

PARIS BALL

By Ralph Finch

It had to happen!

As soon as I said, in this month's target ball column that no new important balls have shown up, one did. And it's a beaut! Ball collectors worry when a great ball shows up. Was it one ball found in the bottom of a privy, or one ball found in a barrel with 299 others (they were often shipped 300 to a crate).

There are many examples of a great ball showing up, accompanied in a few weeks or five others, by maybe four total, but there are other times when a new ball ... just keeps coming.



Such was the excitement — and anxiety — in late September when a previously unknown ball showed up on eBay. With a diamond pattern, the cobalt-blue ball was embossed “GEVELOT” and “PARIS,” and between the two words a squiggle that looks like a snake!

Quick research revealed that Gevelot, in former times, produced ammunition in France, and e-mails to England, France and Germany revealed that a dirty “Gevelot” ball had just been sold at a flea market in Brussels then resold on French eBay. Within a few days it was on U.S. eBay.

As interest — and bidding — escalated on this ball, so did e-mails from a variety of collectors, all asking: “HOW MANY PARIS BALLS ARE THERE? Is this another Van Cutsem?” referring to a French ball that first sold for around \$500, before we discovered that thousands had been found in barrels stored away at a French estate. And we soon found out that the Gevelot/Paris ball was found in the cellar of an old estate / castle near Waterloo, Germany, southwest of Brussels.

The Gevelot/Paris ball sold for \$1,500, with 17 bids from only six bidders — others said they were too hesitant to compete. The under-bidder went \$1,488.88, while my sniper bid was third, at \$1,465.

E-mails continued flying across the Atlantic, and bits and pieces of the Gevelot ball began to come together. The number of the balls increased, as well as the number of sellers. Two Germans were soon offering Gevelot balls, and those of us who had just spent a heck of a lot of money were beginning to worry. (The first “Dr. A. Frank” balls that came from Germany sold for around \$1,500 — they now sell for around \$250.)

But, two weeks later, there are two Paris balls in Michigan, one in Missouri, one or two in England, plus the balls that sold on eBay. Our tally is now at nine balls, and if this remains the total number, \$1,500 is still a great price for this beautiful ball.

We will see, we will see.

Comments? E-mail Ralph at rfinch@twmi.rr.com

The “Drool Factor”

An easy guide to bottle exposure developed through years of studying characteristics of bottle collectors.

By Bobby Vaughn

DROOL FACTOR SCALE (1-10)

#1 This grade of bottle is usually scuffed, with cracks and chips; downright ugly. Collectors should look away quickly to avoid possible brain damage. (No Drool)

#2 Bottle is usually full of dirt, made after 1900 and sometimes is ‘accidently’ pushed off tables - a real throwback-in-the-ditch specimen. (No Drool)

#3 This bottle is really plain and clear in color. Usually you cannot look at this bottle with both eyes; an eyepatch is helpful. (No Drool)

#4 This grade of bottle you may decide to view, but are easily distracted to look away. After inspection, you readily forget you ever saw it. (No Drool)

#5 This bottle requires your attention. It has nice curves and a smooth base. Usually the bottle has embossing. Both your eyes are helplessly fixated. (No Drool)

#6 This bottle is clean, no damage, pre-1900 and brightly colored. There are traces of moist Drool visible at the corners of your mouth.

#7 Bottle is a real looker. Your favorite type and rare too! Some Drool can be seen rolling down your chin; a bib is optional here. A tissue or paper towel is usually absorbent enough.

#8 This bottle is stunning! Mint condition, black glass and pontiled; significant Drool is in order. Please, no sloppy drooling and bibs are definitely required here.

#9 At this Drool Factor level you may develop “shakes” when gazing at the bottle. You may have your wallet, checkbook, and credit card out, but not be aware of it. Bibs are not sufficient and a sponge is required for safe drool containment.

#10 This level has never been attained - could be fatal - and only exists through legend. It would require medical attention, complete with wet-vac drool removal.

May this guide prevent you from ever entering the dangerous level #10 and collecting your bottles without fear of a sudden and incapacitating attack. Collect On!!!!!!