



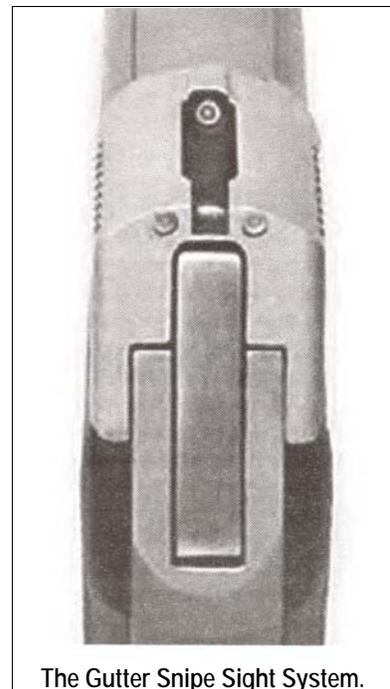
By John C. Krull
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Exactly five years ago to the date of this issue I did my initial review of the North American Arms (NAA, 2150 South 950 East, Dept. GWK, Provo, UT 84606; phone: 800-821-5783; on-line: www.northamericanarms.com) Guardian .32. At that time I couldn't think of any way that they could improve the gun, but over the years they have come up with several modifications that are noted enhancements. The custom shop can perform several modifications for you, but in my opinion the best of these is the installation of what NAA calls the Gutter Snipe Sight System.

The Guardian comes with a very small rear ramp-type sight and a very small front sight blade. Due to the caliber of the gun-.32 ACP-and the short barrel length, these sights weren't really very functional. It was basically a point-and-shoot gun. The installation of the Gutter Snipe eliminates the original front and rear sight, which could get caught up on clothing during a draw, so that is one advantage of their removal.

Next they groove out the rear of the slide for about 1 1/4 inches at a width of 3/16 and a depth of 1/8 inch. Installed at the front of this groove is a single Tritium dot with two more dots installed at the rear of the slide. While being only a 1/16 of in diameter they form an easy to see and reliable sight picture both in daylight and at night.

An additional advantage that I discovered quite by accident is that the sights will help you find the gun at night in the dark. I keep mine in its holster on the top of my dresser and one night while answering a call of nature I noticed how the gun stood out on the dresser as I walked by. Now I place the Guardian in about the same location on my dresser every night with the sights facing into the room and I know that I can find it with no fumbling around. I've never believed in keeping a gun under your pillow or the drawer of the night stand. I want to have to get out of bed and become more alert if I intend to investigate a bump in the night. Being more alert will prevent



The Gutter Snipe Sight System.

me from discharging my firearms into something that I really may not want to shoot, including my dogs or my daughters coming in late at night.

The Gutter Snipe Sight System modification will run you \$150 and will take about two weeks for you to get your gun back from NAA, but it is money well spent. NAA's Custom Shop has a couple other sight modifications that they will install but this is the one that I preferred.

Ankle Holster

I had asked Sandy Chisholm, president of NAA, what they had in the way of an ankle holster. He showed me one from DeSantis (149 Denton Ave., Dept. GWK, New Hyde Park, NY 11040; phone: 516-354-8000; on-line:

www.desantisholster.com). Most people when carrying a gun in an ankle holster have the gun on the inside of their leg. This doesn't work for me because I usually wear one when I'm riding my motorcycle. I need for the gun to be on the outside of the leg so that I don't have the gun between my leg and the bike. The DeSantis holster is very versatile. It can be worn on either leg and with the gun on either the inside or outside of the leg. The price of the ankle holster is \$49.

My Guardian was one of the first to be shipped and came with two six-round magazines. They were flat bottomed and weren't as easy to install in the magazine well as ones that have an extension. Chisholm showed me the way the magazines now come. They have a black finger extension that not only helps in inserting into the gun, but also allows a two-finger grip on the frame rather than just the one finger that I could get around it before. With this addition you have much better control of the gun for both firing and recoil. Extra six-round magazines with the finger extension will cost you \$25 each.

