

# STEPS TO PURCHASING A GUN



## ■ By Mike Ware

Some of the Iowa Sportsman readers have owned and operated firearms and various weapons for a number of years. Yet there are others that are new to either or both. Whether you've achieved coveted "old salt" status in your firearms community circle or not, many times we all fall into one category whether we realize it or not. "Where do I go to buy a firearm?"

This sounds like a pretty easy question to answer, and many of you instantly had a vision of the store or person you do routine business with upon the very hint of the question. Generally speaking the vast majority of us fall into a single category for these purposes, and that is one of being under-informed. First we have to find a source. There are many available. Some great options exist for us and they come at a bare minimum of time, energy, and finance. I always start by asking those I trust, like my friends and family, where they have done business and ask what things made their experience worthy of a return trip. Placing yourself in the circles where others travel in order to pick up some information is always wise. Good examples of this are things like attendance of a Friends of NRA banquet, the annual Iowa Firearms Coalition / National Rifle Association 2A Rally, one of the many wildlife advocacy group fund raisers like Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Wild Turkey Federation, etc. or visiting your local Isaac Walton League chapter. A personal visit and holding a few discussions with people who have been down the road you're traveling will benefit you whether you are fresh to the community or you've already found an establishment that fits your needs.

While I prefer face to face communication whenever possible, the internet is pretty handy for this. With the aid of just a few handy searches you can narrow

down "Box Stores" like Scheels, Bass Pro Shops, and many others that have a number of products under a single roof. There are several Federal Firearms License (FFL) finding services available with large lists of entities quite local you can contact. The means to an end exist readily if you dedicate just a small amount of time to your research and search locally.

At this point you should have a really good idea where you're headed. Stopping in a box store is a sure bet, along with smaller gun shops and hunting shacks, and the occasional phone call to the Mom & Pop shops to learn of their store hours is always a good practice. Many of the smaller stores and Mom & Pop shops take the show on the road to gun shows and this can be a treasure trove if you choose to spend some time shopping. What you're looking for is real simple once you arrive. You should be treated like you are at thriving car dealerships. Well, not the part where they roll up in golf carts, but more so the initial greeting once you arrive. I always appreciate instant eye contact and a greeting to let me know I matter to them. As a small firearms business owner it is incumbent on me to establish a quick reprieve with my customer. Your greeting in many cases can set the stage for all that follows. After all, we're really in the infancy of a potential relationship, so it should start begin on a high note. Product knowledge, a reflection of the market place, and a vision of what can work well for our needs is necessary for

every good retailer.

There are few things I don't want to see as well. I put the brakes on pretty fast if and when a sales person starts talking about 'fit' in terms of weapons. Persons of small stature or youth weapons aside, we can't turn a blind eye to ergonomics. We need to accurately identify the safety features and various controls on the weapon, but if you pick up a weapon and hear "How does this feel?" I'd take flight. Just like your new pair of Nikes, all weapons have a different feel when they are new to you. Make sure you're being asked things like "What do you intend to use the weapon for 90% of the time" and other questions of this nature. There are others I avoid, but suffice it to say you're looking for quantifiable results rather than reflections that are subjective. This way you can narrow the scope of your search and bring a purchase full circle with confidence.

The human condition is very simple when it comes to sales. If you learn to know the person from who you're buying, it will be easy for them to go the extra mile for you and help you when you need it. If you come in the store and your favorite owner or sales person isn't around, you'll be starting the process of relationship building all over again. Thus, find a local source you mesh with and whether you are a single purchase firearm owner, or a true addict, stick with those you know. This practice will serve you well in the long run. 🙌



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