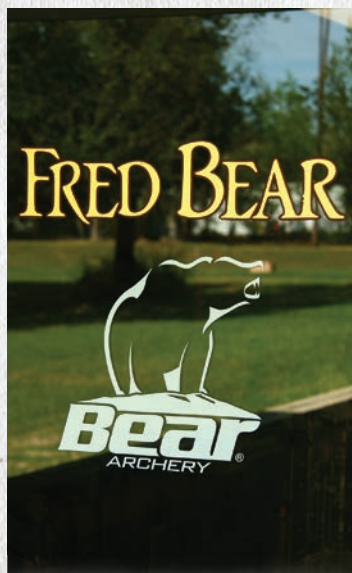


Special Report

Age is No Handicap for this

For archers of a certain age, the Fred Bear name is extraordinarily emphatic, embodying everything we hope and want to be not only as bowhunters but as human beings. Even to the newer set of bowhunters who have little understanding of where bowhunting came from, Fred Bear remains an enduring icon. Those fresh faces are astonished to learn that, yes, bowhunters once shot wood arrows and bows sans fiber-optic sights and fall-away rests, that we all once released bowstrings with our God-given fingers. Archery is filled with hallowed names, with Ben Pearson, Howard Hill, Glenn St. Charles, Maurice Thompson, Will Compton, Ishi, Arthur Young and Saxton Pope among them but it's Fred Bear who has proven most durable, most endearing, to legions of bowhunters around the globe.

Interestingly (Fred Bear's monumental accomplishments well aside), there's no way around the fact that much of Bear's enduring popularity hinges directly on a blitzkrieg of wildly-successful self promotion as Fred Bear the brand. Early on, Bear was a regular on the annual sports-show circuit, where he demonstrated his



Outside the entrance to the Bear Archery Pro Shop stands a statue of Fred Bear's long-standing world's record brown bear; tribute to the incredible feat, and mascot of the company as a whole.



shooting skills for audiences of thousands of enthralled onlookers. Reading "Fred Bear's Field Notes" (Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1976) a chronicle of bowhunting adventures in many lands,

again recently, I am stricken anew by how often Bear relates concern not so much for bowhunting success in and of itself but for capturing enough quality footage to create marketable

1902 - Fredrick Bernard Bear was born on March 5 in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania.

1915 - At 13 years old, Fred Bear went on his first deer hunt with his father, Harry Bear.

1916 - Fred Bear shot his first deer with a firearm.

1919 - Fred Bear served on active duty with the Carlisle National Guard Cavalry in the Cherry Valley coal field.

1923 - A few days after his 21st birthday, Fred Bear left home on the train for Detroit, Michigan, where he began work as a pattern maker for the Packard Motor Car Company. He attended night school at the Detroit Institute of Technology.

1926 - Fred became the Plant Manager of the Jansen Manufacturing Company, making spare tire covers for the auto industry.

1927 - Fred Bear saw Art Young's film "Alaskan Adventures" at the Adams Theatre in Detroit. He later met bowhunter Art Young at a Rotary luncheon and the two became friends. They built archery equipment in Fred's basement and began shooting together.

1929 - Fred Bear went bowhunting for the first time in a cedar swamp near St. Helen's, Michigan.



Bear Archery's 80th Anniversary

By Patrick Meitin

Famous Bow Manufacturer



Fred Bear's first whitetail deer, taken in 1935, was a big event. Few believed bowhunting was a viable method of harvest in those days, so pioneers like Bear (lower right) were forced to find success with primitive equipment and sway an unbelieving public.

"movies." These sentiments and worries are woven intermittently into the very fabric of that seminal bowhunting book. I can attest from first-hand experience: filming hunts with even

modern video equipment (as opposed to the temperamental film cameras of Bear's time) is far from romantic labor. Filming takes away from the overall hunting experience and transforms fun

and relaxation into stress and tedious toil. It's all business, plain and simple.

Bear's first bowhunting films included a 1942 production by Jack Van Coevering, sports editor of the Detroit Free Press; 1946's "Moose Diary," based on a Canadian moose hunt conducted the year before and 1951 and 1952 depictions of Bear's first western bowhunts for mule deer, pronghorn and elk. These productions set the stage in making Bear Archery films standard promotional material. The complete Fred Bear DVD collection was assembled and introduced in 2010, allowing enthusiasts to enjoy many of these early productions, as well as many other interesting Fred Bear moving-picture tidbits.

