have to rush out and buy anything. When I began shooting it was with borrowed rifles and equipment. Generally, people in the shooting sports are more than happy to help people along and teach as it is how the sports grow and survive. The unspoken rule is that you do the same for someone else one day. Take the time to learn from the people around you: how to shoot, what type of shooting you enjoy, and what your goals are. There are endless opportunities with a .22 rifle, from the National Rifle League .22 league with a focus on longer distance targets to Olympic style smallbore.

There are opportunities for every comfort



level. Yes, shooting is a male-dominated sport, but more and more women are joining every day. I started shooting as one of two girls on the silhouette range and the only girl on my junior high-power team. It never bothered me and I found that I learned well from my coaches and teammates. For others, it is harder to learn from men. Never be afraid to ask questions. They might seem stupid but do not let anyone make you feel like they are. Many ranges have ladies only groups. Even if it is for a type of shooting you are not interested in, odds are that someone can point you in the right direction.

Another point – women's bodies are different. Women are also better shooters than men on average. Don't let this go to your head, but

remember that you have the ability, you just need to find the right tools and methods. If shooting from the offhand position, you can balance off of your hip, an advantage most male shooters greatly envy. We are also generally more flexible. Smaller hands mean that the gun that works for your son, father, or husband might not work for you.

At the end of the day, you can too be your own version of Annie Oakley by becoming a better marksman. This is a journey not for anyone else, but for you. Competitive forms of rifle shooting allow you to compete against other people, but at the end of the day, you are really only trying to do better than you did the time before. Do not beat yourself up over bad scores or become discouraged because something isn't working. Embrace the fact that you are entering an entirely new world with a host of women around the world willing to help you find the best version of yourself. ■

*Serena lives in Richfield, Ohio with her time spent working as an outdoor writer, photographer, and marketer. She is a Distinguished Rifleman in High Power Service Rifle and a member of the United States U25 Young Eagles Palma team. You can contact her at [serenajuchnowski.com](mailto:serenajuchnowski.com).*







# 2nd Amendment Discussions

DEFINING DIFFERENCES BY ANDREA BOGARD

Welcome back to 2A Discussions! Last installment we chatted about the education-focused group, the DC Project, and some of the critical concepts they bring to the table. Today, we're going to explore some vocabulary and how important it is to understand the terminology and nuance surrounding 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment proposals and legislation.

Why? I've heard some target shooters ask: "This doesn't affect me - I shoot clays with a 32-inch barrel over-under 12 ga shotgun." Read on to learn how, big picture, these issues may have a greater impact than one might think.

*"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."*

I had an interesting conversation recently with a gentleman at a local sporting clays range. We'll call him Frank, for the purposes of this conversation. He communicated how he didn't want to shoot with another person there that day (we'll call him Mike), and cited Mike's shotgun choice and its lack of "sporting" characteristics, as he perceived it. While Frank talked, his K-80 with 32s balanced precariously on his vest clad shoulder.

Mike happened to shoot a Benelli M2 in a waterfowl camouflage pattern. Listening to Frank you would think the Benelli shooter was proposing shooting clays with a 50 BMG mounted on top of the golfcart. Hmmm.

Trying to understand his reasoning, I asked him some questions. Waving his hands for emphasis he explained, "It's a fully automatic shotgun." He felt it was "unsporting and unsafe" to be on the clays course with a "full auto" shotgun. Interesting. Now, we're getting somewhere.

Terminology is key. Understanding what is

being discussed, proposed, legislated and passed is critical. As of this writing, the new presidential administration is creating executive orders at an unprecedented rate across a broad spectrum of issues and completely bypassing the legislative process. These orders are spanning multiple arenas politically, socially, vocationally and constitutionally. Additionally, the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment is getting compromised in a variety of ways, creating a disconnect between the People and the process laid out in the Constitution.

Let's take a closer look at what some of these terms mean. More importantly, what they can mean for you and your Constitutional rights.

## "Autoloader"

This is a term we hear a lot in the sporting clays/skeet/trap world. It usually references something other than an over-under or side-by-side (double barrel). Pump-action shotguns aren't a common go-to in the target world, so "autoloader" has become a somewhat default nomenclature for a variety of non-double barrel shotguns.

So, we've heard the term, but do we actually know what it means? It may seem irrelevant at the moment, but when terms like "autoloader," "semiautomatic" and "full auto" are used interchangeably by well-meaning but uninformed individuals in the sporting/target industry, it can cause a significant problem.

As a term, "autoloader" actually originated as a mechanized component to load unfired ammunition into a vehicle mounted gun as it was fired. It was not a part of the gun, but rather a "mechanical aid" or "replacement" for human personnel.

It's also evolved to be a slang reference for self-loading firearms. Here's where it starts to get interesting. When you think of self-loading, what comes to mind? If you're like many of us in the sporting/target world, you think of a "semiauto"

shotgun of some variety. This is correct, but not completely.

Circling back to my conversation with Frank (Mr. K-80), how would he respond if he was told he shot a "self-loading" shotgun? Most likely, he had never thought about it. And therein lies the purpose for this dialogue.

Over recent decades, there have been numerous legislative proposals calling for restriction, removal and regulation of "self-loading" firearms. By definition, this could include both over and under and side by side shotguns possessing single triggers, in addition to the more commonly referenced "semiauto" configurations. Why? Because all the shooter needs to do to load/fire the next round is pull the trigger. Let that sit for a moment.

