

Will's Guide to GunBroker

Hello, friend –

Are you looking for a specific gun, or perhaps a relatively expensive accessory and don't want to pay a 25% price increase locally? Have you been led to believe everything that's sold on GunBroker is akin to an electronic gun show, with jacked up prices and no deals in sight?

Well, fear not! I have spent much of my waking life perusing one of the largest online gun/accessory marketplaces and have picked up many tricks, noticed a plethora of exploitable oddities, and have surveyed enough information to ensure you're getting a great deal, without exposing yourself to scams that roam the listings of the wild, electronic wilderness.

There is a large amount to truth to those original sentiments, however. Many people and shops **do** post listings for exorbitant prices, or hype up products that are essentially a basic item with a \$100 cosmetic makeover (I'm looking at you, Meridian Defense, Vang Comp, etc.) and then ask for double the price. However, with a little understanding of A) exactly what you want to buy, B) knowing if you're flexible with the result, and C) the ability to be patient with bidding, you can get a great deal and save a ton of cash.

Another thing to look out for- is that when it comes to a lot of accessories, like optics, handguards, barrels, etc. perfect competition seems to be the rule – all of them are typically very closely priced to regular online stores, and very rarely deviate (many of them ARE listings from the big box online stores like OpticsPlanet or Buds Gun Shop). If you're looking for, let's say, a nice scope – you'll be better served waiting for an online retailer like Primary Arms or Bass Pro shops to run a 10% off coupon, or a Memorial Day sale, etc. You'll be able to find used items on Gunbroker for cheaper, but as always – know what you're looking for, be aware for fakes (like ACOG and EOTech items), know your product warranties, and the person you're buying it from.

Before we get into the thick of it, here's a couple examples. I was prospective for CZ457 .22LR, right at the time they came out. Online shops were selling the base variant (the American) for \$549, and locally around \$619... if it was in stock at all. Most .22LR variants were sold out as it was an incredibly popular cartridge and the rifle was getting wonderful reviews.

I located an auction for a CZ 457, for a reasonable price... but it was in .17HMR. .17HMR is a great cartridge, but much more expensive to shoot than .22LR. The auction was at \$330, with no bidders and had about 4 hours left. I did some research, and discovered that CZ-USA sold a .22LR barrel kit (with a .22 magazine) for \$110. So coming to that realization, I would be able to get a CZ 457 American with two different calibers for \$440 if I was willing to undertake the journey of a CZ barrel replacement... all 15 minutes of it and the two Allen key grub screws it used.

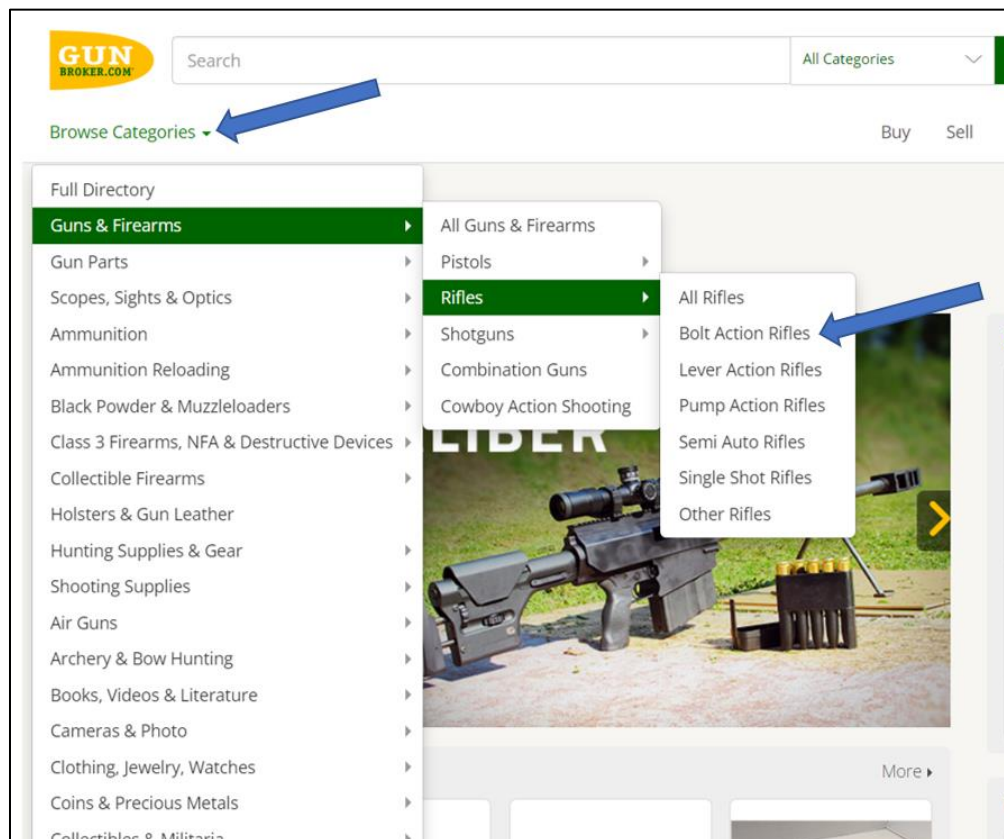
The next example is NFA items. I've discovered that the SBR/SBS/suppressor pricing on Gunbroker is... strange, and somewhat unpredictable. Much more so than a standard marketplace, as the sellers are aware that the additional paperwork (or the actual ability to receive them, depending on the state you're in) and sometimes adjust their prices to be attractive. If you're not subscribed to a specific type of muzzle device, getting your first suppressor off of Gunbroker can be a wonderful idea, and allow you to use some of your saved cash to foot the \$200 tax stamp when submitting your Form 4.

