

a *Mass* **BOW**



***Finding the
Right Gift
for the Archer
in Your Life***

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for Christ **XMAS**



THE REALM OF CROSSBOWS HAS EXPANDED IN

so many wonderful ways in the just the past decade alone.

Crossbows are easier and safer to shoot today than ever before. With numerous different manufacturers producing crossbows on the market today, you have many factors to consider in quality and value in purchasing a crossbow.

Crossbows became legal in Texas to hunt with during archery season during the 2009 hunting season. Ever since then, I have owned one, and I love hunting with crossbows more than just about any other method.

Combining archery with the skills we've learned from shooting a rifle makes hunting with crossbows an absolute blast for all ages.

Finding the right crossbow for yourself or the hunter and

archer in your life doesn't have to be difficult. We will explore a few crossbows and supporting archery equipment in the course of this article.

There are two basic types of crossbows—compound and recurve. Excalibur Crossbow is well-known for excelling in the recurve design. Excalibur proves the durability of their crossbow with “destruction challenges,” doing things to their recurves you wouldn't dream of doing to a compound.

Through these torture tests, the crossbows survive and still function as intended. So the recurve's simpler, but modern design tends to be more durable. Durability and longevity are vitally important in any crossbow you choose, but that comes with a higher price tag than some of the lower-cost options found in the compound category.



Crossbows have been legal for use in the archery-only season in Texas since 2009.

Keep in mind that almost all of the major brands produced in the USA and Canada can be trusted. As with many things in the outdoor industry, inferior quality is not tolerated. In other words, you get what you pay for most of the time.

Compound crossbows can be subdivided into two main categories, traditional and reverse draw. Both are greatly advanced in modern times with all of the innovations of today. More on that in a minute.

The main advantage of a reverse draw crossbow is that you have a shorter, more compact set up, especially when cocked. A good example of this is the Barnett Raptor Reverse, a reverse limb crossbow that I own and love.

When cocked, this crossbow is nine inches at its widest point, measured from cam to cam. That makes a crossbow such as this, ideal for tight quarters as in pop-

up ground blinds or stalking through heavy cover.

A traditional draw crossbow has a long-

ger cam-to-cam distance, but can be easier for younger or older shooters to cock. Most crossbows from manufacturers such as Barnett are traditional limb bows, but they vary widely in price and speed.

A good example of a light, fast compound crossbow I own is the Barnett Buck Commander Xtreme (BCX) Carbonlite. I have killed many deer and hogs on video with this model.

When I first started out crossbow hunting and didn't have a huge budget, I went for an economical Barnett Wildcat C5. The Wildcat C6 has since replaced the C5 I purchased many years ago, but this still represents a good bargain for a beginner.

The need for speed has driven many crossbow manufacturers to push the envelope on what is possible, and the crossbows that result are tremendous improvements. Crossbows clocking more than 400 fps (feet per second) are not uncommon such as the Barnett Ghost 415 and Razr models.

In the recurve world, the Excalibur Matrix 405 is a good example of a 400+ fps contender. One reverse limb crossbow,



Traditional (top) and reverse draw (bottom) compound crossbows.

the Scorpypd V-Tech Extreme, claims to be the fastest production crossbow on the market today at a screaming 440 fps. Those are some speed demons for sure, but keep in mind you will pay more a faster bow.

Why is speed so important? You can shoot flatter trajectories at greater distances with a faster crossbow. If you are reaching out past 50 yards, this becomes more of an issue. If you want to keep your shots at normal archery ranges, say under 45 yards, save your money and spend it on broadheads, bolts or other accessories.

I would fail you here if I didn't make it a point to recommend the use of a rope cocking device of some sort, not your bare hands. The main reason is for accuracy as you want to cock your crossbow at the same point on the string every single time.

If you don't have a lot of upper body strength, choose a crossbow with a crank



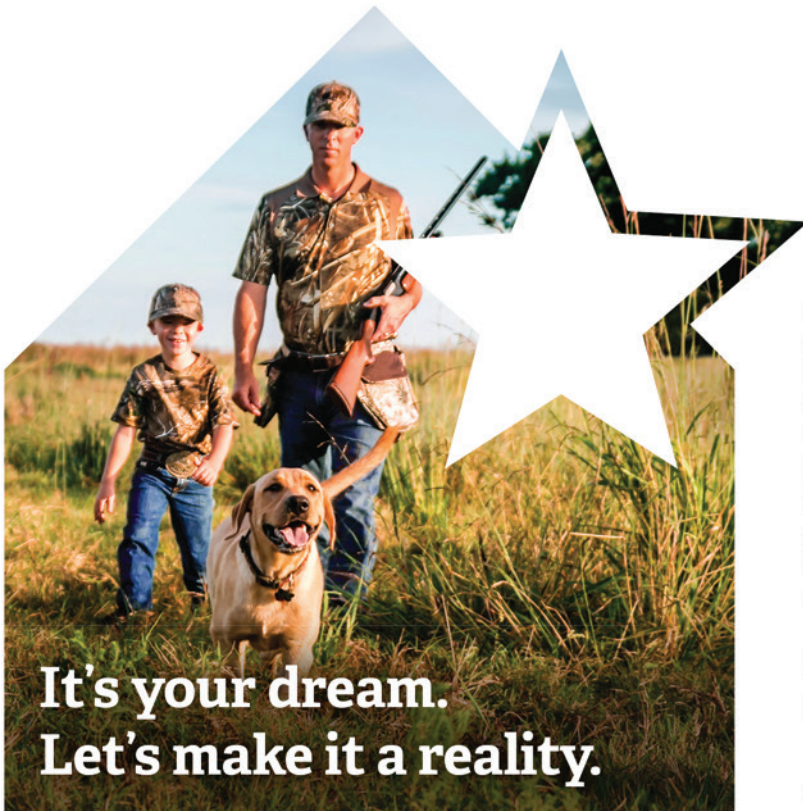
cocking device or one that has an option for this tool. I shot a 100-yard target with a new crossbow brand, Ravin Crossbows, at the SHOT Show earlier this year. That bow's cocking device was an integral part of the design. Another vital tool is a high quality monopod or bipod for a solid shooting rest. This is crucial for consistent accuracy.

For bolts and broadheads, I like Gold Tip arrows and bolts along with Grim Reaper broadheads. I prefer the Laser III model of Gold Tip bolts and the 1 1/2-inch cut radius of the Grim Reaper X-Bow broadheads.

I have taken dozens of big game animals with these broadheads, and I've either watched or heard the animals I shot fall over dead within 100 yards. They usually fall about

seven or eight seconds after running off like a scalded dog.

With so many advances in crossbows and other archery equipment, you have more choices for quality and value than ever before. I hope you and the archers in your life enjoy this journey as much as I do sharing these ideas with you. Be safe and have fun out there!



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