

Equipping families to defend themselves and loved ones, be well informed and welcomed are central to Family Fun Indoor Range's ambitions.

BY ASHLEY MCGEE

FAMILY FUN INDOOR RANGE: A SAFE HAVEN FOR LEARNING AND SHOOTING

Nestled in the heart of Sevierville, Tenn., Family Fun Indoor Range stands out in the world of firearms training facilities. Founded and owned by Susan Romanov, it's evident from the name alone that this range is not just another shooting facility. It's a community hub, an educational center and a safe space for individuals and families to learn about and practice firearm safety.

A stalwart in the industry for nearly three decades, Romanov is also director of the Shooting For Women Alliance (SFWA) — the first organization in the firearms industry to hold a shooting conference specifically for women. Founded in 2003, SFWA was formed to help educate and motivate women (and the men they bring with them) on how to increase the odds of prevailing in a self-defense situation.

To date, Romanov has trained more than 100,000 women through SFWA's in-person and online courses — enough to fill the University of Tennessee's Neyland Stadium.

"MORE LIKE CHANEL NO. 5 THAN HOPPE'S NO. 9."

Having visited indoor and outdoor shooting ranges across the country, Romanov discovered although many of them were accommodating to women and youth, there weren't any ranges specifically designed for them.

"I wanted to create a place where individuals, especially women, would feel comfortable and safe learning about firearms," she said.

Family Fun Indoor Range first opened in 2013. In 2019, Susan and her husband, Vladimir, moved the company to a new facility located in the foothills of the Smoky Mountains where millions of visitors who visit the area each year can enjoy the indoor range.

The range itself is a testament to Susan's dedication to creating a welcoming space. It has 11 lanes, dark wood floors, white leather furniture and a relaxed atmosphere that, according to its website, "smells more like Chanel No. 5 rather than Hoppe's No. 9."

"It's a far cry from the typical grey, male-dominated ranges of the past many women find intimidating," Romanov stated. "I wanted to provide an inclusive environment for everyone."

EDUCATION EMPHASIS

The primary focus of Family Fun Indoor Range is on education, not profit (evidenced by its lack of a retail store.) Susan and her team offer free or donation-based in-person training through the SFWA.

"We aren't in the business of selling products, but we do help you make more educated buying decisions," she asserted.

For adults, the range offers a variety of classes, as well as a membership program called Women of a Different Caliber (and for men, Top Guns). These classes focus on helping individuals select a gun that suits them, how to carry it, shoot it, retain it in a physical fight and ultimately defend themselves if necessary.

The membership includes access to member-only lanes, registration for advanced SFWA courses at no additional cost ($50 value per class), individual and group instruction, access to the Citizen's Elite Real Life Simulator Training Sessions and more.

The cost of the individual membership is $28/month for the first year, then a $100 annual renewal fee each year thereafter. For an extra $5/month, members can add a spouse or "buddy."

Daily memberships are available that allow use of the range for the entire day for $15 per person, and includes eye protection, ear protection and one target.

Anyone who has never shot a handgun before, has limited or no experience with handguns or who hasn't shot a handgun in more than two years is required to take a 30-minute safety course prior to being permitted to shoot on the range.

Family Fun Indoor Range has also taught thousands of kids ages 6–17 about handgun safety, how to use proper sight alignment, trigger pull and other marksmanship skills through its Family Gun Safety Class.

For a nominal $10 registration fee, the 30- to 45-minute course is taught by an SFWA Master Instructor and requires a minimum of one parent or guardian to participate with each child. Upon completion, each child receives a custom color certificate with a pledge signed by the child and his or her instructor. The course is a prerequisite

for children to accompany an adult at the range. Each family also receives a digital copy of Romanov's guide, "Shooting for Women: Firearms Safety, Tips & Techniques for Gun Proofing Kids."

"Our goal is to instill a sense of responsibility and respect for firearms, not to capitalize on the fear for one's personal safety," said Romanov. "While everyone else seems to be focused on teaching people how to be their own first responder, our approach focuses on how to be your own bodyguard and reduce the chances of finding yourself in a situation where you have to be your own first responder in the first place."

DEDICATION BEYOND THE RANGE

Susan's dedication to firearms education goes beyond the range. Those who aren't local to Family Fun Indoor Range can still receive online training through SFWA. The organization offers advanced online courses on how to select the right gun and gear, practice power and precision, handgun cleaning and maintenance, defensive handgun tactics, personal protection at home and how to shoot with a laser and in low-light conditions. Participants can register for courses individually, with costs ranging from $99–$150 per class, or sign up for an online membership for $18/month to access all courses.

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>
> **Susan Romanov** • Founder & Owner
> *Family Fun Indoor Range • Sevierville, Tenn.*

"There's so much free information already out there on 'YouTube University,' but what sets us apart is every online class we offer includes live instruction with a qualified instructor via Zoom," noted Romanov.

Susan also consults with ranges across the country to help them become more welcoming to women and families and grow their businesses in general.

"I don't want to just promote responsible firearm ownership but also to ensure that ranges stay open and accessible to all," she concluded. SI

For more info:

Family Fun Indoor Range
familyfunindoorrange.com

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