

# Behind the Counter

by Randy Booth

## Selling Accessories

All too often, the glitz of a new bow blinds a consumer. He or she thinks about what makes the bow so attractive: the looks, the speed, the accuracy. What takes a back seat almost every time? The accessories. What's a good bow without proper accessories? It's like filling a Lamborghini with 87 octane. It's just not right.

Pointing the customer to the right accessories for his or her bow is crucial for the success of the shooter. At the end of the day, the right accessories are as important as the bow itself. Maybe more so.

One of the most important factors in choosing the right accessories is fitting them to the shooter. Is the shooter a treestand hunter or does he or she like to stalk? This is pivotal to what kind of rest you install on the bow. A treestand hunter might be okay with a rest that allows the arrow to move around a bit before the shot. A spot-and-stalker, however, might want a full containment rest so the arrow doesn't bounce around while he walks through the woods.

Sights, of course, are the same way and it all starts with the fixed vs. adjustable debate. You've probably rattled off the pros and cons plenty of times before and that likely won't stop any time soon. Your customer will want to know why he should go one way or another and why it could make him a better shooter. I've found a lot of customers just want to keep it simple while others are willing to go out on a limb and try new, innovative sights. Of course, that's up to the customer and the savviness of the salesman.

Whether the customer goes to an old favorite or reaches out and tries something new, it's up to the salesman or technician to make sure that customer feels comfortable when he or she leaves the shop. If the customer isn't comfortable or doesn't at least have a general grasp of the new equipment, you might see him or her back within a week to switch back to the old standby. Sometimes it's hard to let go of a good thing, even if it is an outdated 15-year-old sight that weighs just as much as the bow it is on.

In today's bow world, there is also the almighty dollar to consider when it comes to purchasing accessories. In some cases, a new bow can wipe out the bankroll. It would be wise to let the customer know that in most cases, he can get more bang for his buck by putting cash into the accessories and not just the bow.

If a customer can't afford a \$200 rest, then he can't afford a \$200 rest. It's sometimes as simple as that. But if he can't afford a \$100 rest and is buying a \$1,400 bow, maybe his priorities need to be adjusted. There are a lot of great \$600 and \$700 bows on the market. In most cases, if a person buys a \$700 bow and spends the rest of the money on quality accessories, like a micro-adjustable sight or a dozen hard-hitting, consistent arrows, that archer will be better off in the long run. Sometimes it can be hard to explain this phenomenon

to your customers. Guys brag about their bows to their buddies, not about their rests or stabilizers. It's important to let your customers know that great bows are built in many different price ranges and they can all be accurate. At the end of the day, you'd rather be the accurate guy in the group than the guy with the most expensive or fastest bow. Quality accessories can help you achieve this.

To sell accessories, you must know the accessories. Archers are a picky group of people. They ask a lot of questions. If you're trying to sell a \$200 sight, you need to know the answers to their questions and there may be a lot of them. The better you know the line of accessories you offer, the more likely you're going to convince your customer to put cash in your drawer.

Just like when buying a bow, the inevitable "What do you shoot?" question always comes up. It's a great question because the customer figures the person working at a shop has shot all of the bows and seen the best and the worst. If the salesman or the entire staff is shooting with a Trophy Taker Smackdown Pro, for instance, the choice of rest can be an easy one for the customer if it falls within his or her price range.

