

THE CARE AND CLEANING OF COLLECTIBLE COLTS

The care and cleaning of collectible firearms differs slightly from shooting models because of the special characteristics of the precious metal finish normally applied to a collectible model.

"Tender Loving care" is required to maintain the original beauty and luster of the finish and, also, preserve the firearm to a *"like new"* condition indefinitely. Moisture and fingerprints are the enemy we must guard against. The frequency of cleaning will depend on your climate and storage conditions. We recommend at least two cleanings per year (i.e., every six months) or after each handling of the firearm prior to storage. Marring and scratching the finish adversely affects its value and, thus, we recommend the following on the maintenance of collectible firearms:

1. *DO* remove fingerprints and protect the finish with a light coat of preservative oil on blued firearms using one of several reputable aerosol sprays now being marketed. The Custom Shop uses "SS2", marketed by TDP Industries, Inc., 603 Airport Blvd., Doylestown, PA. 18901, which contains a solvent cleaner, a lubricant, and a moisture barrier preservative. Be sure to read and follow all manufacturers directions and warnings before using any aerosol product.
2. *DO* use a non-abrasive silver or gold polish to remove fingerprints, smudges, and tarnish from all plated surfaces. We use "Flitz" metal polish, marketed by Flitz International Ltd., 821 Mohr Avenue, Waterford, WI. 53185. The polish should be used with a very soft flannel cloth or jewelers cloth made especially for this purpose. Be sure to read and follow all manufacturers directions and warnings before using any polishing product.
3. *DO* apply a very light coat of preservative oil in the barrel bore using an aluminum or brass cleaning rod with flannel patch.
4. *DO* display the firearm in its display case for short periods of time, such as gun shows, etc., after wiping off any oil or substance which may stain the case lining.
5. *DO* store the firearm in a plastic bag for long term storage. The firearm can then be stored in a container which includes a moisture absorbing packet of silica gel or other type of moisture absorbing material, as added insurance. The packet should not be enclosed in the plastic bag, as it may stain wood and metal surfaces. This moisture absorbing material is available at most hardware and sporting good stores. Keep in mind that the life of moisture absorbing material is limited and should be replaced periodically.
6. *DO* remove any heavy oil residue accumulated from long periods of storage from the firearm with lacquer thinner and a soft flannel cloth or a soft artist's brush. This solvent will not damage precious metal surfaces, but the stocks should be removed, as it may damage the stock finish. After cleaning with this solvent, a very light coat of preservative should be applied. Care should be taken not to let the lacquer thinner come in contact with the internal mechanism, as it will dissolve any lubrication. *CAUTION:* Lacquer thinner is an extremely flammable solvent and the manufacturers directions should be carefully followed.
7. *DON'T* cock Single Action or Double Action revolver hammers or function automatic slides, as they may cause friction marks and scratches, unless cleaning is necessary. A visual check between the cylinder and frame will determine if a Double Action or Single Action model is loaded. With automatic models, remove the magazine, and carefully retract the slide just enough to insure an empty chamber.
8. *DON'T* store firearms in holsters, presentation cases, soft gun cases, socks, or any material which may absorb moisture.
9. *DON'T* use the presentation case as a shipping container when transporting or shipping your firearm.
10. *DON'T* use abrasive polishes, cloths, or steel wool to restore the luster of precious metal plating.
11. *DON'T* disassemble the firearm for routine cleaning.
12. *DON'T* use excessive oil, which will accumulate dust, etc., or allow oil to contact wood stocks.

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13. *DON'T* use a steel brush or rod to clean barrel bore or cylinder chambers. In stubborn cases, a brass brush can be used, but a bristle brush is preferred. *Do not* reverse brush direction, if avoidable.
14. *DON'T* assume a new in-box (NIB) gun will stay that way without periodic cleaning and lubrication.
15. *DON'T* use nitro bore cleaning solvents on plated surfaces, as damage will result, especially to soft precious metal plating.
16. *DON'T* handle the firearm, especially the metal surfaces, with your hands any more than absolutely necessary, as fingerprints and smudges will eventually become corrosive.

In summation, collectible firearms will retain their original finish, if properly maintained at regular intervals. The frequency of maintenance care will vary depending on individual storage conditions, but good common sense will always prevail. Don't allow stains, fingerprints, and tarnish to become corrosive. Should your gun develop finish deterioration, don't become overzealous in attacking the trouble spots, but contact the manufacturer for recommendations.

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