

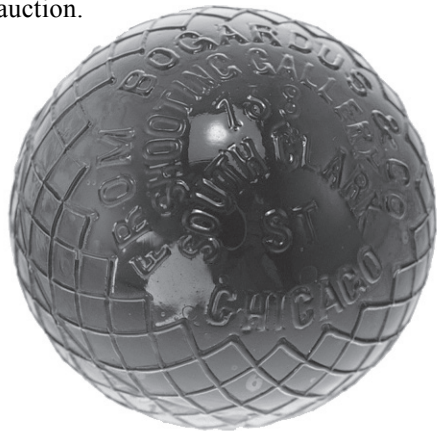
American Bottle Auctions Shatters World Record

Rare Bogardus Glass Target Ball Brings \$17,000

In the first of what may be the beginning chapter of the sale of the Alex Kerr collection of Glass Target Balls, a new world's record was made with the first ten balls selling in an *American Bottle Auctions* (ABA) July 5th auction for a total of over \$45,000.

Alex Kerr was part of the famous Kerr Glass Company and had amassed a collection of fruit jars that would make a veteran collector blush. What was not entirely known was the extent of the treasured collection of glass target balls he had acquired over a 50 year, or so, span. ABA began learning this world class marksman, author, collector, and more importantly, researcher and historian had spent years-assembling information on target balls. Alex was a pioneer in so many ways, much like glass pioneers Charles Gardner and Helen McKearin. His interest in glass target balls surpassed that of even the most ardent collector.

For those still wondering what a target ball was...they were approximately 3" round spheres, thrown in the air with a special contraption for the sportsmen, or marksmen of the day. Manufactured in the mid 1870s, they were only made for about 30 years, maybe less, as the clay pigeon became popular. One of the "throwers" from the 1870s sold for \$3520 in the same auction.



American Bottle Auctions talked to the winner (who wished to remain anonymous) of the record setting (\$17,000 with buyers premium) Bogardus bottom embossed ball (pictured above) and he had this to say, "I thought it was a very well run auction. It was on the Internet the right amount of time and the streaming videos were an excellent touch." The buyer added, "It was very descriptive (*the website description*), it was

very clear about what the piece was." The previous record for a target ball sold at auction was over \$14,000 (for a rare *Sure Break* ball).

Regarding the world's record Bogardus, the buyer continued, "I just wanted that ball. Everybody's got his or her thing, we have a big thing for the Bogardus balls. I have some really nice Bogardus balls, but this is the one I didn't have (*one of two known examples, the other Bogardus ball is not nearly as clearly embossed*). I think it's a great looking ball. I would rate this Bogardus Gallery ball as the Holy Grail of Bogardus balls. On the whole, consider it the very top Bogardus. The Bogardus balls in general hold their value because of their appeal to other collectors. They all want a Bogardus."

Other balls that sold in the last *American Bottle Auctions* auction included a few near records...a Johnston target ball that is a rare and desirable "advertising ball" as well as a glass sphere that has more advertising than most billboards.

"That Johnston ball (*pictured on the right, sold for \$7700*) was a great ball, the sodium spot didn't bother me at all," said the top prizewinner. "It's in-making and the imperfection was done originally. I would consider it right up there with the rarest balls ever found. In the top ten balls at least."

Another anonymous bidder who won the hobnailed Bogardus had this to say



about the auction, "I think the auction was great, the duration of one week of bidding is more than enough. The only thing I would do differently is announcing it a little earlier." Regarding the prices, he said "I think the prices were totally realistic, which shows an exceptional strength in the target ball market." On the record setting Bogardus, "I expected it to go for more money."

American Bottle Auctions also set a world's record for the most ever paid for any bottle at auction. In 1995, they sold a Bryant's Stomach Bitters for \$68,750.

American Bottle Auctions website can be found at www.americanbottle.com.



FYI Notes



Embossed BOTTLE MADE FOR HUTCHINSONS PATENT SPRING STOPPER (in circle slug plate) with no other embossing anywhere came up on eBay recently. Seller described it as: hand blown; hand applied blob collar; aqua; 6 1/2" tall; a dug bottle with some haze and surface wear; only damage is a ding vertical in top of lip. This bottle still has the original wire loop stopper. A sample bottle? After 18 bids, it ended for \$201.



I am not sure how often one of these comes up on eBay, live auction or otherwise, but this one needed no description, - only the photo. This light yellow olive "Brown's Celebrated Indian Herb Bitters" bottle attracted about a dozen online bidders - as well as live auction floor bidders - to bring her ending price to \$9000 (+ 20% BP). (It was an online bidder who won her.)