In addition they have added an optional 10-round magazine. In the plastic bag that the 10-rounder comes in there is a note that tells you to **ONLY** use ball/FMJ ammunition in them. They tell you right up front that hollowpoints may not feed reliably. So heed their warning! They will not feed anything but the full metal jacket ammo; I know because I have tried. This is one reason that I always test fire any gun with several brands of ammo, to see which works the best



At the top is the Desantis ankle holster. The bottom left shows the Alessi pocket holster with the Ahern holster on the right. The magazines from left to right are the 10-shot extended mag followed by the original 6-shot mag without the extension. The next two are both 6-shot mags, the first with a finger extension and the second with just a black floor plate.

and also which brands the gun doesn't like at all. It is nice to carry the 10-rounders for use after you have expended all the ammo in the first one. The 10-round magazines retail for \$30.

I have always been impressed by the workmanship that comes from North American Arms. The Guardian is no exception. While I thought that the Guardian was a fine firearm before these modifications and accessories, the enhancements add value.

The Guardian fires double-action-only (DAO). While I haven't had much experience with other DAOs I do like the idea of it being double-action only from the standpoint that you can carry a round in the chamber with six in the magazine, hammer down and don't have to worry about either cocking the gun or finding the safety during a critical. Like other DAOs, the Guardian doesn't have a safety.

The Guardian weighs only 16 ounces loaded-according to my postal scale. The manual that comes with the Guardian says that it weighs 13.5 ounces empty, but then I never cared what a gun weighs empty. It measures just 4.36 inches long by 3.23 inches high. The Guardian has a nice trim, flat profile; it's less than .85 inches thick. All these features make for a small, compact, reliable carry gun.

The Guardian is made of stainless steel. and should be low maintenance. Stainless steel has never meant that you don't need; to keep your guns cleaned and oiled. The trigger pull is about 10 lbs. It takes a little getting used to but is not unmanageable.

The Guardian comes with its own carrying pouch. It can be clipped right onto your belt and nobody will know what it really is. Drawing from this zippered pouch wouldn't be fast, but the pouch allows you to carry the gun. The pouch is an ideal way to carry during the summer in hot weather. The gun is concealed and also protected from perspiration.

I've used two other holsters with the Guardian. Both are pocket holsters. One is from Ahern, who isn't making holsters any more and the second is from Alessi Custom Concealment Holsters. (2467 Niagara Falls Blvd., Dept GWK, Amherst, NY 14228; phone: 716-691-5615) both keep the gun in a drawing position in your rear pocket and also protect it from the elements and allow for smooth draws. Most of the holsters I own and use on a regular basis are made by Alessi. If you want a quality product to carry your gun in you can't go wrong with them. It's also nice that they are just four miles from my house, making it convenient for me.

The Guardian comes with black synthetic grips. Their finish allows for a good grip for control. If you want to dress your Guardian up, NAA does offer numerous decorative grips in both smooth and checkered finishes. Personally I prefer the stock grips.

The Custom Shop at NAA offers several other optional modifications to your Guardian. Some include a Carry Package, which will dehorn all the sharp edges at a cost of \$99. Frame



Two 10-shot groups fired from 3- and 7- yards in rapid fire. Both groups would have been quite effective on an assailant.

Stippling is another Custom Shop function. The amount of stippling you choose will determine price. Forward Slide Serrations can be added to the front of the slide for a positive gripping surface for combat style slide cycling. Or you can have them add Scalloped Slide Serrations in place of the standard slide serrations.

After getting the modified Guardian back from NAA, I couldn't wait to get to the range to see how it shot. I was very pleased with the groups shot at 3-, 7- and 15-yards. While the groups weren't of target quality, the shots were mostly placed into the killing zone on the silhouette targets. NAA has many other features other than sights that can be added to your Guardian. They now have a locking system that is called the Integral Locking System (ILS). This will lock the hammer so that the gun can't be fired until it is unlocked. They provide two keys with rings. I couldn't find a price for the ILS on their website so you'll have to give them a call for cost.

In summary I would like to say that the Guardian is a well-made, concealable, handgun that could save your life. For more information visit their website given at the beginning of this article.

Remember when contacting any of the manufacturers in this article to tell them that John at Gun Week sent you.

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