



Real World CARRY GEAR

COLUMN BY: DUANE A. DAIKER

New LED lights from SureFire, KaBar TDI Knife, DeSantis Scabbard Holsters and Second-Six Speedloader Carrier

Every day we are bombarded with advertisements for new products aimed at the burgeoning concealed carry market. By watching the industry, keeping my ear to the ground, and taking input from CCM's readers, I try to keep you up to date with the products out there that qualify as real world carry gear. Some of the products are new, some are old classics, but all are quality gear that works. Here are this month's selections for your consideration:

New LED lights from SureFire (L1 Lumamax, E1L and E2L)

SureFire has upgraded some of its line of LED flashlights with new higher performance LEDs that emit higher light outputs with increased efficiency. This means more light output with longer running times. Talk about a win, win situation! SureFire provided me with three different units utilizing the new LED technology, the L1 Lumamax, E1L Outdoorsman, and E2L Outdoorsman.

The L1 Lumamax is my favorite of the three because it is so versatile. The L1 is very small—pocket sized, for certain—measuring only 4.5 inches in length, and weighing 2.9 ounces. The L1, as the name implies, runs on a single lithium 123A battery. The light is small enough to carry anywhere, all the time.

What I love about the Lumamax is the dual output modes. The tail cap switch has two activation positions, depending on how far the pressure switch is depressed. Depressing the switch part way activates the low output mode, which generates a very useful ten lumens of light. Ten lumens is good for most utility tasks, like reading maps, walking around in the dark and such, without killing your night vision. At the low output level, the L1 Lumamax will run for an impressive 16 hours. If you push the switch fully, the high output mode cranks out a full 65 lumens of light—enough to serve as a true tactical flashlight. The L1 will run in high output mode for a full 1.5 hours.

The tail cap switch also has a twist mechanism for constant-on illumination. Turning the tail cap engages the low output mode first, then the high output mode. I particularly like that you can engage the low output constant-on mode, but still jump up to high output mode just by depressing the tailcap pressure switch a bit further. I think this switching method is perfect for this type of dual output light. The tailcap can also be backed out to a "lock out" position to prevent accidental activation of the light. This is great for packing the light in your luggage for travel, or for other storage.

The L1 Lumamax is a great compact light that combines the features many of us look for in an every day carry light: small size, small weight, good battery life and light output that works as both a working light and a tactical light. The unit also comes equipped with a handy pocket clip and an adjustable, detachable lanyard. I recommend this light highly. It is currently my favorite pocket-sized light. SureFire's suggested retail is \$135.

I have also spent some time with the new E1L and E2L Outdoorsman models. The E1L is even smaller, measuring just 3.3 inches long and weighing 2.2 ounces. This light is about as small as SureFire lights get, and now provides 30 lumens of light for ten hours on a single lithium 123A battery. This is a fantastic utility light if you don't need "tactical" levels of brightness. Thirty lumens are enough for any common task, without reaching the "blinding" level. The next step up is the E2L which runs on two lithium cells and pumps out 45 lumens for a full 15 hours. This compact light provides a lot of useful illumination over a long period of time, thanks to the new LED technology.

Both Outdoorsman models are outfitted with a tailcap switch that pushes in for momentary activation, or clicks in for constant-on. No twisting of the tailcap is necessary, so the switching is very easy, and can be done entirely one-handed.



New LED Technology from SureFire: L1 Lumamax, E1L Outdoorsman, and E2L Outdoorsman.



KaBar TDI Knife (bottom) and TDI Training Knife (top).



KaBar factory sheath (left), and On/Scene Tactical sheath (right).

Both models come with a pocket clip. The E1L Outdoorsman retails for \$99, and the E2L Outdoorsman retails for \$129.

These new SureFire LEDs are very impressive units. While the initial cost of SureFire flashlights may be higher than other models, these lights work flawlessly, and are fully backed by a lifetime warranty and excellent customer service. My advice is to pick which of these models most fits your needs and treat yourself to a great flashlight (if you haven't done so already)! For ordering, or for more information, visit:

www.surefire.com
or call 800-828-8809.

KaBar TDI Knife

The KaBar TDI Knife is a special purpose knife, designed for last ditch defensive use. This knife was originally designed by John Benner at the Tactical Defense Institute (TDI) for uniformed law enforcement officers to conceal behind their duty belt for utilization with their weak hand in a fight for control over their weapon. The idea was a good one, and the knives have caught on with the civilian carry world. Many people carry a folding knife on their weak side, with the idea that the knife would be available in the event the strong hand is engaged in a struggle for the gun. Knives carried in such a fashion, however, are often not quick and easy to access and open with one hand, particularly while off balance and under extreme stress.

