

REVIEW! SMITH & WESSON
MODEL 60 PRO SERIES

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THE ULTIMATE RESOURCE
FOR THE ARMED CITIZEN



CONCEALED CARRY

MAGAZINE

BACKUP GUNS A GOOD IDEA?

CONCEALED
CARRY CLOTHING

FIRST AID
FOR CRITICAL
INCIDENTS

WHY SHOOT WITH
ONE HAND?

TRUST YOUR GUT



CONTENTS

JULY 2010



28 TOO OFTEN CONCEALED CARRY CLOTHING IS CHEAP, FLIMSY, OR UNSAFE - BUT NOT THESE.

32 MASSIVE BLEEDING IS AN EMERGENCY THAT REQUIRES THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT AND SKILLS.

FEATURES

23 SMITH & WESSON MODEL 60 PRO SERIES: PINT SIZE PERFORMANCE
BY CALEB GIDDINGS

26 BACK UP GUNS FOR CIVILIANS – A GOOD IDEA?
BY TOM GIVENS

28 THE HOLSTER MAVEN LOOKS AT CONCEALED CARRY CLOTHING
BY KATHY JACKSON

32 STOP THE BLEEDING, SAVE A LIFE: FIRST AID FOR CRITICAL INCIDENTS
BY GRANT CUNNINGHAM

36 SHOOT WITH ONE HAND? WHY?
BY CR WILLIAMS

38 THE TACTICAL PURSE
BY K.L. JAMISON ESQ.

38 THE NIGHTTIME FANNY PACK
BY KATHY JACKSON

40 FINDING YOUR BALANCE: WHAT'S MISSING FROM YOUR FIREARMS TRAINING?
BY ROB PINCUS

44 PRETTY IN PINK: STI ELEKTRA OFFERS BEAUTIFUL CARRY OPTION FOR WOMEN
BY DIANE WALLS

short-barreled firearm the manufacturer suggests dropping a small handkerchief into the bottom of the pouch as a sort of “booster seat.” A small gun easily rides there without the help, but the draw becomes much easier when the grip doesn’t snuggle down under the covers.

Priced at \$190 and made in the USA, the Holster Vest from Concealed Carry Outfitters gets a solid thumbs up for materials, workmanship, and good design.

CCW BREAKAWAYS: REDEFINING POCKET CARRY

Company owners Jay and Georgann French enthusiastically tell people about Jay’s creation: pants with pockets designed specifically for safe, discreet concealed carry. What’s the big deal? Just this: the pocket actually functions as a true holster, holding the firearm securely in the correct orientation to allow a fast draw. Readers familiar with pocket carry probably blinked a little bit at that. “Pocket carry” and “fast draw” aren’t usually terms that appear together. But these pants, and these pockets, are different.

“It takes a little bit of work to get the pocket set up,” notes Jay, “but once you understand what you’re doing, it’s pretty simple.” Indeed, when the pants arrived in the mail, it did take a little while to figure out how to adjust the pocket properly. But both the flyer that arrived with the pants and the company’s website provide detailed, step-by-step instructions with pictures to help the process along.

The twill dress pants, pleated in the front, appear well-made, with good stitching and solid hardware. The cargo-style khakis offer the same functionality as the dress pants, but with a more casual look and feel in a very sturdy fabric. Since CCW Breakaways come in men’s sizes and styles only, my buddy Don Stahlnecker (USCCA’s web developer, instructor at the Firearms Academy of Seattle, and all-around nice guy) agreed to be the guinea pig. Don reported that both pairs of pants were a skosh on the large side when they arrived, but a trip through the wash brought them down to perfection.



CCW Breakaways pockets readily snap free when needed, creating a fast and easy one handed draw.



THE WAISTBAND AND POCKET OF CCW BREAKAWAYS LOOK JUST LIKE THOSE ON COMPARABLE PANTS, BUT WITH A DIFFERENCE: HIDDEN SNAPS ALONG THE TOP EDGE ALLOW THE POCKET TO READILY TEAR OPEN FOR A FAST, ACCESSIBLE DRAW.