The Big Picture

Despite his relentless spin doctoring in direct relation to the company he piloted so skillfully, Bear managed never to lose sight of the big picture, of advancing the greater good, the idea of archery and bowhunting as something larger than himself. Fred Bear somehow managed to remain stalwartly free of today's egocentric posturing, though if anyone had a right to engage in a bit of "the braggies" (as Ernest Hemingway

1933 - Fred Bear and Charles Piper founded the Bear Products Company. Their primary products were silkscreened advertising materials. Off in a corner of the small building, Fred made archery equipment and it soon became a full time business.

1934 - Fred Bear won the Michigan State Target Championship.

1935 - Fred Bear shot his first deer with a bow and arrow.

1937 - Fred Bear patents were granted for the modern shooting glove.

1937, 1939 - Fred Bear won the Michigan Field Archery Championship.

1942 - The first Fred Bear bowhunting film was produced with Jack Van Coevering.

1943 - Fred Bear began work on his first takedown bow.

1945 - Fred Bear's first bow and arrow big game other than deer, a Canadian Moose, was taken.





The three-piece Fred Bear Custom Takedown was Fred Bear's own design and one of his favorite hunting bows and proudest accomplishments. The 1970 design remains much the same today, allowing nearly instant assembly without tools, limbs plugging into a groove- and stud-fit riser base and locked in place by hinged latches that secure the limb solidly.



Despite being heavily involved in the evolution of the modern compound bow, Fred Bear couldn't quite shake his traditional roots, sticking to the recurve bows and wood arrows he had become so accustomed to through his lifetime of bowhunting,

put it), it would have been Fred Bear.

This is only part of the overall allure of Fred Bear the man. There is Bear's humble personality, borne of rural Pennsylvania beginnings. Even his later-years moniker "Papa Bear" hints at a folksy, gentle demeanor; someone who puts people at ease, an old friend, a man you could sit down to a relaxed chat with. From a manufacturing standpoint, the innovations Fred Bear introduced to archery equipment would change the sport forever: for instance, patenting the first shooting glove in 1937, fiberglass bow backing and the first bow quivers in 1946, written bow registration and warranty in 1949, more reliable unidirectional fiberglass laminates and pneumatic bow presses to speed production in 1951, the first working recurve bows

(Kodiak II) in 1954, Bear Razorhead broadheads with replaceable bleeder blades in 1956, snap-on bow quivers in 1963, high-compression wood handle material in 1965, the tool-free-assembled Takedown recurves in 1969, screw-in Converta Point arrows in 1968 and magnesium alloy bow handles in 1971. With friend Glenn St. Charles, Fred Bear also helped pioneer the Pope & Young Club and was one of the club's first directors. In fact, Pope & Young's first Awards Program was held in Grayling, Michigan, as a direct result of Bear's involvement.

The company Fred Bear (and partner Charles Piper) founded in 1933 eventually spawned some of the most popular bows the sport has ever witnessed: the Grizzly (introduced 1949), the Kodiak Magnum (1961), the Super

Kodiak and Super Magnum (1967 ½), the 1970 Takedown and the 1973 Super Grizzly, just for some examples. A product of American archery's infancy, Bear knew the times when bowhunters were forced to hand-hew their own equipment in order to participate in the sport, or pay dearly for hand-crafted bows made by a very few skilled bowyers across the country. He envisioned reliable and most of all affordable archery equipment produced for the masses. That dream began to take shape by the early 1950s, was made whole by the early 1960s and continued through the 1970s, a timeframe when Bear Archery came to all but dominate the traditional bow market.

1946 - Fred Bear's first black bear was taken.

1946 - Fred Bear patented the use of fiberglass as bow backing.

1946 - Fred Bear secured his first bow quiver patents.

1946 - "Moose Diary," Fred Bear's second bowhunting film, was produced.

1947 - The Bear Archery plant opened in Grayling, Michigan.

1949 - Bear Archery bows carried a written registration and warranty for the first time.

1949 - The Bear Grizzly bow was introduced.

1951 - Fred Bear developed special presses for bow bonding.

1951 - Unidirectional glass was developed and patented; for use as bow backing and facing.





Bear Archery Products Operations Manager Neil Byce III compares a Super Kodiak bubinga handle section to the template used to assure risers remain within specs during production. The long tapers at each end assure a smooth transition into the recurve's limbs.

