GENERAL

standard catalog of smith wesson

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Introduction

When it comes to American firearms, few names resonate as powerfully as Smith & Wesson. From the early days of the company's founding in 1852 to the present, Smith & Wesson has produced a wide array of revolvers, pistols, and accessories that have become staples for law enforcement, military, hunters, and civilian collectors alike. One of the most valuable resources for anyone interested in this storied brand is the **standard catalog of Smith & Wesson**. Whether you're a seasoned collector, a first time buyer, or simply curious about the evolution of firearms, a standard catalog offers a snapshot of the company's offerings at a given point in time, complete with specifications, pricing, and design details.

In this article, we'll explore what a standard catalog of Smith & Wesson entails, its historical significance, how it's organized, and why it remains a critical reference for enthusiasts and professionals. We'll also delve into the most iconic models featured in recent catalogs, the manufacturing process behind each firearm, and how you can use the catalog to make informed purchasing decisions.

What Is a Standard Catalog of Smith & Wesson?

A standard catalog is essentially a printed or digital brochure that lists all the firearms and related products that Smith & Wesson offers during a specific year or fiscal period. It typically includes:

- Model numbers and names – The unique identifiers that distinguish each firearm.
- Specifications – Caliber, barrel length, weight, materials, and other technical details.
- Pricing – MSRP or suggested retail prices.
- Photographs and illustrations – High quality images that showcase the design and finish.
- Optional accessories – Sights, grips, cleaning kits, and other add ons.
- Regulatory information – Notes on compliance with state and federal laws.

These catalogs are distributed to dealers, law enforcement agencies, and sometimes directly to consumers. They serve as a reference for what's available, help maintain pricing consistency, and often highlight new releases or limited edition models.

Historical Evolution of Smith & Wesson Catalogs

Early Beginnings (1850s–1900)

Smith & Wesson's first catalogs were modest, hand bound booklets that listed a handful of revolvers. The 1860s saw the introduction of the "Model 3" and the "Model 4," which were highlighted in early catalogs with simple black and white photographs and basic specs. These early documents were essential for a company still establishing its reputation in a competitive market.

The Golden Age (1900–1950)

With the advent of the "Model 10" and the "Model 19," Smith & Wesson began producing larger, more detailed catalogs. These publications were often printed in full color and featured glossy images, allowing buyers to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the firearms. During this era, the company also began offering a range of

accessories, such as adjustable sights and custom grips, which were catalogued alongside the guns themselves.

Modern Era (1950–Present)

From the 1960s onward, Smith & Wesson's catalogs became more sophisticated, incorporating advanced printing techniques, larger product lines, and digital versions. The 1970s introduced the "Model 29" (the iconic .44 Magnum revolver), which quickly became a catalog highlight. In the 21st century, catalogs are often available as PDFs on the company's website, allowing instant access for a global audience.

Structure of a Standard Catalog

Front Matter

The front of the catalog typically includes the company logo, a brief history, and a table of contents. This section sets the tone and gives readers a quick overview of what to expect.

Model Listings

Each firearm is presented in its own section, usually with a consistent layout:

1. Model name and number – For example, "Smith & Wesson Model 59".
2. Image – High resolution photograph from multiple angles.
3. Specifications – Caliber, barrel length, overall length, weight, material composition.
4. Features – Unique attributes such as a "rimless" design, "hammerless" mechanism, or "magazine loaded" system.
5. Price – MSRP, with occasional discounts for bulk orders.
6. Optional accessories – Available sights, grips, cleaning kits, and more.

Special Editions and Limited Runs

Catalogs often dedicate a section to limited editions, commemorative models, and special finishes. These items are usually highlighted with a special badge and a note on their rarity.

Dealer Information and Ordering Process

At the back of the catalog, you'll find dealer contact details, ordering instructions, and sometimes a QR code that links to an online ordering portal.

Key Models Featured in Recent Catalogs

Smith & Wesson Model 59

The Model 59 is a 9mm semi automatic pistol that blends classic Smith & Wesson styling with modern ergonomics. Key specs include:

- Caliber: 9mm Luger
- Barrel length: 4.5 inches
- Overall length: 7.5 inches
- Weight: 1.4 pounds
- Capacity: 15 round magazine

Its "hammerless" design offers a smoother trigger pull, while the "rimless" barrel ensures reliable feeding.

