

# § Holster Designer/Maker Lou Alessi 21

for someone so inclined. It could also be left in place and a pair of cuffs could be carried with it, albeit rather loosely.

Both Alessi “Bodyguard” Shoulder Holsters – the original and the current production – are excellent.

The inside waistband holster, known as the “Hideout,” is very close in design to the original Alessi inside holster I used for years and years. That holster is still in use and just as serviceable more or less three decades later. Both the original version and the current version feature a double snap closure wrap-around leather tongue that originates near the trigger guard area. Both incorporate a paddle-like extension at the front of the holster, this smoothing the silhouette and helping to evenly distribute weight. The new model features a more contoured version of this extension. The original was straight across the bottom.

The new model of the Hideout features a pull-through snap that closes over the hammer of my Detonics. I told Tom Kulwicki of Alessi about my peculiar desire to carry 1911-ish pistols hammer down. The original Hideout was available with or without the pull-through snap, if memory serves. The new model of the Hideout is available with or without the pull-through snap. And, both the original flat-edged paddle design and the contoured version are available. Just specify which you want.

The third Alessi holster included here is the Ankle Holster. Catchy name. Years ago, I occasionally carried a Detonics in an Alessi ankle holster, a model just like this one. The holster employs no safety device of any kind beyond the close fitting, detail wet molding of the unit. The version made for J-Frame revolvers is offered with a pull-through snap, but that’s the only model incorporating a snap.

The Alessi ankle holster doesn’t use any sort of calf-support T-strap. A full leather holster – not just the outer side – is sewn onto a leather back which is already sewn to a contoured, quarter-inch thick pad. The entire unit is wrapped around the ankle and secured with very properly sewn Velcro fasteners, the fuzz overlapping the hook for about two inches where they are joined. The exterior surface of the Velcro hook band is leather covered, of course, and the tail of leather that wraps around and holds the metal loop

through which the band passes before being turned back on itself for the Velcro pieces to bond to one another is both sewn and riveted. That metal loop can’t rub against your ankle because the quarter-inch thick padding is extended behind it.

The current version of the Alessi Ankle Holster is identical, as far as I can determine, to the one I wore years ago. Would I want to wear almost two pounds six ounces of .45 auto (loaded with six rounds of Federal 230-grain Hydra-Shok) on my ankle all the time? Don Johnson’s character did it on “Miami Vice,” of course, and I appreciate having the option to do so, myself. But a quality ankle rig – this one from Alessi is certainly that – is more practical for guns like J-Frame Smith & Wesson revolvers, which weigh close to a pound less.

Spare loaded magazines are something we often give less consideration than they

deserve. Although most armed encounters involve very few shots fired, the wise man or woman will want at least one and preferably two spare magazines available should they be needed. The double and single magazine pouches examined for this column are so identical seeming to the ones from 30 years ago, it would be hard to tell them apart. You can thread the belt through their single tunnel loops, if you wish, or pop the “Pull-The-Dot” snaps.

Alessi holsters are available in black or – my favorite – Alessi Brown (the actual color name used by their dye supplier). And, I have to tell you this, something that as a one-time holster maker makes me almost cringe. Most people in the holster business who

wet mold do so with water. Not Alessi. I mean, talk about potentially messy? Alessi holsters are wet molded with the leather dye, not water. I respect this technique and the superb results speak for themselves, but wet molding with leather dye really does give new depth of meaning to the concept of immersing oneself in one’s work.

Lou Alessi was a good friend, a voice on the phone that I knew for years and years, a master craftsman who combined innovation with tradition. I miss Louie, but I’m glad to see his name and his reputation for quality will endure. Check out Louie’s full line of holsters at [alessigunholsters.com](http://alessigunholsters.com) and you’ll see what I mean.



**The Alessi “Hideout” IWB holster contours nicely to the body. New, the wrap-around belt retention portion of the holster is stiff and won’t lie flat in a photo.**



**Construction of Alessi’s Ankle Holster is first rate.**