Shaping The Legend

It's interesting to note that despite today's mythical status, Fred Bear did not make his mark overnight as a bowhunter or businessman. Born Fredrick Bernard Bear on March 5, 1902, Bear enjoyed his first deer hunt in 1913, at

age 13, while accompanying his father Harry Bear into the Pennsylvania woods. At age 14, Bear shot his first deer with a firearm. With the outbreak of World War I, Bear served on active duty with the Carlisle National Guard Cavalry, safeguarding Pennsylvania's

strategic Cherry Valley coal field. A few days after his 21st birthday in 1923, Bear took a train to Detroit, Michigan, where he quickly took a job as a pattern maker for the Packard Motor Car Company while also attending night school at the Detroit Institute of Technology, studying engineering. By 1926, Bear became the plant supervisor of the Jansen Manufacturing Company, a company that created spare tire covers for the auto industry. All of this early manufacturing experience would shape latter approaches to the bow company he was destined to found.

But it was the 1927 Arthur Young (of Pope & Young fame) film "Alaskan Adventures," which Bear took in at Detroit's Adam's Theatre, that would forever alter his life path. Bear later met Art Young at a Rotary luncheon, where the two became fast friends, soon afterwards shooting and building archery equipment together in the basement of Bear's home. Bear remained unable to bowhunt for his first time until 1929, when he stalked the cedar swamps near St. Helen's, Michigan. In 1934, Bear won his first Michigan State Target

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Championship (a title he would earn again in 1937 and 1939) and the following year, he took his first deer with a bow and arrow near Blaney Park, Michigan, using a simple tie-on broad-head laced to a wood arrow with thin wire and a bow carved from an \$8 Osage orange stave. Of course, by 1933, Fred Bear and Charles Piper had founded the Bear Products Company, providing silk-screening for advertising materials for the auto industry, Bear reserving a small corner of the cramped building to produce archery equipment. As interest in the sport grew, archery became a full-time business.

The rise of Bear Archery to prominence did not come without trials and tribulations. Bear Archery, after all, emerged during the dark days of the Great Depression. I've watched video interviews of Fred Bear in his tranquil latter days, relating tales of hostile debt collectors at the door and near financial disasters, including one example caused by a chronic failure of aluminum-backed bows and a rash of warranty returns that the company in good faith made good on, even as it nearly went bankrupt. But Bear persevered, eventually buying his partner out and forging ahead stubbornly. In 1947, Bear moved the plant to the banks of the AuSable River near Grayling, Michigan, between the AuSable and Huron National Forests,

having outgrown his Detroit building and wanting to be closer to his favorite hunting and fly-fishing territory. He lived with his new wife, Henrietta, in an unheated cabin during that first year of financial transition.

He also continued to rack up firsts in his bowhunting career. Many are chronicled on film for all to enjoy, including a 1945 Canadian moose, a 1946 black bear, a 1952 elk and pronghorn, a 1954 mule deer, a 1955 safari to French Equatorial Africa, a 1955 western Canadian moose and mountain caribou, a 1957 British Columbian bowhunt resulting in his world record Stone sheep, a 1960 world record Alaskan Kodiak bear, a 1963 British Columbian grizzly hunt (featured in Life magazine) and Indian Bengal tiger, a 1964 elephant on a Mozambique safari with Author Godfrey, a 1965 lion and Cape buffalo (Mozambique) and polar bear (after three attempts) and a 1967 Asiatic buffalo on Marajo Island, Brazil, just to offer highlights.

Chairman Bear

From here, the trajectory of Fred Bear's brainchild becomes less about the man himself and more about the company bearing his name, though throughout the several sales and transitions to come, Fred Bear retained the president and chairman seats until his death in April, 27, 1988 at age 86.

Bear sold his hugely-successful archery company to the Victor Comptometer Corporation in 1968. Many ask the obvious question of why but they should recall that Bear was by then 66 years old. He wished to raise money to further his promotion of archery and bowhunting to the masses. The sale also gave Bear time to concentrate on what he loved most: researching and developing new bow models. His offices invariably included an alcove with a complete shop, where he often tinkered on new designs through the day. Despite the sale to the Victor Comptometer Corporation (and then Walter Kidde in 1976), most of the Bear Archery traditional classics in production today were conceived and initially produced during those years.

By 1978, Bear Archery had outgrown its Grayling, Michigan facility. Bear was 76 and Michigan's winters were becoming less tolerable. Union-inspired strikes and labor disputes provided the final push out of Michigan. After considering several locations across the nation, Bear Archery moved to Archer Road (named after the town of Archer) in Gainesville, Florida, where the facility is located to this day. There, Bear was able to enjoy a climate friendlier to his worsening emphysema (in his later years, he was forced to tote an oxygen bottle everywhere he went) and hunt and fish nearly year round. The

1951 - Fred Bear had his first western bowhunt.