## "Semiautomatic"

### "Semi-auto"

### "Semiauto"

A semiautomatic gun is one that is both self-loading and capable of rapid, but not continuous, firing. Rapid can be a somewhat subjective term, however. We've all shot with those that can shoot a true pair in the same amount of time it takes others to locate a single. Regardless, a semiauto is not a full auto, a commonly misused term.

## "Fully automatic"

### "Full auto"

### "Automatic"

A fully automatic gun is one that requires one trigger pull to fire multiple rounds. I don't know about you, but I've never shot clays with a "full auto" shotgun. However, I have heard the term used in reference to a semiautomatic shotgun of some variety.

If you come away with anything today, I hope it's an acknowledgement of the need to be proactive and informed, rather than complacent. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment is designed as a safeguard against the erosion of the Constitution and a defense against a tyrannical government. It is our responsibility to be educated, informed, intentional and proactive. This is a way of life that is only guaranteed by the protection of the Constitution and the presence and preservation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment.

Check back for an update on what's new in 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Discussions! ■





# GABBY FRANCO: Dreamer To Achiever

BY JENINOVAKOVA

**A**t the young age of 40 Gabriela “Gabby” Franco has proven herself as an Olympian and top world shooter winning dozens of awards in her sport. She has earned the respect of the industry and is a role model for young women – or any aspiring shooter for that matter – throughout the world.

Venezuelan native, firearms instructor, and former competitor in the TV series *Top Shot All-Stars*, Gabby’s story is one of overcoming political restrictions and finding a way to do what she loves to do despite the challenges she has encountered. I had the opportunity to interview the handgun shooter and get some insight into who Gabriela Franco is and what drives her to be the successful person she is today.

**LadyShooter LifeStyles (LS): Besides what I can find about you online, what else does the public not know about Gabriela Franco? Give us a little background on yourself.**

**Gabby Franco (GF):** Well, there are many things people do not know about me. First, I always wanted to be a writer, and I started writing my first fiction movie at 14. While I might not finish that book, I have been working on another one that I hope to publish in a year or so. It involves my view of the future, if America continues deviating from its constitutional pathway. Second, I used to be very hyperactive, and most of the time I would speak my mind, which adults thought was rude. Third, I read “The Power is Within YOU” by Louis Hay when I was twelve and it helped me find purpose at a young age when I felt misunderstood. Third, I am Catholic and conservative.

**LS: What do you shoot, and what is your favorite? Why?**

**GF:** I currently shoot a Walther Q5 Steel Frame in 9mm. I have been shooting the Q5SF for two years, and I love it. The Q5SF’s weight is crucial to reduce recoil, which helps me shoot fast yet accurately. The pistol has medium-size grip panels that I changed for a thin metal grip that works great for my small hands. The craftsmanship and quality of the Q5 is a testament to Walther’s commitment to delivering phenomenal products.

**LS: You were young when you started shooting and your dad introduced you to the sport, but how does your family feel about what you do?**

**GF:** They are very proud of me. I came to the US pretty much by myself. I overcame divorce, unemployment, and language barriers. Despite those and other challenges, I have achieved great things in this amazing country and continue to

fulfill my dreams. Since I was a young girl, I always dreamt big, which was not a secret for my parents. It is worth noting that I am who I am because of them. My parents taught me the value of hard work and to be responsible for my future. Thus, I am sure my achievement does not surprise them; I know they are proud of the woman I am today.

**LS: What kind of reaction do you get from people when you tell them what you do for a living? Is there a difference in Venezuela as opposed to in the USA?**

**GF:** The reactions I get are mixed. Some look at me like I am from another planet or scared just with the idea I might be carrying a gun with me. They ask: “Do you have a gun with you now?” I just smile and explain that I am an Olympian and involved in shooting sports. The other reactions I get from people are surprise and excitement.







They want to know more about what I do. Most of them say I don't look like a person that owns guns! LOL. The USA is more open to gun ownership than any other country in the world. Therefore, the reactions I get are more subtle from US Citizens than from people of other countries.

**LS: What is training like? What does it take to be a champion shooter?**

**GF:** That is the million-dollar question. To be a champion, you have to be hungry for it. You have to be willing to sacrifice a lot of things just to achieve this goal. You must spend a lot of time perfecting techniques at home and at the range. I believe there is more to being a champion than winning medals. It is a mind-set. A true champion strives to do its best at everything; in sports, at school, at work, and in life. Being a champion means continually striving to perfect the technique and to be disciplined.

**LS: What sacrifices do you feel you have made to get to where you are today?**

**GF:** I trained three to five hours a day, six days a week. As a teenager, I didn't go to many events and parties with my high school friends because I was always training and competing. I didn't go to my high school graduation and prom because I was at an international competition in Peru that weekend. Being away from my family has been one of the most challenging things for me since I moved to the US, mostly because I didn't get to see my younger brother grow up.



comfortably for men and women. I think men always loved seen women involved in the sport. As a teen in Venezuela, men were proud of my achievements as a competitive shooter and other female shooters. The female shooting team was continually winning medals and representing the city and the club. We did it with the help of everyone at the range! The firearms industry adapted very well to the demand in recent years, so we need more women in shooting sports!

**LS: Where do you see yourself in the future? Do you think you will still be doing this when you are 60 or 70?**

**GF:** I am a woman that is not afraid to change. To tell you the truth, I don't see myself doing the same thing forever. It's not that I don't love what I do because I am very passionate about it, but I also love to explore new venues. I am an adventurous woman. Today, I see myself as an author, motivational speaker, mother, and a prominent coach and psychologist. Life is the opportunity to be the best I can be at anything I want to do.

