

Reaching Your

Target

Montreal Firearms
Recreational Center
celebrates 10 years
of excellence

By Joey Franco

Anyone who walks into Frank Nardi's office on 52nd avenue in Lachine can start to paint a vivid picture of who he is. His walls are adorned with photos and posters of his many passions.

First and foremost, he is a loving father of two: Teah (10), and Nicolas (7). Also, he is a former soccer goaltender. "Goalies are born, they're not made," he says about his days playing for the Montreal Manic farm team when he was 21. His other great passion and his bread and butter for the past decade: firearms!

The 51-year-old is the owner, founder, and lifeline of the Montreal Firearms Recreational Center, or Centre Récréatif d'Armes à Feu de Montréal (CRAFM).

Nardi suggests I shoot a few rounds at the pistol bay before our interview, just to get a better feel for the sport. I graciously accept the offer to try a SIG Sauer P226 pistol with a 9mm chamber – a standard issue firearm for numerous law enforcement and military organizations worldwide. In Canada, this pistol is used by the RCMP, the Canadian Special Forces, as well as the Ontario Provincial Police.

The closest I have come to firing a live gun was with air rifles and pellet guns – so I was a novice and a tad nervous. The staff at CRAFM made the experience very comfortable and enjoyable. Above all, safety and personal comfort was a priority for my instructor, who was by my side during the whole session. All CRAFM employees hold a valid Possession & Acquisition License (PAL), and are Certified Range Officers accredited by La Fédération Québécoise de Tir (FQT).

The center opened its doors in November 2005, and its mission has always remained the same –providing a safe environment with quality products for CRAFM members, as well as law enforcement and security agencies. "It's set up like a golf club," explains the founder. The center has three main areas: the pro shop, the members area, and the shooting bays.

Nardi can trace back his infatuation with firearms to his childhood. Many of his family members were avid hunters. "I was introduced to firearms at a very young age, always, of course keeping safety in mind," he says.

Nardi's parents hail from Calabria. Although he grew up in the east end of Montreal, he spent many years traveling and working in Italy in the shipping business.

His first experience shooting a firearm was at 12-years-old when he fired his uncle's shotgun. Within 3 seconds of pulling the trigger he was flat on his behind! "From that minute on, that's when I decided you really had to respect these things because they kick like a mule!"

From that initial bestowing of respect comes the sense of responsibility he holds today from running his business. "When I was given a license to own a firearm company... this came with a lot of responsibilities to my staff, to keep them safe, to my members, and I also have a responsibility to the regular everyday individual."

Safety and respect go hand-in-hand for Nardi and everyone at CRAFM. Nardi also points out that although firearms give their owners a sense of security -the law is very clear: firearms must be stored unloaded with a locking device in a locked secure case. All available safety accessories can be found at CRAFM.

All members must take 2 mandatory safety courses: the club's safety course as well as Law 9 Practical & Theoretical aptitude exams. Any strange, bizarre or unusual behavior of any individual at the club is reported to the respective authorities, without exceptions.

The center's pro shop features a wide selection of firearms, ammunition, and accessories. Reloading machines and an on site gunsmith are also available to meet your needs. "We're basically a one-stop-shop," says Nardi in reference to anyone who owns a firearm. Many top pistol and rifle brands are sold at the center including Tanfoglio, Beretta, and Benelli.

The pistol bay has twelve shooting stalls and is 25 meters in length. The rifle bay has 10 shooting stalls at a distance of 50 yards.

Nardi likes to focus his attention on the sporting and hobby side of the firearm business. He is involved as a coach and a sponsor for many top competitions across the nation. The owner proudly discloses that there are members of his club that are National Champions. "We have people that are ranked in the top 15, 20 in the world that are members here," he states enthusiastically.

Membership is not limited to pro marksmen, or officers. CRAFM has an extremely wide variety of members ranging from Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, Architects, professional athletes, artists, celebrities, construction workers, and CEO's.

As for my experience at the range, I can truly say it was enjoyable and exhilarating. This is surely something I would suggest trying at least once in your life. For more information, please visit www.crafm.com

- The Centre Récréatif d'Armes à Feu de Montréal opened its doors in November 2005.

- CRAFM was initially operated by Frank Nardi, two full time employees and a part time employee.

- Today there are 14 full time employees at the establishment, including three women.

- On September 1st, CRAFM celebrated their tenth anniversary with special guest Jesse James attending the celebration.



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