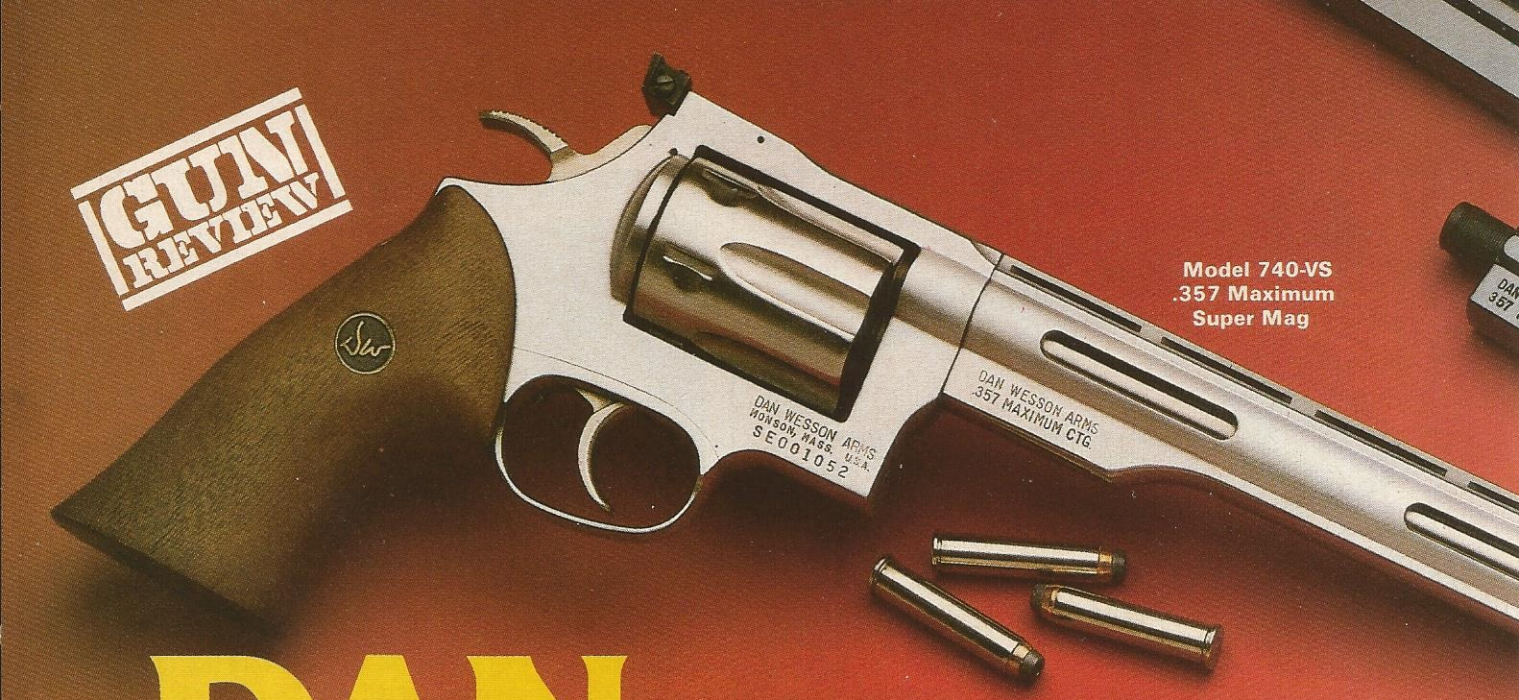
GUN REVIEW



Model 740-VS
.357 Maximum
Super Mag

DAN WESSON

What Makes These Handguns So Accurate?

By Dick Metcalf

According to the company's designers, the answer is the feature that many thought would lead to inaccuracy: the screw-in, interchangeable barrel system. Several other significant design features are not unique to Dan Wesson guns, but the process of combining them into one refined package is. The end result: the winningest revolver in IHMSA history.

IF ACCURACY is what you prize most in a DA revolver, the revolver you should try is a Dan Wesson. Without equivocation, Dan Wesson Arms manufactures the most accurate regular-production revolvers in the world.

Before all the fans of Smith & Wesson, Ruger, Colt, etc., get bent out of shape, let me assure you that I am not saying that each and every single Dan Wesson DA revolver in every caliber is more accurate than each and every revolver produced by its competitors. Any individual S&W, Ruger, Colt, etc., may well be more accurate than an individual Dan Wesson. Moreover, there are particular models and calibers of revolvers from many

