



## **LADIES CHOICE AWARDS Presented to 15 Shooting Industry Leaders at SHOT Show in Las Vegas**

*NV, Las Vegas 1/22/2015:* In front of a standing room only crowd with a multitude of onlookers sneaking a peek through the entryway, fifteen (15) awesome industry leaders accepted 2015 LADIES CHOICE AWARDS for Guns and Gear for the Modern Woman presented by Shooting for Women Alliance, a non-profit 501(c)3 nationally-renowned organization based in Knoxville, Tennessee. “10,000+ women weighed in with all products being used during actual personal defense related training classes, and the crème de’ la crème rose to the top,” explained SFWA Founder, Susan Carrichner Rexrode.

Criteria to be considered as a LADIES CHOICE Award recipient include: a women-friendly company that designs products that actually work well for women, are easy for them to use, perform as they expect, and understands that it is NOT about pink (although customization options are appreciated). All products are tested first by SFWA Certified Instructors for safety and application; however, it is the thousands of women who participate in 4-8 hour training courses offered by SFWA who determine the recipients. The products selected have proven to be of sufficient quality and design to be selected by women who have made the decision to purchase guns and gear for the purpose of personal protection. SFWA is not paid by any recipient to promote their product(s) as LADIES CHOICE, nor does SFWA represent any of the manufacturers. SFWA does not sell products or receive commissions from the sale of products. Important note: Four other well known top selling small concealable carry pistols often purchased for women from two leading manufacturers were in the mix during training and women consistently either refused to shoot them after feeling the recoil and bruises to their hands or sold them to purchase LADIES CHOICE guns. Selections for gear also included popular name-brands that were similarly set aside for LADIES CHOICE gear.

Manufacturers of guns and gear receiving the much deserved accolades included: Barnes Bullets,

Beretta, Blackhawk Holsters, Black Hills Ammunition, Breakthrough®, Designer Concealed Carry, LaserMax, Looper Law Enforcement, North American Arms, Sig Sauer, Springfield Armory, Stealth Gear USA, Taurus, TKL Outdoors, and Walther Arms. “Women want tools that work with their individual qualities that allow them to perform instinctively, without compromise, and ultimately help increase their odds of prevailing if they are attacked,” Susan stressed. “Each product receiving an award had a common feature: women preferred them over competing products, even when compared with those boasting to be female favorites or top sellers. Sadly, many had already spent money on other guns and gear advertised as 'best for women' . . . only to have been disappointed for a number of reasons. These personal protection products were favorites because of quality, style, reliability, function . . . and the ‘no-pain’ factor. Yes, it is possible to find guns and gear that makes it enjoyable to practice with the actual tools a woman will rely on to protect herself!” Specific products receiving 2015 LADIES CHOICE AWARDS included:



**Barnes Bullets TAC-XPD® Defensive Ammunition** comes in popular .380 to .45 caliber rounds and features the personal protection benefits of a deep hollow-point cavity and aggressive mushrooming copper bullet Barnes developed. Jessica Brooks-Stevens and Coni Brooks were present to accept the award on behalf of Barnes Bullets, “We really do appreciate [SFWA] so much. We’ve had Barnes Bullets for 35 years now and we’ve seen so much change. One of the best things about the change is that women are becoming more involved in the shooting sports and more comfortable talking about it. Thanks to SFWA for stepping out and making sure that men are educated well enough to discuss these subjects with women in a way that we will understand. . . . when you’re talking personal defense . . . from a woman’s standpoint . . . carrying these smaller guns . . . we are proud of TAC XPD® because it performs well and stops the threat. We are proud to have such a strong alliance with SFWA and look

forward to more great things.” Coni Brooks was also commended for the exciting video footage of her 2014 Leopard taken in Mozambique which can be viewed via "Women of a Different Caliber" link at [www.MySFWA.com](http://www.MySFWA.com).



