

By Dale Karch & Todd Smith

New Trends In Traditional Sales

You want to hear a secret? Sure, we've got hot new products and great new twists on familiar products, but we have something else. Something you should know. We'll share that with you shortly. Read on. By the time you finish this column, you'll be armed with the knowledge of how you can effectively cash in on the cutting edge trends of the traditional archery market during the 2006 selling season.

The traditional market is straightforward and simple but at the same time it's ever changing and driven by new trends. For years the largest segment of the traditional side of archery were the old-timers, the die-hard traditionalists who were enamored with the romance of recreating the "old days" of bow hunting with self-bows, longbows and recurves. Through their equipment choices, they were able to recreate bow hunting as it was in the days of Pope and Young, Howard Hill, and Fred Bear. The mere thought of shooting anything but a wooden arrow would put them into convulsions.

More recently, we're experiencing a shift. There's a new "traditional archer" emerging. We call them, "Traditional Archery, The Next Generation." These are the archers who have been shooting compound

bows, but they're looking for something more. They're changing weapons and making the move to the high performance longbows and recurves of today for what they can do, not for where they came from. They aren't making the switch to hunting with longbows and recurves because they enjoy recreating the old days. They have other requirements. They use "traditional" equipment for a couple of basic reasons. One of the most compelling is the "rush factor". They know that using traditional gear means getting closer to their quarry. They understand that closer means MORE. More challenge, more satisfaction, and more excitement. There's no denying the adrenaline rush that courses through your veins as you close the gap on a big game animal. It's addictive.

The inherent benefits of the new high-performance equipment are another draw for these serious bowhunters making the move to longbows and recurves. They see these kinds of bows as an advantage, not a self-imposed handicap. They favor this equipment because it follows the K.I.S.S. principle. By keeping it simple you get rugged and dependable equipment with fewer moving parts resulting in less to go wrong. (Or to come out of tune.) Cutting edge tradi-

tional gear is indeed simple but far from primitive. These bows are reliable, shot after shot, even when subjected to the real world challenges of hunting through the toughest conditions Mother Nature can dish out. They're marvels of engineering, pushing the performance levels of the materials used to build them. These bows are also deadly accurate under all conditions, especially in the hands of accomplished bowhunters. Think of them as rugged, simple yet highly effective high-tech weapons and you'll understand why so many compound hunters are making the switch.

You want to know the hottest trend in traditional archery? The big secret? Here it is. The definition of a "traditional archer" is changing. **The peaceful warrior of old is being replaced by a younger, highly motivated modern-day bowhunter who demands the best in equipment.** Their bowhunting is their passion and they're willing to spend whatever it takes for quality bowhunting gear that they can depend on under all conditions, in all weather, to perform consistently time after time at the moment of truth. These bowhunters are the men and women who are taking over as the largest demographic in the traditional archery market. If you plan for this up and coming trend and

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anticipate the needs of this growing market segment you'll be able to cash in on their aggressive buying behavior and add significant dollars to your bottom line.

Now that you know and understand the fastest growing segment of the traditional archery market, what follows regarding the hottest equipment for 2006 will make perfect sense. Our top performing products are those that these new traditional archers are demanding.

What about bows? They'd better be cutting-edge, pack plenty of punch, and perform as promised. The new archers want it all and it's out there for them.

For the next generation if it's a longbow, it's got to be a hybrid. The new hybrid longbows are heavily deflexed and reflexed for optimum energy storage and speed. Longbows like the custom "Desert Fox" from Tomahawk Bows and the "Savannah" by Martin Archery are the only way to go. They offer good bowhunting stability for accurate shooting, combined with impressive power, and performance. No wonder bows like the "Desert Fox" and the "Savannah" are in high demand.

If they're looking for a recurve bow, the beautiful "Cheyenne" from Bear Archery is a perfect candidate for you to stock. Designed specifically for bowhunting, this



At left, details of the riser section of the Desert Fox Longbow by Tomahawk.

At right, The "Savannah", by Martin Archery offers excellent power-to-pull performance and is a good choice for those looking for an entry level longbow that will rival custom performance.



high-performance bow will get the job done time after time. That's very important to these serious bowhunters.

For 2005 we noted the trend toward carbon arrows, heavy broadheads and points. That trend is still strong and expanding. Sales of these items continue to grow dramatically and there are no indications that the trend will slow anytime soon. In carbon arrows, Gold Tips, Carbon Express, and even the exotic Axis arrows from Easton are flying from longbows and recurves worldwide. The benefits of the Axis system are many and we predict that the Axis product will capture a large piece of the traditional archery carbon arrow pie this year.