**LS: What is your greatest accomplishment? What are you most proud of?**

**GF:** Being an Olympian has been the greatest of my accomplishments. It is an honor to be considered one of the best in the world and be one of the few who can call themselves Olympians. I am proud of ALL I have achieved in my life. At 40 years old, I have managed to compete worldwide. I have earned several dozens of medals. I am the only woman to go far in the Top Shot competition. I was the only woman to participate in TOP SHOT "ALL Stars." I have traveled to over fifteen countries. I taught my son to read when he was only two years old. And, I am currently working to getting my degree in psychology with high honors.



**LS: What do you still feel you need to accomplish? Is there anything you still strive to achieve?**

**GF:** I have three books I want to finish writing. One is about overcoming divorce, and the other two about America's future if we continue the progressive path. Get my Bachelor's degree in psychology with honors, and then get my Masters. Work as a psychologist to help athletes and others overcome challenges and become the best they can be.

**LS: What advice would you give to young and new shooters?**

**GF:** Be safe, be responsible, and always keep learning. Get trained by credible instructors and practice regularly. Lastly, get involved in the sport and the fight to protect our rights to own and bear arms. ■

*Gabby is currently living near Alexandria, Virginia and is focused on training, college and family. To contact Gabby for future training, email her at info@gabbyfranco.com or reach out on social media.*



*1996-2001 Venezuelan Team and Individual National champion*

*1997 Silver medal - Bolivarian Games (Arequipa, Peru)*

*1998 Gold medal - South American games (Ecuador)*

*1999 Silver medal - Pan American (Winnipeg, Canada)*

*2000 39th - Olympic Games (Sydney, Australia)*

*2000 Gold medal - South American games (Lima, Peru)*

*2001 Gold medal - Bolivarian Games (Ambato, Ecuador)*

*2002 Gold medal - South American Games (Brazil)*

*2018 1st place Lady - USPSA Limited Oil field Championship*

*2018 1st place Lady - USPSA Limited Area 4 Championship*

*2019 1st place Lady - USPSA CO Arkansas sectional Championship*

*2019 2nd place Lady - USPSA CO Area 3 Championship*

*2019 2nd place Lady - USPSA CO Area 4 Championship*

*2020 2nd place Lady - USPSA CO Area 4 Championship*

*2020 1st place Lady - Virginia State Championship*

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## THE JANA SEVERYNS EDITION

There are 2 bags that I have with me when I travel either to the range or to a match: My range bag and my trusty backpack. My range bag typically carries the things I may possibly need or the “just in case” things, like my Magnetospeed chronograph. Most matches I leave my Range Bag in the car. My backpack goes with me *everywhere*. It carries everything I absolutely may need throughout the day. My range bag is from 5.11 Tactical and my backpack is Tactical Performance from Academy. My backpack has taken a beating and it's still going strong!

Most Precision Rifle Matches require *lots* of walking. At some matches, where you shoot may be a good distance from where you park. Many times, the stages are on separate sections of the range which requires either walking from stage to stage or, at the larger ranges like Reveille Ranch or TX Precision, driving (if allowed). A competition rifle can weigh 20+ pounds and a bag with heavy fill can weigh up to 16 lbs. A backpack is *essential* to carry everything you typically need for the day, hands-free, so you can carry your rifle and your shooting bag. This is especially the case if your car is parked somewhere you can't immediately access.



# What's in My Shooting Bag?

What's in my backpack? *To keep everything organized in my backpack I use either pencil pouches or small Rubbermaid containers to keep the little stuff under control. Everything is labeled so I can find it fast and stay organized. My backpack has a lower portion that is separate from the top. I keep the containers and magazines in the lower portion and the loose items in the top.*

### Rubbermaid container #1 (extras):

- Batteries in all sizes (for Kestrel, ear pro, scope illumination, Rifle-Kuhl)
- Extra ear plugs
- Lip balm, travel size sunscreen (never ever be without sunblock – it's a painful lesson to learn)
- Small first aid kit to include Tylenol, Ibuprofen, and Exedrin Migraine (when I get nervous I tense up and can grind my teeth. That gives me a terrible headache!)
- Travel size tissue (Texas allergies..ugh..)
- Extra chamber flags (some matches require chamber flags others do not – I use one just so I'm always in the habit of using one in the event the match requires it)
- Eyeglass cleaner wipes (for my glasses), Rem-Oil Wipes, and a Kahles soft cloth for my scope lenses
- Loc-tite
- Wet-ones

### Rubbermaid container #2 (rifle “stuff”):

- Masterpiece Arms magazine lip adjustment tool (if I have a mag that is being fussy or that gets bent I use this tool to make a quick adjustment to fix the problem)
- Rifle Kuhl (these barrels get super-hot after a stage, especially in the summer! I pop in my Rifle Kuhl and let the fan run so my barrel is

completely cooled by the time it's my turn on the next stage)

- Masterpiece Arms barricade stop
- Masterpiece Arms magazine loader (huge fingernail saver)

### Pencil Pouch:

- Pens, dry erase markers (for dope cards), and sharpies
- Small roll of painter's tape for dope cards (layer painter's tape and each time you are done with your dope for that stage, peel that piece of tape off to reveal a clean piece so you don't have to worry about wiping your dope card clean)
- NRL dope card & several “homemade” dope cards