I was looking to get into suppressors, but my biggest issue was my wife's AR15. It has a 7.75" barrel in 5.56. Although 5.56 gets a bad rap for performance in some instances, it is quite hard on suppressors. I needed to find a suppressor that had no barrel restrictions, and was also full-auto rated (for added reliability, at the cost of some weight). After watching patiently, seeing suppressors come and go, I ended up bidding on a Griffin Armament RECCE-7 suppressor. I won the auction at \$415 – once I finally received it (after the obligatory year wait), the shop that I bought it from left it's retail sticker, which was labeled at the RECCE-7's standard MSRP at the time, \$895. Needless to say, I've been quite happy with it, and I was able to perform this feat again with my Omega 45K (\$430 for a ~\$750 suppressor).

OK, so let's get started.

You can search in several ways on Gunbroker. You can use the Search bar, or you can filter by a number of things. You can filter by Category (Semi Auto Rifles, Revolvers, Bolt Action Rifles, etc.), and filter further from there. I like to use both of these things in tandem, as they both have their advantages and drawbacks.

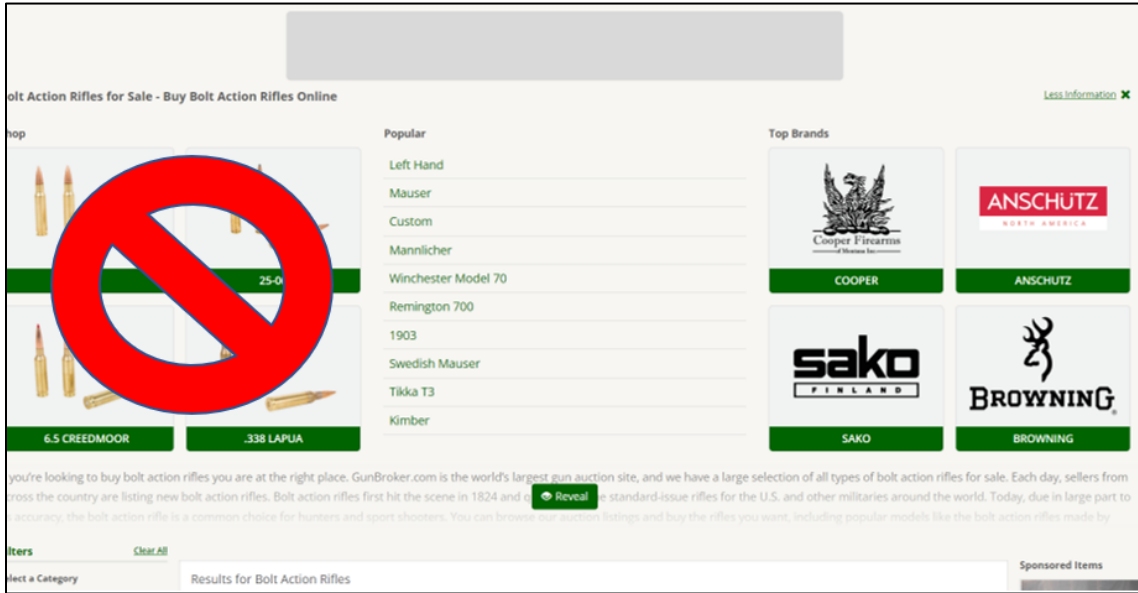
Method 1 – Using Categories



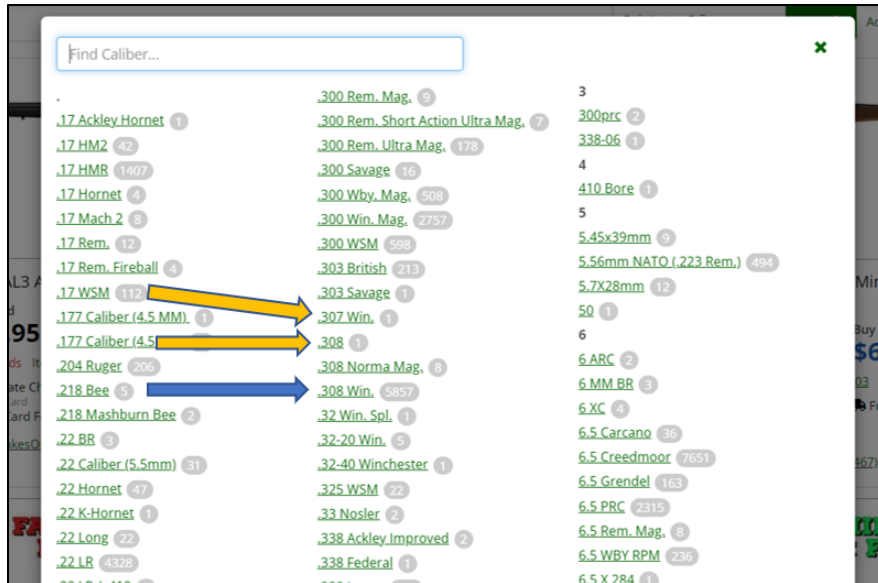
By using this method of search, you'll see all of the listings that people and shops have physically specified what the gun is. That way, if anything was misspelled in the listing themselves – you'll be able to see them by using this. If you're selling a gun on Gunbroker, you **have** to fill these fields out. Unless they whip everything into the

