

TRADITIONAL FOCUS

By Dale Karch & Todd Smith

What's Hot for 2007?

Bows! There are always hot new bows. If you shoot longbows and recurves, you know how it is when you see some sleek new bow with dramatic color combinations and hot new innovations for the first time. You can't help yourself. You get that familiar and almost irresistible urge to buy, one more bow. Brace yourself because there are quite a few impressive new bows in the 2007 lineup.

First we'll divide longbow and recurve shooters into three general groups. The first group, we call the "high-tech traditionalists". This, the fastest growing segment, includes two demographics, the folks coming from compounds looking for a little more challenge but not wanting to give up precision and performance, and those who have already been shooting traditional gear but are looking for the ultimate in accuracy. These are the ranks of recurve shooters who view technological advances as beneficial to better shooting and they've been keeping an eye on recent recurve developments. They embrace the most advanced bows and arrows as a means to

increase their shooting effectiveness. They're a very demanding, often analytical group, ever searching for the best in their equipment and themselves.

The next group contains the largest number of archers and we'll call this group, "modern traditional archers". These are those who love the look and feel of all-natural wood under clear glass, the ones who prefer the rich history combined with the simplicity and challenge of traditional archery as a sport. They are so wide in scope that it's difficult to pinpoint them. For the most part, they're interested in the look and feel of their bows and arrows as much as their performance. Many of them prefer wood arrows, but as a group, they are not adverse to carbon and aluminum at all. They are what you normally think of when the term traditional archer or

traditional bowhunter is mentioned. They're a very dedicated group and enjoy the equipment, the challenge, and the beauty of a well-shot arrow in flight.

Finally, the third group, we'll refer to as the "primitive archers". They're into the primitive crafts and "way of life". They prefer self-bows, bamboo backed bows, or any bow without the use of fiberglass. Wood arrows are the standard for them and you find many of them tipped with flint and obsidian arrowheads. They are interested in the history of primitive archery and take great pleasure in learning all the crafts like; bow building, string making, arrow making, and flint knapping. They are also very dedicated, willing to learn to make their own gear, and interested more in the journey than the destination.

This is a banner year for bows.



The new Takedown Supreme from Bear Archery might be the most beautiful bow from Bear since the signature series of the 1980's.

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We've discovered some exciting new bows for each of these groups. Some of the most exciting developments are in recurves, so let's start with bows for the "high-tech traditionalists".

Hoyt is introducing the new GameMaster II in 2007. The original GameMaster, with its radically engineered riser, has been well received by compound and recurve shooters alike and this "new and improved" version is sure to continue to impress. The GameMaster II is designed for the 3D shooter and bowhunter alike and priced to please. Hoyt has priced this bow within the reach of anyone interested in taking up the recurve. This 62 inch recurve with its 21 inch riser is designed for smooth, accurate shoot-

ing. For many bowhunters stability, smoothness, and consistency shot after shot is the goal. The Hoyt, GameMaster II fits that bill perfectly. Available in 62 inches and weights of 40 pounds to 60 pounds.

One bow company has become a traditional archery phenomenon. Das Kinetic Bows, owned by David Sosa has been producing high-end custom takedown recurves yielding uncompromising performance. Realizing the potential market and the need to get his bows priced lower than his high-end custom versions, he arranged to offer a standard model available exclusively through 3Rivers Archery this year. The Dalaa, (Apache for "The One") shows Das Kinetic

engineering through and through. The Dalaa, like the GameMaster II, was designed with the bowhunter and 3D shooter in mind. This bow is totally adjustable for tiller, pre-load, and utilizes customized W & W limbs. We believe that David has created what could be the most accurate, adjustable recurve ever offered to the bowhunting community. If precision is your game, take a serious look at the "Dalaa Silver Classic" and the "Dalaa Camo Elite". Available in three lengths, 58, 60, and 62 inches, and weights from 40 pounds to 60 pounds there's a perfect match for any bowhunter as the limbs are interchangeable. No wonder its name means, "The One".

The new Hoyt GameMaster II is sure to continue to please both 3D shooters and bowhunters alike.



The new Bamboo Viper longbow from Martin Archery with its unique carbon facing and clear belly glass offers graceful lines and deadly performance.



The Barta Bow, a no-frills working-man's bow is an excellent choice for anyone looking to accept the challenge of longbow hunting.



