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CONCEALED CARRY

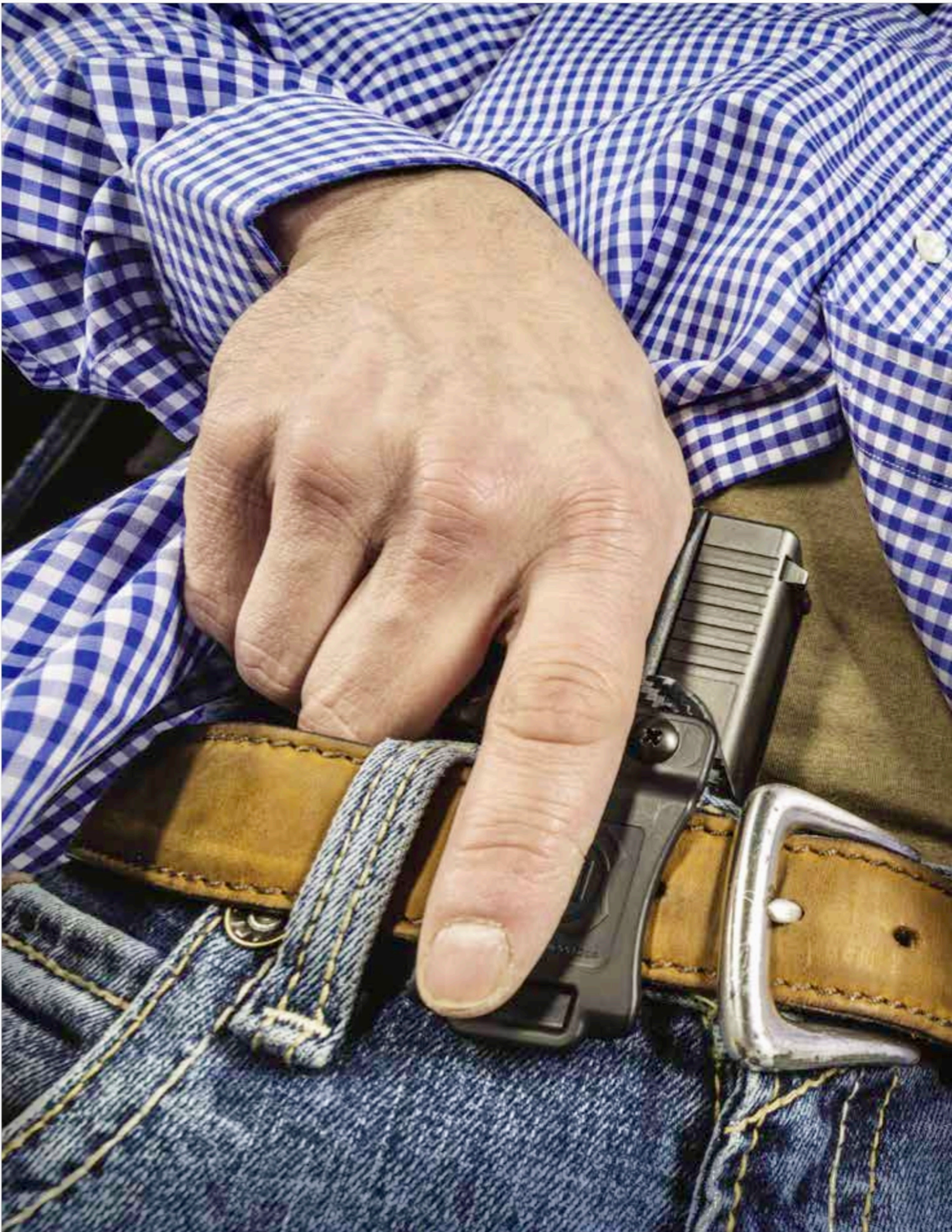
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THE NEW STYLE

The Trenton Dress Shirt from Tarnkappe Gear is specifically designed for modern concealed carry.

CLOAK OF INVISIBILITY

TARNKAPPE GEAR TRENTON DRESS SHIRT

MARK KAKKURI

A dress shirt optimized for concealed carry can offer some real tactical advantages. It can afford faster access to and better accommodation of a hidden gun and holster. Additionally, if the dress shirt is worn tucked in, the wearer may be less likely to be suspected of carrying. You can find several companies offering clothing with such features, but Tarnkappe Gear has taken this idea to the next level with its line of carry-optimized dress shirts.

WELL-DRESSED AND CONCEALED

"Ancient tales refer to a 'cloak of invisibility' as tarnkappe [t(a)-rn-kap pe]," reads Tarnkappe Gear's website. "It has been said that the cloak made its wearer invisible and provided additional strength. Although we have not figured out how to increase one's strength with our products, we are confident our garments will allow carriers to conceal in comfort to protect themselves and their loved ones."

A group of friends in Texas started the company in 2020 when they discovered that there were limited options for premium concealment apparel. Their No. 1 priority is to offer top-tier concealment products of unrivaled quality.

Tarnkappe Gear's shirts sport designs typical of high-end clothing brands. Cuts, patterns and colors are not only stylish but also functional for concealed carry. A more generous cut around the waist and concealed snaps at the bottom of the shirts provide room for a hidden gun and holster worn inside the waistband and give a wearer faster access to them. Moreover, the traditional patterns and colors help hide any printing that may occur, and the shirts' minimal branding keeps the overall look plain but classy.

