

Oh My Codd

"The Mystery of the Codd Bottle"

By Rex Barber

One of the great mysteries of bottle collecting is why William Hiram Codd's 1873 invention never swept across America as it did in England, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and India. This bottle dominated the fizzy drink industry from the 1870s until the 1920s in these countries. It outperformed wire-tied and lead-wrapped cork closures types of bottles. The crown seal cap bottle of 1913 and internal screw slowly led to its demise, although some countries still use Codd bottles today.

The Codd bottle has a glass marble retained in its bulb-shaped neck, which has a rubber or gutta percha seal set above it. When the bottle is being filled with lemonade, orange juice, cordial, etc., carbonated gas is introduced which forces the marble up against its rubber seal. This keeps the contents fresh and fizzy.

The Codd bottle evolved into many different patent types which are highly sought after by collectors all over the world. They come in many different colours; some have coloured tops on clear glass bottles while others have coloured marbles.

The Codd collector can specialize in just patent bottles, colours or even areas of distribution, as 95% of English and Australian towns had at least one aerated cordial manufacturer, especially in the 1890s. Some collect Codd bottles from gold rush towns that no longer exist, or specialize in pictorial Codds, and even within the pictorial Codds, the collectors

specialize in themes such as Codds showing steam trains, animals or even famous people.

Collectors of Codd bottles in Western Australia have several hundred different Codd Bottles to collect including blue glass, hybrids (a combination of a Codd and the Hamilton egg soda), Codds with coloured marbles, and even a bottle which is a mixture of all three but also includes a valve patent.

The valve patent was another means of relieving the pressure in the bottle which allowed the marble to drop into the neck recess, prior to pouring. In other words, just in Western Australia alone a dedicated collector can amass a wonderful collection of historical Codds.

In England, Russ Smith took me to see a collection in Plymouth where the collector specialized in Codds used just within Cornwall and Devon. He showed a floor to ceiling display that we are all familiar with and gathered from just two counties. The population within these two would have been equal to the total Australian population at the same period in history.

Of course many wonderful detailed books and articles have been written on Codd bottles, and the many variant patents. But just like American flasks and beautiful figural bottles that are so popular in the U.S.A, Codds only turn up in small amounts; the Codd just does not appear in every town across America.



Russ Smith with some of his codd paraphernalia



Samples of codd's in Russ Smith's world's best Codd collection



Samples of codd's in Russ Smith's world's best Codd collection.



International varieties including an amazing black glass Vallet's Patent from Liverpool with weird top.

All codd's of Australian origin. (L-R) 1) Rare small size Gledhill Patent. 2) Rare valve hybrid Reading from Bunbury. 3) Blue lip Frank Craig hybrid from York. 4) Highly prized two 32 ounce codd's from O'Neill Bros and Bennett of Melbourne. 5) All time classic cobalt IJK Cohn, Southern Cross and Coolgardie Acme Patent. 6) Chester Lodge Sharpe's Patent (seven dimple codd). 7) Mount's Patent by Melbourne Glass Works named after Mr. Mount who was heavily involved in the glassworks.



"Honey better come see what the little girl next door dug up"

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Some of our rarest bottles
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