The SR Swift from the Great Plains Bow Company offers the look and feel of a beautiful all wood recurve with top-notch performance. The riser section is shown at right.



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The middle group, the “modern traditional archers” have the most choices this year. First there’s the stunning new “Takedown Supreme” from Bear Archery. With its impressive use of exotic rosewood and zebra-wood, you’d be hard pressed to find a more beautiful bow. Then, to make it almost too good to be true, it’s a takedown! Not just any takedown either, a no-tools-needed latch system widely recognized as the best takedown system ever designed. This is Fred Bear’s beloved 60 inch hunting bow, after an upgrade, for today’s demanding traditional bowhunter. This special edition bow will be available for right-handers in weights of 45 pounds to 60 pounds, and for left handed shooters in 50 pounds and 55 pounds only.

A serious contender for best new

recurve of the year is the new “SR Swift” by the Great Plains Traditional Bow Company. It’s already the top selling bow in bowyer Bill Forman’s impressive lineup. SR stands for “short riser”. Combine the short riser with his longer limbs and you have a compact 56, 58, or 60 inch recurve that’s perfectly suited for shooting heavier traditional arrows with a punch. The SR Swift is available in several sweet riser combinations and three different limb lengths. If your customers are looking for a recurve with graceful classic lines, but demand performance, the SR Swift is a natural choice for them and is available in 45 pounds to 65 pounds.

There are those traditionalists who prefer the modern longbow and there are a couple new longbows deserving inclusion in this column. They are the “Woodland Hunter” from Tomahawk Bows, the “Bamboo Viper” from Martin Archery, and the “Barta Bow” from 3Rivers Archery.

First, we’ll introduce the new

“Woodland Hunter” from Tomahawk Bows. Camo and performance are the main ideas behind this superb longbow. Rich, almost iridescent earth tones of brown, gray, and green create a dramatic camo “chameleon-effect” that blends into nearly any outdoor terrain. Not only does it blend naturally outdoors, it’s an eye-catcher on the range or at home. The same powerful Tomahawk Bow hybrid design is available in three lengths, 58, 62, and 64 inches, and in weights from 35 pounds to 70 pounds. This bow is an impressive combination of beauty and performance and that puts the “Woodland Hunter” at the top of our



The Dala from Das Kinetic Bows shown at right is among the most advanced recurve bows in adjustability and performance ever offered traditional bowhunters.

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Dale Karch, owner of Tomahawk Bows, shooting his impressive new Woodland Hunter with “chameleon effect” camo.



The resilience and shocking power of these slip-on rubber blunts makes them excellent for stump shooting and small game. Tred Barta calls them the "Barta Bunny Busters." At right, a new DVD for Tred Barta fans.

list for the hottest longbow of the year.

Second in our top longbow picks is the new "Bamboo Viper" from Martin Archery. Bamboo has been used for years in high-performance bows. Its light mass weight and quick recovery rate makes it an excellent choice for a limb core, but the bowyers at Martin Archery didn't stop there, the bamboo core is backed with a layer of carbon and the belly is covered with clear fiberglass. This unusu-

al combination yields a bow they consider so quick and deadly that they named it after one of the most deadly snakes in the world, the Viper. This powerful longbow is 64 inches long with a full locator grip, a striking stratawood riser, and is available in weights of 40 to 65 pounds.

Our final selection in longbows is the Barta Bow. (More about Tred Barta later...) The Barta Bow is a no-frills, plain-Jane longbow from 3Rivers



Archery designed for the bowhunter looking for a tough, stable, all-around-good-shooting bow that doesn't have to be "babied". The black glass, maple laminations, and stained birch riser is attractive in its simplicity. Priced well under custom bows, the Barta Bow is perfectly suited for the

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rigors of bowhunting and is already a proven top-seller.

It has been a while since anything exciting has been available in any quantity and quality to the “primitive archer” segment. This year is quite an exception. There are no less than three new bamboo-backed bow blanks ready for the aspiring bowyer to finish. These impressive blanks are bamboo-backed hickory and arrive already floor tillered. All the end-user has to do is complete the tillering process and seal the finished bow to protect it from the elements. These bows can be finished to whatever weight the end-user prefers, up to about 70 pounds. For the primitive archers who aren’t quite ready to finish their own bows they can now choose from three finished bows. One is a bamboo-backed hickory in the 50 to 55 pound range. This bow comes ready to shoot, and since it has no arrow shelf, it can be shot by both left or right-handed archers.