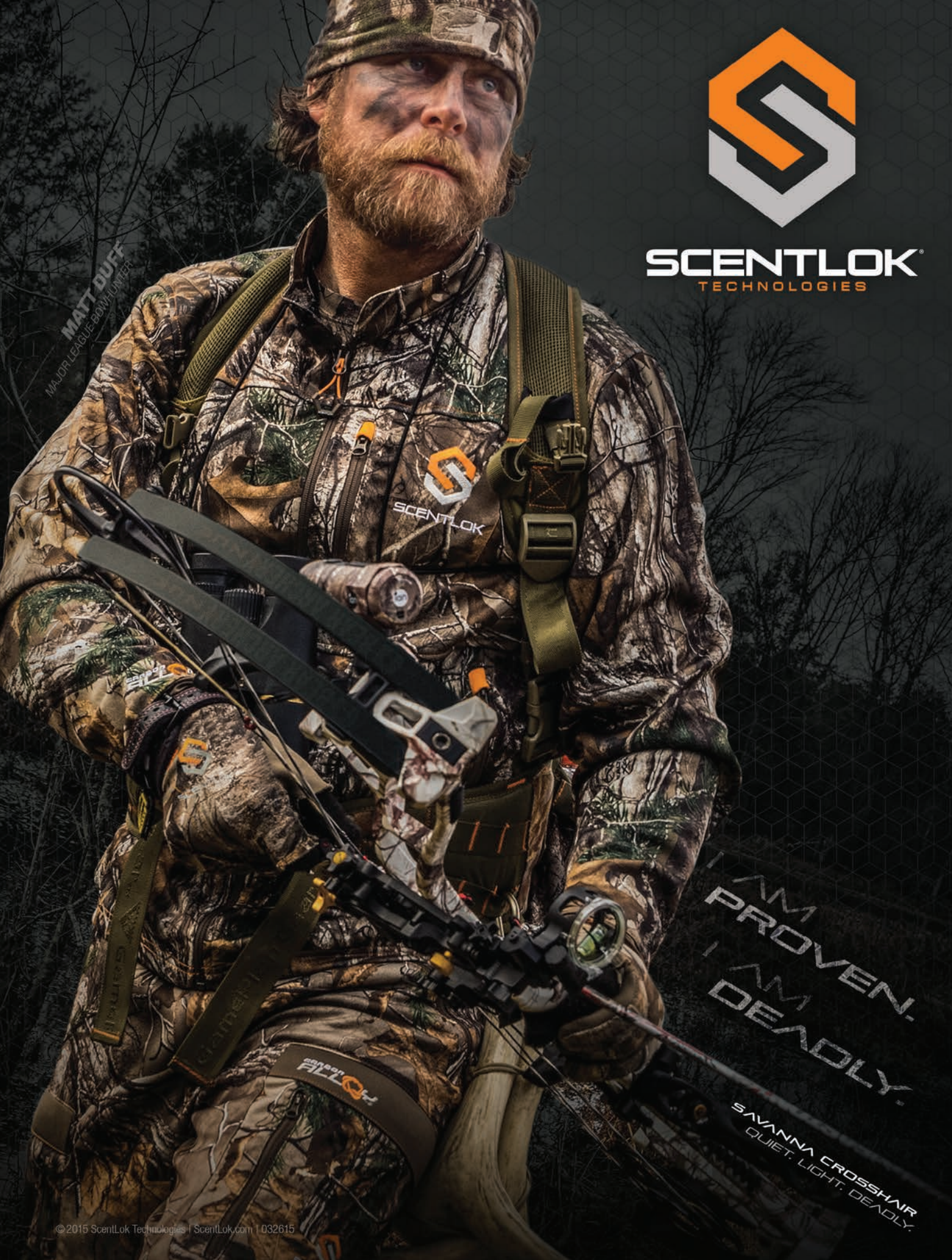
The most pivotal accessory to any bow outfit is perhaps the arrows. There are so many factors to be considered in picking the right arrows that there might as well be textbooks on the subject. Draw length, draw weight, arrow length, field point weight; the list goes on and on. The only way to really get the right arrow is to know how the variables will affect that arrow. And the only way to know that, truly, is to read up on all of it. When I first started this job, I spent many nights researching arrow components on the Internet and how to manipulate the spine of the arrow. It was tedious but, in my opinion, completely necessary.

There's more I could talk about when it comes to accessories (we could devote an entire issue to broadheads) but the bottom line is that every customer is unique. There is not one bow or rest or sight that will be perfect for every archer who walks through your shop's doors. Having a variety of choices allows the customer to find the setup that fits him or her best. And if that customer feels like you went the extra mile to accommodate him or her, you'll be seeing a lot more of that customer down the road.

**Editor's Note:** Randy Booth is a bow technician and salesman at one of the largest sporting goods stores in New England. He enjoys shooting all year long, including indoor spots and outdoor 3-D. He earned his degree in journalism from Keene State College in New Hampshire. Before starting his career in retail, Booth was a newspaper sports writer and sports editor and covered professional sports on the Internet.







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