Think heavy. Traditional bowhunters are from the, "heavy arrows = deeper penetration" school. They want finished arrow weights of 500-600 grains and sometimes even more. The average weight of a carbon arrow for traditional shooters is in the 8-11 grains per inch range. If the average arrow length is 29", that gives you a starting mass weight of 232-319 grains. That's why heavy broadheads and points (125 grains and up) are still the norm with the single most popular weight being the 125 grain versions for all field points, blunts, and broadheads. For broadheads the Zwickey, Magnus, Simmons, Steel Force, and the Wensel Woodsman will be your top sellers to traditional bow fans.

In addition to the weight factor, an interesting phenomenon in traditional archery is the attention paid to the strength of the broadhead to arrow attachment system. These guys won't tolerate equipment failure and tests have proven that aluminum screw-in adapters are normally the weakest link and account for most of the reported 'broadhead failures on big game.



Remember heavy broadheads for the traditional bowhunters. They're shooting 125 grains and up. Heads like this, cut-on-contact, 150-grain Woodsman are exactly what they're looking for.



These glue-in, glue-on inserts add an extra 100 grains to your arrow set-up and increase the strength of the broadhead to arrow transition.



These rugged steel inserts replace the common aluminum broadhead inserts and offer the advantage of more mass weight and strength.



This clever new insert eliminates the need for adhesive! Easy to install or remove and excellent for in the field repairs.

For that reason the glue-in glue-on broadhead adapter is very popular. These adapters replace the screw-in inserts normally found in aluminum and carbon arrows. They are glued into the shaft, and then the broadheads (or field points, Judos, etc.) are glued onto them. This configuration is extremely strong and for that reason is gaining in popularity. That's why we introduced 100-grain solid brass glue-in glue-on adapters. Take a 125-grain point; add a 100-grain adapter and you've added 225 grains to your overall arrow mass-weight. (There's even a 100 grain brass glue-in adapter for the Axis shafts!) Some bowhunters still don't want to mess with gluing on their broadheads; they want the convenience of screw-in heads. For them we suggest the 75-grain, 100-grain or

125-grain solid steel broadhead adapters. These offer the strength and weight of steel to allow the archer to get arrow mass weight where they want it and to have confidence that there will be no arrow failure at the broadhead juncture.

One of the most unique products to cross our desks this year is yet another insert. This insert is billed as a "no glue insert". It sounds impossible, but they work! Slide the insert into the shaft and then, as you screw in your point, a tapered piece is forced forward, expanding the slotted body for a tight fit inside the shaft. No glue, easy to remove at any time and actually makes a fantastic, "in the field" repair part.

To meet the needs of traditional archers in 2006, keep thinking carbon arrows with points and adapters

designed to increase their mass weight and you won't go wrong. Remember 8-10 grains of mass weight per pound of bow weight and you'll be ahead of the game.

For strings, think light. Whenever you're discussing increasing the performance of bows you must consider high performance strings. For a string material to be high performance it needs to be as light a possible and it needs to stretch as little as possible. Dyneema is the lowest stretch, lightest material we have found and it is the material or string type to stock. That's why Dyneema string material is taking over the traditional string market. Both Brownell's Fast Flight Plus and TS1 string materials are made with Dyneema fibers. Traditional archers are pretty good at keeping up with new product offerings and they're looking for strings made from Dyneema. Start stocking your shelves with the raw material, the finished strings, or both. As we mentioned in our previous column on string making, many traditionalists will want to make their own strings. If you keep string making supplies on hand for them like string boards, serving jigs, and how-to DVD's, you'll be able to cross-sell them most of the time.

Feathers are the choice of traditional archers. For shooting off the shelf they're a must. As always, we recommend you stock at least a small supply of feathers. If you want to keep the selections to a minimum, stick with five-inch left wing shield only. The top two selling colors are white and yellow. Have those on hand and you'll cover the majority of your feather requests. If you're a fan of color you'll be interested in the newest



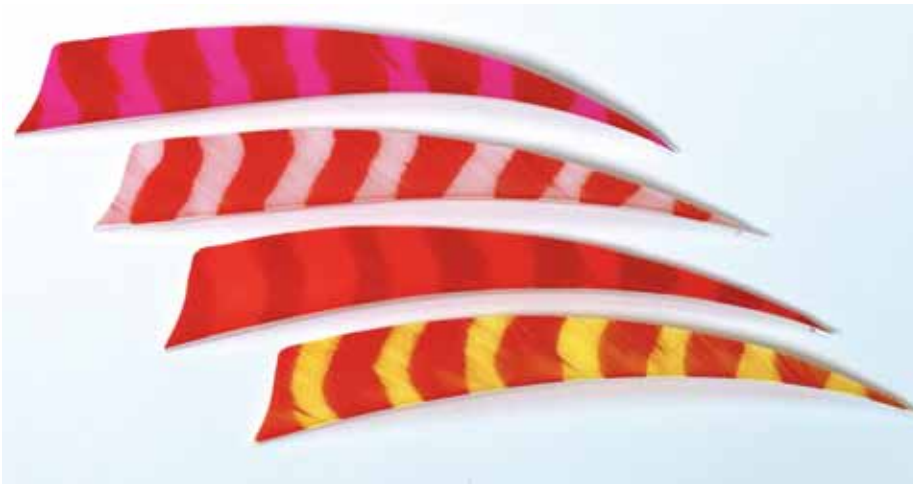
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Trueflight Feathers have taken barred feathers to a new level with their new "Bright Stripes". The bright colors, while non-alarming to deer, will make your arrows easier to find after the shot.

