

A *Matchless* Collection!...Or Is it?

Oh sure! The vast majority of us have *matchless* collections...because we strip the matches out of the covers and just keep the covers, but...how many of us actually have a *match* collection?

Several months ago, someone gave me a sizeable collection, and as I was going through it, dumping the matches out of all the full boxes, it occurred to me that you could make a nifty little collection just out of all the sizes, shapes, and colors of the *matches*, themselves! And think of the display possibilities!...Although I'm not certain that such a display would qualify for any actual award category.

Anyhow, I started putting one of each match type aside--the different colors over here, the different sizes over there, and so forth. As things began to take shape, I could readily see that there was quite a large variety in the colors, as far as the match heads were concerned, but not nearly so much when looking at the match stems.

Sizes could vary to the extremes, everything from tiny, tiny plastic stems from certain foreign boxes to kitchen matches and the even bigger matches designed for use in fireplaces. Putting all those side by side makes quite a contrasting scene. But, size also would include *width*, it seems to me, and there's a pretty good array of match widths, again ranging from the miniscule to the really wide Feature matches.

And, speaking of Features, you'd certainly want at least a couple of examples of Feature matchsticks to represent the pinnacle of match art in such a collection. Say, an individual stick that shows a complete picture (one as a beer bottle, for example) and a row of matchsticks showing the 'contact set' type of Feature matches. Additionally, you'd also probably want to include some printed stick samples, as well.

You wouldn't think there'd be much in the way of shape differences, but they're there, too. In the paper matches, you're pretty much stuck with the standard flat matchstick, but the wooden and plastic stems offer more of a variety. Some of the latter stems are round, some are square, some are hexagon-octagon shaped, and so forth.

So the next time you're shucking matches, take a look at what you're about to throw out. That matchstick just might be a relative rarity to add to your *match* collection.

