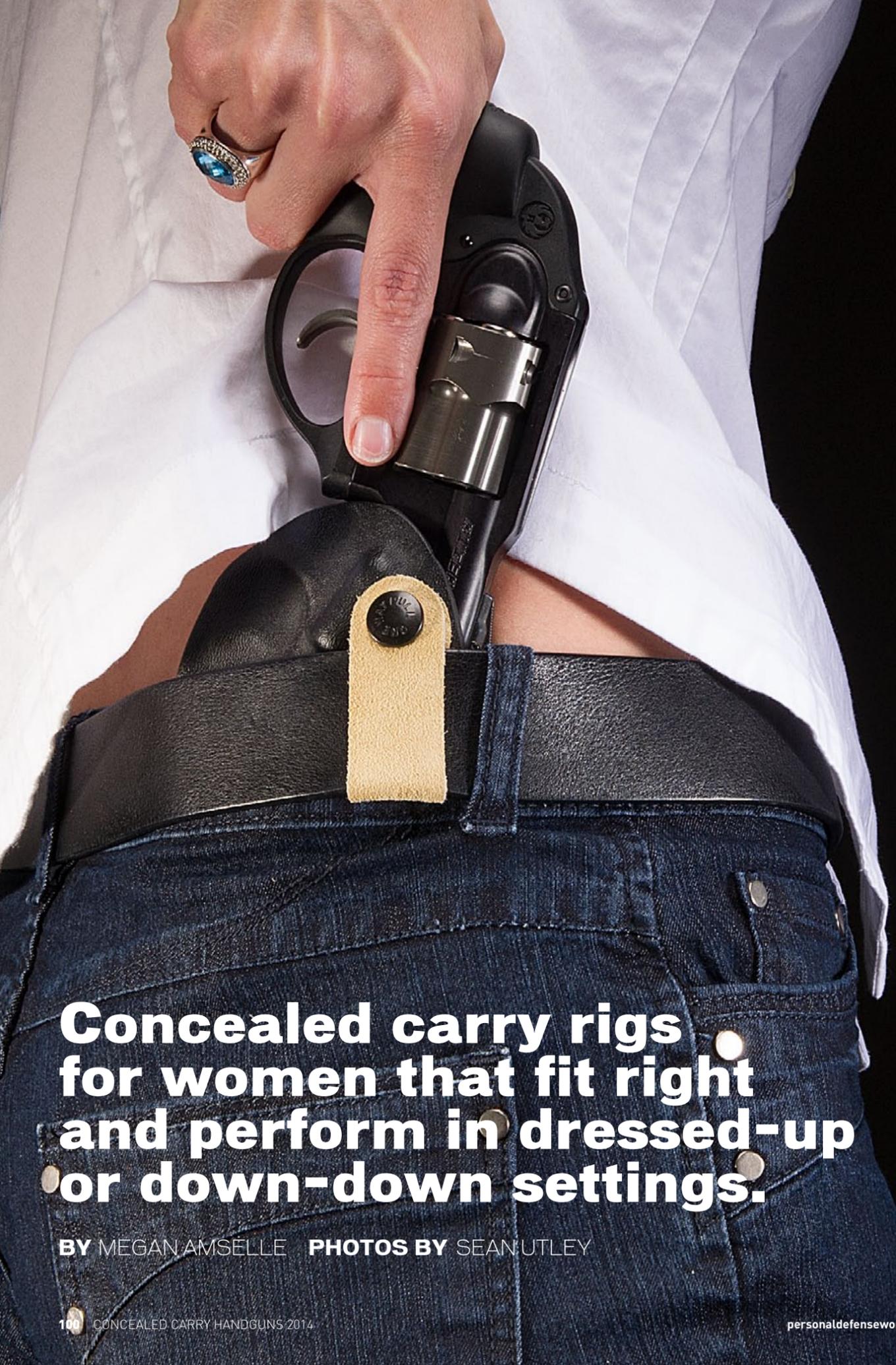


# CARRY ON



**Concealed carry rigs for women that fit right and perform in dressed-up or down-down settings.**

BY MEGAN AMSELLE PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY

Whether carrying a gun openly or concealed, is not always comfortable for women. The heavy piece can pull on your clothing or poke into your ribs whenever you sit down. And women's fashions are quite unforgiving when it comes to attaching or concealing a firearm. Luckily, things are starting to change as companies develop products that allow women to finally carry in comfort and style. Some products even take advantage of hiding places, like bras and purses that are uniquely available to women. Here we present a rundown of some of the options available, nearly all of which are offered in left- and right-handed models and for a wide range of handguns. While not every carry system will appeal to every woman, with so many choices, you're sure to find at least one holster that works for you.

