

14 FAVORITE HOLSTERS

What's new and noteworthy in concealed carry!

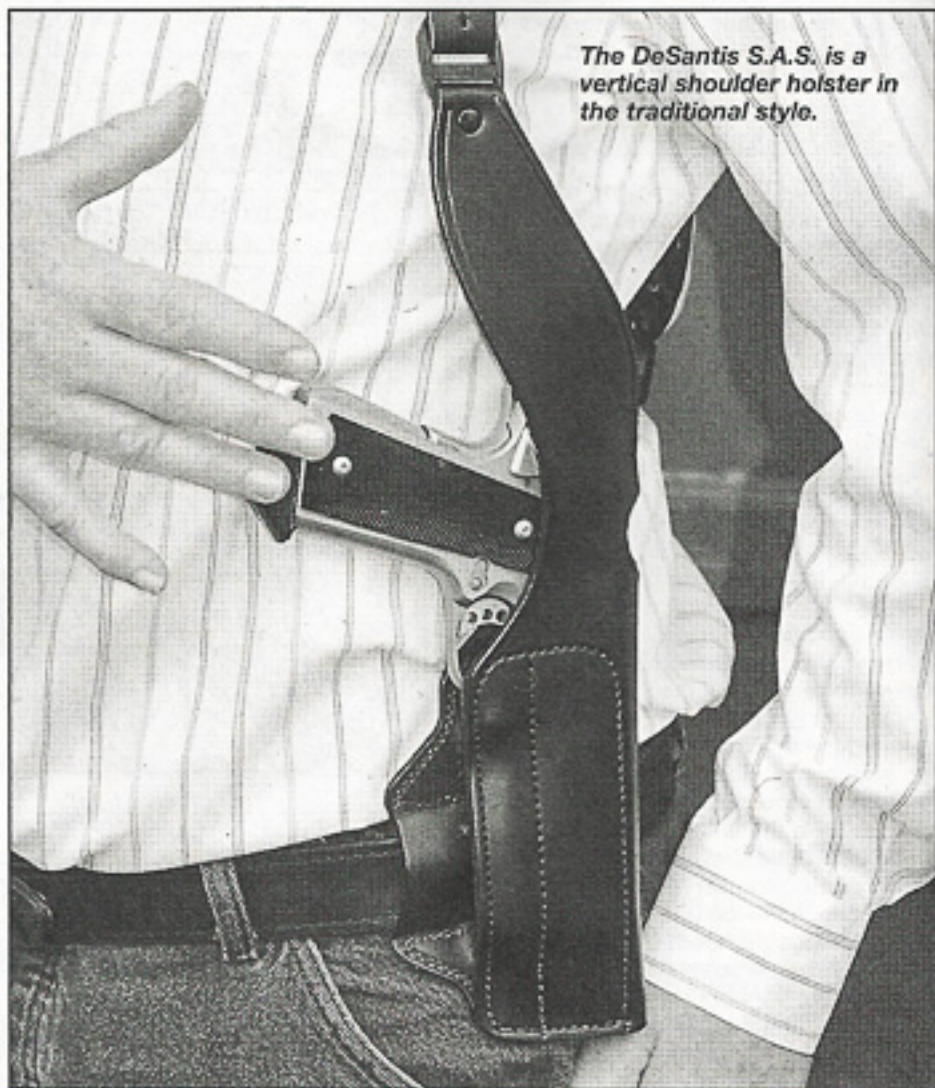
By Mike Boyle

When I first broke into law enforcement, a uniform complete with a Sam Browne rig was the order of the day. I really didn't give too much thought to concealed carry, although my S&W M60 was a constant off-duty companion. Regulations authorized a few different strong side belt holsters and I got by with an inexpensive pancake, which served me well for several years.

Fortunately, the little J-frame was a fairly easy gun to conceal and I was able to remain discreet as long as I paid attention to the clothing I was wearing. After a few years on the job, however, I began to have some reservations about the .38 snub and picked up an M19 Combat Magnum with a 2-1/2-inch barrel. It was right about this point in time when I began to give serious thought to holsters with better concealment qualities.

Today, I rarely put on a uniform and instead wear plainclothes most of the time. Although casual clothing gives me a greater latitude in what sort of gun I can effectively hide, no one holster does it all. Something as subtle as the positioning of the belt loops on your trousers can turn a very concealable holster into something conspicuous. What might work very well under a loose fitting shirt or windbreaker stands out like a sore thumb under a suit jacket.

