



**IWA**  
**OUTDOOR**  
**CLASSICS**  
**29.2.–3.3.2024**  
NÜRNBERG, GERMANY



## Half a century at the forefront of the hunting and target sports industry

IWA OutdoorClassics in Nuremberg has come a long way from its small beginnings – when members of the Association of German Gunsmiths and Gun Traders (VDB) laid out their new wares on tables – to its status today as the world’s leading exhibition for the hunting, outdoor equipment, and target sports industry. The event is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and stands more than ever for innovation, quality, and the unshakeable passion of a whole sector. Once a small gathering of specialists, it has become a worldwide meeting point where makers, importers and retailers come together to define the future. But some things have never changed: the sector’s need to talk together is as great as ever, and it’s also been under pressure to take action for many different reasons as the years have gone by. Today, market players are still making the most of the opportunity to network at IWA OutdoorClassics – so they can respond jointly to the challenges they face in approaching the business of tomorrow. IWA is the one place where top managers of international market leaders can meet and find solutions for their international sales structures. For many, attending IWA feels like a homecoming. It’s not uncommon for business partnerships here to evolve into long-lasting international friendships.

### Origins of IWA

IWA OutdoorClassics, which originated in 1974 as the VDB’s “National Association Meeting of German Gunsmiths and Gun Traders”, has evolved over the past 50 years into the world’s leading trade exhibition for hunting, target sports and outdoor equipment. The original gathering of roughly 100 exhibitors – including names like AKAH, Georg Fritzmann, Helmut Hofmann, Dynamit Nobel (now RWS) and Manfred Alberts – has grown over the decades into an international showcase and an important meeting point for the professional public. And in this context it’s especially worth devoting an honourable mention to UMAREX – the only company to have attended every edition of IWA of the past 50 years, whether in the first year of the pandemic, when it had already finished its booth at the moment the event had to be

#### Honorary Sponsors

##### Ideelle Träger

VDB Verband Deutscher  
Büchsenmacher und  
Waffenfachhändler e. V., Marburg

JSM Verband der Hersteller  
von Jagd-, Sportwaffen  
und Munition, Ratingen

#### Organizer

##### Veranstalter

NürnbergMesse GmbH  
Messezentrum  
90471 Nürnberg  
Germany  
T +49 9 11 86 06-0  
F +49 9 11 86 06-82 28  
iwa@nuernbergmesse.de  
www.iwa.info

Follow us on



#### Chairman of the Supervisory Board

##### Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrates

Marcus König  
Lord Mayor of the City of Nuremberg  
Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Nürnberg

#### CEO

Geschäftsführer  
Peter Ottmann

#### Registration Number

Registergericht  
HRB 761 Nürnberg

NÜRNBERG MESSE



cancelled, or at IWA Studio Edition the next year, when it was the only booth-based exhibitor to present in a hybrid format.

But back to history. Even in the late 70s and early 80s, IWA was already growing steadily, expanding in both size and international repute. As early as 1978, for instance, the fashion show in Hall B (today's Hall 1) signalled the event's growing diversification and its burgeoning range of products. And where the first IWA opened to an attendance almost exclusively made up of men, that situation has changed a lot.

### **IWA keeps growing**

The 1990s were a turning point for IWA, when it celebrated its 20th anniversary and finally became established as an international trade show. The expansion of the Nuremberg Exhibition Centre during this period also reflected the growing size and importance of IWA. This was the period when new traditions and in-show events also arose to enrich the exhibition and sharpen its profile. And 2019 went down in the books as the biggest year in IWA OutdoorClassics history: 1,619 exhibitors and 45,500 visitors attended, filling a total of 60,000 square metres of exhibition space.

The 2020s began with challenges, especially at the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. The unique IWA Studio Edition was a way for IWA OutdoorClassics to prove its standing as a versatile partner, networking the sector in an extraordinary format. In 2022, IWA OutdoorClassics returned as an in-person event, even though the pandemic was not quite over. But people were yearning to meet face to face, and 2022 made that possible again – in spite of masking requirements and distancing rules. Ever since, more and more dealers and makers have been returning to their international platform. The 2023 edition of IWA OutdoorClassics welcomed some 1,100 exhibitors and 34,000 visiting professionals from 119 countries.