### General Gear:

- Kestrel / back up weather meter from Geoballistics in case something happens to Kestrel
- Several 10 round magazines/1 magazine with an extension for 12 round stages (there is always that “one guy” who misbehaves – I've learned the hard way to have good back-ups and maintain them frequently!)
- Hoppe's Bore snake (this is an emergency item “just in case” – I thoroughly clean my barrel every 200 rounds using Bore-Tech products)
- Small Allen wrench set (this little cheap set from Wal-Mart has saved me so many times)
- Berger Hybrid Match 105 grain ammunition. A 1-day match typically requires 100 rounds. A 2-day match requires 200 rounds. I keep my ammo in a 50 round ammo box just to eliminate the number of ammo boxes in my backpack.
- Extra granola bar / energy bar / Twizzlers and or a Slim Jim (I love Slim Jims)



- Electronic Ear Pro (Walker's)
- Extra pair of generic eye pro (I wear prescription glasses so these are back up)
- Leatherman multi-tool
- Small mini-clip board (for Course of Fire)

### What's in my Range Bag? *The Range Bag stays in car usually depending on the match:*

- Magnetospeed chronograph (I usually chrono and true my dope prior to a match but occasionally I'll double-check my velocity, especially if anything has changed from the last match)
- Extra reactive targets for zeroing
- Rifles Only rifle sling
- Wheeler fat wrench (torque wrench) (a must for scope adjustments that require specific torque settings)
- Toilet paper/baggies (there aren't always porta-potties where we shoot!)
- Extra pair of warm glove liners
- Rain gear

What else goes to the match with me?

**Rifle:** My rifle is a custom build by Straight Jacket Armory out of Evanston, WY. It's a Curtis Custom Vector action chambered in a 6 Creedmoor, Masterpiece Arms BA Competition Chassis, Barlein 26” MTU Barrel, Huber 2-stage trigger, Atlas Bipod, Masterpiece Arms Competition Side Rails, Wiebad gear mini-stock pad and an Area 419 Sidewinder muzzle brake topped with a Kahles 525i scope in a Spuhr mount.

Depending upon how far I'm traveling and if I'm flying, I'll use my Pelican 1750 Long Rifle Hard Case OR my Saint soft rifle case for local matches close to home.

**Bags:** Wiebad gear Whiskey Charlie Max Fortune Cookie bag (medium fill), Gray-Ops Mini Plate Pro, Wiebad Mini-Pro Plate bag (heavy fill), Armageddon Gear Fat bag. Bags are like shoes - - they come in all shapes and sizes and weights, sticky/not sticky, canvas/waxed canvas, etc. You have to find out what works for YOU! My primary “go-to” bag is my Fortune Cookie. It works on just about every stage. Occasionally I'll encounter an unusual stage that I might use something else on, but if I could only have one bag it would be my beloved Fortune Cookie (monogrammed of course).

**Other:** 5.11 Tactical Knee Pads (kneepads are a *must* in precision rifle unless you want to kneel on crushed granite or hard surfaces which I do not). I also have a backup pair of cheap volleyball kneepads to wear under my pants that don't have inserts for knee pads. I wear a 5.11 Tactical belt, TAB gear magazine pouch and Kestrel pouch (without the pouch attached to my belt I will set these down and then forget where I set them). If the match doesn't provide water or it's really hot, I will bring my own small ice chest with lots of water and Gatorades. I also bring my SLIK tripod and Kopfjager Industries Reaper Rail mount. I don't have a spotting scope yet, but I do use my tripod sometimes to shoot off of or film a stage with. I also bought a little \$5 pop up stool from Academy. Best \$5 spent!! Finally – my little Academy “tactical” wagon to carry everything around!

I know it seems like a lot and what is important to me to have (i.e. lip balm and Excedrin) may not be something another shooter

would have. Likewise, they may have something I am missing. However, the precision rifle community is very welcoming and supportive of each other, but especially new shooters. Everyone is more than happy to loan a bag or the use of a chronograph or most anything else a new shooter may need to show up and shoot their first match. Many matches even have amazing loaner rifles and ammo available for shooters that may not have their own match rifle yet. Match directors will put new shooters on a squad with more experienced shooters who will walk you through every stage. It's an amazing group of generous people in this sport! As a female starting out in a male dominated sport, I was super intimidated at first. However, over the past three years I've met some fantastic people who will do anything to help you out, even if you are a total stranger. It really is an amazing community of folks who just want to grow the sport as much as they can. Many times you will see an experienced shooter who wins the match allow a new shooter to walk the prize table in their place. I've seen a new shooter walk away with a brand-new custom rifle or high end scope that way. That is not something you see often or at all in other sports. I am super blessed to call so many of these people friends and I cannot say enough about how supportive everyone is of each other. ■



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# LEADING LADIES

## *Fashion Edition*



**Amber Haynes**  
CEO, McKenna Quinn



I first met Amber Haynes, owner and designer of McKenna Quinn, during a fashion show put on by Houston's finest outdoor shop, Gordy & Sons. She was quiet yet decisive as she helped us, the models, choose outfits and pair her beautiful designs with other designs, making the most beautiful shooting outfits I had ever seen, or rather had only seen on British people. I had never heard of McKenna Quinn but was immediately enamored with the comfortable and fitted shooting shirts a lot of us were modeling. This was in September of 2017, just months after Amber had debuted her designs to the outdoor world at the Dallas Safari Club Convention in January. The exponential growth

and demand for her designs clearly shows the need for innovation for women's gear in our shooting community. Since then, I have seen her designs on women in the shooting community all over the world. I recently had the chance to sit down and have some coffee with Amber and discuss how McKenna Quinn came to be.

