

## Concealed Carry Weapons

Soon after Missouri became a “Shall Issue” state, I purchased the ideal concealed carry weapon. As you’ll see, I continue to purchase the ideal concealed carry weapon. Here’s a short list of my quest for the perfect carry gun:

<b>Firearm</b>	<b>Purchasing Rationale</b>
Glock 26	Everybody says you need a Glock. No comment regarding its attractiveness.
Walther PPK	I love PPKs. Had it customized with a hand checkered frontstrap, action job and dehorn. Waited three months for a Milt Sparks Versa-Max II IWB (Inside the WaistBand) holster, which is a work of art. It’s a beautiful gun and holster.
1911 Officers Model	Complete custom gun, built on a Caspian titanium frame and stainless steel slide. I added a pair of beautiful double-diamond rosewood grips. Ordered another Versa-Max II holster. A really beautiful gun.
S&W 642	I needed to buy a revolver for my daughter. At the time, handguns were a bit unfamiliar to her so the simplicity of the 642 was very attractive.
NAA Guardian 32	A really small gun will be a great concealed carry weapon. Upgraded by the North American Arms custom shop. A really nice gun.
Seecamp 32	The Seecamp is the “real thing” which was copied by NAA for their Guardian 32. The Seecamp 32 is 2.5 oz. lighter than the Guardian and I had to have one.
S&W 340PD	I decided I needed a light gun in a respectable defensive caliber, such as 357 Magnum. Not wanting to leave well enough alone, I added a pair Eagle Secret Service rosewood grips and had the action completely worked over. I waited twenty weeks for a Milt Sparks pocket holster. After carrying this revolver for a few years, I upgraded it with the addition of Crimson Trace LG-105 laser grips. It’s a really beautiful revolver.
Kahr PM9	Automatics are so modern and the Kahr PM9 might be the best one for concealed carry. It’s small, light, extremely reliable and in 9mm. I had to have one.
Kel-Tec P3-AT	The Kel-Tec 32 ACP and 380 ACP are the lightest pocket automatics available. I went with the 380 ACP. This is a really ugly gun.
Seecamp 380	The Seecamp 380 is identical to the 32, but in a larger caliber, 380 ACP. They are in limited production with a delivery time exceeding one year. Something this hard to get must be really good. I received mine after waiting thirteen months. It’s sort of like the Rolex of pocket automatics.
Ruger LCP	The LCP is quite similar to the Kel-Tec P3-AT, but slightly heavier. It is a very well made pistol and is quite attractive.

After lots of experimentation with various weapons and holsters, I’ve reached a few conclusions and recommendations that I’ll share with you.

## Smith & Wesson 642 Airweight

Description: The 642 is the aluminum and stainless steel version of the hammerless S&W Centennial. What the weapon lacks in glamour and coolness, it makes up in simplicity and reliability. If it doesn't fire, commence PTA routine (Pull Trigger Again). Semi-automatic pistols, while extremely reliable, do occasionally malfunction, requiring corrective action (TRB – Tap the magazine to firmly seat. Rack the slide to chamber a fresh cartridge. Pull the trigger and it should go Bang.). In forty years of shooting, I've never had a revolver jam. The 642 is also a great value.



Caliber: 38 Special

Capacity: 5 shot

Weight: 16.6 oz., loaded (est.)

Est. Price: \$ 430.00

Carry: Holster, pocket or purse. Although not the smallest gun, it is great for pocket carry due to its thinness at the muzzle and rounded grip, resulting in minimal printing (the ability to see the shape of a concealed weapon through clothing). The DeSantis Nemesis is an excellent and economical holster for pocket carry. If you want the best, order a Milt Sparks pocket holster. It features a band of metal around the perimeter that lets you mold the holster to the contour of your thigh. Milt Sparks makes some of the finest holsters in America; normal delivery is about twenty weeks. Buy a DeSantis and wait for the arrival of your Milt Sparks. For traditional belt carry, talk to the people at Milt Sparks. Unfortunately, the 642 is equipped with rubber grips that grab fabric. That's the last thing you want when drawing a weapon from a pocket or from under a cover garment. Order a set of smooth Secret Service grips (no checkering) from Eagle Grips. These grips are thin, fit perfectly and available in a number of materials. Although rather expensive, the ultimate upgrade are Crimson Trace LG-105 laser grips. Place the laser dot on the target and pull the trigger.