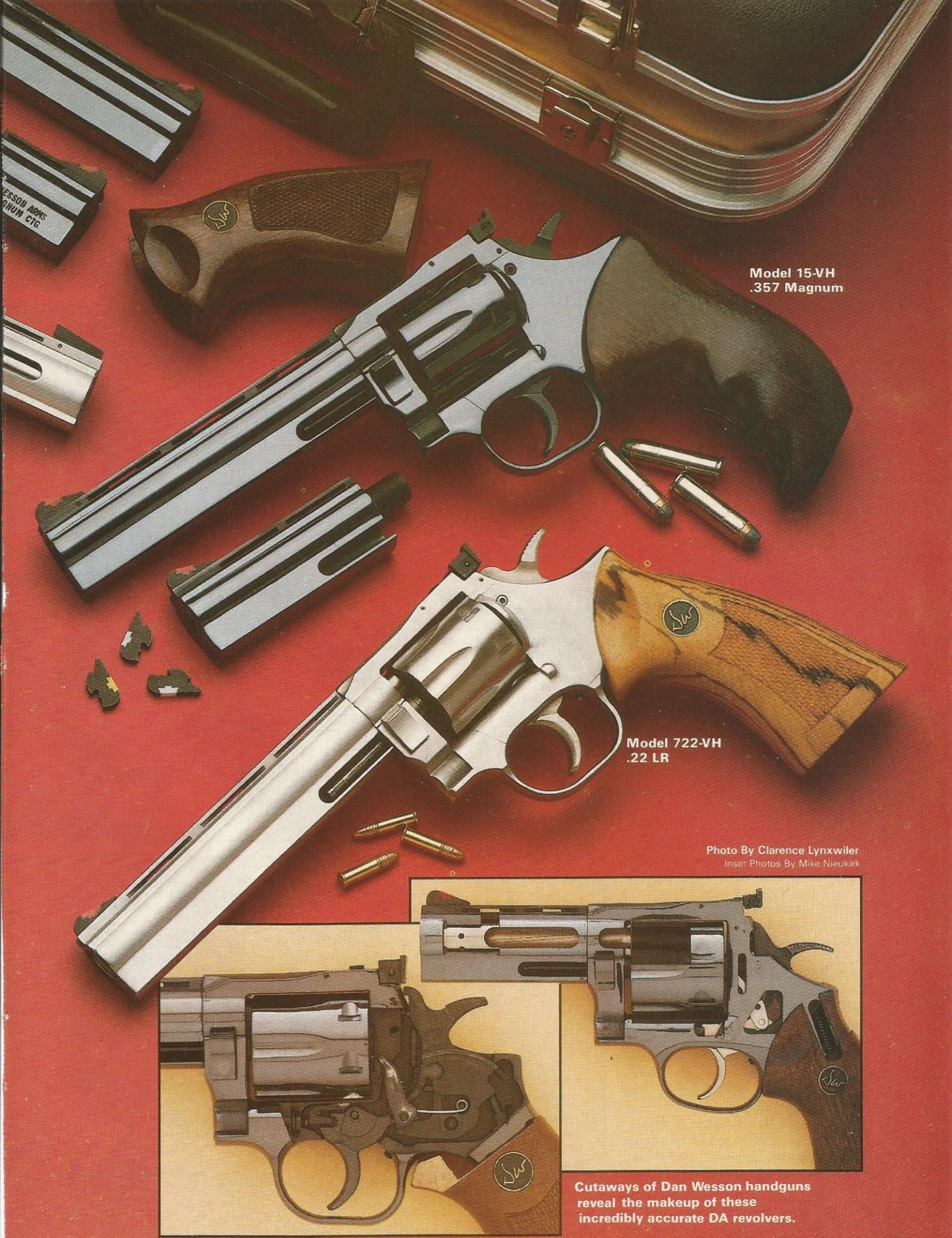


Photo By Clarence Lynxwiler
Inset Photos By Mike Nieukirk

Cutaways of Dan Wesson handguns reveal the makeup of these incredibly accurate DA revolvers.

manufacturers that stand out as exceptional performers in their class—Smith & Wesson's extremely accurate L-frame series of "Distinguished Combat Magnums" in .357 Magnum chambering comes to mind, as does Colt's famed .357 Python.

In terms of overall product line, in all models, all chamberings, and all variations, however, Dan Wesson revolvers simply stand head and shoulders above the rest when it comes to accuracy. I realize this is a strong statement, but the evidence is overwhelming.

In many ways, it's difficult to establish statistically significant accuracy comparisons between handguns when using only a limited number of samples from each and firing them at the relatively close ranges commonly associated with conventional handgun uses. If you put representative samples of premium-grade revolvers from any of the major manufacturers into a reliable machine rest and fire them all with the same lot of known consistent ammunition at a 20-yard target, all will probably place the bullets into a ragged hole, and the differences in actual average group size wouldn't be great enough to be worth noting. The same will probably be true at 25 yards, 30 yards—maybe even 40 yards. But by the time you get out to 50 yards and beyond, any differences that exist among these revolvers will start to become very apparent, and the winner will be easy to discern.

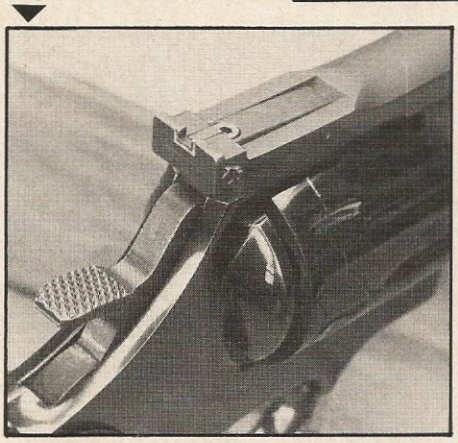
Of course, such an individual comparison will only tell you which of those individual revolvers is the most consistent with a particular load. You can't conclude—if the Ruger happens to beat the Colt—that all Rugers, even of a particular model firing a particular load, will be more accurate than all Colts of a particular model firing a particular load. You would have to fire several thousand rounds of many different types of ammunition through hundreds of individual guns before any reliable conclusion could be reached as to whether one manufacturer's product was more likely to be a better performer.

