

GUN TESTS VALUE GUIDE: SMALL 38 SP/357 MAGNUM REVOLVERS

GUN NAME	ISSUE	GRADE & COMMENTS
S&W Model 442 Centennial Airweight 38 Special, \$400 used	Sept 2010	Grade A: Overall, this revolver had the best DA trigger for precision slow shooting.
Taurus Model CIA 38 Special, \$259	Dec 2001	Grade A: This Centennial copy sells for hundreds less than the S&W gun.
Taurus 851 SSUL Ultra Lite Protector 38 Special, \$461	June 2005	Grade A: Snagproof adjustable rear sight gives windage adjustment and great sight picture.
Taurus 817 2-817029ULC 38 Special, \$440	Sept 2002	Grade A: Porting—love it or hate it. The tradeoffs were very good controllability, but fierce noise.
Taurus Model 85 38 Special, \$286	March 2001	Grade A: Our team said this small wheelgun is a reliable barebones package.
S&W Model 342Ti 38 Special, \$499	March 1999	Grade A: This titanium-frame wheelgun is light enough not to require a holster.
Ruger LCR No. 5401 38 Special, \$525	July 2009	Grade A-: Represents the first steps forward in revolver construction since modern 8-rounders appeared.
S&W Model 438 Bodyguard 38 Special, \$625	Sept 2010	Grade A-: We liked the gun, despite construction methods and materials that are alien to lovers of classic S&Ws.
Ruger Model SP101 No. KSP-321X 357 Magnum, \$530	Sept 2006	Grade A-: Ejector rod wobbled because of the crane-latch design, but ejection was always flawless with no binding.
S&W Model 638-3 38 Special, \$620	June 2005	Grade B+: This Smith & Wesson is a classic with a smooth, reliable double-action trigger.
Taurus Model 817 2-817029UL 38 Special, \$420	Sept 2002	Grade B+: This 7-shooter comes in a 24-ounce package that our team thought was a versatile carry option.
S&W Model 36-1 Chiefs Special Custom 38 Special, about \$300	Sept 2010	Grade B: If you find one with an intact hammer, you might want to carry it in a holster, not your pocket.
Smith & Wesson 442 No. 162810 38 Special, \$600	July 2009	Grade B: If you believe that small revolvers are for contact distance only, you'll would be satisfied with a 442.
Ruger KSP-821X 38 Special +P, \$515	Sept 2005	Grade B: This revolver can handle any 38 Special +P load comfortably.
Charter Arms On Duty No. 53810 SAO-DAO 38 Special, \$430	July 2009	Grade C: We think Charter could hit a three-bagger if not a homerun with just a few improvements.
Taurus Model 605B2 357 Magnum, \$391	Jan 2008	Grade F: Hotter loads made the cylinder pin stick in the forward position. Easy fix, though.
Rossi Model R46202 357 Magnum, \$377	Jan 2008	Grade F: Cylinder locking pin would stick in the forward position. Easy fix.