

Wesson .357 Magnum (Model 27)

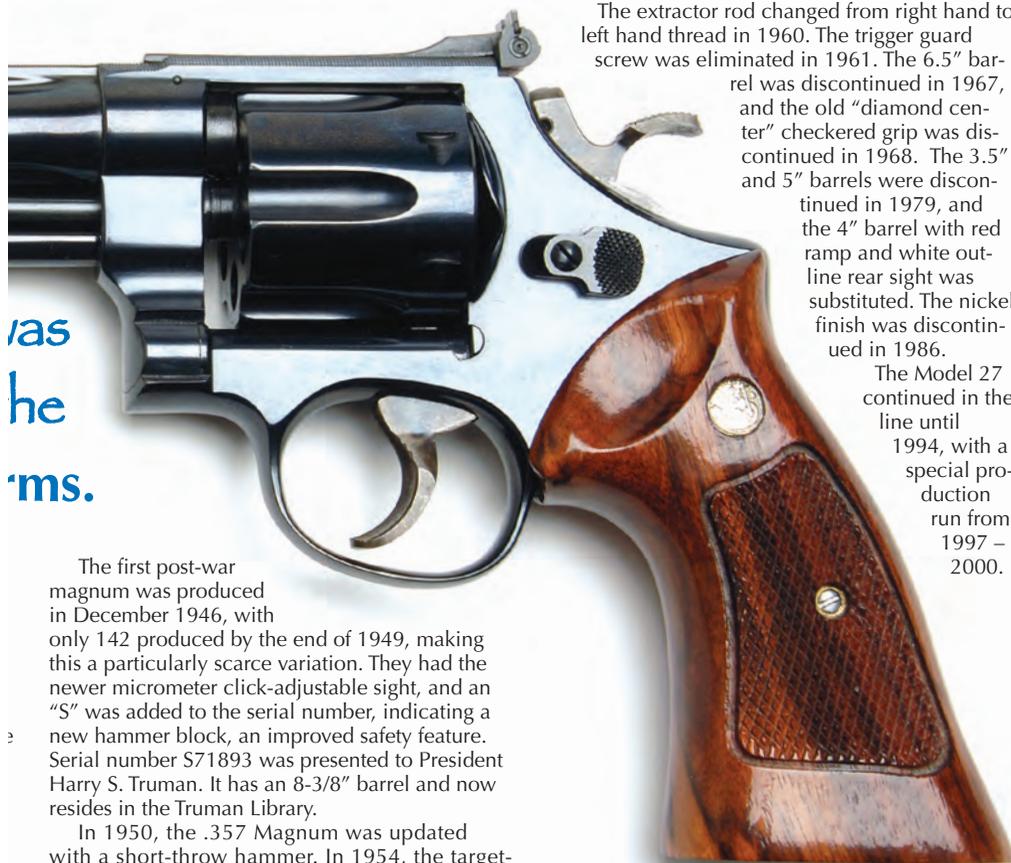
cleaning swab, brochure, wrapping paper, registration card, and a spare sight with envelope. An original revolver, together with these matching items and a registration certificate in its shipping tube has become the "holy grail" for Smith and Wesson collectors, and "as new in the box" specimens currently fetch between \$7500 and \$12,000 or more! Registration of these revolvers ceased around 1941. The last non-registered gun was produced in 1942, the only revolver produced in that year. Only about 1400 of the "non-registered" magnums were produced, making them actually more scarce than the registered variety.

which had a brushed-blue finish, a matted topstrap and barrel rib. It was offered with 6" or 4" barrels, although a very few 5" and 8-3/8" barreled specimens were made. This model appeared in the line in 1954, and became the Model 28 in 1957. I bought my first magnum, a Model 28, in 1965, and it still gives excellent service today.

The Model 27 continued to have a pinned barrel and counterbored chambers until 1982. Collectors now tend to value the earlier "pinned and recessed" guns more highly as being more elegant and refined – a nostalgia thing that bears no relation to practicality.

The extractor rod changed from right hand to left hand thread in 1960. The trigger guard screw was eliminated in 1961. The 6.5" barrel was discontinued in 1967, and the old "diamond center" checkered grip was discontinued in 1968. The 3.5" and 5" barrels were discontinued in 1979, and the 4" barrel with red ramp and white outline rear sight was substituted. The nickel finish was discontinued in 1986.

The Model 27 continued in the line until 1994, with a special production run from 1997 – 2000.



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The first post-war magnum was produced in December 1946, with only 142 produced by the end of 1949, making this a particularly scarce variation. They had the newer micrometer click-adjustable sight, and an "S" was added to the serial number, indicating a new hammer block, an improved safety feature. Serial number S71893 was presented to President Harry S. Truman. It has an 8-3/8" barrel and now resides in the Truman Library.

In 1950, the .357 Magnum was updated with a short-throw hammer. In 1954, the target-style stocks were offered as an option. Barrel lengths offered then were 3.5", 5", 6", 6.5", and 8-3/8." The upper sideplate screw was eliminated in 1956.

In 1957, Smith & Wesson adopted a new naming system throughout the line, and the .357 Magnum became the Model 27. The "S" serial prefix changed to "N" in 1969. A less expensive version of the Model 27 was the Highway Patrolman,

The "first magnum" was a very special gun, praised by police, civilians and the military as perhaps the finest revolver ever made by Smith & Wesson. The company lavished extra care on its manufacture, and this is reflected in the flawless finish, checkered top, and butter-smooth action. It is a classic handgun in every sense of the word! **P**