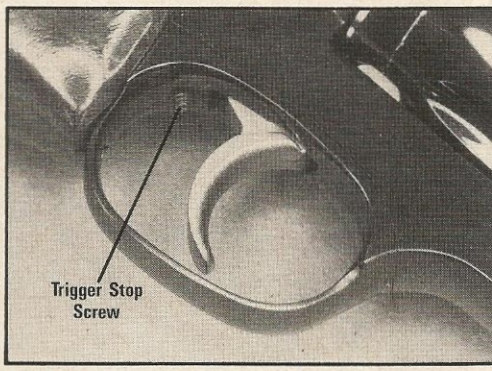
I know of no shooter who has the time or resources to do this. I don't know any full-time gun writers or firearms consultants who do. Very few handgun manufacturers do this. But there is one group of shooters that does. These shooters fire thousands of rounds of many kinds of factory and handloaded ammunition through hundreds of individual models and configurations of production-grade handguns from all the major manufacturers at target distances that begin at 50 meters and reach out to 200 meters. They do it week in and week out, year round, year after year. They are the handgun metallic silhouette shooters, and at last count, there were nearly 40,000 of them.

After years of this kind of shooting by a large sample of handgun enthusiasts who compete at local, state, regional, and

Dan Wesson Arms revolvers come in stainless or blue and with a variety of barrel shroud styles.

Click-adjustable rear sight with a white outline notch and a wide-spur, target-style hammer are standard features.

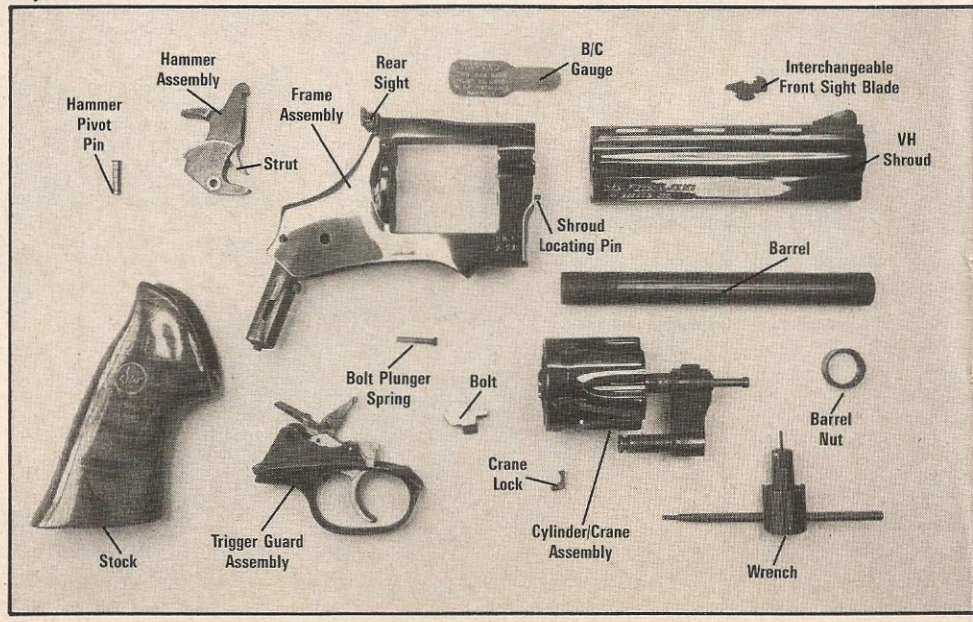


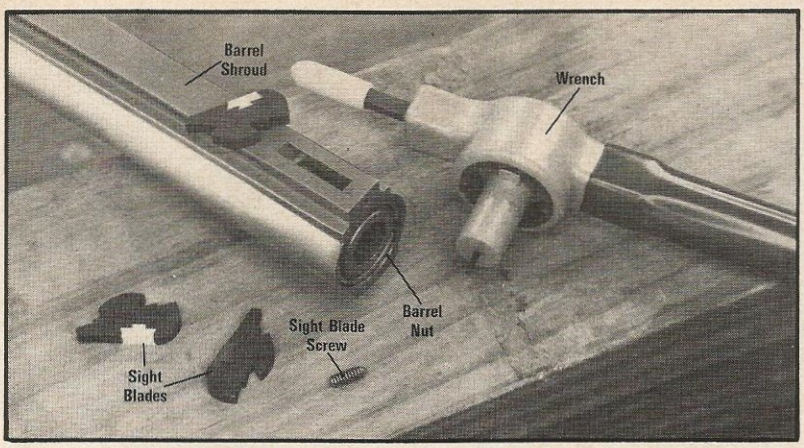


All Dan Wesson target-style revolvers come with an adjustable trigger stop.