As a single mother of two beautiful girls, Piper, 11, and Addy, 10, Amber has managed to turn a simple yet elegant idea into a thriving business. Having grown up with a close-knit family in the heart of Texas, daughter herself to an oil & gas man, Amber was happily working for her father's company when it all began. It is through this Texas spirit that Amber is committed

to not only providing quality goods, but also supporting local American businesses. All of her clothing is made in the great state of Texas.

Amber had no experience sewing or wholesale retail, nothing. So how did she do it?

"My dad and I started quail hunting quite a bit more often together, we had these beautiful shotguns, and these beautiful dogs, and quail hunting is always been such a pretty thing for me, but I always felt that I was dressed for the bowling alley, there was nothing I could find that fit me." This was the moment that changed the direction of her life. It amazes me how one moment, one thought, one idea can change everything.

So, she decided, "Let me try and make a shirt. At first, I thought maybe I'll make one for me and a couple of my friends and it wouldn't go beyond that. I worked with a company and we designed a shooting shirt. Right as we got the samples ready, a girlfriend of mine had a booth space at the Dallas Safari Club Convention in 2017, she said why don't you bring some samples, they sold like crazy, so that was it."

The shirts went into full blown production and McKenna Quinn took off. As they went into production, she got a call from Gordy & Sons. They were opening up a new store in Houston, Texas and they wanted to talk to her about carrying her "line" at the time she didn't have a line... she had one shirt. Fast forward to four years later, she has five different stores around the US and just started working with a store in the UK!

What makes her shooting shirts the go-to choice for a long list of shooting world celebrities







including: Rachel Carrie, The Fausti Sisters, and Olympian, Kayle Browning? It's the design of course. It isn't just a good-looking shirt. It's a great-looking shirt you can actually shoot in. "I grew up horseback riding so that movement is kind of similar, I wanted a shirt that looked nice, fitted well, but also provided for movement. If you look at the shirt there is a lot of seaming across the arms and the sides so as you're bringing the gun up its not keeping you back in any way. That's something that's always been really important to me." Amber recalls the memories of her childhood and the beginning of her career in fashion and outfitting fondly.

Pants came the second year, and so on it has grown to include scarves, belts, shooting vests, and even beanies. Everything that comes out Amber designs, and then hunts in it for a season before releasing it to the public. "I am constantly pulling new samples of fabrics and then trying to see if I can make what I want to make out of it. I try to add two to three pieces every season, right now I've got a jacket that I am working on, a new round of sweaters and a new short sleeve shirt. It should be a cross between our long sleeve shirt and our fishing shirt so that it's really lightweight and short sleeve, and you can tuck it in, or leave it out." Enthusiasm radiated from her smile as she said this. "I am always calling in my local friends, like Catherine Kruse, to test out products when they go out hunting too."

Amber's passion and commitment to growing shooting sports is a top priority for her as well. "One thing that I am trying to grow is having women's hunting opportunities so that's been

something I didn't expect McKenna Quinn to have a platform for; but it definitely does, I want to make sure that I am providing as many opportunities for women to come out and learn to hunt." Amber has been putting together hunts where the participants get outfitted by McKenna Quinn, and learn, and do the activity, and share in the beauty of nature together. All levels of experience are always welcome.

"When I first started, I had so many women say *I don't want to go because I'm already not sure of what I am doing so I don't want to show up and look unprepared, so if I at least look prepared, then I am a little*



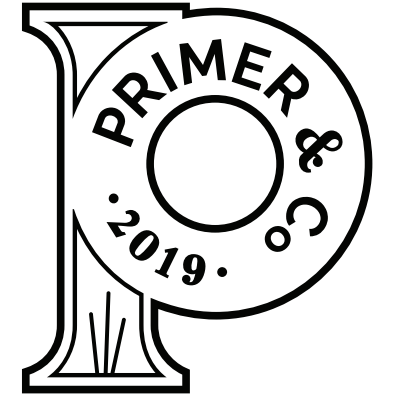
*more confident to try it"*

Some growing women that she hopes will join her on these adventures are her daughters who are just now starting to fit into her clothes. "They are getting into it more now that they are older and can shoot and participate."

As for the state of her business due to the unfortunate pandemic we are facing, well... "When COVID-19 first started everything froze, I thought it was a sign that this was it for me, that I would be making my exit. Then in the middle of June/middle of July it started to pick up, and then my sales went up over 30% of last year. I've been on the good side of it, more people are staying home and looking for things to do locally, so they are going out hunting and shooting around Texas more, so my sales have actually increased which is wonderful."

With sales booming and outdoor activities drawing in the masses, the success of this small business seems to have no end in sight. Please, check out her website and look for opportunities to participate in one of her events where I have no doubt you will have fun, and look good doing it!

[www.shopmckennaquinn.com](http://www.shopmckennaquinn.com)



**Mary Dixon**  
CEO, Primer & Co.

I was first introduced Primer & Co. during an event where her scrunchies, aka "gunchies", were included in the swag bag. I was immediately intrigued and found out that Primer & Co. had way more to offer than a gunchie. It turned out I was destined to meet the creator behind Primer & Co. during my first 3gun match which I documented in the Jan/Feb edition of Lady Shooter Lifestyles. Mary Dixon, the creative genius behind Primer & Co., actually shot on my squad. Mary was not only completely polite and almost shy, but she impressed me with her ability to transform from the girl next door from Dayton, Ohio, into the gun toting beast that turned on at the beep of the timer. I didn't want to bug her for an interview during a competition but I did get the chance to catch up and ask her everything I had been wondering over the phone not long ago. Inspiration abounded.