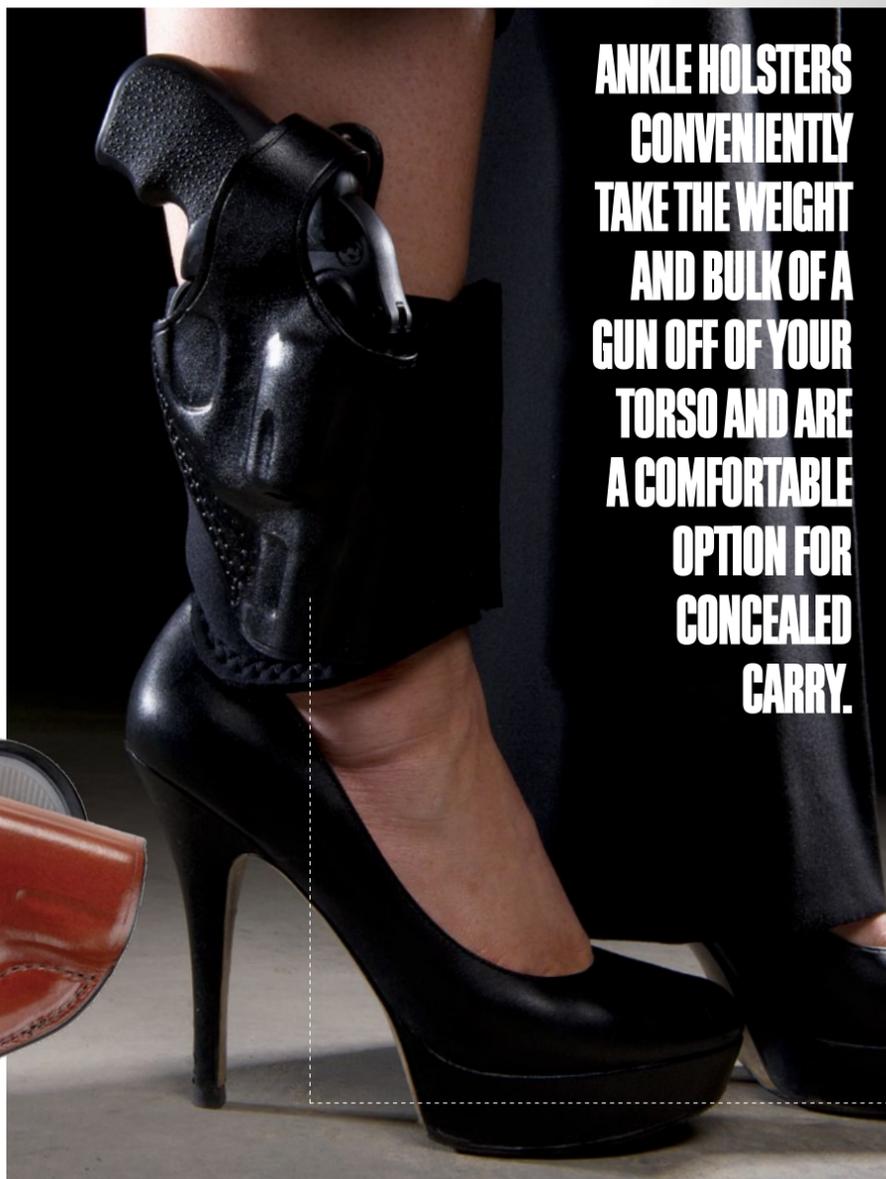
#### ◀ INSIDE THE WAISTBAND

Flashbang Holsters is devoted entirely to holsters specially designed for women. The company's inside-the-waistband (IWB) holster, the Ava, features a molded holster attached to a leather backpiece whose inner surface is lined with soft purple suede for comfort and to allow the holster to conform to your



body's shape. This backpiece is smaller than those on most men's holsters, so it's comfortable on a woman's shorter torso. Two very strong metal clips hook on to the waist of your pants, making the holster sturdy and stable. Unlike many waistband holsters, the Ava does not require that a belt be worn, so the user will have more clothing options. The holster and clips are adjustable and can be worn at the front, side or back of the hips.