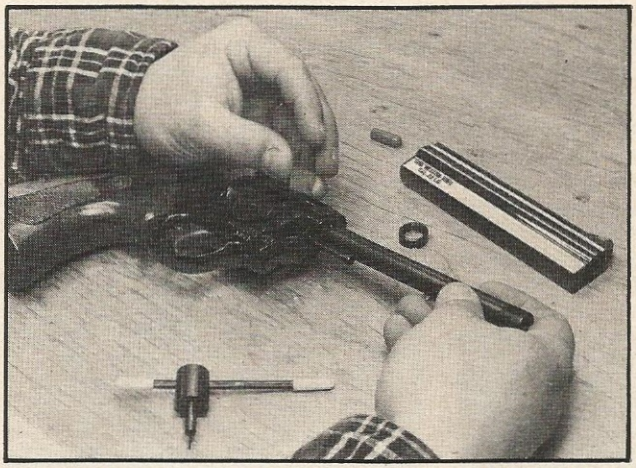
Pistol Pacs provide shooters with full selection of barrels and accessories.

Modular construction translates into easy takedown, maintenance.





Muzzle stability afforded by barrel nut shroud lock is one key to accuracy.



Switching barrels and setting the B/C gauge can be done in minutes.

Dan Wesson Revolver Performance
IHMSA Championships
Revolver Category/-
International Class Competition

1985	1st Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag 2nd Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 3rd Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 4th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 6th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 7th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 9th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 10th Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag NOTE: Dan Wesson claimed eight of top 10 and 15 of top 20 places.
1984	1st Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag 2nd Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 3rd Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 4th Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag 6th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 8th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 9th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum NOTE: Dan Wesson claimed seven of top 10 and 16 of top 20 places.
1983	1st Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag 2nd Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag 3rd Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag 4th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 5th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 7th Place: Model 44 .44 Magnum 9th Place: Model 40 .357 Super Mag NOTE: Dan Wesson claimed seven of top 10 and 11 of top 20 places.

annual international championships, what if *one* particular make of revolver is the overwhelming choice of the great majority of these shooters? What if that make of revolver captured 70 to 80 percent of the top places in the highest categories of this competition year after year at the world championships of the sport. And what if that make of gun had to earn its way to that position by outperforming already-established competing guns because it had not been available when the sport got its start? It seems to me you'd have persuasive evidence that this particular brand of revolver is more accurate (not to mention durable and reliable) than its competition.

Well, that brand of revolver is Dan Wesson.

In the Production Revolver Category at the 1985 International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association (IHMSA) championships held last August at Idaho Falls, Idaho, Dan Wesson revolvers won eight of the top 10 places (including the first four) and 15 of the top 20 at the highest "International Class" level of shooter skill. Of the 60 shooters who represented the top 10 at each of the six classified skill levels (C Class, B Class, etc.), there were 30 shooters using Dan Wesson guns—exactly as many as *all* other brands used combined. That's an impressive record.

And it has been much the same for several years (see the accompanying chart). At the 1984 IHMSA championships, Dan Wesson held seven of the top 10 and 16 of the top 20 places in Production Revolver Category, again including first through fourth place. In 1983, when I was able to witness the IHMSA championships in Phoenix, Arizona, Dan Wesson claimed seven of the top 10 and 11 of the top 20 places among Production Revolvers, this time including first through fifth place. No other revolver even comes close to challenging this record.

My own experience with Dan Wessons really began in November 1980, when I had the opportunity to review a preproduction sample of the big Model 44 .44 Magnum that was introduced to the public a short time later ("The New Model 44—Dan Wesson's Amazing .44 Magnum DA Revolver," March 1981). In miserably damp and blustery late fall weather, I ran nearly 1200 rounds of five-shot, 50-yard groups of 10 different varieties of commercial .44 Magnum ammunition through four different six- and eight-inch barrels on the gun.

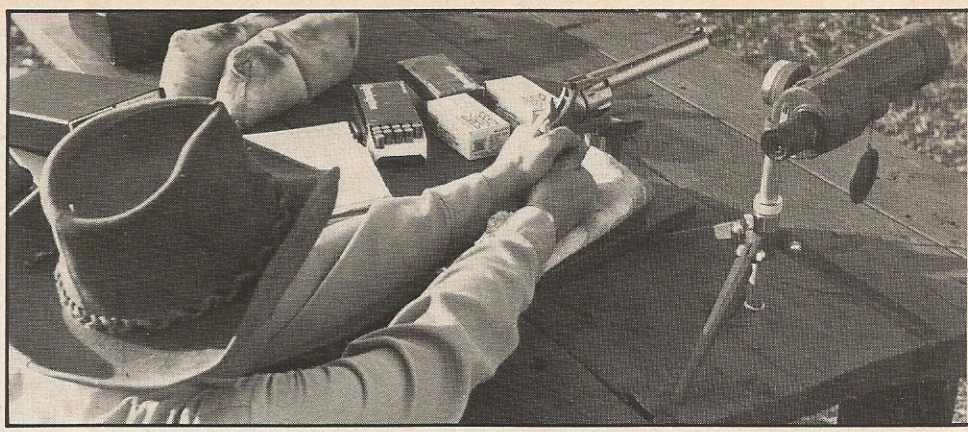
I am not a particularly outstanding marksman. I don't shoot very well offhand, and I'm not a quick shot. What I do have is the patience and concentration necessary to sit down and spend days firing carefully controlled groups from a benchrest. There were no scope mount systems then available for the Dan Wesson Model 44, so I did the best I could with a six o'clock hold on a large bullseye with the factory metallic sights.