**Beretta's NANO 9mm** is perfectly balanced with easily controlled recoil, snag-free sleek styling and accurate sights. Color options and multiple holster choices make the NANO easily customizable and the consistent ability by many women to place one shot in the hole of the prior shot is exceptional, especially for an easily concealable handgun. "This is truly an honor. The Nano is incredibly accurate and very easy to conceal and we are very proud of it," stated Kari Cook, Associate Product Manager, accepting the award on behalf of Beretta. SFWA Founder, Susan Carrichner Rexrode, explained how accurate the NANO is, having herself first shot the gun with the extended magazine and only one round in the chamber, followed by another single round in the chamber shot with the standard magazine inserted, both bullets having landed in the same hole at 21 feet, "Women love the Nano!"

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**Blackhawk's SERPA® Holster** offers ladies the ability to retain control of their handgun in hand-to-hand self defense situations as well as giving them the peace of mind when carrying it around their children. This level 2 retention holster comes with both on-the-belt and paddle style making it versatile and comfortable with varied wardrobe options. Liam Yarborough, Product Manager, accepted the award on behalf of Blackhawk, "Every day when we at BlackHawk wake up, we think about making gear better, and to be here today and to receive an award for something that we have a passion for is something that we are honored and proud to receive. My grandfather and grandmother used to settle arguments between them by going to the range and shooting against each other. My grandfather was wrong a lot!"



**Black Hills' New Pistol Ammunition** was a long-time coming for women who wanted the same high-quality and reliability in a defensive pistol round that they have depended on for years in other venues. Accepting the award, co-owner of Black Hills, Kristy Hoffman, "We have had a longstanding relationship with Shooting for Women Alliance, and they've been great to work with. I appreciate

what they are doing for women." SFWA told those present at the awards press conference, "Jeff Hoffman, wrote an article for *Shooting for Women* magazine more than a decade ago detailing ammunition calibers, application and information that women wanted to know. It is still perfectly relevant and used by women today! The focus is never on the owners of Black Hills Ammunition; they always turn the spotlight on their employees and those who make a difference in their eyes. Through the years, SFWA has determined that women prefer doing business with caring companies like Black Hills!"



**Breakthrough® Advanced Cleaning Fluid** is truly odorless. The cleaning fluid is the only distilled petroleum solvent on the market that works very well, does not leave an odor on your hands, firearm or in the air, and is environmentally friendly. A skeptical media representative present during the awards ceremony immediately opened the bottle he received as a door prize and confirmed, "it really has no odor!" Michelle Vera, General Manager, and Erick Navarro, President/CEO of Breakthrough Clean, accepted the award on behalf of Breakthrough®, "Our intent was to introduce to the market a product that is tried and tested, is safe on all parts of the firearm, can perform and is also safe for the environment." SFWA emphasized, "It doesn't take women more than a minute to react positively when they use the solvent . . . they prefer odorless products hands-down, as long as they work."



**Designer Concealed Carry's *Santa Fe*** is the best-selling style in the company's extensive line of concealed carry purses. Designed to offer the feel and prestige of purses by Louis Vuitton, Coach, Gucci and other famous brands in a carry purse, Kate Woolstenhulme, owner, has gained the attention of discerning women who want off-body carry options that make a designer fashion statement. Holding a host of her gorgeous purses, Kate smiled, "I appreciate that Shooting for Women Alliance has recognized the 'technical-tactical features' . . . I try to adapt [designs] to fit all women . . . there are women in all price points that have all kinds of different needs in terms of their lifestyles or professions, and they need a different look. My mission is really to make sure all women have something they can carry their handgun in and feel safe."



**LaserMax Controlled Activation Lasers** allow women to be in control of the use of the laser on their handgun and offers easy to reach activation. Made for many of the handguns receiving awards, women prefer LaserMax solutions for enhanced accuracy and low-light conditions rather than fidgeting to cover the laser beam or failing to activate the in-grip button that does not naturally align with their

fingers when they grip the handgun on competitors' models. Celia Grimes, Director of Marketing and Laura Evans, Marketing Communications Specialist, accepted the award on behalf of LaserMax, “We really appreciate this recognition. We really pride ourselves on making rugged, reliable sighting solutions, and we appreciate being cited as a Ladies Choice.”



