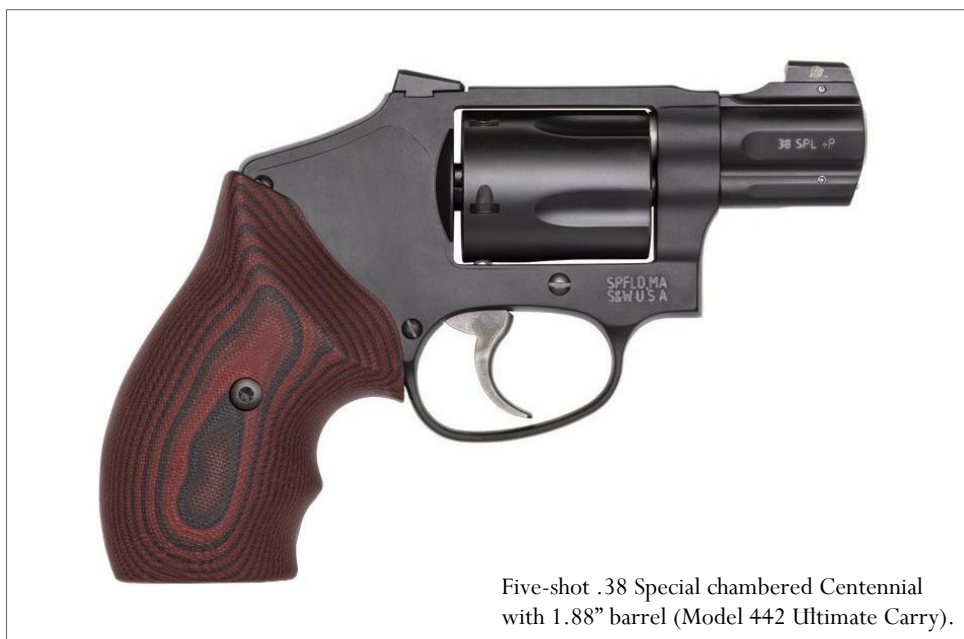


S & W CENTENNIAL

SMALL ARMS REVIEW TEAM

POCKET REVOLVER (.38 SPECIAL)



Five-shot .38 Special chambered Centennial with 1.88" barrel (Model 442 Ultimate Carry).

The Smith & Wesson Centennial series revolvers (c. 1952) have been chambered for a wide range of rounds, notably the .38 Special round, but also the 9x19mm Parabellum, 357 Magnum and .32 H&R Magnum rounds.

As they were designed for pocket use (the internal hammer allows them to be fired inside a pocket) they are available with light aluminium and scandium alloy frames, though this results in very heavy recoil when used with .357 Magnum ammunition (most people use lower power .38 Special loads in .357 Magnum chambered Centennials).

The most efficient round in a short barrel revolver is the rimless 9x19mm pistol round which the steel frame Model 940 was chambered for (discontinued), but required full moon clips for extraction

as this rimless round could not be extracted with a conventional revolver extractor, which allowed very fast loading and extraction of fired cases. Without a full moon clip you would normally have to punch the fired cartridge cases out with a rod as the fired cases would tend to stick to the chamber walls rather than fall out when the revolver was inverted and the front face of the cylinder slapped briskly.

They have heavy trigger pulls, which make them safe for pocket carry, though the Ultimate Carry variants are better than most in this regard. Some people fit an Apex or Wolff spring kit to lighten the trigger pull, but if you lighten it too much and you will get light primer strikes. A 10 pound trigger pull is as light as one should go to ensure reliable ignition.

The Model 442 Ultimate

Carry (and 642 UC) is chambered for the readily available .38 Special round which is the optimum round for lightweight revolvers like this due to having good stopping power without excessive recoil. The Ultimate Carry models were created in conjunction with Lipsey's and have a number of enhancements, notably G10 boot grips suited to concealed carry and much better sights with an illuminated front dot. It also uses a No Lock frame. The Internal Lock used on many S&W revolvers is prone to failure, which will lock up the gun, thus is best avoided. We recommend a .38 Special chambered Centennial loaded with the Hornady 38 Special 90 gr FTX Critical Defense Lite load and (for the recoil sensitive) the Federal Personal Defense Hydra-Shok Low Recoil 38 Special 110 Grain load.

SUMMARY

Ideal for jacket pockets and a great choice for inside waistband (IWB), bellyband and crotch holsters.

ACCESSORIES

Log Book

Firearm Usage & Maintenance Log Book. [Blackheart International]

Cleaning Kit

BoreSnake Soft Sided Cleaning Kit (34002 for .357/38/9mm handguns). [Hoppe's]

Speedloader

HKS Speedloader Model 36-A. [HKS]

Dry Fire Rounds

A-Zoom Snap Caps. [Lyman Products Corporation]

Ear Plugs

EarPro EP3 or EP4. [SureFire]

Grip

Secret Service Grips (the same type of boot grip used on the Ultimate Carry models). [Eagle Grips]

IWB Holster

Workman. [Mitch Rosen]

Waistpack Holster

Stealth Pac. [Coronado Leather]

Tactical Flashlight

E1B Backup MaxVision. [SureFire]

HOT TIP

Line a pocket with leather if you intend to carry a handgun inside it without a holster.