I was astounded by the results. Using 240-grain JHP loads from Federal, CCI Speer, and S&W, I started getting consistent 1.5- and 1.75-inch groups. This was as good or better than I was accustomed to getting with that ammo from a scoped 14-inch T/C Contender solid-breech single shot. Since then, with a 4X scope on the gun and some barrel-specific handloads, I have managed to print one-inch (two MOA), center-to-center, 50-yard groups when I take the time to work at it.

I concluded my evaluation at that time by saying the Dan Wesson Model 44 may be the most accurate standard-production .44 Magnum revolver ever built and predicting it "should soon become one of the foremost hunting and silhouette handguns in America." Considering how many top 10 slots it holds in the IHMSA rankings chart, I obviously wasn't sticking my neck out very far.

Nor is Dan Wesson's pre-eminence among revolvers limited to the big .44 Magnum and .357 Maximum chamberings. A 1979 survey of guns used in local IHMSA matches nationwide showed the Dan Wesson Model 15 was the top-ranking revolver among silhouette shooters using the .357 Magnum. Such remains the case today. The Dan Wesson .41 Magnum is also the most winning revolver among those who shoot silhouette with this caliber, and the Dan Wesson Model 22 is the top revolver in IHMSA .22 rimfire competition. It's simple: Dan Wesson sweeps the board for long-range precision revolver accuracy.

What is it about the way Dan Wesson revolvers are designed and manufactured that makes them so notably superi-



Author is impressed by the accuracy of DW regular-production revolvers.

or? The answer, according to the design engineers, is ironically the very feature of the Dan Wesson revolver that in its infancy was popularly regarded as the thing that would make it inaccurate: the screw-in, interchangeable barrel system.

Most shooters know how the Dan Wesson barrels work. To remove the barrel to switch it for a longer or shorter one, you unscrew the barrel nut from the muzzle, slide off the barrel shroud, and unscrew the barrel from the frame (with only finger pressure needed). To put a barrel on, screw it into the frame with your hand until it snugs lightly up against the .006-inch barrel/cylinder (B/C) gauge that comes with each gun (only finger pressure needed); then slip on your choice of shroud (three basic styles and weights) and tighten the barrel nut down firmly with the wrench that also comes with each gun. It takes about one minute.

At first thought, it would seem that such a "loosely" attached barrel could not possibly provide precisely consistent long-range accuracy, but the Dan Wesson barrel is actually more stable than conventional permanently attached barrels.

Dan Wesson engineers explain it this way: all firearm barrels flex, whip, and vibrate as bullets pass down their bores in discharge. (If you watched slow-motion film of a sporter-weight centerfire rifle barrel as the bullet speeds down its bore, you would see it writhe like a snake.) Conventional barrel attachments secure only the breech end to the receiver or frame. The Dan Wesson barrel is held in place both at the breech *and* at the muzzle by the enclosing shroud and barrel nut. The result is a more secure foundation, less barrel vibration, and less variation in the flexing of the barrel from round to round. The result is better accuracy.

Like most technical realities I've encountered in firearms and ballistic engineering, this seems to go against common sense . . . but it sure works.

Dan Wesson's technical staff points to other design features as contributors to superior accuracy. One is the width of the B/C gap, which can be carefully and precisely controlled—and altered—by screwing the barrel slightly in or out. Another factor is that the cylinder/crane assembly locks shut to the frame with its latch in the crane itself, not at the rear of the cylinder alone (Colt) or at the rear of the cylinder and the front of the ejector rod (Smith & Wesson).

The benefit of the crane-latch system (which was pioneered on S&W's classic Triple-Lock .44 Special revolvers) is that it holds the crane tightly against the frame in firing. Systems that latch the cylinder only at its rear or in conjunction with the ejector rod allow the crane to move slightly away from the frame under stress. This results in varied chamber alignment with the barrel and loss of

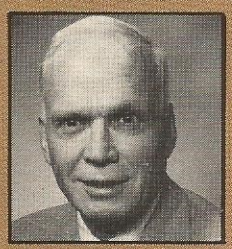
Stainless-steel Super Mag .357 Maximum is company's latest entry.

