

suburbanlife

At **Main Line Armory**, Iraq War veterans Greg and Katie Butler aim to strengthen the community by promoting gun safety, education, and proper training in an environment unlike any other. page 64



Also Inside:

Top attorneys,
back to school,
and more





Hitting the Mark

At **Main Line Armory**, Iraq War veterans Greg and Katie Butler aim to strengthen the community by promoting gun safety, education, and proper training in an environment unlike any other.

by **MATT COSENTINO** | photos by **JEFF ANDERSON**

From the very beginning of their relationship, Greg and Katie Butler knew they shared a passion for helping others. It's what brought them together in the first place, when they met as members of the Army National Guard who were assisting with the recovery from Hurricane Katrina. Ever since then, they've tried to pay their blessings forward whenever possible. That's why they are so excited about their latest venture, which they expect to make a lasting positive difference in the community.

When the husband-and-wife team opened Main Line Armory in April 2023, they saw it as a golden business opportunity to offer a gun-range experience unlike any other in the area. With local gun ownership having increased dramatically since the pandemic, the Butlers found their calling in emphasizing education and proper training, and to make the community safer one responsible gun owner at a time.

Greg and Katie are Iraq War veterans who served their country for at least a decade each, and Greg went on to a career as a Pennsylvania State Trooper. In fact, he was only six years away from retirement and his dream of "wearing Tommy Bahama shirts every day" before pivoting and realizing that he and his wife still had more to give.

"Our service background made it easier for us to get into this industry," Katie says. "When you think about startups, this is probably one of the most expensive you can get into. There was a point in time when we were starting to look at the numbers and the risks

we were about to take personally, and we were asking ourselves whether we should do it. We decided to [move forward] because we both come from a background of giving back to the community, and we really felt that the demand for responsible training was there. There are so many barriers to get into this industry, so we felt that if we didn't build this, who would?"

Greg was first exposed to the industry when his father became an FFL (Federal Firearm Licensee), an individual who assists with the legal process of buying a firearm. His business was overwhelmed by the strong demand for gun ownership during the COVID-19 years, and Greg came on to help while still working for the state police. After about a year, Greg noticed that a lot of first-time buyers—doctors, lawyers, and CEOs among them—had no idea about gun safety and nowhere locally to learn.

One of the driving factors in starting Main Line Armory was to be that resource. The Butlers offer a free course every other week for those thinking about purchasing a firearm to discuss important points, such as how to store a gun in the house, establishing a safety plan for the family, and dispelling common myths. They also have classes for new and experienced gun owners

led by some of the most capable instructors around, adopting many of the same safety measures used by the military and law enforcement regarding how to safely carry and handle firearms. The four primary rules of firearm safety—treat every gun as if it's loaded, never point a gun at anything you don't intend to shoot, keep your finger off the trigger, and be sure of your target and what's behind it—are reinforced constantly.

Greg has seen firsthand what can happen when these rules aren't followed. In September 2014, a young State Trooper named David Kedra was accidentally killed during a training session in Montgomery County. One of the two classrooms at Main Line Armory is dedicated to Trooper Kedra as a reminder to the community that even the most trained and proficient need to remain diligent when it comes to handling firearms.

"We truly believe and we know that we're saving people's lives and saving them from injuring themselves just because the more training you receive with a firearm, the better you are," Greg says. "You can never be complacent with a firearm."

"Obviously, we want to grow the business and possibly open other locations, but [our goal is] mainly to serve the community," Katie adds. "Even the people who aren't gun owners, we want to make the community safer for them. The old saying is, 'A good guy with a gun is better than a bad guy with a gun.' That's not necessarily true all the time. Untrained good guys could be just as dangerous, due to negligence. So our goal is to continue to strive to teach



people to be responsible, in a comfortable environment. We don't want you to be intimidated to come in and use our facility."

Training is offered for the whole family as well, including female-only classes with female instructors to make women more comfortable. Kids' classes, for those age 10 and older, not only to promote safety in the home, but also enable children to enjoy the sporting side of shooting with the guidance of a parent or grandparent.

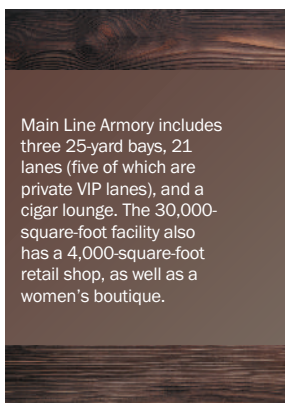
Of course, Main Line Armory is not just geared toward newcomers but also longtime gun enthusiasts. Before opening, Greg toured ranges across the country and discovered a

popular concept in the South and Midwest that marries a gun club with a country club to create a luxurious setting for pursuing the hobby. That's why the Butlers' 30,000-square-foot facility includes three 25-yard bays, 21 lanes, five of which are private VIP lanes, a cigar lounge, and a 4,000-square foot retail shop with a wide range of guns available for purchase or rental. History buffs will appreciate the nods to the local Revolutionary War ties, and there are also memorials to those killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan. Public tours are available to anyone interested in learning more.

The Butlers also aim to cater to an often-overlooked segment of the population by having what they believe is the only women's boutique in the firearm industry. Katie and a designer meticulously chose every element of the boutique.

"We have merchandise in our women's boutique that is hard for women to find, to touch, to feel," she says. "The reality is, when it comes to conceal carry for women, there are a lot of different options, and it's a very personal choice. We carry a little bit of everything so that women can see the array of options available to them in the marketplace."

The Butlers realize that gun ownership can be a controversial issue. Regardless of the differences in political and social opinion, their goal is for anyone exercising their Second Amendment rights to do so with absolute safety in mind. ■



Main Line Armory

60 Three Tun Road, Suite 2
Malvern, PA 19355
(484) 559-8412

MainLineArmory.com