1952 - Fred Bear's first elk and first antelope was taken in Wyoming.

1954 - Bear Archery produced the first working recurve bows (Kodiak II).

1954 - Fred Bear had his first successful western mule deer hunt.

1955 - Fred Bear had his first overseas hunt in French Equatorial Africa.

1955 - Fred Bear had his first western Canada hunt for moose and caribou.

1956 - Bear Archery marketed new Bear Razorhead hunting points.

1957 - Fred Bear took his world record Stone sheep in British Columbia.

1958 - Pope and Young's first Awards Program was held in Grayling.

1960 - Fred Bear took his world record Kodiak bear in Alaska.

1960 - Bear Archery developed clear "Crystalight" Bearglass.



compound bow had begun to make its mark, slowly eroding the traditional models' hold on the sport. Bear adapted and rode the new trend with models such as the heralded Whitetail Hunter, never speaking badly of the compound bow as many seem to believe. After a lifetime of shooting traditional bows, he found the let-off from compound bows distracting to his fluid, instinctive shooting style, so he never completely got the knack of shooting them, preferring his standby Takedown recurve to the very end. Otherwise, Bear was right in the middle of the compound bow revolution, even purchasing Jennings Archery in 1983.

New Beginnings

A succession of company owners followed: Hanson Industries (1980s), U.S. Industries (1994), Fenway Partners (1995) and finally Charles Palmer's 1999 takeover under the North American Archery Group umbrella, including Golden Eagle, Satellite, Jennings and Bear. During the early 1990s, the compound bow had taken over as the weapon of choice among the majority of bowhunters and Bear Archery remained at the forefront of innovation. Bear Archery sponsored nearly all the best shooters of the time, many tournament seasons having all the top winners shooting Bear bows. But without Fred Bear, by all accounts a hands-on man with uncompromising standards, to keep things on track, by the late 1990s, the once-legendary name faltered under lack of direction and most especially technological innovation, the traditional bow line on which the company was founded figuratively dying on the vine. By the early 2000s, the brand was in danger of fading away, the Fred Bear name alone not enough to prop up lackluster products.

In June 2003, Escalade Sports, a large sporting goods conglomerate headquartered in Evansville, Indiana, purchased the North American Archery Group out of bankruptcy. In a community as intimate as the archery industry, the rumor mill was bound to kick in. Some gossip, I can relate from personal observations; some said Escalade's new archery division was given three years to sink or swim. If management couldn't make it fly in that time, it



An early aerial view of the large Bear Archery plant in Gainesville, Florida.

would be allowed to die. Some said that before purchasing the company, Escalade sold nothing but ping-pong tables (they do, in fact, own a division selling such wares) and didn't know bows from basketballs. Perhaps the biggest stretch was that Bear products would thereafter be made overseas.

Gossip is rarely based in reality. One is left to wonder how these things get started. The essential truth was that

Escalade invested millions of dollars in basic infrastructure before it could ship its first bow. The 156,000 square foot Gainesville manufacturing facility needed a new roof and the air-conditioning units and CNC machines occupying the building since its construction in 1978 required replacements and rebuilding. It was hardly a viable business plan for a company applying a sink-or-swim approach. In regards

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to Escalade's previous involvement in archery, they in fact have roots in the industry dating back to 1927, as Indian Archery & Toy Company, the oldest archery company in the United States. You might remember them more recently as Indian Xi, which sponsored archery luminaries such as Miles Keller and Larry Wise. Most importantly, all Bear Archery Products bows are still made right here in the USA, more specifically in Gainesville, Florida.

The Midas Touch

Escalade's Bear Archery Products division is staffed by a multitude of hard-core archery enthusiasts. Company employees Ross Rinehart (International Sales Manager), Jeff Pease (National Sales Manager), Jack Bowman (President), Josh Sidebottom (Engineering Manager), Jason Pickerill (Marketing Manager), Steve Dalp (Product Manager) and Neil Byce (Director of Operations, Gainesville, Florida), for example, have extensive experience in the archery industry and an underlying passion for bowhunting. Escalade CEO Bob Keller developed an interest in bowhunting after exposure to his Bear Archery crew and is now a fervent archer and bowhunter himself.