The “Medieval War Bow” and the “Medieval Huntsman” are both built along the line of the old English long-

bow. They bend full length, are solid oak, and backed with linen, a material quite prevalent in medieval days. Another ambidextrous design, these bows are especially popular with reenactment groups like the SCA. (Society for Creative Anachronism see www.SCA.org) Available in a 30 to 35 pound and a 45 to 50 pound model.

Tred Barta is in a category of his own, and like it or not, he’s hot. The controversial star of OLN’s top rated hunting and fishing show, “The Best and Worst of Tred Barta” has reached hundreds of thousands of potential new archers. His no-nonsense, in-your-face style alienates some and



Cordovan faced target style tabs, like the Elite from Cavalier, are being used by more and more serious traditional shooters.

endears others. Still, the net is, he’s bringing more people into our sport of shooting longbows and recurves than any one personality we know of. It stands to reason then that he’d have his own signature line of traditional archery products. Like any TV personality, Tred has his following, and they want Tred Barta products. The line includes quality products at reasonable price-points. There is his signature “Barta Bow”, which we introduced above, his plain but well made all-cedar “Barta Wilderness Arrows” and an array of assorted accessories like a shooting glove, armguard, and a couple of small game heads. One of which, the “Barta Bunny Buster”, is an all rubber blunt designed to slip over either a parallel or tapered shaft. They come in sizes from ¼ inch to 23/64 inch so will fit anything from Easton’s Axis carbons to the large 23/64 alu-



The Dawg Ware Deluxe side quiver is a new concept in side quivers that has it all. It features quiet, easy arrow extraction, and pockets for your extra gear.

Photo Right: Lightweight bow quivers, like the fancy Kanati 4-arrow are selling strong to traditional archers.



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minum and wood arrows. We've already seen strong sales with this line and as Tred's popularity and notoriety increase, so will the demand for his products. Tred Barta is going to be a positive influence in the growth of traditional archery. Like it or not!

Carbon arrows. How can something as common as carbon arrow be a hot new trend? Maybe not new, but hot is still a good descriptive word for carbon arrows. The carbon arrow had a tough go of it breaking into the traditional market. Finally, after many years, they are nearly accepted by all traditional archers as the arrow of choice. Easton's Beman MFX, Gold Tip's "Traditional Hunter", and the Carbon Express "Heritage" shafts all offer a wood shaft look alike and the ease, durability, and accuracy of these arrows have converted most of the market. One new trend for carbon arrows is the offerings of pre-fletched carbons. We've found that many bowhunters would rather purchase their arrows ready-made than to assemble them on their own. Pre-fletched carbon arrows have been available with vanes, but the new offering with natural turkey feathers has proven to be very popular and definitely qualify as a top selling item for traditional archers everywhere.

Vanes! Vanes? On wood arrows? On arrows for longbows and recurves? YES! Believe it not the Bi-Delta vane company has a new vane, the "Rain Vane", "Feather Like". This one-of-a-kind vane has small slits cut in it that self-separate during repeated contact with the shelf. They're specifically designed for shooting off traditional bows. Impervious to rain, these vanes could find themselves into the quivers of thousands of traditional archers. Even if bowhunters carry only one or two arrows fletched with the "Rain Vane" they'll be ready for any weather, especially wet weather. In keeping with the way traditional shooters like to decorate and personalize their arrows with new and unique patterns, the "Vane Stain" stick can be used on all Bi-Delta vanes to create any pattern the archer can think of. Now traditional shooters can leave their nice feathered arrows at home when hunting in wet conditions. Or, they can

carry a couple arrows fletched with Rain Vanes just in case their feathers do get matted down. We had a difficult time believing these would work, but we tested them ourselves and now we know, the Rain Vane works for traditional shooters. We expect big things from them in 2007.

Traditional bowhunters like heavy arrows and need add-on accessories to allow them to bump the weight of their carbons. Weight tubes are a simple solution and are available in 3, 6, and 8 grains per inch models. You simply cut them to length, slide them inside the shaft and enjoy increased penetration. These weight tubes are available in two sizes and fit all the popular 5/16 inch carbons as well as the Easton Axis and Beman MFX's.

