

# *PARKER* COM

Change-Ready Environment



**Bill & Sherry Krenz**  
with Interviews by  
Tracey Reginek

# POUND BOWS

The archery industry has the tremendous advantage of being made up of hundreds of independent enterprises, all of which are agents for change. Sometimes, the change comes in the form of splashy new products. Or it can simply be new ways of doing things, of conducting business, of prospering in an ever-evolving landscape.

In 1965, a young man named Bob Errett happened upon an archery tournament near his hometown of Point Pleasant, West Virginia. The event, the outdoor championship of the National Field Archery Association, had attracted top archers from all across the country.

**The drive and energy of crossbow guru Paul Vaicunas (left) and compound-bow expert Johnny Grace (right) epitomize Parker's longstanding focus on constant and meaningful product improvement.**





"I was only a spectator," Bob recalls. "But I remember the arcing flight of the arrows, the smell of the stacked hay bales and the smack of arrows hitting the targets. I was instantly hooked on shooting a bow, although I had no idea how archery would become the center of my life."

Archery took Bob Errett a long way and through many changes. He became an archer and bowhunter, an archery dealer, an archery sales rep, an archery distributor and eventually an archery-equipment manufacturer. He changed and prospered in all of those stages.

Today, Bob Errett is most commonly recognized as the founder and president of Parker Compound Bows, one of the archery industry's leading bow manufacturers. Parker enjoys a well-deserved reputation for quality compound bows and a growing reputation for state-of-the-art crossbows. It's a progressive, change-minded company, which should surprise no one who knows Bob Errett's long history in the archery industry.



**Shipping bows to dealers on time has been a big part of the success of Parker Compound Bows. To make that possible, an impressive supply of bows is kept on the shelves at all times.**

In 1970, after a tour of duty in Vietnam and four years at Marshall University where he earned a business degree, Bob Errett began shooting a bow in earnest. In 1973, Bob partnered with a friend to open a sporting-goods store, complete with indoor archery lanes.

"The store quickly did very well, and we built quite a reputation as archery experts," says Errett. "It seemed that everybody wanted a new compound bow, and we had a large selection."

Then came a phone call from Grayling, Michigan, that would change Bob Errett's life and push him even further along the archery path. The call was from Hap Fling, the national sales manager for Bear Archery.

"At the time, Bear was the largest archery company in the world," Bob explains. "We had been selling lots of Bear bows and accessories in our store, and I had become good friends with Al Dawson, our Bear Archery sales rep. On Christmas Eve 1974, Hap Fling offered me Al's job as Dawson was being relocated to Pennsylvania. It was an opportunity I couldn't turn down. Bear had an in-house sales force, and to be on that sales team was really something special. It was the big time in archery."

For the next ten years, Bob Errett was the Bear Archery sales rep for Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and the Washington, D.C. area. It was an important sales territory for Bear because of its strong dealer business and the presence of three major archery distributors and several mass merchant accounts. Errett thrived under the pressure and the opportunity.

In those ten years from 1975 to 1985, Bob Errett's sales figures were always among the top for Bear Archery, and that ranking held an additional reward. Each year, the top seven Bear salesmen were invited to bowhunt with Fred Bear at Fred's bowhunting camp in Michigan.

"Those annual trips were special occasions," says Errett, "and I was able to spend countless private moments with company founder and archery-industry icon Fred Bear. In fact, I skinned and processed the last deer that Fred ever shot. Those years with Bear Archery were full of hard work and much excitement. We watched archery boom and rode the compound-bow revolution to the very top. In the process, I learned the inside workings of manufacturing, distribution channels, sales strategies and much more."

"By the middle 1980s, though, I could see that things were changing. Bear Archery had gone through several buyouts and was moving toward independent sales reps rather than an in-house sales force, the first compound-bow boom was slowing somewhat and a host of new bow and accessory companies were emerging within the industry. While I had enjoyed working at Bear Archery, I had to admit that I had always felt stifled. I knew I

wasn't using my business potential. It was time to change with the changing times."

While with Bear Archery, Errett worked with many of the leading archery distributors of that day.

"I felt that I could create my own company, a new archery distributorship, that would do things a little differently."

In 1985, Bob Errett left Bear Archery to found Nationwide Archery.

"My wife Jeanie and I sold our home to finance our fledgling archery business," Bob remembers. "At first, we were the only employees. We did everything ourselves, and we based our hopes on in-stock

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inventory, fast shipping and excellent customer service.”

In short order, Nationwide Archery gained a solid reputation for all three. In time, it became one of the largest distributors of archery equipment in the United States.

