
*Necked down cases were split in two by "blue pill" loads used to test gun's strength, but the gun held up.*

the full diameter of the log; since they were soft lead, or copper-jacketed with soft lead points, I doubt it. I did, however, discover a good way to split up stove wood and still get some shooting done!

The load, 22 grains of 2400, with 158-grain bullet was considered entirely too hot for use as other than a "proof" load. This quantity of 2400 was, however, used by fellow experimenter Tom Milburn with a 150-grain lead slug. Velocity from the .44/.357's blazing muzzle was 1970 f/s!! This charge represents what was considered an absolute maximum of 2400 with this size bullet. This means that, as a maximum, it should be approached *only* after cautious loading has been done with quantities of 2400, begining with about 18 grains and increasing by small amounts. Dropping the 2400 down to a charge of 21 grains, using the 148-grain bullets and CCI Large Pistol Magnum primers and necked down Super-X brass, velocity ran a neat 1900 f/s. This is still a maximum loading, however, and should be approached with caution.

Looking back now to the .357 Magnum, "stock" loading, velocities with 158-grain bullets were running just over 1200 f/s with the 8⅜-inch tube, and around 1175 from the six-incher. Let's stretch a little for the .357 and say the velocity was running to 1225 f/s from the longer barrel. A charge of 17 grains of 2400 ran velocities for the .44/357 to an average 1235 f/s. A charge of 16 grains of the same powder is about tops for the regular .357; more invites trouble.

Analytically speaking, it can readily be noted that it takes more powder to get equal results with the more voluminous case. That plays right along with discoveries made during work with what I called the .357 Short, a trimmed (.910-inch) version of the .38 Special. *More* power was achieved with *less* powder!

In the case of the .44/.357 vs. the standard .357 Magnum, the same rule holds true, but is vastly outweighed by the capacity advantage of the larger case. Seating a 158-grain bullet such as the excellent Remington .358-diameter jacketed soft point (#22846) down to the cannelure atop 18 grains of 2400 in the .357 Magnum would constitute a compressed load. Not so with the .44/.357 . . . Capacity increase, with 2400, amounts to about 7.5 grains, measured to the base of its .330-inch neck. It'll hold approximately 25.5 grains of 2400, 24.5 grains of 4227, and about 19 grains of 4759. This latter powder is made up of heavy sticks, though, and burns slowly enough to be compressible. You, therefore, might stack it a bit higher, say under 146 through 160-grain bullets, and compress it over CCI Magnum primers. Again, don't start with maximum charges of any of the powders discussed here. (See the included table of loads and velocities for suggestions.)

Right now, there are two known .44/.357s in existence. I have the first; Tom Milburn has the second. Milburn's Model 27 S&W lay on the bench at Bain & Davis that night of the initial tests, with the order, according to Keith Davis, to convert if tests were successful. Originally, case forming was done with a set of two custom forming dies. It was later discovered, reports Davis, that the second forming die could be skipped, pending use of the regular sizing die. Some less flexible cases might, however, require the use of both forming steps. At any rate, making cases for this rambunctious blaster is easy.

The .44/.357 has been carried afield with loads of 18 grains of 2400 and the 148-grain (H&G #73) Green Bay cast bullets, and 19 grains of 4759, both with CCI Magnum primers. These bullets were treated, as were all lead bullets in these tests, with *Swagemagic* for the purpose of eliminating bore leading and increasing accuracy. A double-dip of bullets into this stuff can work wonders for a clean, accurate-shooting bore. For maximum sharpness in the barrel, the bore also was swabbed with this lubricant. An optical aid in the form of a Bushnell *Phantom* handgun scope was attached. Accuracy attained was such as to extend the effectiveness of this caliber to probably three hundred yards in the hands of an ordinary pistol shot. Longest ranges would naturally demand that shots be taken from rest.

**TABLE OF LOADS AND PERFORMANCES**

Ctge. Davis .44/.357, Cases W-W, Smith & Wesson Model 27, 8⅜-inch bbl.

| Powder | Amt. | Primer | Bullet Wt. | Bullet Type | Muzzle Vel. | Muzzle Energy | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Uniq. | 14.0 | Win. | 113 | Swaged | 2170 | 1181 | Maximum |
| Uniq. | 12.0 | CCI #300 | 140 | Swaged | 1460 | 662 | Good load |
| 2400 | 21.0 | CCI #350 | 148 | Green Bay | 1742 | 997 | Maximum |
| 4227 | 24.0 | CCI #350 | 148 | Green Bay | 1703 | 952 | Maximum |
| 2400 | 18.0 | CCI #300 | 148 | Green Bay | 1377 | 620 | Medium-hvy |
| 4759 | 19.0 | CCI #350 | 158 | Rem. Soft-Pt. | 1418 | 705 | Good Load |
| 2400 | 20.0 | CCI #350 | 158 | Rem. Soft-Pt. | 1483 | 771 | Nr. Maximum |
| 4227 | 22.0 | CCI #350 | 158 | Rem. Soft-Pt. | 1490 | 779 | Maximum |
| 2400 | 17.0 | CCI #300 | 158 | Rem. Soft-Pt. | 1235 | 535 | Beats .357 Mg |
| 2400 | 22.0 | Win. | 150 | Cast | 1970 | 1291.5 | **Absolute Max.** |
| **Factory Ctgs.** | | | | | | | |
| .357 Mag (Rem.-Peters) | | | 158 | | 1430 | 717 | Fac. tables.* |
| .44 Mag (Super-X) | | | 240 | | 1470 | 1150 | Fac. tables.* |

*See text.