Negatives: Long and heavy trigger pull. Standard sights are difficult to see and use. Reloads are slower than with a semi-automatic pistol.

## Smith & Wesson 340PD Airlite


Description: The 340PD is the scandium and titanium version of the S&W Centennial and is chambered for the 357 Magnum. Basically, it's the same design as the S&W 642, but much lighter and more powerful. The very low weight and powerful caliber results in the 340PD boasting the highest power to weight ratio of any weapon on the market. Many of the advantages of this weapon are listed above, in the description of the S&W 642. When first picked up, most people are shocked at the revolver's light weight. While dimensionally the same as the Smith & Wesson 642, the 340PD is 3 oz. lighter. 3 oz. is the weight of 12 Quarters. Due to its light weight, the 342PD is perfect for pocket carry. The



340PD is available with either a red ramp or fiber optic front sight. The 340PD with Crimson Trace LG-105 laser grips is the ultimate personal defense, “no-compromise,” weapon.

- Caliber: 357 Magnum  
Capacity: 5 shot  
Weight: 13.6 oz., loaded  
Est. Price: \$ 800.00  
Carry: See above under S&W 642 listing. Same advantages plus very low weight and the ability to use the far more powerful 357 Magnum cartridge (38 Specials can also be fired in the 340PD).  
Negatives: Long heavy trigger pull. Substantial recoil. Keep in mind that defensive handguns are carried a lot but seldom fired. Reloads are slower than with a semi-automatic pistol.

## **Glock**

- Description: With the introduction of the full-size Glock 17, the modern handgun was redefined with Glock’s use of polymer as a material for firearms construction, resulting in lighter handguns. Now, most manufacturers offer weapons with polymer frames. Since then, Glock has introduced reduced sized “Compact” models and even smaller “Mini Glocks.” Glocks are, without a doubt, outstanding weapons. Due to the double stack design of their magazines, they are rather thick. Glocks are extremely reliable and simple to operate and are available in a wide range of calibers. Glocks are available with standard, adjustable or night sights that glow in the dark. All Glock sights are excellent and work very well. For concealed carry, standard or night sights are preferable.
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- Caliber: 9mm, 40 S&W, 45 GAP, 45 ACP, 357 SIG. For concealed carry, 9mm and 40 S&W are the most popular.
- Capacity: Varies, depending on caliber and model. The Glock 26 “Mini” in 9mm has a capacity of 10+1.
- Weight: 26.6 oz. (Glock 26)
- Est. Price: \$515.00 (Standard sights); \$570.00 (Night sights)
- Carry: Holster or purse. Due to their thickness and weight, Glocks are not well suited for pocket carry. Kydex belt and IWB holsters work very well. Milt Sparks has many outstanding leather holsters for all Glock pistols.
- Negatives: Notwithstanding what some experts say, an automatic is more complicated and less reliable than a revolver. TRB (Tap, Rack, Bang) is more complicated than PTA (Pull Trigger Again). Glocks are thick and heavy (even the G26 or G27), making them impractical for comfortable pocket carry.

## **Kahr PM9 and PM40**

- Description: Kahr makes some of the finest concealed carry semi-automatic pistols available. The PM9 (9mm) and PM40 (40 S&W) are single stack designs which make them



thinner than double-stack configurations, such as the Glock 26 or 27, making the Kahrs ideal for IWB holsters. Compared to the Mini Glocks, the PMs are smaller, thinner and lighter. The pistols can be configured with standard or night sights, either of which are excellent. The Kahr PM pistols are outstanding choices for concealed carry.

Caliber: 9mm or 40 S&W  
Capacity: PM9 6+1, PM40 5+1.  
Weight: 19.4 oz. (PM9)  
Est. Price: \$650.00 (Standard sights); \$730.00 (Night sights)  
Carry: Holster or purse. Due to its blocky design, the PMs are not the best choice for pocket carry. Because they are so thin, the pistols are perfect for IWB holsters, such as the Comp-Tac Infidel.  
Negatives: Lower maximum capacity due to single-stack design. Expensive. See notes in Glock section regarding semi-automatic reliability.