Dealer, sales rep, distributor—Bob Errett had flowed with the changing archery landscape, always striving to do things better.

“The one thing I hadn’t done,” says Bob, “was to become a manufacturer of my own products. For some time, I had thought about developing a bow company that would succeed by helping dealers succeed. It would produce high-quality bows, offer programs that would allow dealers to profit and provide customer service second to none.”

In 1996, Bob Errett took that final step by founding Parker Compound Bows on those very principles.

“My initial vision for Parker Compound Bows was very clear,” Errett exclaims. “I knew what consumers wanted and what dealers needed to be successful. I was firmly committed to the idea that Parker could and would provide both.

“Today, more than a decade later, that Parker ideal is as bright as ever. If anything, we see it even clearer. Today, Parker Compound Bows represents an exceptional opportunity for the archery businessperson. We offer a complete line of bows at strategic price points, a dating program that can finance a dealer’s bows for the season, dependable in-season deliveries that enable dealers to make every sale and no-questions-asked customer service. And most importantly, Parker is a profitable bow line for dealers because of its strong margins and Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) program.

“Related to that has been the consistency of those programs over the years, along with a strong, independent sales force. Parker Compound Bows has 25 experienced archery salesmen covering the entire United States. Most of those rep groups have been with Parker since our inception and include Blue Ridge Marketing, Steve Kaufman & Associates and Hoover-Seville & Associates. Lone Pine Marketing recently joined Parker in the western market.”

In 2007, Parker increased its production,

warehousing and staging capacity with a 12,830-square-foot plant expansion project. At a cost of over a million dollars, the new Parker facilities include larger and more efficient bow and crossbow production capabilities, redesigned product flow for more streamlined shipments and revamped administrative and sales offices.

“Our growth in the last several years had led us to the conclusion that it was time to physically grow Parker in order to better serve all of our existing customers as well as the many new customers we had been gaining. To remain competitive you have to invest in your strengths, and at Parker our three most important strengths have always been great products, service and delivery.

“With this most recent expansion, our work flow has once again improved,” says Errett, “allowing us to produce over 300 bows per day. The expanded facilities and our experienced people are making that happen.”

Today, Parker has two main divisions—compound bows and crossbows. To keep both divisions moving forward, Bob Errett has surrounded himself with dynamic and experienced management. Among the key members of the Parker team are Vice President of Sales and Product Development Johnny Grace, Vice President of Purchasing Guy Rowzie, Vice President of Operations Tom Woodworth and two new additions, Vice President of Crossbow Division Paul Vaicunas and Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer Rob Mason. In addition, National Sales Manager Jim Wynne works closely with all of Parker’s field representatives.

“The right people make all the difference,” explains Errett. “The archery market is a fluid industry. It’s ever changing. We have to have people that understand the inevitability of change and embrace the need for continual progress, and have the drive and skills to lead our company forward with that mindset.

“Johnny Grace, who joined Parker shortly after we launched the company, and recent addition Paul Vaicunas epitomize what we’re trying to do and how Parker is constantly changing and moving forward.”

“Our vision of the compound bow continues to change,” says Grace, “We’ve long hung our hat on quality and led the way with bows

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that were lighter, more compact, quieter and more shootable. But recently, we've found ways to significantly boost arrow speed, reduce shot vibration and noise and blend all of that in with the light, compact, smooth-shooting bow nature that Parker fans have come to expect. It's more than just up with the times, it's jumping out onto the front edge of the wave.



**Trained technicians with years of experience assemble every Parker bow. State-of-the-art pneumatic X-Presses are utilized.**



"A perfect example is the new-for-2008 Parker Blackhawk XP bow. The Blackhawk XP is a high-end hunting bow that's already creating tremendous excitement with our dealers and consumers. The new Parker Blackhawk XP is one of the fastest compound bows we have ever offered. It's also one of the quietest bows we've ever produced and one of the most vibration free. At the same time, we've incorporated a brand-new type of riser machining on the Blackhawk. We call it Quad Venting. The Blackhawk's riser is vented side-to-side in the conventional manner and also front to back. All that extra venting makes the bow lighter and handier. We've also taken the extra step to maximize the performance of the Blackhawk XP's cams at 28 and 29 inches of draw length. Most of today's bows are most efficient at 30 or even 31 inches of draw length, but the vast majority of today's shooters draw only 28 or 29 inches. We've redesigned the Blackhawk's cams to give more of those 28- and 29-inch shooters the best performance they've ever seen. The new Parker Blackhawk XP is indicative of our commitment to constantly improve our bows."

