

GUN TESTS VALUE GUIDE: COMPACT 38 SPECIAL REVOLVERS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
Taurus CIA, \$259	Dec 01	Grade A (Best Buy): Centennial copy for hundreds less.
S&W 342Ti, \$499	Mar 99	Grade A: Light enough not to need a holster.
Taurus 85, \$286	Mar 01	Grade A (Best Buy): Reliable, small bare-bones package.
Taurus 851 SSUL Ultra Lite Protector, \$461	June 05	Grade A (Our Pick): Snagproof adjustable rear sight gives windage adjustment and great sight picture.
Taurus 817 2-817029ULC, \$440	Sept 02	Grade A (Our Pick): Porting—love it or hate it.
S&W 638-3, \$620	June 05	Grade B+ (Buy It): Classic; smooth, reliable DA trigger.
S&W 638 Bodyguard, \$492	July 01	Grade B+ (Buy It): Snag-free handling w/option of SA use.
S&W 642 Centennial +P, \$460	Mar 99	Grade B+: We liked it, but we preferred the 642Ti.
S&W Centennial 442, \$459	Sept 00	Grade B+ (Buy It): Understated, aluminum cuts costs.
S&W 36LS Ladysmith, \$539	Mar 01	Grade B+ (Buy It): Good gun. Ignore the gender reference.
Taurus 817 2-817029UL, \$420	Sept 02	Grade B+ (Buy It): 7 shots in 24 ounces, versatile.
S&W Centennial 342PD, \$704	Sept 00	Grade B (Conditional Buy): A topnotch concealable gun. We had no issue with its performance, but price gave us pause.
Taurus 85P Ported, \$305	Mar 01	Grade B (Conditional Buy): Porting reduced recoil.
Taurus M85CH ULT, \$514	Sept 00	Grade B (Buy It): Reliable, use bullets 130-gr. or smaller.
Ruger KSP-821X +P, \$515	Sept 05	Grade B (Buy It): Can handle any +P load comfortably.
Colt Agent, \$339	July 01	Grade B (Conditional Buy): 19-oz. 6-shooter; not perfect.
Colt Detective Sp. II, \$408	June 98	Grade C: Sharp edges made it iffy as a hideout gun.
S&W Centennial 342PD, \$759	July 01	Grade C (Don't Buy): Too expensive; we think there are equal or better guns cost hundreds less.
S&W Model 64-4, \$422	June 98	Grade C: Stainless frame made it heavy.
EAA Windicator, \$170	June 98	Grade D: Difficult hull extraction made it too slow to reload.
Taurus M85CH, \$305	Sept 00	Grade F (Don't Buy): Ignition problems surprised us.
Charter Arms Undercover No. 73820, \$325	Sept 06	Grade F: DA trigger pull showed binding.

Log on to GunReports.com or Gun-Tests.com to read complete reviews of these products. Some grades include comments in parentheses that reflect original recommendations.