Mary Dixon studied to be a graphic designer. This may seem like the obvious reason and connection she needed to start Primer & Co. However, the primer, pun intended, was the need for a cute shirt that low-key showed her support for firearms but didn't scream out at liberals, let's conversation. In fact, that is the motto at Primer & Co. – Spark a conversation. As a mother to three children, all evenly spaced out two years apart, six, four, and two, Mary found herself feeling more comfortable homeschooling her children and being present for them rather than sending them to a childcare facility. After the first child, Mary quit her job as a graphic designer

and stayed home. Her husband began competing in 3Gun competitions in 2014 and Mary enjoyed supporting her husband. Having grown up with a dad who was an avid hunter she had always enjoyed being around firearms. When her husband encouraged her to give 3Gun a try as an idea for a "date", she jumped at the opportunity, especially because at the time they only had one child. Her first competition was a cold day, so cold that her fingers froze. This did not deter her from falling in love with the sport. As her family has grown from one to three children, her opportunities to shoot have waivered because it is not easy to find a sitter for three kids she explained.





Fast forward to June of 2019 when the need for a cute shirt sparked her creativity and her first shirt came to life. With borrowed equipment, a Cricut® from a friend and a heat press from Amazon, she put together her first design “Coffee, Guns & Messy Bums”. She immediately got a glowing reception from friends and ladies she shot with. Next, she designed “On Wednesdays We Plink?”, a creative play on words from the ever popular Mean Girls, a movie that ruled girl culture in the early 2000s. Her next design is also the one that is most dear to her heart. “E PLURIBUS UNUM” which is the motto of the United States: Out of Many, One. Her creativity flows easily because her husband is always available for her to brainstorm with. Her most recent creation is basically genius. She created a sticker that pretty much embodies the feelings all of us “gun people” are experiencing lately... “No. I don’t know where to buy ammo.”

Mary Dixon is my favorite kind of business owner. She took an idea and ran with it. It started out as something for herself and organically grew because it was just that cool. As a small business owner, and sort of accidental business owner, Mary has really given us what she wanted. A

primer. Her designs are truly a great way to spark a conversation about firearms in a safe and non-intimidating way. I personally have one of her designs that says “Just An Ordinary Mom Trying Not



To Raise Communists” and I can’t tell you how many people have loved and laughed at it. Because it’s true. Her designs are not just for women, she also has a full line of men’s clothing, and accessories for women including ponytail hats and headbands. Be sure to check out her website for more information on her designs.

[www.primeraandco.com](http://www.primeraandco.com)



### Kirstie Pike CEO, Prois



**K**irstie Pike – *Prowess, process and animal spirits*  
Please welcome Kirstie Pike to this series of Leading Ladies.

Kirstie is the owner of the Prois, a woman’s technical hunting apparel company based in Gunnison, CO. Like many of the world’s best ideas, Prois was born of necessity. Join us as we learn about the what, the why and the how for this amazing company and the even more incredible woman behind it.

A career RN with two toddlers and a husband, hunting was rather low on the priority

for Kirstie. One day, her husband (who was also a guide), convinced her to give hunting a try. At first light in borrowed camo, a cow elk was harvested and a passion was born.

Shortly after that, Kirstie decided to take up archery hunting. After an extremely disappointing trip to a local box store, she decided there was a void to be filled. At that time, there was performance gear for women hiking, biking, running, skiing or climbing. Why not hunting?

In 2008, Prois was born. What began as a necessity for Kirstie’s passion for hunting grew into a go-to gear destination for women around

the world. From bird hunting in the Midwest to chasing Ibex in Kazakhstan, Prois is there. That’s actually in line with one of the company hashtags! #proiswasthere

The gear is performance focused and purpose built. The community that is Prois is what truly sets Kirstie and her company apart. There is a culture, an essence and a sisterhood surrounding Prois that is led and perpetuated by Kirstie. It is a community of women focused on not only being their best selves, but straightening the crown (or in this case, the camo beanie) of the woman beside her. This culture is a direct reflection of Kirstie’s approach to her company as well as her intense passion for creating effective performance hunting gear for the female hunter.

So, why Prois? The word has a few meanings and they embody the product and the person.

*Prowess* – Prois is made by strong women to help strengthen women. A hunt is so much more than an animal at the end. It’s a journey, an adventure and a challenge.

*Process* – Kirstie saw a need for a product and created a process. She created an outstanding full spectrum line of women’s performance hunting gear.

*Animal spirit* – As an intense lover of nature and an avid outdoorswoman, Kirstie’s focus began there and evolved to include the hunt and the harvest. Today, she is a leader not only in the design and production of purpose-built hunting gear, but a true icon in the hunting world – male or female.

That’s the Linked In version. Here’s the unicorn magic that makes the magic of Prois look







like that mythical mono-horned creature. As an ER nurse with no business, manufacturing, merchandising or design knowledge, Kirstie started sketching designs for clothes she didn't know how to produce, distribute or sell. And yet, she learned.

She learned that producing Stateside is hard – but she found a way. She learned about UPC codes and RN numbers. She learned that being a small, low-volume, niche-driven company makes it hard to convince manufacturers to take a chance on you. She learned how to survive (temporarily) on no sleep while she raised two daughters, put in shifts at the hospital and scoured the internet for production sources and distributors.