Paul Vaicunas has long been one of the most active, energetic and influential people in the crossbow industry. His recent move to Parker perfectly complements the company's forward-thinking vision for crossbows.

"The crossbow market, long relatively sluggish, is now rapidly changing," explains Vaicunas. "For years, few crossbow-hunting opportunities existed. Only a very few states allowed their use. But in just the past few years, Georgia, Virginia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Maryland and portions of Pennsylvania have all added crossbow seasons. Others states have approved their use by older hunters and by those who may be otherwise physically challenged. In other words, crossbow opportunities have expanded exponentially, and that's begun to create a stronger crossbow market.

"However, crossbow-product performance and even styling has been slow to catch up. The fact is most of today's crossbows look very much like the crossbows of 10 or even 15 years ago. There are reasons for that. In a slow market, crossbow manufacturers could scarcely afford to invest in significant product development. Today, crossbows are playing catch-up to escalating demand.

"Our approach at Parker is to reengineer

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In 2007, Parker increased the size of its plant with a million-dollar expansion project. Included in that expansion was a larger and more efficient receiving and raw materials area.

the hunting crossbow, dramatically improving every aspect of its performance, handling and styling. In the same way that progressive archery companies like Mathews changed compound bow design, we're working hard to develop next-generation crossbow performance and styling changes. The goal is to blend a more compact, ultra-lightweight nature with advanced tactical firearms features that crossbow buyers will naturally embrace. We have to remember that the typical crossbow buyer is most often a gun user, not an archer.

"With that in mind, we're introducing a revolutionary new hunting crossbow for 2008. It's the Parker Cyclone, and it's already redefining the modern hunting crossbow."

The 2008 Parker Cyclone is amazingly trim, lightweight, compact, adjustable and powerful. It incorporates several newly patented or patent-pending innovations.

"The Cyclone marries the very latest in high-performance archery technology with advanced tactical rifle design elements," says Vaicunas. "The Parker Cyclone features a retractable butt stock that allows dealers to perfectly fit the Cyclone to any customer—young or old,

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Parker is a powerhouse in the growing crossbow market, as evidenced by the consumer and dealer popularity of Parker crossbows. New for 2008 is the Parker Cyclone, a revolutionary new crossbow that is redefining the nature of the modern hunting crossbow.



short or tall—that walks in the door. That unique stock can be quickly adjusted in length all the way from 10.75 inches to over 14 inches. It's truly a universal stock.

“The Cyclone also features an easier-to-handle pistol-grip midstock

and a shotgun-like receiver that houses the advanced trigger mechanism. That distinctive receiver profile is both especially trim and a familiar shape for most gun users. The slim barrel of the Cyclone reduces bulk and weight. In fact, the 2008 Parker Cyclone weighs just 6.5 pounds.

“At the front end, the Parker Cyclone sports a machined riser, limb pockets, limbs and cam system that borrow much from today's finest high-performance compound bows. What that does is allow the Cyclone, at just 165#, to shoot a 425-grain arrow at a blazing 350 feet per second.

“In other words, the Parker Cyclone can be quickly configured to fit its owner perfectly, handles with unparalleled deftness, weighs an ultra-light 6.5 pounds, measures barely 18 inches wide when cocked and shoots up a storm. The Cyclone truly is the modern hunting crossbow.”

Unusually progressive archery-industry veteran Bob Errett has crafted an archery career and a company based on change and progress. Both compound-bow-oriented Johnny Grace and crossbow-oriented Paul Vaicunas embrace that sentiment.

“Bob has put together a team at Parker that shares common goals,” says Grace. “We're all amazingly open-minded and flexible in our approaches to various situations and challenges. We tend to talk things out, weigh all the alternatives and make the right decisions as a team. We're rarely satisfied with where we are, choosing instead to focus on where we could be.”

“It would be very easy,” Vaicunas adds, “for a company this size to sit back a bit and rest on its laurels. But that isn't Bob Errett's style. As successful as Bob has been with Parker, he's still embracing change and reaching out for improvement. That change-enabling mindset is one of the major reasons I decided to join Parker.”

Business is often survival of the fittest, but how should we define the word “fit?” Since change is inevitable in any progressive industry, the best definition may well be the one that talks about those most inclined to lead the change.

Bob Errett has always trusted change. Today, his company, Parker Compound Bows, is a change-ready environment. It's poised for big things. Watch out for Parker. For more information, Circle #124, log onto [parkerbows.com](http://parkerbows.com) or call (540) 337-5426.