



# Real World CARRY GEAR

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Crimson Trace LG-405 Lasergrips, Del Fatti Pocket Holster, Bianchi Speed Strips, The Wilderness Safepacker, Barami Hip-Grip

## SNUBBY GEAR

The S&W J-frame snub-nose revolver and equivalent guns from other manufacturers are likely to be the most carried civilian concealed firearm ever, and they probably will be for quite some time. If you don't have one in your arsenal, you probably should. Since the ubiquitous snubby has been around in its present form since 1950 (with the introduction of the S&W Chief's Special), the options for holsters and related snubby gear are nearly endless. The following are a few of my favorites for your consideration. Some are cutting edge and some are old favorites.

## CRIMSON TRACE LG-405 LASERGRIPS

Laser sights have become increasingly popular as serious carry gear, and the snub-nose revolver is one of the very best platforms for using a laser. Snubbies have minimal sights and a short sight radius, and they are mostly for short distance defensive

work, all of which makes a laser sight very advantageous. Crimson Trace is the only manufacturer making laser sights for wheelguns, and it has led the way on laser sights throughout the market.

Previously, Crimson Trace has offered only two models for the J-frame Smiths: the LG-205s, which were small, hard polymer grips that left the backstrap exposed, and the LG-305s, which were much larger, overmolded rubber grips. Both had their strengths. The LG-205s were great for pocket carry, but uncomfortable to shoot with because they did not absorb much recoil. The LG-305s were easier to shoot with, but much harder to conceal because of their size and the "sticky" rubber grip material. Personally, I would usually tough it out with the LG-205s because I wanted to be able to carry easily in a pocket.

Enter the brand new LG-405s, a perfect compromise between the two models. The 405s are larger and more hand-filling than the 205s, but

retain the short grip length to make concealment easier. Most of the extra grip material is along the backstrap, which is partially covered and partially exposed. The top of the backstrap, where the recoil impulse hits your hand, has a soft rubber "recoil reduction pocket" that provides a nice cushion where you need it most. The sides of the grip panels are hard polymer, to keep the grips from hanging up on a draw from the pocket. Finally, the 405s also include a master "on-off" switch hidden on the bottom of the grip, which is nice for storage or for practicing with your open sights at the range.

The LG-405s are a winner. The set you see here is mine. I was already sold on Crimson Trace grips a long time ago, and the 405s are just what I was waiting for (along with many of you). I recommend them highly.

## DEL FATTI POCKET HOLSTER

Matt Del Fatti has been making fine leather holsters since 1978, and he seems to have perfected the craft. Everyone needs some type of pocket holster for their snub-nose revolver, and you can get by with any number of "off the rack" alternatives made from some of type of synthetic material, but if you want a functional holster that is also a work of art, you better call Matt. The photo here does not do justice to the level of fit and finish in a Del Fatti holster. The "PH" model shown works well, fits like a glove with a perfect degree of retention, keeps the gun stable, stays in the pocket on the draw, and is stunning to look at as well.

There are two other things you need to know about Del Fatti holsters. First, they are not inexpensive, but true quality usually isn't. Second,



there is a significant wait time. At the time that this issue went to press, Matt was about 18 months behind. Sometimes you can get lucky and snap up an in-stock item or a cancellation, but usually you have to wait for your turn. I am certain that the end result will meet all your expectations and will be worth the wait. Why are you waiting? Get in line now!



### BIANCHI SPEED STRIPS

Speedloaders come in a variety of styles, and from a few different manufacturers. They are used to quickly load 5, 6, 7 or 8 rounds (the full capacity a particular revolver) into the gun in one motion, and when used properly, are quite

fast. The problem with them is that they are as big around as the cylinder of the revolver that they are designed to load, and can be difficult to carry concealed. If you want to carry your ammo in a flat loader, the Bianchi Speed Strip is the only product available.

The Speed Strip is a flat piece of black, flexible plastic that securely holds 6 rounds of .38 Special or .357 Magnum ammunition. When you want to load, you insert the rounds into the cylinder one or two at a time, and peel off the strip as you go, releasing the rounds into the cylinder. The flat nature of the loader makes it easy to carry in a pocket or elsewhere.