In a very short time, Bear Archery Products, under Escalade's guidance, became a force to be reckoned with. As Marketing Manager Jason Pickerill put it to me recently, "A company that has something to prove is dangerous." It's fair to say this transformation, some might say emergence from the flames,



Bear's fast new Motive 6 is at left, while the 2013 Domain is shown at right in a RTH or Ready To Hunt version.

begin with the Truth line. Since that year, 2006, Bear Archery wares have become increasingly innovative with each successive season. Today, Bear

compounds are once again among the most cutting edge and hardest-hitting in the industry. The traditional line, through concerted effort by Bear

1961 - Bear Archery introduced the Kodiak Magnum bow.

1963 - Bear Archery introduced snap-on bow quivers.

1963 - The Fred Bear grizzly hunt in British Columbia was featured in Life magazine.

1963 - Fred Bear took a Bengal Tiger in India.

1964 - Bear Archery's Two Season Hunter advertising theme began.

1964 - Fred Bear took an elephant on an African safari with Arthur Godfrey.

1965 - Fred Bear had his third African safari for Lion and Cape buffalo.

1965 - Bear Archery introduced high compression handle material.

1965 - Fred Bear took a polar bear on his third try.



Archery Products management, has quickly regained its place as a single-string touchstone, appealing to both long-time traditionalists and new converts who only wish to expand their enjoyment of archery in addition to the compounds they regularly wield.

The Charging Bear

Reaching back 12 quarters, the Bear Archery Products compound line began to gain momentum and grab headlines with models such as the Attack (2010), the Carnage (2011) and the Anarchy (2012). Important advances included milled aluminum risers taking on more aesthetically pleasing lines and shedding mass (all models today weighing about or less than 4 pounds), Max Pre-Load Quad Limbs providing faster and quieter past-parallel geometry, Zero-Tolerance Limb Pockets providing more accuracy and silence, Dual Arc Offset String Suppressors providing more positive nock separation on release and quieter shots without speed-robbing string silencers, and 4x4 Roller Guards for additional buss-cable control and wear elimination, just to name a few.

Cam systems have evolved with each new season as well; last year's Flat Top Cam and Bear Skeleton Cam systems (both single cam systems) are perfect examples of the forward-thinking technology prevailing with Bear Archery Products' engineers. The 80 percent let-off Flat Top -- powering the forgiving 35.25-inch, 7.25-inch braced Anarchy retained in this year's lineup -- rockets arrows to IBO speeds of 330 fps without the challenging draw cycles normally associated with flagship speed bows. In fact, the Anarchy was one of the smoothest, most forgiving compounds I shot last year. I can say the same of the 2011 Carnage (held over in this year's lineup), a 32-inch, 7.25-inch braced dynamo that propelled arrows to 345 fps while retaining a silky draw cycle. The latest Bear compounds retain these solid selling points while featuring progressive performance features worn by some of the biggest names in the industry.

The big news for 2013 revolves around three new cam systems. Bear Archery has entered the hybrid cam market with the all-new H13-Cam,

at the same time refining the single-cam market with the new S13-Cam and E3-Cam designs. The H13-Cam is found on three 2013 models: the flagship Motive 6 and 7 and the lower-priced Method. The S13-Cam is offered on the Empire and the E3-Cam on the more affordable Domain. Essentially, the Motive and Empire bows are the same designs as the Method and Domain, only with different cam systems on each, hybrid or single cam, as per customer desires.

All-New Bear Compounds!

The Motive 6 includes 350 fps IBO speeds, a 4-pound mass, a 6-inch brace and 32-inch axle-to-axle dimension powered by a H13-Cam system equipped with dual stainless steel sealed bearings, the riser holding the 4x4 Roller Guard system. The Motive 7 is much the same but includes a more forgiving 7-inch brace and 340 fps IBO speeds. Both Motives include an MSRP of \$900.

The Empire is essentially the S13-Cam (single-cam) version of the Motive 7, including identical specs and dimensions, but has 330 fps IBO arrow speeds and a lower \$850 MSRP. Each of these models also includes an improved Adjustable Offset String Suppressor system for more tuning control.

The \$900 MSRP, 3.8-pound Anarchy, offered again this year by popular demand, remains the same, including a 330 fps IBO rating and the most forgiving specs in the entire Bear Archery Products lineup, ideal for western hunters in the habit of stretching shooting range to the limit and looking for maximum accuracy potential

or for those with exceptionally long draw lengths.

