

Gun Stores Cash In on Surge in Female Customers

You may think of guns as mainly a “guy” thing, but women now make up the fastest-growing segment of gun buyers in the United States.

Gun stores and shooting ranges are cashing in on the trend by offering products and services specifically for the ladies.

Caliber’s Shooting Sports Center in Albuquerque, N.M., is one of those businesses. Caliber’s has seen a 40 percent surge in female customers.

Lindsay Fassler is the only female firearms instructor at Caliber’s. She teaches a ladies-only class.

“It’s somewhat empowering for a female to be able to protect herself with this specific tool,” Fassler said. “We don’t go into shotguns, we don’t go into any AR-15s. We stick with just handguns.”

What’s happening at Caliber’s reflects a nationwide trend. In 2005, just 13 percent of U.S. gun owners were women. Today, that number is 23 percent—a 77 percent increase in the last seven years.

While women are showing more interest in shooting sports these days, most women will tell you they’re buying a handgun for another reason: self-defense.

Fassler said many of her students are single women and single moms who don’t think pepper spray or whistles offer enough protection.

“Especially those single mothers who are by themselves,” Fassler explained. “They really want to make sure they can handle whatever they need to handle.”

Gloria Martinez, a Caliber's customer who is shopping for a handgun, agreed.

"It's just the fact that for me," she said. "If I need it, it would be there as a last resort."