In true Kirstie style, Prois made its debut at the largest outdoor industry show – SHOT Show. With a horse trailer of naked mannequins, bins

of clothing and random living room furniture, Prois took the plunge into the show circuit – and never looked back.

The timing was perfect. Women were entering the hunting world at a furious rate and desperately needed clothing/gear that fit. Prois had a product, a process and a leader passionate about outfitting the female hunter.

I have had the privilege of being in camp with Kirstie a few times now. Something she mentioned last time we spoke really told the story of business ownership – “I'd love to weave you a story about well thought out success. But, after 13 years in business, I can tell you that the

learning comes more from mistakes and difficulties, rather than a good plan.”

Kirstie, on behalf of women around the world, thanks for creating an incredible product and an amazing community of female hunters. Keep doing great things, and we can't wait to see what's next!

Check out Prois today and drop Kirstie a line! ■

[www.proishunting.com](http://www.proishunting.com)



*Please tune in for our next installment of Leading Ladies: The Olympic Version. We'll be visiting with Amber English, Kayle Browning and Julia Stallings.*



IT'S TIME TO SHOW WHO WE REALLY ARE.

# GUN OWNERS CARE<sup>SM</sup>

Gun owners care about the safety, preventing unauthorized access to firearms, bettering communities, helping those in need and conserving wildlife and wild places for generations to come.

You won't hear these positive stories about real gun owners and pro-gun advocates in the mainstream media. In fact, you're more likely to see insulting messages that try to shun or even shame gun owners due to some heinous acts of criminals. It's time for gun owners to tell their stories, to show how we're making a difference, to show that we don't fit under one identity and to keep others accountable for trying to villainize lawful gun owners.

We're calling on all gun owners to join us.

**WITH YOUR SUPPORT,  
WE CAN DO THIS — TOGETHER.**

[GunOwnersCare.org](http://GunOwnersCare.org)





# Competitive Fashion

Everything you need to stay competitive in 2021



### GET THE LOOK:

- Court 4.5" Skort, \$58, [outdoorvoices.com](http://outdoorvoices.com) |
- Customized Semi-Professional Shooting Shirt, \$50-80, [gungoddess.com](http://gungoddess.com) |
- Skeet II Lady Waistcoat, €79.95, [seeland.com](http://seeland.com) |
- Ryder Indestructible Shoes, \$79, [indestructibleshoes.com](http://indestructibleshoes.com) |
- Earring and Pendant Gift Set, \$29.99, [thewellarmedwoman.com](http://thewellarmedwoman.com) |
- Bullets 'n Crystal Stud Earrings, \$19.95, [gungoddess.com](http://gungoddess.com) |
- Blaser F16 Intuition, \$4999, [blaser.de](http://blaser.de) |
- Briley Spectrum Chokes for Blaser, \$64.95-99.95, [briley.com](http://briley.com) |

# On the Hunt for...

The Perfect Outfit for the Camp or the Field



### GET THE LOOK:

- Kevin's Huntress Stretch Briar Pant, \$149, [kevinscatalog.com](http://kevinscatalog.com) |
- Laksen Ladies Hen Cotton Shirt, £69.95, [onthepegclothing.co.uk](http://onthepegclothing.co.uk) |
- Diana Cobalt Blue Double Sided Belt, £85, [howesandwayko.com](http://howesandwayko.com) |
- Le Chameau Veirzon Jersey Ladies Fit, £150, [onthepegclothing.co.uk](http://onthepegclothing.co.uk) |
- Bottomlands Riggers Tote, \$245, [overunderclothing.com](http://overunderclothing.com) |
- 20 Gauge Leather Tassel Shotgun Necklace, \$29.95, [bulletdesigns.com](http://bulletdesigns.com) |
- Browning 22 Caliber Stud Earrings, \$24.95, [bulletdesigns.com](http://bulletdesigns.com) |
- 40 Caliber Bronze Hammered Link Bracelet, \$29.95, [thewellarmedwoman.com](http://thewellarmedwoman.com) |
- Beretta A400 Xtreme Plus Max 5, \$1900, [beretta.com](http://beretta.com) |
- MacWet Short Climatec Sports Gloves, £32.99, [macwet.com](http://macwet.com) |
- Ladies Wrist Warmers, £21.50, [houseofcheviot.com](http://houseofcheviot.com) |
- Elk Ivory & Elk Casting Ring, \$425 custom order, [peggyhouchin.com](http://peggyhouchin.com) |
- Brielle Scarf, £30, [howesandwayko.com](http://howesandwayko.com) |



# Range Apparel

*Staying within  
range of your  
budget without  
compromising  
looking fierce*

## GET THE LOOK:

Concealed Carry Original Leggings, \$89.99, [undertechundercover.com](http://undertechundercover.com) |  
Firearm Female Crew Neck Tee, \$25, [primerandco.com](http://primerandco.com) |  
Waterproof Single Shot Belt, \$55, [overunderclothing.com](http://overunderclothing.com) | Half Vest Range Vest, \$49.99, [gwgclothing.com](http://gwgclothing.com) |  
Revolver Necklace, \$49, [gungoddess.com](http://gungoddess.com) |  
Small Revolver Sterling Earrings, \$75, [peggyhouchin.com](http://peggyhouchin.com) |  
Sig Sauer P238 Purple Luster, pre-owned, \$779, [libertygunstore.com](http://libertygunstore.com) |  
Pistol Twist Headband, \$12, [primerandco.com](http://primerandco.com) |  
Gold Foil Pistol Case, \$9.99, [gwgclothing.com](http://gwgclothing.com) |  
Rush MOAB™ 6 Sling Pack 11L, \$69.99, [511tactical.com](http://511tactical.com) |