SPECIFICATIONS

Dan Wesson Arms Model 740-VS .357 Super Mag DA Revolver

Manufacturer	Dan Wesson Arms 293 Main St. Monson, MA 01057
Model	740-VS
Type	Revolver
Operation	Double action
Caliber	.357 Maximum/.357 Magnum/.38 Special
Barrel length	8 inches
Overall length	14.375 inches
Weight, empty	64 ounces
Safety	Internal hammerblock
Sights	Click-adjustable rear with interchangeable notch widths; interchangeable front blade
Sight radius	10.375 inches
Rifling	6 grooves, 1:18.75 RH twist
Stocks	Smooth walnut target
Cartridge capacity	6
Finish	Satin stainless steel
Variations	6- and 10-inch barrels; VH shrouds available
Distributor	Dan Wesson Arms
Price	$426 to $482
Remarks	Extra barrel standard with gun; VS shroud allows revolver to meet IHMSA Production Category weight limit

Dan Wesson's Robert McWilliams



Robert McWilliams is the owner and president of Dan Wesson Arms Co. He came into the firm in 1973 and says of firearms manufacturing, "This is my one love." A reserved and soft-spoken man who keeps a low personal profile, McWilliams holds three university engineering degrees and is a designer and inventor with three patents to his credit, two in firearms.

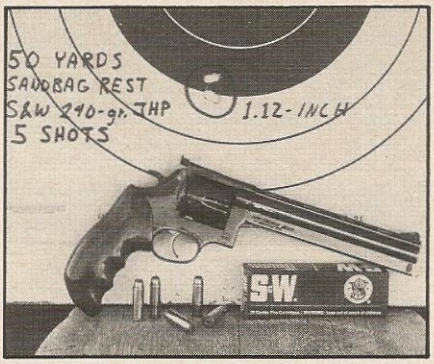
Wishing to allay rumors about Dan Wesson Arms' fate and future, McWilliams agreed to a no-holds-barred interview at the Dan Wesson plant in Monson, Massachusetts. In addition to his on-the-record statements, he provided company records and financial data which left no question about his candor on the prospects for the company's continued good health.

ST: *During the past year and a half, the disappearance of Dan Wesson Arms from such national firearms gatherings as the annual NRA convention and from the advertising*

consistency in round-to-round accuracy.

Another point contributing to Dan Wesson accuracy is that the barrels are "choke bored." Without going into overly technical detail, a choke-bored barrel is slightly larger in actual bore diameter at its breech than at its muzzle. This results in an increasingly tight engagement of the rifling with the bullet as it moves toward the muzzle. By deliberately choke-boring a barrel, a manufacturer ensures that the bore will not (through variation in tolerance ranges) actually wind up being bigger at the muzzle than at the breech—which would result in the barrel being "looser" around the bullet the farther along it moved and inferior rifling stabilization.

Final points Dan Wesson feels significant are that the rifling of its barrels is broached, resulting in very sharp and crisp edges to the lands and grooves—and better "bite" on the bullet—and, of course, fine quality control in production to make sure all these design elements are well executed in individual guns.



Model 44-VH with metallic sights turned in this five-shot group at 50 yards.

It should be noted that none of these features (except the screw-in, interchangeable barrels) are unique to Dan Wesson revolvers. Other companies' guns are choke bored, others have broached rifling—Ruger's Redhawk, to cite one example, latches the cylinder at the crane— and good quality control in manufacturing is common throughout the industry. But no revolvers besides Dan Wesson's have all these ingredients in one refined package, and the consequences are obvious. The average Dan Wesson centerfire revolver is capable of putting 10 consecutive shots into a target the size of the killing zone of an average-size whitetail deer at 200 meters.

To use the current phrase, Dan Wesson revolvers are also particularly "user-friendly." The interchangeable barrel system does not exactly allow you to have "several guns for the price of one," but it does enable you to have a short, long, or even longer barreled revolver in various weights and balances for a lot less than it would cost to buy each separately.

"Interchangeability" marks the entire Dan Wesson design system. In addition to the barrels, the front sight blades on

pages of the national shooting publications has prompted widespread concern that the company is on the verge of failure. Is this true?

McWilliams: No. It looks to us as though at the end of 1985—assuming no great disasters—we will end up with a company that owns its own receivables, owns its own inventory, owns its own machinery, and owns its own credit. What we will have left is all assets and no liabilities—which is a situation Dan Wesson has never had before in its existence.

ST: *But the company has gone through some difficult times.*

McWilliams: Admittedly. As has the entire firearms industry. But Dan Wesson Arms has always been a highly profitable operation—after 1975 always a debt-free manufacturing operation as far as the banks were concerned. We did recently get into a "cash crunch." There were several factors. First, the handgun market took a big slump in 1984, when we had already committed to materials purchases based on more optimistic projections. Also, the company had acquired an ownership debt burden stemming from a process of consolidation following the death of Dan Wesson, the founder. In addition, I had another business in Connecticut, in an industry that was experiencing even more serious market deteriorations, and my top management people and I were devoting most of our attentions there, at what proved to be an unfortunate time.

The years 1983 and 1984 were difficult times, but we have weathered the storm and, in the 1985 calendar year, have entered into a positive cash flow position.