## **Random Thoughts and Personal Opinions**

### **DAO**

All of the above firearms have DAO (Double Action Only) actions. This means that they have long and rather heavy trigger pulls that minimize the chance of accidentally pulling the trigger.

### **22 Magnum and 25 ACP**

I don't recommend defensive pistols in either of these two calibers. Both use small bullets and do not provide sufficient energy to be effective.

### **32 ACP**

In recent years, the 32 ACP has enjoyed a renewed popularity due to the greatly increased sales of small pocket semi-automatic pistols, such as the Secamp and Guardian. The 32 ACP is, by no means, a powerful cartridge, and should be considered a marginal choice. If, due to clothing and lifestyle issues, you are unable to carry a larger weapon in a more effective caliber, a quality 32 ACP might be a reasonable alternative. A 32 ACP in your pocket is better than a 9mm at home. Also, bullet placement is what's most important. A 32 ACP bullet in the chest is more effective than a 357 Magnum bullet in the hand. For decades, the 32 ACP was widely used by European police. World War I was started with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand with a 32 ACP FN Model 1910. Adolph Hitler committed suicide with a 32 ACP Walther PPK. Obviously, the 32 ACP is lethal.

### **380 ACP**

Many of the same pistols chambered for 32 ACP are also available in the more effective 380 ACP. The 380 ACP uses a larger and heavier bullet than the 32 ACP and is a better choice for a defensive pistol.

### **Kel-Tec Pistols**

Kel-Tec makes small pocket pistols in 32 ACP and 380 ACP. Due to their small size and polymer frames, these guns are very light and compact, making them a popular choice for concealed carry. They are also very affordable.

## Ruger LCP

Basically, Ruger copied very popular Kel-Tec P3-AT (380 ACP), extensively refining the design. Their efforts resulted in a well-designed and highly refined pocket pistol.

## Seecamp

Seecamp pistols are very small and are available in both 32 ACP and 380 ACP. These pistols are handmade with limited availability (delivery on the 380 ACP is approximately one year). The Seecamp could be described as the Rolex of pocket pistols. Due to their small size, they are difficult to shoot and easy to conceal.

## North American Arms Guardian

The NAA Guardian 32 is very similar to the Seecamp 32 ACP. The pistol is slightly larger and heavier than the Seecamp, making it a bit easier to shoot.

## Sights

Pistol sights are typically configured with a post front sight and a notch rear sight. They are available with many variations, including night sights that glow in the dark. With any configuration, it's necessary to line up the sights and maintain the alignment while aiming the gun at the target. It takes a lot of practice to accurately shoot a handgun. An alternative is a laser sight, such as those made by Crimson Trace. With laser sights, a red laser beam is projected from the gun to the target. Place the red dot on your target and shoot. You don't have to align the sights or even have the gun directly in front of your eye. Just place the glowing red dot where you want the bullet to go. Quality laser sights are expensive but are an outstanding upgrade to any defensive weapon.

## Compromise / No-Compromise Weapons

Any of the small pocket automatics (Seecamp, Guardian, Kel-Tec, etc.) are compromises. They provide high concealability but reduced power and effective range, often limited to approximately 7 yards. Some of these pistols don't even have sights. No-Compromise weapons are chambered for higher powered cartridges and have good sights. With practice, they have an effective range of 25 yards and beyond. The Smith & Wesson 642 and 340PD, in addition to the Kahr PM9 (or 40 S&W PM40) and the Glock pistols are "No-Compromise" weapons. The two Smith & Wesson revolvers, though, can be easily carried and concealed in one's pants pocket. Due to their weight and shape, this is problematic with the Kahr or Glock pistols.

## What Do I Carry?

My normal, warm weather, weekday attire is business casual; i.e., khaki or dress trousers and a cotton dress shirt. I'll carry a S&W 340PD, with Crimson Trace LG-105 laser grips, in a Milt Sparks pocket holster. If I need even more concealment, I'll carry a Ruger LCP, using various holsters.