

More on Lipstick Matchbooks

by Andy Denes

In the January/February 2018 issue of the *RMS Bulletin*, Tom Gray discusses some lipstick matchbooks. I have some related items in my collection.

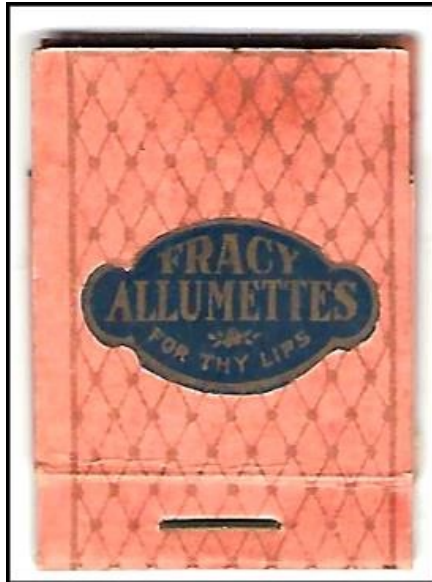
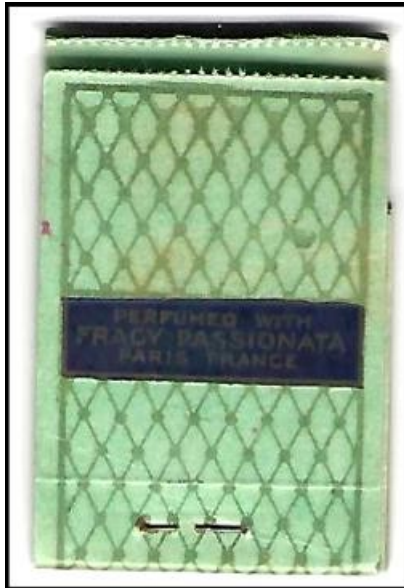
Here is an example [*see next page*] from my collection, similar to what Tom displayed. To look at them, aside from lacking a striker, these items are indistinguishable from an ordinary 20-strike matchbook, inside and out. This one and Tom's were made by F. R. Arnold & Co., from which comes their tradename Fracy. Francis R. Arnold (1837-1922) was an importer of French toiletries in business at least as early as 1886. In 1928, the company was renamed Fracy, Inc., and there is evidence that the company was in existence as late as 1930. Since Tom's examples and mine bear the name "Fracy, Inc." they must date from 1928 or after.

However, these items all bear patent number 1577406. This patent was filed in 1925 and granted in 1926, assigned to F. R. Arnold & Co. It covers an earlier, more complicated lipstick matchbook, examples at right. They are very different from an ordinary matchbook, as can be seen in the side-view. The striker-less striker area has been lengthened to the height of the lipsticks. The "front cover" was initially tucked into this long flap, and it was perforated at the back edge of the saddle so that it could be detached and discarded. The lipsticks are separated by 3 folds of cardboard. The "matchsticks" are thin, and the perfumed lipstick "matchheads" are triangular. The cover came in at least 3 colors of cardboard. They were initially marketed in a matchbook holder-like metal case, or they could be purchased separately.

The long flap is decorated and is inscribed, "Fracy Alumettes for thy lips." The decorated backs are inscribed "Perfumed with Fracy Passionata Paris France." The first of the 3 inside folds had instructions on how to use the lipsticks. The discardable front cover contains a lot of information for which I needed a 10x loupe to read. It says, "Tear off at perforation and insert in case. This the Fracy Allumette Re-Fill for Silvered and also Enameled cases in various colors to match the costume. This Re-Fill retails at 20c or 6 for \$1.00. They are suggested as favors for Luncheons, Bridge Parties, etc. Special sizes, 50 and 100 sticks for the Dressing Table and Guest Rooms. F. R. Arnold & Co. Importers. Fracy Parfums de Luxe, Poudres de Beaute, Sels pour Bains, Savons de Toilette, etc. 14 W. 33rd St., New York City." This is all repeated inside of the long flap, except for the first sentence.

Based on newspaper advertising, these Allumettes were marketed from mid-1926 into 1928, perhaps when they were replaced by the simpler, later, more matchbook-like version. They were distributed in a mirrored metal case, also inscribed "Fracy Allumettes for thy Lips" above the mirror. Unlike the prices quoted in the Re-Fill, the newspaper ads quote prices of \$1.25 or \$1.50 for base metal (plain or enameled on the front). Another case was advertised for \$8.50, which I assume might have been for a sterling, or perhaps gold, case. The ads show the Re-Fills were initially sold at 25c each, but the price would drop to 21c and then to 19c each. At that low point, they could also be purchased 6 for 89c. The coup de grace was administered when the lipstick matchbooks were given away as a premium if you spent \$1 on other Fracy products.

Fracy Allumettes had at least one competitor. This is the Beauharnais Petét Lipstick matchbook from Retailers' Syndicate, Inc., Chicago. Like the later Fracys, it looks a striker-less matchbook. Note the footer. The back is blank, so it may be a salesman's sample. Unfortunately, I can find no information about this manufacturer.




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LIP STICKS**

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**A New
Creation In
Lipsticks**

Fracy
Allumettes
25c regular 19c
6 for89c