“Other” category, which seems to be relatively infrequent. People want their things to be sold, so they take the time and effort to make them attractive and available to the largest audience.

When searching this way, you’ll see this screen first:



If you’re searching for a gun by caliber (for a while I was looking for a .308 that strikes my fancy, since I already had reloading dies and components that would work), I **recommend NOT clicking these buttons**. All they do is type “308” or “6.5 CREEDMOOR” in the search bar and hit enter for you, which is going to miss a ton of listings. Because .308 can be “308”, “.308”, “.308WIN”, “308WIN”, any permutations of the sort. The seller themselves are going to specify caliber and you’ll see how many listings in “Caliber” will be .308-related and you can look through them individually. I wish Gunbroker had the ability to multiple select calibers, but alas, here we are. If you go to the left search bar and go down to Caliber, here’s the list:



Remember what I said about mislabeled listings? That lonely .308 and “.307 Win” (since we know .307 Win doesn’t exist) are both .308 listings that would only be found by using the search bar, since the listing **itself** is correct, but the seller screwed up this portion. So if anything, any competition for those would only come from the Search Bar, as anyone filtering down to this would probably go straight to the ~5900 listings of “.308 Win” and miss these listings. Misspelled listings work the same way. 6.5 Creedmoor is commonly referred to as “Creedmore”, Mossberg is “Mossburg” time to time, Mosin Nagant is commonly “Moisin” (hell, people list them as Mausers all the time) etc. If you find listings like that, you can expect less traffic, and maybe less competition.