The Tarnkappe Gear Trenton Long Sleeve is a classic design, suitable for a variety of settings, ranging from the office to a neighborhood barbecue. Similarly, you can wear it tucked in or untucked and still look great. To test out the features of this optimized garment, I wore it (tucked in) to a few events, with my gun and holster inside the waistband, hidden from sight.

Besides the compliments I received on the overall look of the shirt, I don't

MORE THAN A NAME



■ "Our goal at Tarnkappe Gear is to help citizens exercise their right to self-defense. We like to think that we offer concealment, not just high-quality shirts," co-founder Gustavo Molina said in an email.

Molina works in the banking industry, usually wearing suits or business-casual attire. Concealing while wearing a jacket wasn't an issue before the COVID-19 pandemic, but when his employer transitioned to a more relaxed attire for its employees, it became a problem for him. Hence, Tarnkappe Gear was born.

"Tarnkappe Gear shirts are specifically designed from top to bottom to allow users to blend into their environment and thus be as close to invisible when exercising their rights," he wrote.

Tarnkappe's founders decided to name their shirts after Revolutionary War battles, not because they are history junkies but because they are incredibly appreciative of the sacrifices our forefathers made to secure our freedom. Freedom is not something they take lightly; it's a belief they hold dearly.

"Men and women gave up their lives to carve a place in history for the foundation of our country," Molina continued. "Once freed, the American experiment began, starting with the Declaration of Independence, subsequently reflected in the U.S. Constitution and the accompanying Bill of Rights. We wanted our shirts to remind our customers of their sacrifices."

— Frank Jastrzemski, Contributing Editor

think anyone suspected I was carrying a concealed pistol in a tuckable holster on my right hip at 4 o'clock. When I dressed, I did blouse the shirt a bit, pulling it up and out so that the fabric fell over my belt while still remaining tucked in. This helped conceal the holster's two black belt clips — the only visible signs that I was packing. But because the black clips were riding over a black belt, they were barely visible anyway. (For those who are unfamiliar, "tuckable" holsters usually offer one or two belt clips. With one clip, you get faster installation because you're tucking a shirt behind only one clip. With two clips, you get slower installation but more overall stability.)

The shirt indeed had more room to accommodate the bulk of a holstered

gun inside my waistband — although other dress shirts have not really been lacking in this area. With the Trenton, I could turn side to side, bend over and basically move however I wanted without much fear of printing. The blue plaid color added an attractive visual disruptor to any potential printing as well.

Generally, I wore a V-neck T-shirt under the tucked-in Trenton, not because the Trenton is in any way scratchy or uncomfortable but because I prefer a layer of cotton between my holstered gun and my skin. (A T-shirt will also mitigate any sweating that may occur.) In the more casual untucked mode, I usually rolled up the sleeves two turns so the cuffs rode just below my elbows.

With the tucked-in Trenton, my



SMOOTH OPERATOR

Like some other popular men's shirts, Tarnkappe Gear's Trenton is designed and cut to be worn untucked but performed exceptionally well tucked in too.

backup magazine went in my front weak-side pocket. With the Trenton untucked, I could carry my reload in a pouch on my belt, weak-side.

As for other aspects of the shirt's fit, dimensionally, it was perfect for my 5-foot-10, 180-pound frame in a Size Large. The 100 percent cotton construction was comfortable and ironed nicely.

The Trenton's MSRP is \$99.99.

DRY RUN

In the privacy of my home, I tried a few draws, noting the Trenton's function. Here I noticed the shirt is cut just a bit shorter than other dress shirts, allowing the tucked sides or tails to become untucked just a bit faster as well as for there to be just a bit less shirt to clear to gain access to my gun. I tried a left-handed shirt pull and clear with a right-handed draw, and a right-handed shirt pull and clear with a right-handed draw. Generally, when I was drawing from 4 o'clock, the snaps didn't need to break away and, with practice, I could feel confident that I could draw and present my gun relatively quickly.

Switching to a 1 o'clock (appendix)

carry location, I could tuck in the shirt over a gun and holster, blouse the shirt out a bit and get to a decently fast clear, draw and presentation. In this carry location, one or two of the snaps would more regularly release to ease access. That's when I was drawing while standing. While sitting, the concealed snaps really proved their worth, providing a larger opening from which a draw and presentation could occur. The snaps are robust, holding very tightly but easing a bit as they broke in.

I also tried clearing and drawing with the shirt untucked, which, of course, was less involved than drawing from a tucked shirt. In this mode, I discovered that the shirt, while cut shorter, is still plenty long for concealing a gun and holster, even when I was moving a lot or bending over.

As excellent as the long-sleeved shirt is, keep in mind it is only one part of an overall concealed carry solution. Just as important as the features of this shirt (and others like it) is the size and type of gun and holster you carry. Also, a proper gun belt is critical. (Your individual build may affect your ability to carry well this

way.) Thankfully, the popularity of concealed carry has resulted in many new designs in tuckable holsters as well as gun belts that look like dress belts.

GOING UNNOTICED

Tarnkappe Gear offers several dress shirts, all equipped with the concealed carry functionality noted here. Its long-sleeved shirts have a button-down collar, while the short-sleeved shirts have a spread collar. All of them come in classic colors and prints.

Tarnkappe improves tucked-in concealed carry in several ways, offering the "cloak of invisibility" so helpful to those who desire to eliminate as many external signs as possible that they're carrying a concealed handgun. If you are in need of a church shirt or something to wear with a suit, definitely check the company out.



SOURCES

Tarnkappe Gear: TarnkappeGear.
MyShopify.com