Properly adjusted, CCW Breakaways pants easily conceal a Glock 26 in the pocket even while seated.

Extraordinarily deep, the patent-pending front pockets offer a myriad of setup options. Using Velcro panels in strategic locations, they can be adjusted to suit nearly any firearm—and that includes full-size guns rarely used for pocket carry. A standard 1911 fits as discreetly into these pockets as easily as a tiny Kel-Tec. The pocket allows the user to adjust depth, grip angle, and where the gun rides on the leg. Our tester found that it took a day or two of fiddling around to find the really ideal spot for the gun to ride for maximum concealability. Once properly set up, the pocket can remain set indefinitely without readjustment.

Now for the tough question: is this really a *safe* way to carry a firearm? I have long said that any gun carried loose in a pocket is simply asking for trouble. You need to cover and protect the trigger. You need to be sure the gun will stay where it's put and will be in the correct orientation when you reach for it. You need to be sure that you can't inadver-

tently yank the trigger by running a hand up the outside of your pants. For all those reasons, simply dropping a bare gun into a pocket is a bad idea.

The multiple angle and depth adjustments answered my concerns about gun orientation. Once adjusted to suit a particular firearm and human body, the pocket holds the gun where it needs to be. But what about protecting the trigger? CCW Breakaways pockets are made of thin, slippery material which provides good lubricity for a smooth draw. But that thin material isn't much of a trigger-protector. Noting the problem to Jay as he showed off his prototype at the 2010 SHOT Show, I didn't really expect much in the way of a response. But Jay surprised me, taking the concern seriously and

working hard to address it. Current production models feature a trigger-protector made of seat belt webbing sewn across the strategic spots. This stuff is thin enough to move easily and naturally with the pants, but sturdy enough to prevent any outside pressure from getting inside the trigger guard and depressing the trigger. Barring truly extraordinary circumstances, I'm satisfied that the trigger cannot be moved by outside influence with this design.

Jay didn't stop there, however. After another customer (a fellow USCCA member) expressed concerns that the seat belt webbing didn't provide as much protection as he'd like, Jay decided to offer an extra shield, a drop-in piece of solid plastic roughly the shape of a wallet. This isn't available on production models yet, but will be an option on the next run—almost certainly by the end of summer.

Two unavoidable safety issues remain. First, in common with all forms of pocket carry, these pants do not al-

low the user to drop car keys or other items into the same pocket where the gun rides. You need to think of the gun pocket as a holster, not as a place to put stuff. Second, our product tester noted that with a bare gun in the pocket, it takes a *very* conscious effort of will to keep the trigger finger outside the trigger guard during the draw. "If you're not paying attention," Don warned, "you'll find that the pocket directs your finger right onto the trigger." That's not a product-design issue, but a training issue—and it bears repeating. Always train yourself to draw with your trigger finger straight, regardless of how you carry.

Many folks over the years have found pocket draw slow and clumsy. Although the gun drops into a pocket easily enough, getting it back out past the pocket mouth can be difficult once you've got a firing grip on it.

CCW Breakaways offer a revolutionary solution to the clumsy draw problem. The entire top edge of the pocket, hidden securely underneath a fold-up section of the waistband, easily snaps wide open with a yank. Because the entire top edge of the pocket easily rips open, it's quite possible to draw even while seated. But a casual observer—or even a sharp-eyed one—won't be able to see the feature that makes it work.

Both front pockets offer the same features, but can easily be rigged to support different firearms or different uses. CCW Breakaways sells various accessories for the pockets, including well-designed magazine socks that affix to the inside of the pocket with Velcro. This lets the user choose the ideal depth and placement for the reload. It also allows the comfort of being able to drop car keys into the same pocket as the magazine without tangle trouble. Knife socks offer an opportunity to discreetly carry a clip-on folding knife without the clip showing outside the pocket, while a larger pepper spray sock protects and positions a small OC canister.

Priced at \$90 and made in the USA, pants from CCW Breakaways offer good looks paired with good function. The truly revolutionary pocket design may change forever the way we think about holsters. ★