**Looper Law Enforcement's "The Flashbang" Holster** offers women of all sizes and shapes the ability to keep their personal protection handgun close—very close. Securely held in a kydex form fit holster and fastened to a woman's bra, The Flashbang allows higher retention of a handgun because it is well-hidden. Despite the impression that a woman would actually be required to 'flash' an assailant, the handgun can be quickly drawn from concealment without completely raising clothing. While accepting the award, Lisa Looper, co-owner of Flashbang Holsters revealed that "The Flashbang" came from her own attempt to find a solution to conceal her own handgun, “Everything that has happened with the holster has been because of other women's support of having a way to carry without changing the way they dressed. I appreciate that support; thank you so much!”

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**North American Arms 22 Magnum Mini Revolver** is not only a favorite of many women, it has a “fan club” like following of avid loyal owners. The collapsing handle can be added and has a built-in clip to permit easy concealment in any number of positions. The all steel mini-revolver is a first choice for a backup gun and a personal protection solution when concealing a larger handgun is not practical. A multitude of stylish accessories and grip options for the mini revolver appeal to women. Sandy Chisholm, owner of North American Arms, accepted the award, “We intend to continue to manufacture products that deserve your respect and your business.” Sandy is always appreciative of those who purchase and rely on products offered by North American Arms and can be found enjoying conversation with those who visit their booth at national conventions they attend. "I am happy among my peeps!" he shared while in Indianapolis last year.



**Sig Sauer P238** offers many of the favorite benefits of a full size 1911 in a very compact and concealable .380 that women find beautiful, reliable and easy to operate. This small handgun is

responsive to the touch, is easy to keep on target, has excellent sights for fast focus, and fits many different women-friendly holster options. Amy Pevear, Director of Marketing and Vincent Abrams, Director of Global Marketing and Product Planning, accepted the award on behalf of Sig Sauer. Vincent stated, “It is an honor for Sig Sauer to be here today. It is one of our goals and commitments to supply women in the shooting sports industry with products that are reliable, durable and provide them with confidence and fit.”



**Springfield Armory** was honored with two awards, the **EMP 9mm** and the **XD-S 9mm**. The 1911 style EMP 9mm is coveted by virtually every person who pulls the trigger. The XD-S 9mm has a more aggressive grip than competitor models making it exceptionally easy for women to securely hold while shooting with only two fingers on the grip. The triggers on both models (although very different operationally) are smooth and responsive. The slide on both models operate so smoothly and you hardly notice any recoil—smooth as butter! Dawn Wehunt, Range Program Coordinator/Dealer Assistance and Response Team (and competitive shooter who had the joy of assembling her own Springfield Armory competition handgun at the factory, beautifully customized in purple), accepted the awards and emphasized, “The EMP is a phenomenal 1911 – it’s the smallest one on the market in 9 mm. The XD-S . . . has been a huge hit for Springfield Armory and we are very happy to have the ladies vote these two awards to us.”

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**Stealth Gear USA** received an award for the **ONYX IWB Holster** for two reasons: it is very comfortable easily conforming to virtually any body shape, and the “breathable” material offers ladies the benefit of cool, dry and secure carry. Susan explained, “When SFWA was first asked to put the holster to the ultimate test (women of all shapes, sizes and styles) we were accommodating but underwhelmed with yet another claim by a male-owned company attempting to make the perfect product for women. Then, the test . . . thousands of women, thousands of smiles! After which, we could not easily identify the company who made the holster and ultimately succeeded after locating a single business card originally supplied by Tyler . . . *for months*, ladies waited to place their order! This holster is truly LADIES CHOICE!” Co-owners Tyler Ely and Paul Laemmlen accompanied by Randy Ataide, CFO and Jason Goates, Operations Manager, accepted the award, “We’re just really excited how fast the industry is growing for women . . . we are proud to be a part of it. We love building these holsters. The breathable material, and the way they contour around your body, and the comfort is just amazing – women really love it. We are really excited about the year ahead.”



