

EXCEPTIONAL MATCH SAFES BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by Dean Six for Silver Magazine

September/October 2009, page 44

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Publisher: International Match Safe Association (IMSA), 2008

Hard cover, 150 pages

ISBN: 978-0-9822333-0-6

To order: International Match Safe Association, PO Box 227, Riverdale, NJ 07457 or http://www.matchsafe.org/Club_News, \$175.00 for IMSA members, \$225.00 for non-members.

Before you touch this volume, the design of it makes clear that this is something special. Residing in a cloth-covered slipcase and having a matching cloth binding, this is no ordinary tome. Everything about it shouts from several paces off-behold and show reverence. Upon removing the book from the case and opening the oversized cover to reveal a total spread of 12 x 23 inches, the dramatic display begins.

Exceptional Match Safes is more of a presentation than a traditional book. Some twelve pages of text introduce the volume before it becomes all about the objects-the match safes or vestas as they are called in the UK. These small containers from the late 1800s and early 1900s were the civilized man's accessory to safely transport the popular wood or cardboard matches of the day. Two large collections, one in the United States and one in England, provide many of the examples shown, but we are reminded that members of the International Match Safe Association shared additional objects for inclusion. While predominately about silver and silver enameled cases, there are cases of gold, ivory, and other materials illustrated as well.

Gorham, Shreve & Co., Tiffany & Co., and Fabergé, along with a host of others, produced these small pocket masterpieces that fill the 150 page book. From the nude and naughty to the elegant and figural, these diminutive works of art capture the spirit and imagery of their time. This exceptionally produced book showcases the match safes that captured that imagery.

If this review seems to chant praise for the book, it is because the book, while nicely captioned and with some limited historical notes, really is about the beauty of the objects and it well serves this goal.

All together a beautiful volume, it would make a nice addition to any silver library. Noting that it is not designed as a research book, but as a visual record to proclaim the variety and artistry of these miniature creations-if you can add one to your bookshelf, we suggest you do so.