Method 2: Search Bar Fishing

Remember what I said about misspelled listings, improperly filtered drop downs? A good way to bypass that is using the Search Bar directly. Sometimes I want to look at something in .357, but I don’t care what action type (bolt, semi auto, lever, revolver, pistol).

Type “.357” in the Search bar, and see the myriad of listings that come up.

.357 For Sale – Buy .357 Online

Filters [Clear All](#)

Select a Category

All

Gun Parts

- Other Gun Accessories & Parts
- Pistol Parts
- Rifle Parts
- [More](#) ▾

Guns & Firearms

- Cowboy Action Shooting
- Rifles
- Pistols
- [More](#) ▾

Pistols

- Revolvers
- Semi Auto Pistols
- Other Pistols
- [More](#) ▾

[See all](#) ▶

Manufacturer


- [Smith & Wesson / S&W](#) 3580
- [Colt](#) 1896
- [Taurus](#) 1635
- [Ruger / Sturm, Ruger & Co.](#) 1546
- [Cimarron Firearms](#) 1035

[See all](#) ▶

Results for .357

[Save this Search](#) | 10000 Items Found

100 Rounds



.357 Magnum 125gr. JHP



357 Mag JHP .357 Magnum
357 Mag JHP .357 Magnum


Price **\$99.99** **100 Rounds**
\$1.00 /rd

Qty: 2 Item #: [1006102771](#)

📦 Immediate Checkout
* Credit Card
NO Credit Card Fee

🚚 \$17.99 Shipping

TITAN AMMO [A+\(2135\)](#)  



