



# DISCOVERING HER RANGE

By CLAUDIA I. SMITH  
Shumard-Designs, LLC, Edmond, Oklahoma, Heartland Friends of NRA Sponsor  
\*Photos by Neil Chapman

**IT COMES DOWN TO THE SHOES.** For many ladies, stepping out of one's comfort zone takes some gumption and a great pair of shoes that inspires confidence. Building up the courage to explore trails yet tread—be them careers, relationships or other endeavors—may take years. And abundant styles of shoes exist for any given moment of any given day. For an introductory shooting and safety gathering, all styles are welcomed. What is important is that women step out of their element—in heels, flats, sneakers or cowboy boots—and introduce themselves to the shooting sports.



Not many outdoor events gear towards women these days. Luckily, in the heart of Oklahoma, women have the chance to experience the thrill and pleasure of well-manicured or garden-stained nails wrapped around cold, polished cast metal.

The Women's Division of the Oklahoma City Gun Club and the NRA's Women On Target® program, both created 14 years ago, partnered to instigate the Women On Target® Instructional Shooting Clinic billed the "Women's Fun Shoot" in 2000. Since then, organizers including Oklahoma City Gun Club President Suzi Rouse have seen interest swell and attendance snowball from the 57 attendees at that inaugural event.

"For the first few years, we were

armed with merely a passion and hot pink flyers. But, over time, the interest level and support base went crazy!" emphasized Rouse. "We weren't sure what to do. ... Eventually, everyone wondered what happened to the pink sheets. Today, [publicity] is all done by word of mouth. In fact, this year the registration form was added to our website on a Monday night and by Wednesday we had dozens of registrations without even advertising."

Registration for the 2013 clinic was capped at 600 participants, limited only by the amount of space available at the event site near Arcadia, Okla. In fact, since its inception, this Women On Target® event has been the nation's largest women's instructional shooting clinic, made possible by 12 NRA Foun-

ation grants totaling \$117,300. This year's grant included over 86,000 rounds of ammo—valued at over \$25,000. For some this has become a yearly event, and grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters, friends and individuals come from as far away as Arkansas, Missouri, Nebraska, California and Florida. "We have been so fortunate to have such dedicated supporters and sponsors," expressed Rouse.

Over 100 volunteers, many of whom are women, provided instruction at this year's Oklahoma City Gun Club Women On Target® event. The Oklahoma County Sheriff's Department, Highway Patrol and Department of Wildlife as well as the Midwest City Police Department also provided assistance. Rotating among four ranges, participants experienced the feel and power of various calibers of handguns, shotguns and rifles provided by sponsors including Smith & Wesson, Glock, Benelli and DPMS. They learned the familiar "ding" when metal targets are successfully struck or the sight of exploding clay pigeons rewarding concentration and firing precision. As always, a favorite among the women were the "big, black guns," or AR-15s, which left many wanting more.

At the end of the day, even those who never imagined they would enjoy the event learned that with proper instruction and practice, shooting can be an enjoyable and confidence-building experience. It can even lead women into competitive shooting, mentoring and leadership roles they never dreamed possible. Of course, no one goes home empty handed, either. Each participant leaves with a shooter's bag filled with information and goodies. Not surprisingly, many of the women acquired the new attitude of "To heck with the craft shows! We're headed to the range."★

*Find a Women On Target clinic near you and learn about all the women's programs supported by The NRA Foundation! Visit [women.nra.org](http://women.nra.org).*