ST: *Were you "robbing Peter to pay Paul"?*

McWilliams: Partly true. It is true that money was coming out of here and going down to Connecticut, plus a drain on Dan Wesson management energies. But no longer. Early this year, we concluded to sell the company in Connecticut, along with my other outside businesses, and use the proceeds to take care of Dan Wesson's creditors and bank debts. Firearms are my love. I decided that you can only have one love, and that one love was Dan Wesson.

ST: *So you consider Dan Wesson Arms to now be a healthy company?*

McWilliams: Oh, yes; absolutely. You might note that we are still doing business with all the same suppliers that we were buying from two years ago. That's an important consideration. They wouldn't still be with us if they thought this was a "last gasp" operation. We never quit manufacturing, after all. When things got tight, our objective was to maintain uninterrupted production. And we did. But we did make sacrifices: the advertising budget, some public relations were allowed to slip, attendance at conventions, some reduction in customer service and in-house repairs. This contributed to the rumors about the company. When you're not out blowing trumpets, people think you've shut the doors. But we never shut the doors, never had to lay off the work force. And we are getting back up to speed on the other things.

ST: *The proof of the pudding is product.*

McWilliams: Indeed. And we are not just standing still with what we have already. We introduced the stainless-steel .357 Super Mag—the Model 740—last summer. We just received a patent on a technique that will reduce stress and erosion at the forcing cone of the barrel, where the bullet jumps across from the cylinder—and should improve accuracy as well. We've also got a patent on a "ratchetless" mechanism for direct advancement of the revolver cylinder which would substantially eliminate the need for individually handfitted parts in manufacturing. Our idea here has always been to improve the product, be "innovators," like the motto says. We won't make "just another gun" unless we can contribute something that we think will make it better—not just different—than other guns. You'll be seeing a lot of new things coming out of here in the future that we're sure you'll like.

ST: *We're looking forward to it.* ■

Dan Wesson Arms DA Revolvers: Models And Variations

Cartridge Caliber	Model Designation	Available Barrel Lengths (Inches)	Available Shroud Styles	Weight Six-Inch "S" (Ounces)	Sights	Finish	Pistol Pac Barrels Included* (Inches)	Price Range (1985)	Pistol Pac Price Range
.22 LR	22	2½, 4, 6, 8	S, V, VH	44	Adjustable	Brite Blue	2½, 4, 6, 8	$272.30-$340.95	$507.75-$672.05
	722	2½, 4, 6, 8	S, V, VH	44	Adjustable	Satin Stainless	2½, 4, 6, 8	$306.55-$381.95	$580.15-$744.30
.22 WMR	22M	2½, 4, 6, 8	S, V, VH	44	Adjustable	Brite Blue	2½, 4, 6, 8	$281.65-$350.27	$525.95-$690.05
	722M	2½, 4, 6, 8	S, V, VH	44	Adjustable	Satin Stainless	2½, 4, 6, 8	$316.05-$391.45	$598.85-$782.40
.38 Special	8-2/8-2B	2½, 4, 6	S	38	Fixed	Satin Blue/-Brite Blue	2½, 4, 6	$219.35-$248.50	$375.85-$395.95
	9-2	2½, 4, 6, 8	S, V, VH	44	Adjustable	Brite Blue	2½, 4, 6, 8	$272.30-$423.90	$507.75-$672.05
	708	2½, 4, 6	S	38	Fixed	Satin Stainless	2½, 4, 6	$253.65-$265.40	$430.65
	709	2½, 4, 6, 8	S, V, VH	44	Adjustable	Satin Stainless	2½, 4, 6, 8	$306.55-$458.05	$580.15-$744.30
.357 Magnum	14-2/14-2B	2½, 4, 6	S	38	Fixed	Satin Blue/-Brite Blue	2½, 4, 6	$219.35-$248.50	$375.85-$395.95
	15-2	2½, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15	S, V, VH	40	Adjustable	Brite Blue	2½, 4, 6, 8	$272.30-$423.90	$507.75-$672.05
	714	2½, 4, 6	S	40	Fixed	Satin Stainless	2½, 4, 6	$253.65-$265.40	$430.65
	715	2½, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15	S, V, VH	40	Adjustable	Satin Stainless	2½, 4, 6, 8	$306.55-$458.05	$580.15-$744.30
.357 Maximum (.357 Super Mag)	40	6, 8, 10	V, VH, VS	59.5 (V)	Adjustable	Brite Blue	N/A	$426.35-$482.05	–
	740	6, 8, 10	V, VH, VS	59.5 (V)	Adjustable	Satin Stainless	N/A		–
.41 Magnum	41	4, 6, 8, 10	V, VH	53 (V)	Adjustable	Brite Blue	6, 8	$373.50-$431.05	$560.00-$603.70
	741	4, 6, 8, 10	V, VH	53 (V)	Adjustable	Satin Stainless	6, 8	$416.05-$473.55	$617.94-$661.62
.44 Magnum	44	4, 6, 8, 10	V, VH	53 (V)	Adjustable	Brite Blue	6, 8	$373.50-$431.05	$615.40-$659.15
	744	4, 6, 8, 10	V, VH	53 (V)	Adjustable	Satin Stainless	6, 8	$416.05-$473.55	$675.75-$719.40

*Pistol Pacs are available in any shroud styles per model.