Flashbang Holsters makes another clip-on holster called the Betty. Smaller than the Ava but much more versatile, the Betty is simply a molded holster with a single clip. Its small size means that it can be worn in a variety of ways to suit anyone's taste: strong side, crossdraw, small of the back, appendix, or inside a pocket or purse. Its combination of strong clip and light retention on the gun means that you will not have to worry about the holster coming out with the gun when you draw.



**ANKLE HOLSTERS CONVENIENTLY TAKE THE WEIGHT AND BULK OF A GUN OFF OF YOUR TORSO AND ARE A COMFORTABLE OPTION FOR CONCEALED CARRY.**

slide onto the belt rather than to clip on, it can fit any belt up to 1¾ inches wide. Eschewing the forward cant used in most belt holsters, it holds the gun vertically and close to the body, minimizing bulkiness, visibility and pressure on the wearer's ribs.

◀ **ANKLE CARRY**

Ankle holsters are a very comfortable option for concealed carry if you find carrying a gun at your torso to be restricting. The Ankle Lite is a simplified version of Galco's popular Ankle Glove model.

The Velcro closure and wide neoprene band holds the holster onto your calf, and the sheepskin padding on the inside provides comfort. The leather holster has a retention strap for added security. The Ankle Lite comes in black or khaki to match the most popular pants colors, just in case it peeps out at the cuff.

◀ **ACTIVEWEAR**

Jogging and exercising present a unique challenge for concealed carry since most holsters cannot attach to athletic wear and would not feel comfortable during strenuous activity. Pistol Wear's line of athletic holsters fills this gap.

The firearm goes into a pouch attached to a bellyband that is concealed under your shirt. The band is comfortable and won't bounce or shift when you move. The material is lightweight and breathable, and the gun is completely enclosed so it won't poke into your skin. In fact, the holster is so comfortable that you may decide to use it for everyday carry, as long as you don't need to tuck in your shirt.

The Pistol Wear line includes two sizes: the PT-One and the PT-Two. The PT-One can hold a compact or full-size gun and has a separate little pouch for a spare magazine. The PT-Two, which is ambidextrous, is designed for a compact gun and lacks the extra magazine pouch. Both models are available in white, black or nude color.

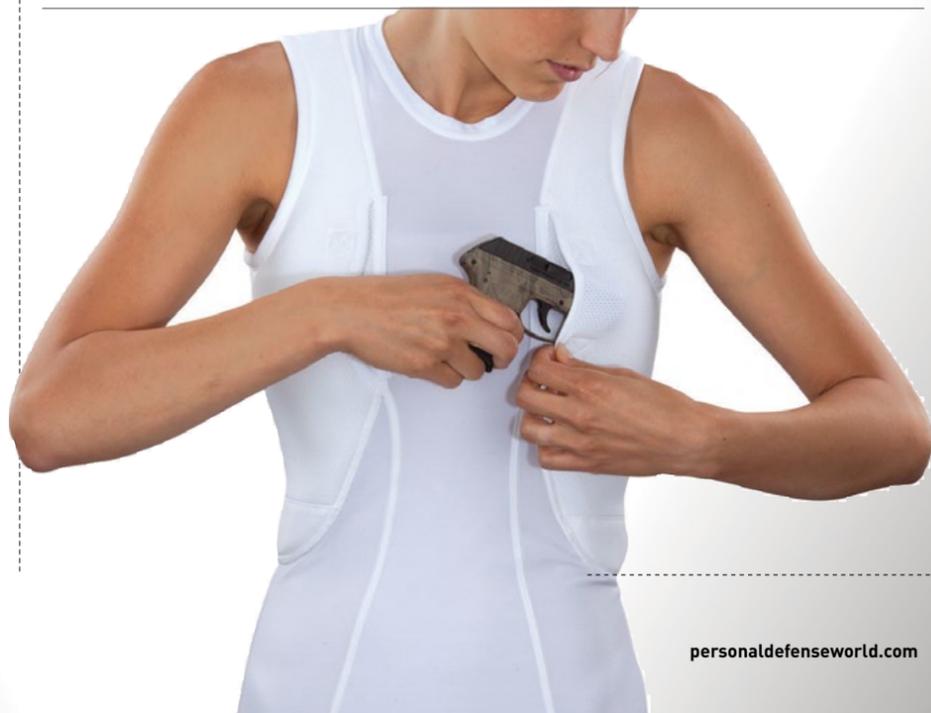
5.11's sleeveless holster shirt is one of the most comfortable and discreet options for women's concealed carry. A tank top with underarm holster pockets on both the left and right sides, the shirt distributes the gun's weight evenly across the fabric so that it is less noticeable to the carrier—there are no itchy straps or belts involved. The shirt is available in black or white and can easily be incorporated into your casual or business wardrobe. The holster pockets are lined to prevent the gun from printing through your clothes.