The Method (the Bear bow I chose for the coming year) uses the company's H13-Cam Hybrid system but gives the shooter a tad more forgiveness in a 33-inch axle-to-axle length and 6.75-inch brace height, spitting arrows to an impressive 340 fps IBO. My test bow tuned instantly, is silky-smooth during the draw cycle, promotes proper back-tension shooting form (owning a solid back wall and shallow letoff valley) and delivers arrows with amazing authority. It holds a carbon cable slide instead of the Roller Guard and retails for a reasonable \$650 MSRP.

Finally, the new Domain is essentially the same as the Method but holds an S3-Cam single-cam power system instead of the new Hybrid cam. It includes a slightly higher 7-inch brace and a slightly slower 322 fps IBO rating; but also an MSRP of only \$600. The added forgiveness is free of charge. Both of these bows represent great bargains for customers who want to experience flat-out performance but also have enough cash left over for arrows

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and broadheads.

There are also six budget-priced and youth/women bows in the 2013 lineup. The Legion offers 318 fps IBO speeds in a 30.5-inch, 7-inch braced bow with an MSRP sticker price of only \$400. The Encounter and Outbreak have an MSRP of only \$300, the former 30.5 inches long with a 7.75-inch brace and 310 fps IBO speed and the latter measuring 29.25 inches axle-to-axle, including a 7.25-inch brace and 308 fps advertised IBO speeds. The Siren is a top-grade compound made for serious women archers, measuring a compact 31 inches with a 6.75-inch brace, 300 fps arrow speeds, a 27-inch draw length and a 60 pound draw weight. It retails for around \$600. The Home Wrecker's a more affordable women's option, with a \$400 MSRP, a 28-inch overall length, a 7.25-inch brace and a 280 fps speed rating. Finally, the Apprentice 2 was designed to give youth shooters enhanced performance, using a 27.5-inch, 6.125-inch braced platform to push arrows to 265 fps. Its MSRP is only \$280.

Regaining Traditional Supremacy

In 2011, Bear Archery Products began an all-out attack to recapture the traditional marketplace it once all but dominated. An ingenious business plan resulted in an incredible 70 percent growth in the traditional division in a single year (as compared to 2010). This started with more than a

year spent seeking detailed input from dealers and customers, the consensus, according to Director of Operations Neil Byce III (a 30-plus year Bear employee), being that Bear should return to the look, feel, shootability and quality that made '60s and '70s models great. This initiated the return of several Bear classics from yesteryear (some holding "Grayling Green" glass) and a couple all-new models, including the AuSable long-bow as well as the reintroduction of the famed Fred Bear Master Shooting Glove. This push included a traditional-only catalog for the first time since the appearance of compound bows.

Last year, several more traditional models were introduced, including the 64-inch, exotic African bubinga-handled Super Kodiak models (MSRP \$619) and the 64-inch, B-Riser, #3 limbed Takedowns (MSRP \$819). The revolutionary Fred Bear Takedown was also offered with gorgeous bubinga risers and limb fadeouts in 56-, 60- and 64-inch models. Demand for all Bear traditional models has been so great, 14 new employees were hired to help keep abreast of demand.

The big surprise for 2013 is that hard-core traditional shooters can look forward to the reintroduced

The riser from the Fred Bear Takedown is shown at near right while next to it is the 2013 version of the Kodiak, which can use Fast Flight strings.



1967 - The Fred Bear Museum opened in Grayling, Michigan.

1967 - Fred Bear perfected his famous Takedown bow.

1967 - After 17 years, the Kodiak bow ceased production.

1967 - Bear Archery introduced the Super Kodiak & the 48 inch Super Magnum.

1967 - Fred Bear hunted Asian buffalo on Marajo Island, Brazil.

1968 - Bear Archery introduced Converta Point arrows.

1968 - Bear Archery was sold to the Victor Comptometer Corp. Fred Bear remained President.

1968 - "The Archer's Bible," the first of Fred Bear's books, was published.

1970 - Bear Archery introduced the Takedown.

1971 - The introduction of magnesium alloy handles for takedowns.





Kodiak, which is modeled after the 1959 Kodiak but constructed of modern materials to make it Fast-Flight compatible so the latest string materials can be used. It retains the look and feel of the iconic recurve Fred Bear used to bag many of his most important trophies, including I-Beam construction of Purple Heart and Bolivian rosewood, original brown- and caramel-hued glass, a feather rest and a leather grip. This elegant 60 inch bow will retail for a suggested \$680.

