

Single action colt

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Definition Essay: Single Action Colt Hollywood would not be the same without the single action colt. This small firearm is the weapon of choice for countless cowboys and cavalrymen in the Western movie genre. It is a revolver, which refers to the rotating barrel containing the ammunition and the "single action" of its name refers to the striking of the hammer on the ammunition to eject it into the barrel. There are three main reasons why it remains a favourite in the modern age of television and videogames, as well as in the real world of gun collectors: its design, its functionality and its illustrious history in the taming of America's Wild West.

When the gun first came into production in 1873 (Mings, 2010, p. 1), it was designed with an elegant simplicity. The key principles that lie behind the design are admired as a model for the whole design process, because they encapsulate what it means to match up exactly the purpose of the object with its form. The metallic sound of four clicks indicates the four step process of design: click one is a preparatory move, setting in place a safety lock; click two is a half cock position which allows the cylinder to be rotated and the gun to be quickly loaded with multiple bullets; click three engages the cylinder with the barrel and the fourth click signifies that the gun is ready to fire. Safety, flexibility, commitment and readiness are therefore the four key design principles of the gun, and the four stages in its firing. (Mings, 2010, p. 1).

The main reason for the popularity of the Single Action Colt is its functionality. It is a small and relatively light weapon, which requires two hands to set up, but can be easily fired by one hand. This is a significant advantage over a two barrelled shotgun which is unwieldy, takes much

longer to load, and fires only two cartridges each time it is loaded. The elegant simplicity of its design makes it reliable, which is a major consideration in a conflict situation. For law enforcers it has the advantage of being easy to store and to use, even on horseback. Its nicknames were “Peacemaker” and “Frontiersman” because it was so adaptable to the difficult conditions of the frontier trail. Classic battles such as the ones in “Stagecoach” (1939) “Gunfight at the O. K. Corral” (1957) and more recently “The Mummy” (1999) and “Kill Bill” (2003 and 2004) feature the Colt Single Action revolver (imfdb website, 2011).

The illustrious history of this firearm extends far beyond the movies, however. This little revolver, nicknamed also the sixgun, because of its capacity to take six bullets in the cylinder, epitomizes American masculinity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One disadvantage of the gun is its relatively short range. Users have to be quite close to their enemy and this requires courage and skill in the face of danger.

The Colt Single Action is a piece of American history, beloved for the evocative sound of its four click movement and the ricochets of its bullets, and for its sleek and compact form. It symbolizes the pioneer spirit and it demonstrates the emerging excellence of American industrial design and production processes. For these reasons it will always remain close to the hearts of those who appreciate distinctive American style, including, of course, the directors, actors and fans of Hollywood’s historical action movies.

References

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