**Taurus Holdings, Inc.** received two awards: **The Judge** and **738 TCP**. Robert Crescenzi, Product

Manager, accepted the awards. "The Judge is a favorite of ladies who want a revolver that has home protection stopping power and can be carried in the car when travelling. Each lady who participates in the 'What Women Want' 6-8 hour course offered exclusively by SFWA Certified Instructors has the opportunity to shoot The Judge and every one of them are smiling from ear to ear when they are presented with the .410 empty shotgun shell as a souvenir! The 738 TCP .380 pocket pistol is perhaps the industry's best kept secret," explained SFWA Founder. Blown away by the responsive smooth trigger pull, the easily manageable recoil, and the extreme accuracy of the gun at 5 yards after shooting 5 rounds repetitively in a hole the size of a nickel, she continued, "I had to do it again, and shooting even faster just to be certain . . . the result was the same! But, best of all, ladies in our courses do it, too, on a regular basis. At half of the price of two well known manufacturer competitors' popular .380 pocket pistols, the TCP offers one thing more that they do not . . . it does NOT hurt when shot!" Robert smiled from ear to ear when he heard the accolades, "Taurus is always looking at ways to improve our products and focuses on innovative ways to design our products that enhance their operation . . . we recently applied for patents on two new innovations which are showcased at our [SHOT Show] booth this year." One new innovation (the "wings" added to the rear of the TCP slide to aid manipulation) described during the press conference, had women attendees heading to the Taurus booth immediately after the event.



**TKL Outdoors**, (part of TKL, the longstanding premiere case manufacturer of cases for fine instruments such as Gibson and Martin Guitars) leading manufacturer of the highest quality weapon transport and

storage cases, received an award for their **INNOVATIVE 24/7 PROTECTION®** which protects the guns and gear women rely on "when [making their] first shot counts!™" Joella Bates, only women in the world to take the Big 5 of Africa with a bow, accepted the award on behalf of TKL Outdoors. "It is important that the equipment you rely on to perform when you need it is properly protected. When I learned of TKL Outdoors' Innovative 24/7 Protection® and the people behind the company, I had to endorse the products they make. They are committed to manufacturing cases for transport and storage that protect our life-saving tools and recreational lifestyles." Joella was sporting SFWA's lavender custom simulated leather embossed dura-hyde exterior mandolin Cloak and Dagger™ Pistol Case which easily transports a number of handguns and is available in a number of colors, showcasing the Innovative 24/7 Protection®.



**Walther Arms** was honored for the **P22**. "We have stood beside thousands of ladies who have shot a total of just a smidgen under a million rounds through four Walther P22s and the only thing that needed to be repaired on the guns was a spring now and then, that's it. They are reliable, are preferred over the less expensive SR22 made by a competing manufacturer, and offer ladies the option to move up to a higher caliber easily with the product line offered by Walther Arms," SFWA explained. Cyndi Flannigan, VP of Sales and Marketing and Becky Bowen, National Accounts Manager and NRA Certified Instructor accepted the award, "I think you'll find that a lot of our products are really good for women, and what we are known for is our ergonomics and our grips. We love being on the ground floor of [SFWA's] organization and your training." SFWA has used the P22 on the firing line since 2008.

Manufacturers who would like more information about getting a product included in the mix for future

LADIES CHOICE Award consideration, please email: [susan@mysfwa.com](mailto:susan@mysfwa.com) or call 865-329-3293. Shooting for Women Alliance, SFWA University and *Shooting for Women* special edition publications are dedicated to empowering women and their families with comprehensive education for the purpose of increasing the odds of prevailing in an attack and enjoyment of the benefits of being equipped with tools that work for each person's individual qualities. Founder, Susan Carrichner Rexrode, was held hostage in her home at knife-point for 5 1/2 hours in 1992 and stalked for two years. She has spent more than two decades helping women enjoy living life in greater confidence empowered with education and tools that fit their lifestyle. Since 2011, SFWA has offered other instructors and individuals the opportunity to make a difference in their area through SFWA "Softer Side of Shooting" Certification and seven sets of curriculum that help women and their families master techniques that do not take a lifetime of training once they have made the decision to consider a handgun for personal protection. Shooting for Women Alliance was the first women's organization to present nationally attended collaborative conferences for women in handgun, shotgun, rifle, archery and self defense held in Nashville, TN (2004) and Phoenix, AZ (2005). More recently, SFWA held a well-attended Ladies Personal Defense Weekend Conference event at Bass Pro Shops in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. Visit [www.MySFWA.com](http://www.MySFWA.com) for the rest of the story and [www.Guns-and-Gear-for-Women.com](http://www.Guns-and-Gear-for-Women.com) for links to the recipients of 2015 LADIES CHOICE Awards including video of the presentations.