### **A political anchor**

For half a century, IWA OutdoorClassics has served as a political hub for the international hunting and target sports industry. Historic events like the signing of



**IWA**  
**OUTDOOR**  
**CLASSICS**  
**29.2.–3.3.2024**  
NÜRNBERG, GERMANY



the Schengen Agreement in 1985 and the introduction of the European Union's Firearms Directive in 1991 played a major early role in shaping the industry. The Firearms Directive laid down fundamental standards for the possession, production and sale of firearms, while the Schengen Agreement provided the groundwork for eliminating border controls among the signatory European states – with a concomitant positive impact on cross-border commerce in weapons. IWA OutdoorClassics was kept hopping during this period as a driver for deals in international trade.

The subsequent years too saw more and more political events that directly affected the hunting and target sports industry. One positive example was the introduction of the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1994, whose 18 Member States formed the world's largest market for the free movement of goods, services, and capital.

Finally, the introduction of the EU firearms register in 2020 marked an important step towards improved traceability of firearms within the European Union, along with better cooperation among the Member States. But these political decisions as well had an immediate impact on industry and trade. New regulations and standards necessitated revisions in the production, distribution and sale of weaponry and equipment. Companies had to adjust to tightened rules, and possibly change their business practices to stay in compliance with the new requirements. At the same time, new opportunities opened up for companies that specialised in compliance and implementation for these regulations, and demand for expert knowledge and consulting in this area climbed – including because of a change that was slowly beginning even then in the social image of hunting and target sports.

In view of these changes, it was indispensable for actors in the industry to discuss and find out about these topics. IWA OutdoorClassics offered an ideal platform for the purpose. As the sector's leading exhibition, it enabled companies to bring together experts and interest groups to talk over the latest developments, challenges, and opportunities. The focus here was not just on presenting products, but on exchanging ideas, sharing best practices, and setting up business networks. The event served as a forum for knowledge transfer and further development in the

sector, and its significance as a central meeting place for the hunting and target sports industry became ever stronger as the years went by.

### **Products undergoing change**

It's not just political reasons that have earned IWA OutdoorClassics a significant role in the success of an entire sector. As can be seen similarly in other fields, this exhibition has helped generate dynamism in the market. Countless product novelties have been presented at IWA OutdoorClassics over the years. The event has motivated manufacturers to work on new products and technologies. Not because that was anything IWA OutdoorClassics had asked for – but because it was what the market wanted.

Over the course of five decades, the range of presented products has grown significantly. The first iteration mainly spotlighted hunting and sporting weapons, as well as munitions. But today, exhibitors show civilian weapons of virtually every description. Clothing and accessories now also claim equal priority. And in parallel, technological advances in hunting equipment are also in evidence – hunting today has become almost unthinkable without silencers and equipment for night vision and heat imaging.

### **When business gives rise to friendships**

For many long-standing exhibitors and visitors, IWA OutdoorClassics is more than a permanent business appointment. Over the years, the event has fostered friendships between international dealers and makers, but also members of the press corps, organisers, and partners.

Paolo Tagini, a former editor for Italian trade journals, has attended IWA more than 25 times. “For me, IWA has been much more than an exhibition. It's been a general meeting point for long-anticipated reunions with friends from every country, a place for exciting conversations, the best opportunity to see what was going on in the world of firearms. And last but not least, there's the ‘after IWA’ – evenings and often late nights spent in Nuremberg's many beer halls, meeting old and new friends. A real melting pot of ideas.”

### **The next 50 years**

IWA OutdoorClassics looks back proudly on the past 50 years, with loyal exhibitors and almost 1 million visitors who've come to the event year after year over that time. But of course it's not just focusing on the past. The anniversary year will also see IWA OutdoorClassics presenting the trends of today and tomorrow. One emphasis this year will be on artificial intelligence and the extent to which AI is getting into products and commerce – to take just one example. Also starting this year, all trending themes will be combined under the "IWA VISION" heading – to emphasise that IWA OutdoorClassics is focussing all the more on the topics of tomorrow. The exhibition and range of goods and services on display will change along with society and with advancing digitalization. So who knows what products and developments will show up in the exhibition halls of IWA OutdoorClassics even as soon as 2025? At any event, the coming year will once again see great numbers of visitors coming to Nuremberg from all over the world.

### **Contact for press and media**

Georg Loichinger

T +49 9 11 86 06-8191

[press@iwa.info](mailto:press@iwa.info)

Visit our newsroom for all press releases, more detailed information, photos and videos:

**[www.iwa.info/news](http://www.iwa.info/news)**

Additional services for journalists and media representatives are available at:

**[www.iwa.info/presse](http://www.iwa.info/presse)**