Traditional shooters have caught on to the fact that a better release results in better accuracy. **Gloves and tabs** are not looked at as simply finger protection but more as the strategic platform for releasing the string that they really are. Specialty shooting gloves like the American Leathers "Full-Shot" with its full palm glove-like construction and slick nylon webbing on the fingers, the "Dura-Glove" with heavy-weight Cordura on the fingers, and the nylon webbing faced "Barta Glove" from 3Rivers, have taken shooting gloves to the next level. Competition tabs like the "Elite" from

Cavalier and the "Widow-Cordovan" are showing up on more and more traditional archers every day. Not just on the target and 3-D ranges either. We can't mention Cavalier tabs without a word or two about their new "ultra-lightweight" model specifically designed for the bowhunting market. Space age "iso-plast" is used for the faceplate and their slick "super leather" on the face of the tab. The "Widow-Cordovan" tab from Black Widow is an upgraded Widow "Super leather" tab to a slick and durable cordovan leather facing, the most respected leather in gloves and tabs. We've tested this one and can tell you from experience that it's an excellent tab at a great price and well suited to the demands of the bowhunter. Traditional bowhunters are taking notice of the improved accuracy achieved by using these specialty gloves and tabs. They're spreading the word and sales of these items have skyrocketed.

Bowquivers are always a hot item and this is a year of extremes. The most prevalent trend is to smaller, compact, bowquivers. We've seen strong interest in the offerings from Alaska Bowhunting Supply and their 1-3 arrow "Skookum" line, Eagle's Flight with their "Mini-3" and "MiniMax-4" offerings, the 4-arrow "Kanati" bowquiver from

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Anneewakee Archery, and the "Mini-Boa" 1-4 arrow bowquiver from Thunderhorn. These bowquivers all offer lightweight solutions for carrying extra arrows. Then on the "more is better" side of bowquivers, the Tred Barta "Wilderness Bowquiver" offers a standard 6-arrow version as well as an unprecedented 8-arrow model. The 8-arrow model accepts seven broad-head arrows inside the hood and

there's an extra clip on the exterior of the hood for a judo stump-shooting arrow or other blunt tipped arrow. Both quivers utilize the respected Boa attachment system for easy-on and easy-off convenience and are sure to please all bowhunters looking for increased arrow capacity.

Last year, over the shoulder "side quivers" gained momentum with the introduction of the versatile "Sidekick" from Great Northern, and the "GFA" side quiver from G. Fred Asbell. This year's impressive entrant to the category is the "Dawg Ware Deluxe Side Quiver." This quiver offers an easy top-loading feature with a stealthy side-draw arrow extraction slot in a soft "quiet cloth" fabric over a semi-rigid core. Combine those features with an adjustable shoulder strap and two large accessory pockets and you'll see why we rate this quiver as a contender for "best in class." If your customers have been asking for an all-purpose over-the-shoulder side quiver you can't go wrong with the Dawg Ware Deluxe Side Quiver.

The latest traditional bowhunt-

ing DVD's have proven themselves as hot sellers too. The productions continue to improve and the market is hungry for more traditional action. DVD's like the Wensel/Minton "Primal Dreams", Fred Eichler's "Traditional Harvest" series, the first season of "The Best and Worst of Tred Barta, and "Easton Bowhunting's" first season continue to top the charts. Educational DVD's are always strong and the series from John Eberhart on "Bowhunting Pressured Whitetails" is a winner and with its universal appeal it will reach all hunters, not only the traditional segment. Shooting DVD's as well are always in demand and the latest offering, "Masters of the Barebow" by Traditional Vision Quest is a runaway best seller. Volume 1 has been out since October and has been flying off the shelves. Volume 2 is due out sometime in mid-2007 and is a sure bet.

The new Superstringer from Thunderhorn is noteworthy because it is truly a universal **stringer**. The clever crossover design grips both longbows and recurves equally well and eliminates the need for separate stringers. This item is a must-have for any retail shelf.

That's it, our picks of the latest and greatest new products and trends in traditional archery. Traditional archery is growing, and growing fast. As an industry we're evolving, becoming more complex, and attracting people from all walks of life. We continue to seek out, identify, and fill the needs of these emerging segments and help you to do the same. Our industry tells us it's OK to mix the old with the new. We're unique in our dependence on both large established manufacturers and the mom-and-pop, cottage industry suppliers as well. That diversity allows us to be quick on our feet when it comes to filling a need. Traditional archery is here to stay and it's quite an opportunity for anyone willing to join us.

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Traditional shooters recognize the benefit of vanes in wet weather and the new RainVane was designed specifically for longbows and recurves.



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