

DOTTING YOUR I'S **RED** IDOL SCOOPES

BY: MICHAEL WARE



WITH DOT



"HEY, I WANT one of those red dot sights." We hear that almost daily when folks pop by the CCA North American Headquarters as my right hand man, Dave, refers to the shop. In reality our place is so small you could hurl a whiffle ball across it at terminal velocity. Like I say, there's no reason this can't be fun. There is no shortage of red dots on the market now and they range, as is the case with anything popular, from military grade equipment to pure junk. Let's explore some of the different options available.

A red dot style sight can be put on just about anything these days. We've mounted Trijicon RMR (Ruggedized Miniature Reflex) sights on Glock slides we milled to accept them. We've mounted EoTech sights on M249 SAWs.

We've placed Aimpoint PROs on AR15s, Zeiss Z-points on bows, Vortex Spares on 10/22s, and JPoints on slug guns. There is a way to modify the firearm, optic, or bow to make them fit – trust me. Red dot optics fall into two categories - holographic and reflex styles. They overlap in concept, but some actually use power and LEDs (light emitting diodes) to provide an aiming point or reticle, while others simply rely on existing light

to essentially reflect an image, in this case an aiming point, onto a lens.

Red dots come in all shapes and sizes these days. Some are fashioned to look like traditional scopes and have similar size and weight. Others look like a tiny flat screen TV hanging off your firearm. There are all points in between. We're really moving into a genuine buyer's market with these. There is lots of competition for product in all size and value ranges, so we're in the fabled cat bird seat and can choose nearly anything for our specific needs. With the joys of many manufacturers and lots of sales, comes the overseas junk as well. Be careful of what

you buy as there is junk on the market too. Typically, you can identify these quickly based on bargain bottom pricing alone, however... overseas countries are notorious for fakes, and they've managed to come up with some knock offs that really look like EoTechs, Aimpoints, and

ACOGs, so don't hesitate to check the manufacturer's website for information on fakes. To the point of how much of an issue this has become, most of the top quality makers now offer sections on their websites dedicated to pointing out the specific attributes and markings of the fakes. Be careful.

We know these handy little suckers come in a wide array of configurations and cost, but do they really help us? Are

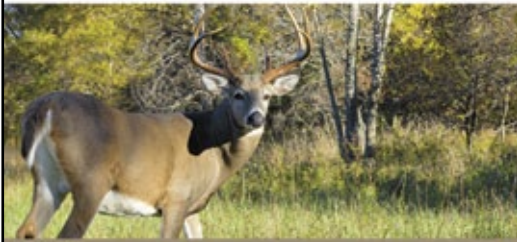
they really a big deal? Yes and yes. For those of us with failing eyesight they are a return to the range and shooting we'd long since been missing. When blade sights, peep sights, and basic irons are tough to use and see, a red dot is quick to acquire and utilize. We're seeing a huge trend towards these for two basic uses. First, they are darn easy to use for all of us regardless of age or ability. Second, they are fast to pick up and acquire. These are two big pluses we sometimes take for granted. Considering red dots don't project any kind of forward laser, they're not restricted for game in any states I'm aware of, where many actual

lasers are. Essentially if what you're using actually casts a light onto the game, you'd be wise to consult the game directory in your state. Iowa doesn't allow the use of lasers in most cases for example.

As I first began using these types of sights, it was obvious this was an actual milestone in optics. I was blown away

WHEN IT COMES TO
SLUG GUN HUNTING
IN IOWA, I PREFER
A LOW PROFILE
UNIT WITH JUST A
SIMPLE DOT.

at how quickly I could place my weapon sight on target and how accurate I could be when employing that speed. You can apply this genre of sight to nearly any shooting except that of engagement ranges requiring lots of magnification. Some of these sights are in fact magnified, but the vast majority are not. The only downside I can see is that of target identification.



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With a magnified optic, especially when hunting, I enjoy being able to better see and identify my target and all behind it. But if we concede that in most cases we'll be able to place a great shot on target, then we simply keep it in perspective.

There are dots of various sizes of an aiming point, little chevrons, triangle, circles, and even reticle designs available today. I have no doubt this product line will continue to offer more and more to us as we ask for it. When it comes to slug gun hunting in Iowa, I prefer a low profile unit with just a simple dot. I like having the adjustability of the dot's intensity, so I can raise or lower it according to how bright things are outdoors. After all, a sunny day with lots of snow requires a brighter aiming point than dusk and overcast conditions. My rule of thumb is to adjust my aiming point brightness to just enough to clearly recognize it against the terrain and no brighter. My experience has been such that when I have the dot way too bright it can obscure the target somewhat and especially so at longer ranges. I find the same to be true when pistol shooting.

It took me some time to warm up to pistol shooting with a Trijicon RMR. For some reason I performed just fine, and actually, especially well with a bow, rifle, carbine, and belt fed machine gun. The handgun was where I fell flat on my face. I simply couldn't get used to it for a long time. I'm so used to employing an isosceles stance and getting half way into the 'tactical turtle' as I slightly hunch forward that I just couldn't pull myself up a half inch to see my dot. When you train yourself for so long so hard to look just a hair above the weapon's top rail/slide and get on your front sight, it was darn tough for me to look into the air above the weapon for a dot out in space.

It truly felt that foreign to me. Now, I'm able to perform pretty well. I can draw, acquire, and send some fast hot little pills downrange in quick succession with accuracy and repeatability.

I can promise you my son and daughter will be learning on iron sights in various configurations first and foremost. I believe that those basic concepts are necessary and work hand-in-hand when instructing and applying the basic tenants for safe and respectful shooting. Still, I know that they'll benefit from the use of red dots on a firearm or bow, so it becomes a matter of time really. For those of us who either want a better mousetrap or will benefit from having something that compensates well for tired eyes, the red dot style sights are here to stay. If you haven't tried one, you're missing out. The number of old boys that have come in my shop exclaiming the virtues of being able to go shooting again tell the tale, and I for one am tickled pink over it. Good shooting friends... 🙌



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