In all, there are now 14 recurve and longbow models (22 counting length variations) included in the traditional lineup. On the short end, there is the Kodiak Magnum (MSRP \$469), the quick-handling, 52-inch dynamo offered as one of the first "brush bows" in the industry. The longest one-piece recurve is the Super Kodiak, including the Grayling Green Super Kodiak in 60- and 64-inch models, with a gorgeous three-piece bubinga handle fashioned using an original 1967-1/2 model as a template but built using more fast-flight compatible materials. Sturdy Dymond Wood, an epoxy-impregnated maple dyed various hues and laminated to create a material adding stability and aesthetic appeal to many of the traditional models, is now part of many of said models. The standard Super Kodiak (\$519) includes a two-tone handle made of this durable material.

The newly-refined three-piece

Strung and unstrung images of the AuSable longbow from Bear Archery.

- 1972 - The Fred Bear Sports Club was opened to the public.
- 1973 - The Super Grizzly was introduced.
- 1976 - Fred Bear's second book, "Fred Bear Field Notes," was published.
- 1977 - Walter Kidde & Co. took over the Victor Comptometer Corp and Bear Archery.
- 1978 - Bear Archery introduced the Super Razorhead.
- 1978 - The Bear Archery plant moved to Gainesville, Florida.
- 1979 - Fred Bear's third book, "Fred Bear's World of Archery," was published.
- 1980 - The Fred Bear Signature Bow was announced.
- 1981 - Bear Archery introduced stainless steel Razorheads.




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Takedown also includes epoxy-impregnated maple riser construction, with a charcoal hue and red accent strip and limb tips. It's now designed around a more substantial grip closely mirroring original '69 models but still offers instant assembly, an inlaid working compass and Fascor limb cores (impregnated maple that offers additional performance). Recurve lengths of 56, 60 and 64 inches are possible through A Riser/#1 Limbs and A Riser/#3 Limbs or B Riser/#1 Limbs, and B Riser/#3 Limbs, respectively. Of course, the bubinga versions (already touched on) are also now included. From a personal perspective, I've bowhunted successfully over the years with a good number of Fred Bear Takedowns and the newest incarnations are smoother and



Trophy Ridge React sights are quick to set up thanks to a variable pitch lead screw that adjusts pins.

sweeter shooting than ever, something more pointed when subjected to my extra-long draw length.

Also look for the 58-inch,

affordably-priced Grizzly (MSRP \$339), the reintroduced 58-inch Super Grizzly (\$449) with a riser accent stripe and Fast-Flight compatibility, the

1983 - Bear Archery celebrated its 50th anniversary.

1988 - Fred Bear passed away on April 27th.

1995 - Hanson Industries sold Bear Archery to U.S. Industries.

1997 - Fenway Partners acquired Bear Archery from U.S. Industries.

1998 - Bear Archery introduced the Montana Long Bow.

1999 - Charles Palmer purchased Bear Archery and renamed it North American Archery Group.

2002 - Bear Archery teamed with legendary archer Byron Ferguson to promote the sport of traditional archery.

2002 - The Royal Safari and Patriot longbows were introduced.

2003 - In June, Escalade Sports purchased all of the assets of North American Archery Group of which the brand Bear Archery was a part.

2006 - Bear Archery introduced the Supreme series of bows using exotic woods.

2010 - The complete Fred Bear DVD collection was introduced.

2011 - The 50 Year Anniversary version of the Kodiak Magnum was offered.

2011 - Bear Archery brought back the Super Grizzly.

2011 - Both A and B Riser Takedowns were brought back with a new look.

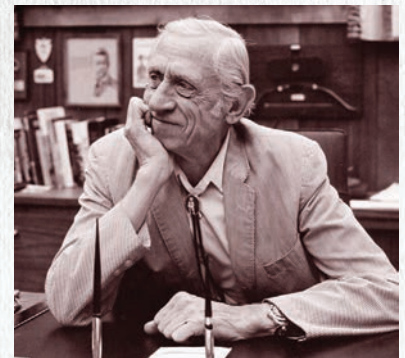
2011 - The AuSable Long Bow was introduced.

2011 - Grayling Green Glass used in the Kodiak Magnum & a new classic version of the Super Kodiak.

2011 - The Fred Bear Master Shooting Glove was brought back.

2012 - Two versions of the famous Take-Down bow were introduced.