SHROUD STYLE ABBREVIATIONS:
S: Standard
V: Vent (standard shroud with a ventilated rib)
VH: Vent Heavy (shroud with a ventilated rib and a full-length under lug)
VS: Vent Slotted (standard shroud with a vent rib and slots for weight reduction; Models 40 and 748, eight-inch barrel only)

the shrouds are quickly interchangeable and are available with a variety of colored, high-visibility inserts *and* in various heights of plain black Patridge-style blades for long-range shooting. The grip stocks are also easily interchangeable and slip over a small stud protruding from the rear of the frame. This allows more flexibility in the size and shape of the stocks than does a revolver with a grip frame that has the approximate dimensions of the stock. Dan Wesson offers several shapes, sizes, and material styles of grips under its own label, as well as an inletted stock blank the shooter can whittle down to suit himself.

Add to this versatility that allows the individual shooter to practically "customize" a Dan Wesson to his own tastes the fact that Dan Wesson revolvers tend to be somewhat heavier and more massive overall than other manufacturers' guns in the same calibers, qualities that moderate apparent recoil and make the Dan Wessons more pleasant to shoot. Also throw in such niceties as a precision click-adjustable rear sight with a visible white-outline notch, an adjustable overtravel stop for the trigger, and an average single-action trigger pull that rivals the classic "breaking-glass" Smith & Wesson letoff for crispness, and you have a package serious revolver shooters will find hard to resist.

All these features are common to all models of Dan Wesson revolvers, with the exception of the "service-style" Models 8, 708, 14, and 714 in .38 Special and .357 Magnum, which have fixed sights, noninterchangeable front blades, and a limited selection of barrel shroud styles. The list of Dan Wesson models and variations is extensive (see accompanying chart). Chamberings include .22 Long Rifle, .22 Magnum, .38 Special, .357 Magnum, .357 Maximum, .41 Magnum, and .44 Magnum. There was also a limited run of massive .375 USA Magnums made in 1984 for sale to IHMSA members only. Slated to be added to this list at the beginning of this year is a .32 H&R Magnum model.

In terms of chamberings, barrels, lengths, and shroud styles alone, there are over 170 different Dan Wesson revolver configurations available, and when you throw in all the possible combinations of grip and sight systems, the number of variations is mind boggling. Prices? The recommended retail runs from about $220 for the most basic, no-frills .38 or .357 Magnum service model to about $720 ot $750 for a "Pistol Pac" in one of the stainless-steel magnum models that contains four barrels, shrouds, and different grips and accessories in a luggage-style case.

Dan Wesson's .22s offer RF fans equally fine accuracy.

With all of the factors that the Dan Wesson revolvers have going for them, it's unfortunate the company has been suffering from a bit of an "image problem" during the last couple of years – a problem that had nothing to do with the quality of the product – with rumors about the health of the business itself. It is damned hard for a small firearms manufacturer to make a go of things in today's economy, no matter how good the guns – or accessories – it produces, not to mention the incredible expense all sectors of the gun industry have to bear in insuring themselves against the hailstorm of frivolous product-liability lawsuits.

The list of well-known and highly regarded firearms manufacturers who have been forced to close their doors continues to grow, including High Standard, Sterling Arms, and, most recently, Randall Arms – not to mention the firearms divisions (Winchester, for example) of some conglomerates (Olin, for example) that have been sold off for what the parent company viewed as low profitability.

So when Dan Wesson Arms took a low-visibility profile about 18 months past in terms of advertising and attendance at the major national firearms trade shows and conventions, many members of the shooting fraternity concluded the company was about to join those other small gunmakers who have gone the way of the

(Continued on Page 94)

Dan Wesson

(Continued from Page 46)

passenger pigeon.

Not true.

It *is* true that Dan Wesson Arms has gone through a period of economic stress . . . as has the entire handgun industry. And it is also true that some parts of the Dan Wesson operation (speed and responsiveness in customer service and repairs) were not as effective as either the company or its consumers wished, which gave rise to a certain amount of grumbling by shooters who found it was taking several months to cycle a gun needing service through the factory repair center.

But it also appears the company has been able to weather the storm and come out in a productive position. Last fall, at the invitation of Dan Wesson Arms' president Bob McWilliams, ST editor Jim Bequette and I journeyed to the Dan Wesson factory for a close look at the operation. We were favorably impressed.

Production manufacturing continues apace, with guns being shipped every day. New models are being introduced, and several newly patented engineering and design concepts are in the process of being worked up for integration into the product line, and the operation has an overall healthy and even enthusiastic glow to it (see the accompanying interview with McWilliams). The in-house service and repair operation is also back on track, with the turnaround rate averaging two weeks (as of last September) and a goal of 24 hours (in and out) set to be reached by the end of 1985.

So if you have been concerned that Dan Wesson revolvers were about to vanish from the firearms market or have had a less-than-satisfactory experience with the company's customer service department, be informed that Dan Wesson Arms is still in business, intends to always be in business, and stands ready to make up for any glitches its grassroots consumers might have suffered during the last two years.

That's good news for handgunners . . . .