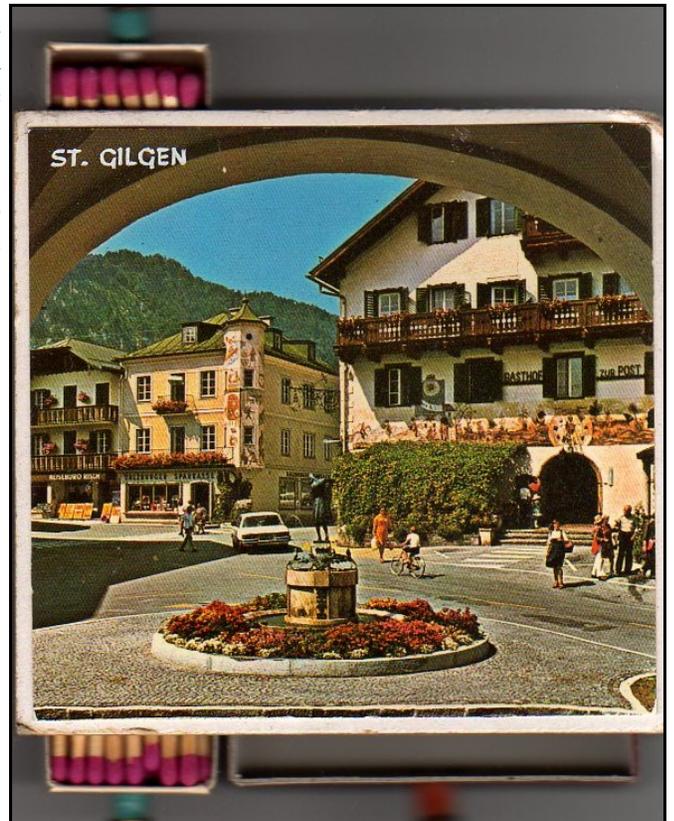


Matchbox Holders

by
Mike Prero

Over the years, in the process of collecting covers, a number of matchbox holders have come into my possession. I don't actively collect them, and I've always treated them as something of an oddity, but they do look kind of nice displayed on top of my hobby room bookcases and the like...and they are interesting. Matchbox holders, it should be noted, are not the same thing as Match Safes. The former holds boxes; the latter holds just loose matches.

I only have about 15, but even that small number is enough to demonstrate a rather remarkable variety of sizes and materials. Shape-wise, they're all *continued on p.3*

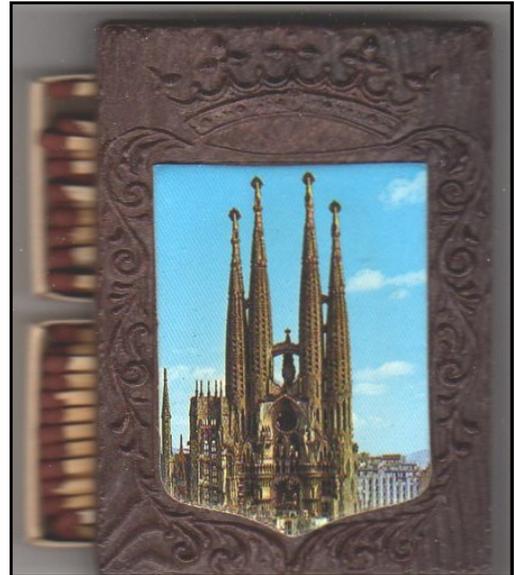


basically rectangular (at least the ones I have) because, I would assume, the matchbox(s) they hold is rectangular to begin with, although I don't see any reason why the holder couldn't be heart-shaped or just about any other shape as long as it was big enough to hold the box within itself.

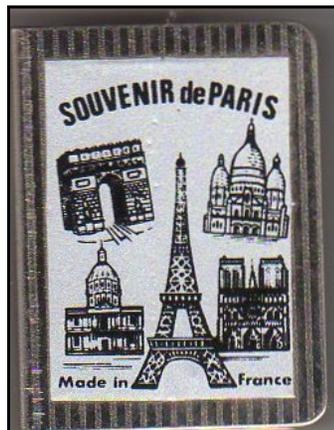
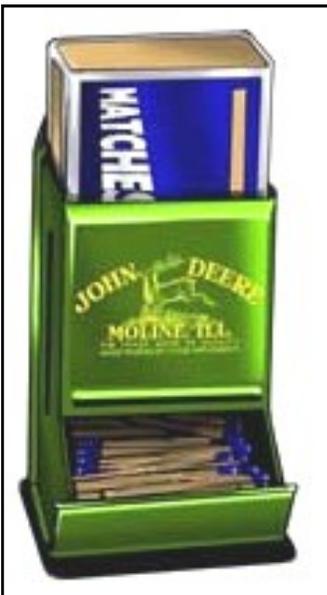
Most of my own matchbox holders are made of wood or plastic, but I have more than one made of porcelain, one of metal, and one of what looks to be marble. Also, most are designed to hold one box, but I have one that holds two, and one that holds four. Also note that the first two shown on this page actually hold matchbooks.



Courtesy of Andy Denes, CA



Courtesy of Lia DeSimone, FL

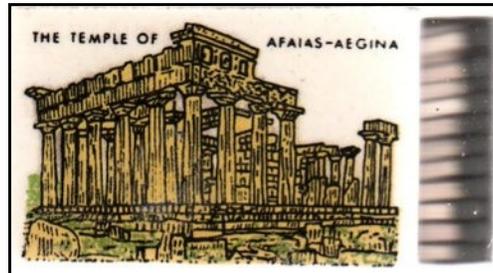


Now, the really interesting part is...yes...the history! Some matchbox holders go back a respectable way, although apparently Match Safes pre-date matchbox holders, which go back to the late 1800s? Some are designed to highlight historical places, such as the one below that shows the Temple of Afaias-Aegina. Some show ancient art work, such as the first one shown on this page.

Lots of geography here, as well, since many match holders were designed as souvenirs from various places, such as the one Zurich, below.



Some matchbox holders were issued as part of a set. Some are even more of a novelty items, such as the lenticular seen below. All the matchbox holders I've seen are colorful and attractive, and I can



certainly see why some collectors actively collect them. They're very nice! I imagine that you could pick up contemporary ones at tourist spots when you're traveling abroad in Europe and elsewhere.