Some people jokingly refer to these as "slow strips," because they aren't as fast as traditional speedloaders. However, they can be quite quick with practice. Also, they allow you to load less than a full cylinder; that is, to reload one or two rounds without dumping any live rounds you may have left. Several prominent revolver instructors teach the importance of keeping your gun loaded and running, and that often involves loading one, two or three rounds as necessary. Speed Strips allow this procedure, while traditional speed loaders do not.

Speed Strips are only available from Bianchi, and only in 6 round strips in .38 Special/.357 Magnum. Dillon's Blue Press catalog is a great source for Speed Strips and Dillon also carries a small, leather Speed Strip case that will attach to a belt, or just protect the rounds in your pocket.

### THE WILDERNESS SAFEPACKER

The Safepacker from The Wilderness is a holster and a whole lot more. The Safepacker can be worn on the belt like a full flap holster that doesn't look like a holster, so your gun can be "concealed" in plain sight. The holster works well if used in the right environment, where it doesn't seem out of place. In particular, it is fantastic for hiking, biking, camping and similar activities, so the gun is well protected in addition to being hidden. However, it would easily work in casual urban environments, and is no more obtrusive than a fanny pack.

The Safepacker is also well suited for off body carry, much like a Day Timer or similar personal item. I often use mine to carry my snubby when traveling. It attaches to a seatbelt to keep it secured and accessible

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in the car, and then I carry it with me into a hotel or other destination. The Safepacker doesn't get a second look in these days of cell phones, PDAs, Blackberries, laptops, iPods, digital cameras, and all their assorted carrying cases and gear.

The Safepacker comes in various sizes to accommodate nearly any gun, including the J-frame snubby. There is also room in the main compartment for a spare reload or two, either speed strips or speedloaders. The main compartment opens along the front edge to assist in a quick draw, much like a breakfront holster. There is also a Velcro-closed compartment in the holster flap for carrying documents or more gear, as long as it is relatively flat.

Like all products from The Wilderness, the Safepacker is built to last forever, and it probably will. You can purchase a variety of accessories to convert the Safepacker into a shoulder bag, a fanny pack, or a briefcase. The Wilderness' web site is very well done, and it explains all the features better than I can in this short space. If you are looking for a creative way to carry your snubby, I think you will appreciate the Safepacker as much as I do.

## BARAMI HIP-GRIP

I have to be honest about this.

I had no interest in this product for years. I considered the Barami Hip-Grip to be "old school," and pointless. Why not just get a proper holster? Then I attended a gathering of nationally known trainers and found that several very serious operators use the Hip-Grip on a regular basis. I began to think that maybe I was missing something...

The Hip-Grip is a replacement set of grips for your snubby that incorporates a hook-like appendage to the grip that hooks over your pants and under your belt to allow the gun to be carried inside-the-waistband without a holster. Amazingly, this is more comfortable and secure than you might imagine. While I still do not carry my gun this way on a regular basis, I do find it very useful for times when a holster is not immediately available or desirable, like answering the door to a stranger, taking out the garbage, or making a quick trip to the corner store. Unlike some of the "belt clips" on the market, the Hip-Grip is easily removed, and doesn't interfere with the fit of your regular holster.

The Hip-Grip is available in several colors: black, off-white, brown and pink, but it won't win any beauty contests.

The price is very reasonable, coming in under \$25 wherever you look. The packaging looks as if it hasn't changed since the 1970s, which means they must be doing something right. Don't change what is not broken!

The Barami Hip-Grip can be a great alternative to an inside-the-waistband holster when such carry is appropriate. Obviously, you have to be careful anytime you are using a carry method that doesn't completely cover the trigger, but it can be done safely with a snubby. The Hip-Grip is a better alternative than some of the other holsterless carry systems, and it can be a nice option to have available to you.

## LINKS:

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Duane A. Daiker is a contributing editor for CCM, but is otherwise a regular guy—not much different from you. Duane has been a lifelong shooter and goes about his life as an armed, responsible, and somewhat opinionated citizen. Duane can be reached at [Daiker@RealWorldCarryGear.com](mailto:Daiker@RealWorldCarryGear.com). Additional RWCG columns can be viewed at [www.RealWorldCarryGear.com](http://www.RealWorldCarryGear.com).

