

Oehler chronograph, looking for one cylinder to produce higher velocities than the others. To this end we chrono'd from all seven cylinders, not the usual five chosen at random. In review of the figures under extreme spread (maximum difference in velocity from shot to shot) we only found one glaring inconsistency and that was traced to a split case from 3D, a commercially reloaded round. Standard deviation was 12 fps for the Winchester and 16 fps for the Hornady ammo. A SD of less than 10 fps is considered match grade, and the Federal ammo clocked in at 8 fps.

Smith & Wesson Model 14/K38 Masterpiece

Our recommendation: Buy it. One of the best feeling guns of all. Although limited to .38 Special, this is the type of firearm every dedicated shooter deserves to own.

The Masterpiece designation in the S&W catalog refers to fit, not a fancy stainless finish, on this pistol. In contrast to the stainless Rossi, the money in this gun was spent on fitting the barrel and tuning the action. It can even be said that the dark-blued finish is not by way of cost cutting but serves to reduce glare when taking careful aim. The makers of the Model 14 have obviously been to a shooting match or two. This \$484 model has been in production since its reintroduction in 1991, but has been subtly updated over time with features such as the wide, easily-accessible target hammer. The specially-designed cylinder latch, relieved for speed loaders, is one of the more recent updates. The Hogue monogrip with S&W insignia was new for 1998.

Thanks to CNC machining, the ejector now meshes cleanly into the cylinder instead of settling over pegs that were prone to break off. This gun was a favorite in the early days of Practical Shooting competition and was known for its accuracy. Today, it is one of the few pure .38 Special target revolvers still available. Unlike

Ruger GP100 KGP-161

Retail Price...\$474



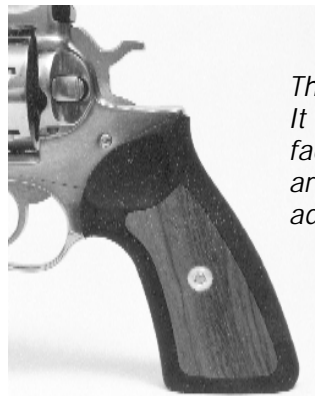
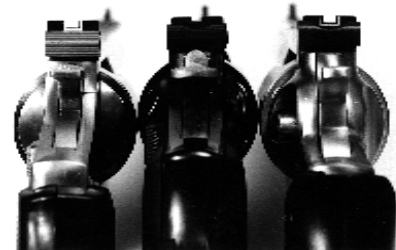
SPECIFICATIONS

Warranty: None Written

METAL FINISH	Stainless St.	SIGHT RADIUS	7.5 in.
WEIGHT (EMPTY)	45 oz.	CAPACITY	6 rds.
OVERALL LENGTH	11.75 in.	GRIP MATERIAL ...	Wood/Plastic
OVERALL HEIGHT	5.5 in.	OPTIONAL GRIPS	Yes
MAX. WIDTH	1.5 in.	ACTION TYPE	SA/DA
BARREL LENGTH	6 in.	TRIGGER PULL Wt. SA	3.75 lbs.

Our recommendation: Worth a look. We liked the two Smith guns better, but this is a solid, shootable revolver

The Ruger rear sight (far right) was harder to read, we thought, than the Smith M14 (center) or the Rossi (left). The Ruger's white-outlined notch had a black margin inside it that was confusing to the eye.



The Ruger's grip was superb, we thought. It featured a Santoprene-cushioned surface in the crucial back- and frontstrap areas, and the Xenoy wood-grain insert added striking cosmetics.

the other participants in this test, nearly all are now chambered for the .357 Magnum as well.

The Smith & Wesson Model 14 was the only gun in our test whose out-of-the-box single-action and double-action pulls could be considered ready for competition. Smith triggers respond extremely well to tuning, which is usually important in getting

them ready for double-action competition. It has been our observation that the majority of S&W revolvers are shipped today with SA triggers ranging from very good to excellent. Usually the double actions straight from the factory are decidedly heavy. Not so with this K38. A machinist could improve it further, but out of the box, we enjoyed the choice of us-