# Spring Into Sporting Clays

*A Fresh Perspective  
—Pants Optional*

## GET THE LOOK:

Align Sport Dress, \$145, [olayasport.com](http://olayasport.com) |  
Breathable Flat Bottom Sneaker Shoes, \$39.99, [puregemcofitnessapparel.com](http://puregemcofitnessapparel.com) | Hella Supremo  
Blue Snake Cartridge Pouch, £165, [howesandwayko.com](http://howesandwayko.com) |  
20 Gauge Adjustable Shotgun Ring, \$34.99, [thewellarmedwoman.com](http://thewellarmedwoman.com) | 12 Gauge Shotgun  
Dangle Earrings, \$19.95, [bulletdesigns.com](http://bulletdesigns.com) |  
Iris Teal Cap, £35, [howesandwayko.com](http://howesandwayko.com) |  
Beretta A400 Xplor Action, \$1900, [beretta.com](http://beretta.com) |  
Past Recoil Shield, \$22.45, [wildhareshootinggear.com](http://wildhareshootinggear.com) |  
Gold Foil Shotgun Case, \$39.99, [gwgclothing.com](http://gwgclothing.com) |  
New Shooter Kit & Range Bag, \$169.99, [agirlandagun.org](http://agirlandagun.org)





**BEAUTY** *Hyperpigmentation*

THE SAGA OF DISCOLORATION  
BY NATALIA GONZALEZ

At my salon, I see a lot of women who struggle with discoloration, also known as hyperpigmentation. These patches of darker skin are typically caused by one of three things: sun damage, acne scars exposed to sun, and hormone fluctuations—particularly during pregnancy—combined with sun exposure. These dark spots can not only be found on the face, but also the hands and other areas frequently exposed to the sun.

As you can see, the common factor here is the sun. The sun's rays are the true culprit of this darkening of the skin. Overproduction of melanin is the official definition of hyperpigmentation. Unfortunately, it is not like tanning where the skin gets a nice even darker tone. Hyperpigmentation affects smaller areas, bigger than freckles, but small enough to be patchy. This uneven skin tone is one of the leading reasons that women wear makeup, to even out their skintone.

First, I want to address how to prevent hyperpigmentation. Naturally, if the main cause has to do with sun damage, then preventing sun damage is the key. Sunscreen should be your best friend. Not all sunscreens are created equal, but once you find one that you love, stick with it. Wear it every single day, rain or shine. I have touched on this subject in a previous article but I will reiterate. There are chemical sunscreens and physical sunscreens. What's the difference? Chemical Sunscreens are absorbed into the skin and convert UV rays into heat. Physical sunscreen sits on top of the skin and reflects UVA and UVB rays. I prefer to use a physical sunscreen because I have found that overall, it irritates my skin less. When you use a chemical sunscreen, you need to reapply more often, and can run into more allergy issues. Just be sure to check your labels, look for ingredients such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, these are both non-comedogenic (non pore clogging).

Once you have a good sunscreen, you are winning 80% of the battle. If you are protecting your skin from the sun, then the sun cannot damage it. Now comes the 20% that helps prevent discoloration. Brightening the skin with regular use of a product containing Vitamin C (ascorbic acid,) helps protect the skin cells from damaging environmental factors like pollution. It promotes collagen production which gives the skin a youthful glow. Imagine you are drinking the healthiest smoothie ever. This is what Vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant is doing for your skin.

Now that you know how to protect your skin you can start doing these things right away. What do you do when you already have damage? My first suggestion is to find a local esthetician, this will allow you to have a professional look at your skin and make suggestions on how to repair your skin to optimal beauty. The best way to treat hyperpigmentation is with an ingredient called hydroquinone. This is a bleaching agent that will lighten and fade the dark spots as well as slow the production of melanin. You must get this from a facility with a medical director, or a dermatologist. Just like it took months or even years to create the hyperpigmentation, it takes months and years to correct it. But fear not, it can be improved if not completely erased over time.

There are also laser treatments that help significantly with hyperpigmentation. However, these methods can be extremely expensive, harsh, and require some downtime after each session. It is even possible that the laser could have a negative effect and leave the skin worse than before, making this my least favorite option.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out. [luxebeautyhouston@gmail.com](mailto:luxebeautyhouston@gmail.com)



*Our Top Picks*

<p>Collagen C Booster Luxe Beauty Houston \$125 <a href="http://luxebeautyhouston.com">luxebeautyhouston.com</a></p>	
<p>SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic \$166 <a href="http://dermstore.com">dermstore.com</a></p>	
<p>Vita-C Glycolic Brightening Serum \$80 <a href="http://murad.com">murad.com</a></p>	
<p>Elta MD Tinted UV Facial Sunscreen \$25-31 <a href="http://walmart.com">walmart.com</a> <a href="http://amazon.com">amazon.com</a></p>	
<p>Cetaphil Daily Facial Moisturizer SPF 35, \$16 <i>Available at Amazon, Target &amp; Local Stores</i></p>	
<p>CeraVe Facial Moisturizer w/ Sunscreen \$13 <a href="http://amazon.com">amazon.com</a></p>	







