

K- and N-framed guns, designated the L frame. The L frame is only slightly taller but allows for a full outside diameter at the forcing cone, heretofore abbreviated in K-frame models. This added strength made it possible for repeated use of one of the most effective handgun rounds of all time, the 125-grain JHP .357 Magnum traveling in excess of 1,400 fps.

The 6-inch 686 is stainless steel with a full-lug barrel. This means recoil-absorbing weight sits under the barrel from frame to muzzle. The front sight on our sample was a ramp style with orange insert. We found the slick surface to the insert detrimental since the glare from its smooth surface made the front sight hard to decipher, especially its upper portion. The grip was the rubber Monogrip design from Hogue that includes a beaded finish, exposed backstrap, palm swell and support lug between the trigger guard and front strap. The frame was a round-butt design unlike the K38, and along with the application of the Monogrip maintains a slim profile. The double action was heavy but consistent. Our experience with S&W guns has showed us that a Smith revolver delivered with a heavy action should be considered an uncut diamond. This gun's single action was deceptively smooth, solid, and heavy. The hammer would fall before we could predict it. The new Smiths include a floating firing pin, and when the hammer drops in single action one feels its inertia with authority.

Regarding the addition of a seventh cylinder and the according ratchet/hand relationship, the change in inertia from a six-cylinder pattern was unnoticeable, we thought. We did find that one of the cylinders was less willing to eject spent cases and receive fresh rounds than the other six. We searched for the answer with our

## S&W Model 14/K38

Retail Price...\$484



### SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: One Year

METAL FINISH .....	Blued Steel	SIGHT RADIUS .....	7.1 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY) .....	41 oz.	CAPACITY .....	6 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH .....	11.6 in.	GRIP MATERIAL .....	Rubber
OVERALL HEIGHT .....	5.9 in.	OPTIONAL GRIPS .....	Yes
MAX. WIDTH .....	0.9 in.	ACTION TYPE .....	SA/DA
BARREL LENGTH .....	6 in.	TRIGGER PULL WT. SA .....	4 lbs.

**Our recommendation:** Though not as versatile as the 686-5, this gun shoots. For pure range work, it would get the nod over the stainless Smith.



*The money in this gun was spent on fitting the barrel and tuning the action. Result: It shot three of our test ammos better than the other guns. Also, the Model 14 was the only gun in our test whose single- and double-action pulls are ready for competition.*

*The specially-designed cylinder latch is relieved for speed loaders. Also, the ejector now meshes cleanly into the cylinder instead of settling over pegs that were prone to break off.*