2013 - Bear Archery introduced a new Kodiak bow modeled after the famous 1959 Kodiak.



super-short SuperMag 48 (\$379), the 56-inch performance-driven Cheyenne (\$489) and youth Kodiak Cub (\$200) recurves, the Byron Ferguson-inspired Patriot Longbow (\$519), the affordable and no-nonsense Montana Longbow (\$339) and the hard-shooting and gorgeous AuSable Longbow (\$569) with reflex limbs and a semi-pistol grip.

To own a modern Bear Archery traditional bow is to own a piece of history. Each is still made almost entirely by hand, just like in Fred Bear's day, using the very presses designed and crafted by Papa Bear himself and brought from Grayling, Michigan. In the end, there's really little difference in a production Bear recurve or longbow and a fully customized bow except that all materials and lines remain the same for the sake of streamlining production and bringing down costs. All shaping, tilting and finishing involves hand files, sandpaper and elbow grease, much of this conducted by employees who have been with the company for more than 30 years.

Bear Sister Companies

Of course, Escalade also acquired Trophy Ridge, maker of top-grade archery accessories, and Rocket Broadheads, pioneer in mechanical broadhead technology since the takeover of Bear Archery. Recent developments at Trophy Ridge include Ballistix CoPolymer System material, giving accessories the strength of aluminum but with 40 percent less weight. This revolutionary technology is found in a growing number of Trophy Ridge accessories, including last year's Cypher-series sights, Beacon and Threat Quivers and new-for-2013 React Sights, Torsion Quivers and Static Stabilizers.

The React Sight should prove a huge seller in the coming year, allowing customers to confidently dial in equipment faster and easier without second guessing whether poor shooting form is influencing long-range settings. The React includes a system by which the 20-yard pin is sighted, the Smart Pin Technology dial adjusted so the 30-yard pin is dead nuts from the correlating distance and the remaining three .019-inch diameter fiber-optic pins (40 to 60 yards) are

automatically ready to roll. The all-new Torsion Quiver also includes Ballistix CoPolymer Technology construction, making it feather light and super compact. The four-arrow design is engineered to include a huge degree of vertical adjustment to help create perfect bow balance, the dual arrow grippers and round profile creating a secure but compact overall footprint. Also introduced for 2013, the Static Stabilizer, in 6- and 9-inch models, includes a "twisted-vine" profile holding mid-point dampening weights suspended in rubber "stars," customizable cap weights and a rubber dampener. The lightweight design pulls unwanted vibrations and noise from any bow, the open-frame design allowing air to pass through for less buffeting in windy conditions. A braided-cord wrist sling and milled-aluminum base plate are included.

The Rocket Broadhead line includes many battle-proven designs, one fixed, five mechanical and one fixed/mechanical combination, all now including Titanium Nitride (Ti-N) coating to make them even more reliable. Newer to the line are four Meat Seeker 1-1/2- to 2-inch wide models, including the Piston Hammer, with rear-deploying deployment that wastes no energy while opening, the rotating chisel tip rolling around bone and allowing it to take the path of least resistance for increased penetration.

And this was just announced as I worked on this article: Bear Archery has acquired the bowfishing assets and brand name of Cajun Archery. Originally founded in 1963 by William "Billy" Amentor, Cajun Archery's initial focus consisted of hardwood and cedar arrows. By the 1970s, the company diversified, purchasing the rights to the original Sting-A-Ree bowhunting point in 1976 and eventually branching into other areas of bowfishing and general archery wares. In 2004, Cajun Archery was purchased by David White of Corolla Capital Management, LLC (Hot Shot Releases, Aborigine Blowguns and the Plucker and Tusker product lines are also housed under this company umbrella). President Jack Bowman says Bear Archery has been eyeing the bowfishing market for some time and he is excited about the prospects of growing

Cajun Archery's bowfishing products and making it a leader in that popular segment of the industry. Cajun's headquarters will move to Evansville, Indiana and its manufacturing to Gainesville, Florida. Hot Shot Releases, Aborigine Blowguns, the Plucker and Tusker product lines and production of Cajun's arrow line will remain in Logan, Utah, under the control of Dave White.

The new Bear Archery Products business approach has been to listen carefully to customers and dealers, not deciding what customers want to shoot, but allowing customers to say what they will be willing to spend their hard-earned money on. The results speak for themselves: hard-working bows and accessories offered at competitive prices that meet or exceed the performance capabilities of anything on the marketplace. It's something I think Fred Bear would be happy to put his name on.



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