

How About A World Capital Collection?

The reasons collectors collect their specific categories are almost as varied as the collectors themselves. Some may have a professional connection to those topics—the insurance salesman may collect Insurance; the airline pilot may collect Airlines. Some may chose categories based on nostalgia—the collector who fondly remembers his teenaged years at the local A&W may collect A&W; the collector who rejoices in his divorce may collect...Lawyers (!) Some may collect based on rarity, or age, or beauty.

But some collect based on...the challenge! Can I go where others fear to tread? Can I succeed where others have failed? For those collectors, it's the challenge that makes collecting come alive...Can I get all the Navy Ships? Collect all the County Seats? Big categories...small categories...it doesn't matter. It's the challenge. And, even, if the collector ultimately fails in getting each and every collector in that category, there's still that special thrill that accompanies each and every find...more so than the usual satisfaction that comes with finding *any* cover which fits into your collection. A needed cover in a challenging category is a treasure.

One of the defining aspects, I think, of the collector that's after a challenge is that that collector will often 'invent' a new category...simply because it presents him or her with...a challenge! Well, here's one!

How about a World Capital collection? Once cover from every country's capital city—Washington, DC; Berlin, Tokyo, Mexico City....Hey! No problem!...Well, capitals such as those are the *easy* ones. The challenge, as you might suspect, wouldn't come from the Western countries, but mainly from the Third World countries—many of those in Africa and Asia.

The challenge, here, is twofold. First, when's the last time you saw *any* covers from countries such as Tibet, Mongolia, Swaziland, etc.? Some countries, as far as the hobby is concerned, are basically coverless to begin with! Ouch! Second, Third World countries rely mainly (and in some cases almost *solely*) on boxes rather than matchbooks. Hmmmm...We might want to make an adjustment here to collecting a cover *or* box from each capital city.

Tough! But, if it isn't tough, there's no challenge! So, we *welcome* tough! We *thrive* on tough! Give us tough! But, back to our goal...to get ever capital city in the world.

In all probability, when it comes down to all those Third World countries, you'd have to rely on Western hotels in those capitals—Hiltons, Intercontinentals, and the like. But, even so, how would you manage to acquire such covers or boxes? There probably wouldn't be any known collectors there that you could trade with. Well, you could try getting the hotel address and simply writing and requesting a matchbook or box. A few decades ago, there was a well-known Bank collector who routinely acquired many Bank covers by doing such.

And those Asian and African countries aren't the *only* hard ones, not by a long sight! What about the Pacific countries that are basically just a collection of atolls?! And, there are even virtual impossibilities in Europe! Have you seen an Albanian cover lately? How about Vatican City?...Does the Pope smoke?

Still, these are but trifles to the collector who's after a good challenge. Undaunted, we persevere!

Go get 'em!