Concealment holsters should be comfortable, reasonably secure, durable, accessible, and allow the user to return the pistol with a single hand. Did I mention that they should also help hide the gun? Unfortunately, this quality is often overlooked with inferior designs.



The DeSantis S.A.S. is a vertical shoulder holster in the traditional style.

Over the last several months, I've had the opportunity to check out a variety of new designs. The really good news is that top quality doesn't always have to cost a king's ransom. Let's take a look.

Bulman Gunleather

Some of today's best contemporary leather holsters originate from the Pennsylvania shop of Josh Bulman. Bulman Gunleather continues to turn out superbly crafted versions of several classic styles of concealment

holsters, plus a few very noteworthy originals.

First up for consideration is the Bulman TSA. The TSA (The Secret Agent) is an inside-the-waistband design reminiscent of the original Bruce Nelson Summer Special. The gun is angled forward in an FBI cant and is secured to the belt by a pair of loops with snaps. A reinforced band below the mouth keeps the holster from collapsing when the gun is drawn. Stitched sight rails are standard on most TSAs cut for autopistols.



The new DeSantis Jackal represents a good buy. Thumbbreak and belt holster variations are available.



The Express Line 5JR from Mitch Rosen is yet another excellent value.

My sample TSA was set up for my issue GLOCK 32 and has proven both concealable and comfortable. The TSA is precisely molded to the shape of the gun and is available in a variety of colors.

The FBS (Full Belt Slide) is another classic design that will appeal to even the most discriminating consumer. Although Bulman's literature describes the FBS as a pancake design, one should not confuse it with the mass-produced, ill-fitting scabbards that wear this label.

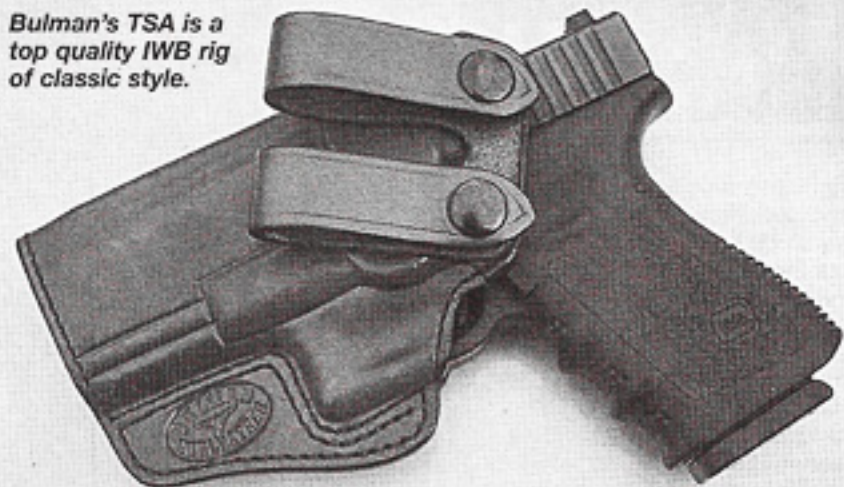
The sample I received for evaluation was finished in a rich chocolate brown and security is ensured by precisely molding the FBS to a particular gun. An FBI butt-forward cant is utilized to maximize concealment qualities.

I mated the FBS to my GLOCK 22 and this combo can be discreetly hidden under a loose shirt, vest or jacket. Available for most pistols and revolvers, the Bulman FBS comes highly recommended.

DeSantis

Gene DeSantis has long offered a quality product at a reasonable price. Recently, the DeSantis Holster &

Bulman's TSA is a top quality IWB rig of classic style.



The FBS from Bulman Gunleather is a precisely molded pancake of the highest quality.

Mitch Rosen's Slimline USD harbors author's GLOCK 31. The USD is truly the Cadillac of IWB holsters.



Leather Goods Company has started turning out concealment holsters crafted of Kydex, a nearly indestructible material. While several firms have been turning out Kydex holsters for years, the DeSantis rigs are 100% machine made. The end result is a holster that will retail for about half of

what the competition sells one for, with absolutely no compromise in quality.

For this review, I obtained two samples of the new DeSantis paddle holster. Dubbed the Jackal, these new rigs were perfectly formed to the shape of the pistol and proved very