Starline
MADE IN THE USA

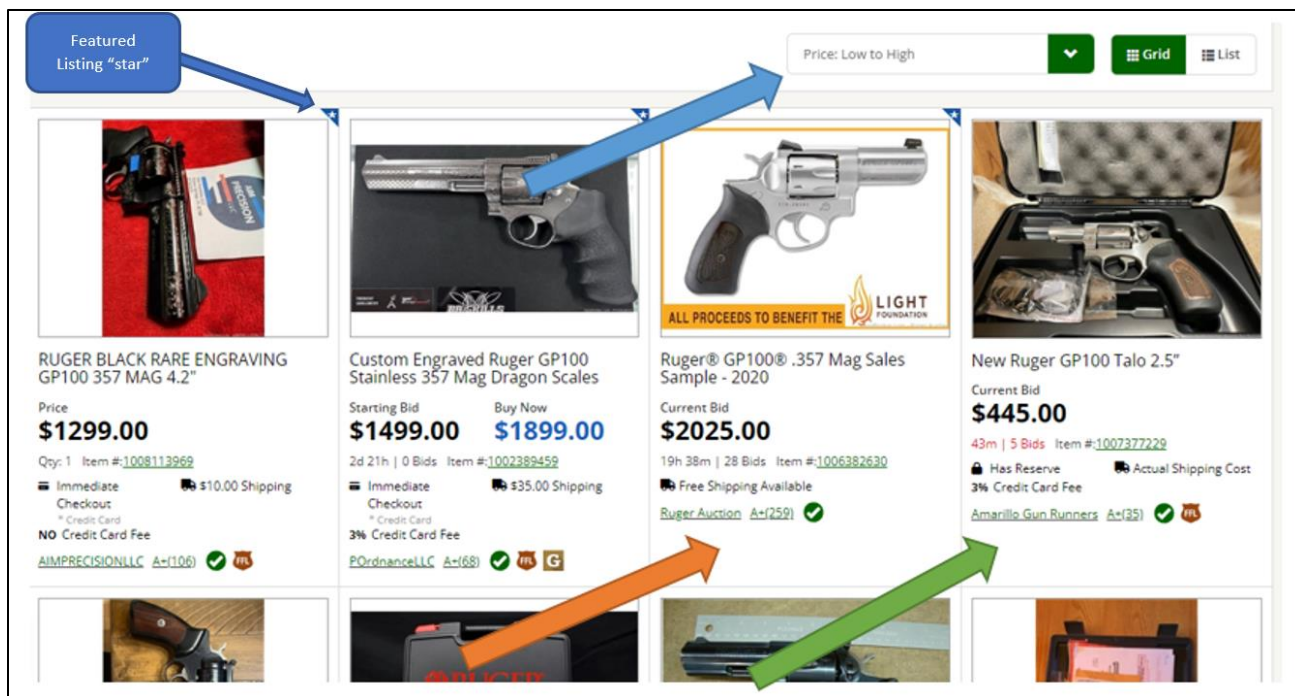
100 Cases
New Brass

From here, I use the side categories. The **only thing you can't do** is filter by a caliber specifically with no other criteria, but it allows you to get the feel of which guns are in high volume (which will spread out some of the bidders' attention). If you filter by Manufacturer and look at Ruger specifically, you can pore over the various models and see if anything strikes your fancy.

Finding a good listing

Once you've settled on something you want, there's a nuance that affects the filters themselves. Gunbroker uses "Featured Listings" as it's own filtered set – so if you filter by price, **you will not see ALL low priced guns first – only the Featured listings first!** You have to scroll all the way to the end of the Featured listings to see the cheaper, non-featured listings. A lot of the time people don't want to spend the extra money for the little blue star thingy at the corner of the listing.

1. *Sorting your listings*



Notice how “Price: Low to High” seemingly means \$1299, \$1899, \$2025, **\$445**? You’ve now entered the other listings that aren’t prioritized, and usually get less traffic. I make a point to look at these every single time, as they may also be finishing in the immediate future (just like that Talo GP100 above, that only has 45 minutes left and 5 bids... which is not much action. So if that’s what you were drooling over, that would be one to watch.

2. What are you trying to buy?

If you’re looking for a run-of-the-mill pistol, a lot of people are compelled to buy it because they’re familiar with the 4473 process, you do a transfer through an FFL and you’re good to go. **What about NFA items?** That’s a different story. As I mentioned above, people are much more gun-shy (no pun intended) to make an impulsive buy on a suppressor/SBR/etc. if they’re unfamiliar with what it takes to get one. There’s a much smaller pool of individuals that bid on these, and the dealers/sellers that have listings for them are typically gun shops and big box stores; upon doing so, they’re items that may or may not move very fast so much of the time you can find at least one suppressor listing that’s very competitively priced – if not below wholesale.

Other factors of a good listing

1. Seller Account

The first thing I check is who’s selling the item. It is Bud’s Gun Shop with ~38,000 positive reviews, a smaller shop with ~30 reviews... or some guy that’s asking for a money order only, one lonely vague listing at 2 reviews? That makes a huge difference on what you want to take your chances on. Personally, **I will not entertain anyone with less than 10 positive reviews, or more than one bad review.** You may get it cheap, but you may also wind up with a lost package, a fraudulent item (such as a fake EOTech holographic sight that are very convincing, that I mentioned earlier in the guide – the store itself may not even know) or a straight up scam

where they just take your money, close their accounts and let Gunbroker's milquetoast support team twist in the wind. When in doubt, I try to shop with a seller that has an obvious well-oiled machine with shipping, customer service, and dozens of other listings currently for sale. If your low-ranked, @gmail.com-based seller starts mentioning that they like to get paid through a Western Union debit transfer... there should be immense alarm bells ringing in your head (Western Union is a haven for scammers and the black market). But like I said, pretty easy to avoid as there's hundreds of great shops all over the US that are just trying to make sales and have a good respectable reputation.

2. Credit Card Fees

There are several things that affect the total price of the gun you're attempting to buy. If you're using a credit card (typically the simplest endeavor), shops charge a myriad of different credit card fees, any where from 0 to 5%. If you're buying a \$200 item it may not be that big of a deal... but if you're planning on buying a \$3300 item you may end up saving close to a hundred dollars, depending on if the listing has a credit card fee or not.

However, there is another side to this. Most bidders use credit cards, so if you have no problem sending a money order or cashier's check – you do inherently have less competition. I would be hesitant about sending a \$3300 money order in the mail without some form of delivery certificate, signature receipt, etc.