feathers from Trueflight Feathers. They're called the "Bright Stripes" and the colors are like nothing you've ever seen before in feathers. Bright pinks, yellows, reds, oranges, and even white in assorted combinations. One thing we've noticed with the "Next Generation" is they like to be flashy. So it stands to reason that these new

colors are going to be quite popular. We especially like the red-orange combination. Imagine them on your arrows. Not bad! Because they're so new, they're not really a trend yet, but an item worth keeping an eye on.

Another area experiencing dramatic growth targeting high tech applications are accessories. In gloves

we have a few new "killer" styles. First up are the "Skookum" gloves from Alaska Bowhunting Supply. Skookum gloves utilize a soft and smooth proprietary material called Mega-Tuff on the fingerstalls. Using Mega-Tuff instead of leather improves the archer's feel of the string and cuts down on friction resulting in a smoother release and a faster arrow. The Skookum gloves are available in a traditional leather palm style as well as a WindStopper Fleece style for cold weather shooting. The leather version is the stronger in terms of sheer number of sales, but for those in colder climates, the WindStopper Fleece is sure to be a hit. WindStopper Fleece acts much like Gore-Tex in blocking air movement so they keep your hands warmer. The special anti-slip rubberized material on the palms offer a welcomed non-slip grip.

The "Wet Shot" shooting glove from American Leathers is another high-tech glove that deserves special mention. This clever new glove utilizes neoprene and chamois with



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Mega-Tuff fingertips are the key to this Skookum Regular glove's overwhelming success. They offer a smooth, slick release shot after shot.

nylon finger stalls resulting in a shooting glove that offers a super smooth release in any weather. It's impervious to weather and is especially well suited to bowfishing. As a matter of fact, the glove was developed out of frustration from destroying all-leather gloves while bowfishing. These gloves are breaking new ground. They're innovative, universal, and they fill a real need quite nicely.

Once in a while a product combines old and new for an awesome application. That's the case with the new "Qiviut" musk ox string silencers. (Pronounced "key-vee-ute") "Qiviut" is the luxurious under wool from the arctic musk ox. (A true prehistoric mammal.) It's extremely lightweight and less weight on your string means minimal affect on arrow speed. At the same time it's naturally water repellent and it quiets bowstrings right now! The neutral brown hue complements any bow and they're very easy to install. These silencers are going to be big. Stock up now!



These exotic Musk Ox wool silencers are a perfect combination of lightweight materials, water resistance, and string silencing capabilities.



Many bowhunters hunt often in colder temperatures. The Skookum with WindStopper keeps your hands warm, helps you keep a good grip on your bow, and offers the Mega-Tuff finger stalls for a perfectly smooth release.

Last year we mentioned that many traditional bowhunters were getting out of the trees and hunting from the ground. That is still true and sales of ground blinds like the Double Bull and Ameristep lines are still strong. This year we feel the need to mention a slick new seat designed for "on the move" bowhunters, but it fits the bill for fishing, gun hunting, sporting events, and hunting from ground blinds perfectly. They're called All-Terrain-Seats and come in two models at this time. The "Bull" and the "Buck": They are incredibly strong



Light, portable, and strong with the benefit of a rotating seat, the "Buck" and "Bull" all-terrain seats may be the perfect seats for use in ground blinds.



and portable with a claim to fame of a rotating seat. We never know exactly where that shot opportunity is going to come from and the true value of this seat is evident when you need to twist slightly to get yourself set up for your shot as the animal approaches. Lightweight, portable and strong, these seats are hard to beat.

For 2006 remember that traditional bowhunters are changing. With those changes come new needs and new buying patterns. To stay ahead of the game, recognize those needs and offer the products they're demanding. Give them high-performance traditional bows in both longbows and recurves. Stock plenty of heavy carbon arrows, remember the "weight-adding" accessories, and cut-on-contact broadheads from 125 grains and up. Take advantage of the advancements in shooting gloves and other popular accessories that sell well and offer better margins. We're looking forward to another exceptional year of traditional archery growth and we hope you are too. Traditional archery is on the move. Grow with us!

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