The TDI knife is designed to be carried on your belt, on the weak side, for quick access with your weak hand. Nothing beats a fixed blade knife for quick, no-fumble access. The TDI is a small fixed blade with a very ergonomic handle that makes it perfect for instinctive

defensive maneuvers like thrusting and slashing to defend against a close-in attack. The deep finger groove under the blade, combined with the relatively short 2.5" blade, make it very difficult for your attacker to take this knife way from you during a close-quarters struggle. The handle is well designed to fit either a forward or reverse grip.

KaBar has done an excellent job with this knife, mating a textured Zytel handle with AUS 8A stainless steel. The knife

measures about 5.5 inches in length, and weighs less than three ounces. The finish on my sample was a black powder coat that gives the knife a very low-profile look. The craftsmanship on this knife is very impressive, especially considering its low price point. M.S.R.P. is only \$42 from KaBar, and the TDI can be found with street prices around \$30. KaBar also offers a red handled dull edge training knife, also pictured with this review.

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DeSantis Speed Scabbard.

The only weak point on the TDI is the factory sheath. While well-designed for its original purpose—i.e., to be worn behind a police duty belt—the civilian will likely prefer a more versatile sheath. KaBar offers an optional belt clip for the sheath, which is workable. However, there are also aftermarket providers making better sheaths. I obtained an excellent sheath from Eric at On/Scene Tactical Custom Sheathing Systems. The On/Scene Tactical rig is smaller, has smoother edges, a better belt clip, and can be oriented in any number of positions for custom carry. If you invest in a TDI knife, I suggest you contact Eric for your kydex sheath needs. On/Scene Tactical can be reached on the web at www.onscenetactical.com or by calling (519) 738-6693.

The TDI is an excellent product for its intended use. While the use of the knife is fairly intuitive, I feel like I would benefit from professional training in its use, which is available from TDI. For TDI's training schedule, visit www.tdiohio.com or call 937-544-7228. For more information, or to order the KaBar TDI Knife, visit:

www.kabar.com
or call 800-282-0130.

DeSantis Scabbard Holsters and Second-Six Speedloader Carrier

In this column I have covered a wide variety of leather shops that make custom order holsters. A custom holster is a great thing if you have the money and the time. Sometimes you need a good quality leather holster without the wait. DeSantis Gunhide offers a huge variety



DeSantis Thumb Break Scabbard and Second Six Speedloader Holder.

of very well made leather holsters that are stocked for mail order from DeSantis direct, or from a huge dealer network, and probably even your local gun shop. Just because you need a holster in a hurry doesn't mean you need to buy a cheap, black, nylon holster with a generic fit.

Recently I had the opportunity to use a couple of DeSantis belt holsters, including the Thumb Break Scabbard (pictured in tan) and the Speed Scabbard (pictured in black). Both holsters are very well constructed examples of a classic belt holster design. The scabbard holsters ride high and tight for easy carry under a cover garment and both feature a classic grip-forward cant. The Thumb Break Scabbard has a thumb break retention strap for those who want or need one, and the Speed Scabbard does not. The Speed Scabbard still offers very good retention, without the need of the retention strap.

Most of the stock holsters are offered in tan or black. The tan is particularly striking because of the contrast with the white stitching. Both holsters are offered in either color for over 200 different handguns. The retail price from DeSantis is \$62.50, but these holsters can be found significantly discounted all over the place. Prices under \$50 are not uncommon. Given the quality of these classic designs, the DeSantis holsters offer a lot of value.

This is not to say, of course, that Gene DeSantis won't build you a custom holster. DeSantis has a Custom Shop for special orders, but be ready for the longer waits that always go along with special orders. Gene has been making

holsters since the 1970s, and is one of the icons in the holster making business.

DeSantis also makes various leather accessories including one of my favorites: the Second Six Speedloader Holder (pictured with the Thumb Break Scabbard). For those of us who carry revolvers, there are not very many ways to discretely carry a speedloader on your belt. Most speedloader carriers are designed for duty belts, or for competition. The only good way to carry a speedloader is with one half the loader on one side of your belt, and one half on the other side. This is precisely the set-up for the Second Six. The speedloader straddles your belt. With only half the bulk in front of the belt, the bulge is much easier to conceal. Unfortunately, the Second Six is only available for HKS loaders. The carrier retails for \$26.50, but street prices are lower.

For more information on any of these DeSantis Gunhide products, or their Custom Shop, visit:

www.desantisholster.com
or call (800) GUNHIDE.

About the Author

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