3. Shipping

Shipping is the silent killer of your bottom line, and many shops will directly adjust their listing prices to compensate (they won't need to pay Gunbroker sales tax for the shipping of the listing, only the purchase price. They do that to lower their cost, under the guise of a "deal") As a buyer, that doesn't affect you as much but it still can lead you to believe that you're getting an awesome deal... only to find out they want \$55 to ship a small pistol to you.

4. Time Left

This portion is tricky, and everyone has their own style of bidding, but this has potentially the biggest benefit of getting a cheap listing in the bag. Here are some of my notes on the subject.

First off, *when is the listing going to end?* You know that CZ 457 I mentioned earlier, that I won for \$330 dollars? It was an off-path caliber, but a large factor was most likely *when* it ended. It was a 6-8 day listing... but ended at 3:00pm **on Super Bowl Sunday**. So needless to say, people were a bit... preoccupied, rather than bird-dogging a stock rimfire rifle on Gunbroker. Any major events, whether it's TV shows, performances, current events in the news... it's good to time those items with the public interest and jump on some stuff while everyone's distracted with the Super Bowl, World Series, the Olympics, etc.

Time of the year itself is also a factor. *When do people have dispensable money available?* Immediately after tax season is much more competitive, with people getting shiny new tax returns burning a hole in their respective pockets. Black Friday? People are waiting for those deals. However... if you shop immediately after the school year has started, and summer's end people are usually recouping costs from vacations. You may have a little extra luck grabbing a more expensive item... when people are busy trying to ice down a half-melted Visa card after a multi-day, four-child sojourn to Disney's finest establishments.

Then finally, *when do you bid?* There's several factors. If you're looking at a gun that retails for \$549, and it's currently hovering at \$80 with 4 days left? There is some strategies here. You can either leave it at that price, to try to keep as much action away from it as possible, or bid it up to a point that you aren't near your max price,

but “getting it out of reach” of people looking to steal it. If I was going to bid on something with this much time left, I would maybe kick it up to \$190 to keep people from salivating over it. However, depending on the item? That may not help if there’s already 6-7 bids and people are undoubtedly watching.

Once the listing gets within 24 hours is when you should actively watch. If the price is still **very** low, keep an eye on when people bid. The moment someone bids, if you outbid them **immediately** after – that’s a great thing to show that you’re actively watching the listing (*establish listing dominance!* Haha.) Only do it incrementally. Bid up in small increments – try \$20 over the current price. If you get “Not Successful!” back, then try again in the same increment. Take 2-3 steps to find out the max bid (or hit your max price and abort if someone’s willing to pay more than you), versus shooting your shot early and dropping your max price out there first.

Don’t get to your maximum price until the listing has just crested the 15 minute mark. Gunbroker is **NOT like eBay!** You cannot “snipe” a bid at the last second, any bid that occurs within the 15 minute mark will reset the clock to 15 minutes. 30 seconds left? One bid, boom – you’re back to 15 minutes (it’s known as the “15 Minute Rule”). So what I do is try to drop a decent bid price with 15 minutes and a few seconds left, in order to not upset the clock and kind of fly “under the radar” to a degree. I still like to have some margin left over, to where if someone wants to engage in a sub-15-minute dogfight - you can do what I mentioned earlier and drop a bid directly on top of theirs. It helps to advertise that you’re staring at your phone, with unswerving gaze, on your 28th minute in the bathroom stall at work, with no intention of leaving until you have complete victory in your grasp... but I digress.

Parting Thoughts

1 – Don’t feel bad about being outbid. If you’re looking for something that isn’t one-of-a-kind or has a finite stock (think of the dwindling M1 Garand market) – wait it out and try again later. There will always be another listing that will inevitably show up.

2- Don’t spend your rent money on guns. I just thought I would throw that out for good measure. If you get a smoking deal... it’s no good to you if you have to sell it later to make ends meet.

3 – If you do buy something, *don’t forget to leave feedback!* If you ever intend to sell anything on Gunbroker, as I mentioned in the previous section a high rating is great and more people are willing to entertain your listings if you’re trustworthy.

I’m sure I’ve failed to mention other nuances of the experience, but there you have it. This should give you a little more of a competitive edge in finding some better prices and engaging in less bidding free-for-all for a desirable item, and make the online bidding a more methodic and enjoyable experience.

Good luck, and happy bidding!

~W