◀ **OUTSIDE THE WAISTBAND**

Safariland makes many excellent holsters, but the Model 5195 Low Ride is specifically recommended as a hip holster for women. The holster, approved for use in the IDPA, is offset from the belt loop by about 25 degrees, so while the belt loop follows your natural curve, the gun is still held vertically. This angle, combined with the gun's low-ride position on the hip, means that the grips won't dig into your ribs. The gun is also easier to draw for someone with a short torso. The Model 5195 can be concealed under a jacket, but outside-the-waistband holsters are generally tougher to hide. The Model 5195 comes with a waterproof and scratch-resistant finish and is compatible with the other belt loops, clips and paddles from Safariland, so you can customize it to suit your taste.

Flashbang Holster's Sophia is an all-leather belt holster. Designed to



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: SEAN UTLEY, PHOTO COURTESY PISTOL WEAR; PHOTO COURTESY BIANCHI



◀ **BRA HOLSTERS**

Many women dislike the added bulk and weight that comes with carrying a gun on the hip. A better concealment option may be a bra holster. Your natural curves create an easy and convenient space to fit a firearm. The Flashbang is a molded plastic holster with a leather strap that attaches around the center bridge in the front of your bra. The angle of the strap can be adjusted so that the holster either hangs down below the bra or is held right up under the band. The gun is drawn by reaching up under your shirt.

Flashbang Holsters' other bra holster model is the Marilyn. Instead of attaching to the center of your bra, its strap goes around the bra band under your armpit. The holster then clips into the cup so that the gun rests partly inside the cup. You may need to adjust your bra fit to accommodate it, but once it's settled in, it's quite comfortable. This is one of a very few holsters that can be worn with a slim-fitted dress and remain concealed. Drawing the gun requires that you reach right down into the front of your shirt, which may seem odd, but this won't matter in an emergency situation.

◀ **HOLSTER PURSES**

When it is too difficult to carry your firearm on your body, a holster purse may fit the bill. Know that purses are much more easily lost or stolen than a gun you carry on your person, and you may be well advised to take a personal-defense class that covers gun retention in such a situation. Nonetheless, holster purses remain extremely popular. Once limited to nondescript black bags, holster purses are now expanding into a bonanza of colors and styles. Gun Tote'n Mamas



**Holster purses remain extremely popular and today are available in a wide range of styles and materials. You can carry securely and with style.**

sells a line ranging from tote bags to evening bags and including every style in between. These are available in several colors as well as in floral tooled leather and zebra or leopard print. For dressier events, there are now several models of small evening bags with holsters that fit subcompact handguns.

Everyday Tactical offers the Cocktail, an evening purse that comes in black leather, patent leather or faux crocodile. Even smaller is its Wrist bag, designed to be carried as a clutch or wristlet and available in several colors. Despite its sophisticated look, it can still hold a small or mid-sized handgun.

For women who cannot give up their favorite handbag or who have several different bags that they love, concealed carry is still possible. Famed for its luxurious and high-quality holster bags, Galco has now come out with the removable Carry Safe holster system. This nylon holster

Velcros onto a patch that can be clipped anywhere in your bag. The Velcro allows you to easily adjust the position and angle of the holster any way you like so that the gun is readily accessible regardless of your bag's shape. The entire holster mount can be moved from bag to bag very simply, allowing you to convert any purse, briefcase or handbag into a concealment bag. Compared with the cost of buying multiple carry bags, the Carry Safe at \$30 is a real bargain. The holster is available in four sizes to fit most carry guns.

There are holster options available for when you are dressed up for an evening out or dressed down for a jog. Regardless of a woman's size, clothing or activity level, she should always feel that she can easily carry a firearm with her. With so many options out there, a lady should never have to suffer through an ill-fitting or uncomfortable holster, especially when she can so easily go armed in style.

LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY FLASHBANG HOLSTER; RIGHT PHOTO COURTESY GALCO GUNLEATHER