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FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION COLTS OFFER GREAT VALUE IN TODAY'S MARKET

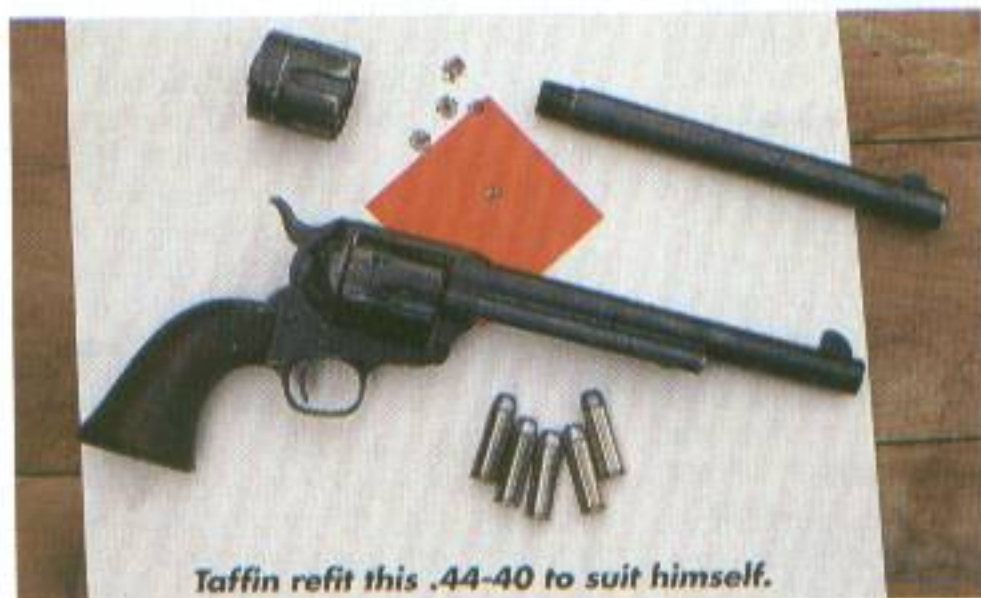
You can rebarrel an old "shooter" for less than the cost of a brand new SAA.

Even an old, die-hard fan of the Colt Single Action Army such as me comes away somewhat shell-shocked by the price of a new Colt SAA. The new retail price for a 4½" or 5½" .45 Colt or .44-40 SAA is now \$1,988. If your tastes run to the longer 7½" barrel length or .38-40 or .357 Magnum chamberings, the price jumps to \$2,125. I don't know what this will do to the sales of "real" Colt sixguns, especially considering that several replicas are now

very close to the \$1,000 mark, but I do know it certainly makes First and Second Generation Colts look awfully good and quite economical. Most Second Generation Colts can now be picked up for prices ranging from \$900 to \$1,500, but First Generations—those made from 1873 to 1941—have prices that are all over the map. The true collector's items with a majority of the finish still remaining and all original parts still intact command prices that start at around \$2,500 and go

way up. If one of these should happen to drop into my lap at an incredible price, I certainly would not turn it down, but for the most part I am not interested in high-dollar Colts. What I want are shooters.

I look for sixguns that are still safe and still in good shooting shape, regardless of the exterior finish or if the parts are original. In the past year I have been fortunate to find and purchase four First Generations. My total outlay for the four, each of which is a piece of history in its



Taffin refit this .44-40 to suit himself.



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own right, was considerably less than the cost of two brand-spanking-new ones from the Colt Custom Shop.

Vintage Sixguns

The first gun I bought is an 1879 7½" .44-40, marked on the barrel "Colt Frontier Six-Shooter" with virtually no original finish. However, the barrel is excellent in spite of this being a blackpowder sixgun, the cylinder and lock-up is as tight as a Freedom Arms sixgun, and the original one-piece wooden stocks shrunk away from the grip frame, some scratches on the barrel, no markings on the barrel, but the side of the frame says U.S. It is a Cavalry Colt with mismatched numbers.

My third little treasure is a 1907 4¾" .32-20 with about 50 percent of the finish left, a perfect bore and chambers, tight lock-up and black rubber stocks.

The old re-blue was stripped by soaking all the parts in brown vinegar (yes, it really works).

Finally, I latched onto a 1917 4¾" .45 Colt with an excellent bore and chambers, several pits and scratches on the surface, black eagle grips slightly warped and a cylinder that's a little loose—a perfect candidate for a full restoration.

Now none of these are true collector's items and most need new parts. The tip of the trigger was broken off of gun number one and required a simple replacement to put it into shooting shape. I thought number two could benefit by the replacement of the blackpowder barrel and cylinder with new parts, and I did do this so I could shoot mild smokeless powder loads in it, but I subsequently changed my mind and returned the original barrel and cylinder to its rightful place. The old re-blue was stripped by soaking all the parts in brown vinegar (yes, it really works) and in the process I also got a lot of crud out of the original barrel. I also found I had a sixgun that shoots just fine with blackpowder loads.

The third sixgun, the .32-20, needs absolutely nothing but a slight barrel turning. It shoots to point-of-aim for elevation, but about 2" to the left. This will be taken care of easily this summer.

Finally we come to the .45 Colt 4¾" sixgun. This one needs several parts to bring it back to first-class shooting shape. It already shoots to point-of-aim, so no

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So if one has a chance to pick up a First Generation shooter, where does one find the necessary parts to bring it back to excellent shooting shape? In the past this was a long searching process. No more. Thanks to Peacemaker Parts, we can now acquire newly manufactured parts to fit these old sixguns.

Currently, Peacemaker Parts has all the necessary screws, several different styles of base-pins, base-pin bushings, firing-pins, hands, bolts, all springs, and even bolt and trigger screws that are different in length to allow for the tapered frame. In addition to all these newly manufactured parts, both First and Second Generation barrels and cylinders are available for most calibers and models, and eventually these may also be offered as newly manufactured parts.

When I first started shooting, it was not unusual to pick up Colt SAAs for under \$40 and then rebuild them using parts remaining from pre-war production. Both the low prices and old parts are gone, but it is still economically feasible to pick up an old Colt and, using Peacemaker Parts, put it back into excellent shooting shape.



Readers will find the parts they need at Peacemaker Parts, P.O. Box 157, Dept. AH, Whitmore, CA 96096; phone: (530) 472-3438.

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