Smith & Wesson Model 29

Often referred to as the "Colt Miller" in the gun community, the Model 29 is a .44 Magnum revolver known for its powerful stopping ability. The latest catalog editions feature:

- Caliber: .44 Magnum
- Barrel length: 6 inches
- Overall length: 12 inches
- Weight: 3.8 pounds
- Capacity: 6 round cylinder

It’s a favorite among hunters and collectors alike, and its “rimless” cylinder design reduces wear and tear.

Smith & Wesson Model 68

The Model 68 is a .357 Magnum revolver that offers a balance between power and portability. Recent catalogs highlight:

- Caliber: .357 Magnum
- Barrel length: 4 inches
- Overall length: 9.5 inches
- Weight: 2.7 pounds
- Capacity: 6 round cylinder

Its “hammerless” construction provides a clean aesthetic and a quick trigger reset.

Smith & Wesson Model 65

The Model 65 is a .45 ACP semi automatic pistol that’s popular for its reliability and smooth trigger. Key features include:

- Caliber: .45 ACP
- Barrel length: 4.5 inches
- Overall length: 8.5 inches
- Weight: 1.9 pounds
- Capacity: 10 round magazine

Its “rimless” barrel ensures consistent cycling, making it a favorite for both self defense and target shooting.

Manufacturing Process Behind Smith & Wesson Firearms

Design and Engineering

Smith & Wesson’s design team employs CAD software to create precise models of each firearm. Engineers focus on ergonomics, recoil management, and durability. Once a design is finalized, prototypes are built for rigorous testing.

Material Selection

Key materials include:

- Steel alloys – For barrels and frames, providing strength and heat resistance.
- Aluminum alloys – Used in some frames for reduced weight.
- Polymer composites – Employed in grips and non metal components to lower production costs.

Manufacturing Techniques

Smith & Wesson uses a combination of:

- Precision machining – For barrels, cylinders, and other critical components.
- Heat treatment – To harden metal parts and enhance longevity.
- Surface finishing – Including bluing, nickel plating, and powder coating.

- Quality control – Every firearm undergoes multiple tests, from functional checks to ballistic performance.

Assembly and Testing

After manufacturing, each part is assembled by skilled technicians. The finished firearm is then tested for safety, reliability, and performance. Only after passing all tests does it make it into the catalog.

How to Use the Standard Catalog for Buying Decisions

Identify Your Needs

Start by determining the purpose of the firearm—self defense, hunting, competition, or collection. The catalog's specifications section helps you match your requirements with the right model.

Compare Models Side by Side

Many catalogs include side by side comparison tables. This allows you to see differences in weight, capacity, barrel length, and price at a glance.

Check for Optional Accessories

Accessories can significantly enhance a firearm's performance. Look for options like:

- Adjustable sights – For improved accuracy.
- Grip panels – To tailor ergonomics.
- Cleaning kits – Essential for maintaining reliability.

Consider the Price and Value

While MSRP is a starting point, consider long term value. A slightly higher price may be justified by superior materials or added features.

Verify Legal Compliance

Firearm laws vary by state and country. The catalog often includes a compliance section that indicates whether a model meets specific regulatory requirements.

Digital vs. Print Catalogs: Which Is Better?

Print Catalogs

Print versions have tactile appeal and can be easily annotated. They're also useful in environments where digital access is limited.

Digital Catalogs

Digital PDFs or interactive web catalogs offer:

- Instant search functionality.
- High resolution zoomable images.
- Embedded links to ordering portals.
- Environmental friendliness (no paper).

For most buyers, a digital catalog is the most convenient option.

Collecting Smith & Wesson: Tips for Beginners

1. Start with Popular Models – Models like the 29 and 59 are widely recognized and tend to retain value.

2. Check Condition – Look for minimal wear, intact original parts, and a clean finish.
3. Authenticate – Verify serial numbers and compare with catalog listings.
4. Preserve Originality – Avoid aftermarket parts unless they're documented and verified.
5. Document Provenance – Keep receipts and catalog references for future resale.

Conclusion

The standard catalog of Smith & Wesson is more than just a list of firearms; it's a historical record, a technical guide, and a marketing tool all rolled into one. By examining the catalog, you gain insight into the company's engineering priorities, design evolution, and market positioning. Whether you're a collector, a law enforcement professional, or a casual enthusiast, a thorough understanding of the catalog can help you make informed decisions, appreciate the craftsmanship behind each firearm, and connect with the rich legacy of Smith & Wesson.

Next time you browse a Smith & Wesson catalog—whether it's a glossy printed edition or a sleek digital PDF—you'll know exactly what to look for and why each model stands out in a crowded marketplace. Happy hunting and happy collecting!

Tags: #standard #catalog #smith #wesson