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Restaurant China : Identification & Value Guide For Restaurant, Airline, Ship & Railroad Dinnerware (Volume 1)



Synopsis

This giant new reference book covers dinnerware, oven-to-table serving pieces, and accessories specifically designed for use in commercial food service, as opposed to household tableware. This fine china is used in restaurants, in addition to hotel, government, company, military, hospital, school, church, club, fraternal organization, department and drugstore, railroad station and airport dining rooms and cafeterias, as well as on trains, ships, and airplanes. Restaurant china brings a hint of nostalgia of pre-freeway cross-country vacations by car or rail, when fast food stops were nonexistent and dining out was a big event for people. In addition to 690 color photographs, Conroy has included lengthy alphabetical topmark lists, logo illustrations, value ranges, and in-depth sections on manufacturing and decoration techniques. 2003 values. 8.5 X 11.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This 368-page volume begins with airline dinnerware, then moves on to ship and railroad china before examining military, western, and oriental motif china. Also covered is china used in casinos, amusement parks and fairgrounds, and company dining rooms, although the bulk of the book is devoted to airline, ship, and railroad dinnerware. A selection of manufacturers' pieces that include samples and employee gifts is provided.

Barbara Conroy and her husband have collected restaurant china together for about 20 years. She spent more than six years in intense study for her two volumes on Restaurant China, and her careful research is evident in the two volumes.

I was very disappointed in this book. The colors in the photographs are beautiful. But as a reference for china patterns, it is seriously lacking. Except for a select few companies, the author seems to offer only one example rather than a more complete listing of the different china patterns used by each company over the years. There are some very nice photographs of railroad dining cars, steamship dining rooms, and airline meals being served, but again as a reference, the pictures do not show the china in these photos very clearly at all. In addition, the listings and descriptions of company logos as well as time-frames for china patterns are sometimes inaccurate and other times incomplete. As always, price guides become outdated quickly and would have been better in a separate addendum instead of being placed with text and captions throughout the book. I feel the book was too generalized. As a new collector I wanted help in identifying the different china patterns used by these transportation companies, when each pattern was used, and who manufactured them. All this book provided were scattered bits and pieces of that information. I do not intend to buy Volume II.

First I need to preface that this book was purchased solely for the information on the Railroad China. As my title says, this book is good for the pictures of the Railroad China, but I take issue with the prices displayed....[Either she got really gyped/cheated or she had lots of money to burn and "price was no object". Neither my spouse nor myself would spend the kind of money price-wise that was quoted in this book. Prices were over three times what we would pay in certain cases. Going back to the pictures, *color* pictures - very nice. Whether the pictures are color correct, I can't necessarily say, which brings us to the next point. They are pictures of patterns that I hadn't seen previously in either the two better known railroad china books. In the books favor, there is section about "how" the china was made, that included decorated/decaled and the like. That section appeared to be quite good reading. Lastly, if you want to know about the Restaurant, Airline and Ship aspects of the book - I can't tell you. I hate to say it, but the book, now purchased will probably be kept for the photos.

I love researching Syracuse China & other vintage china collectibles. In my opinion this, along with Conroy's volume II are invaluable, easy reference tools.

Although this book is dated it has great information on marks and manufacturers. I recommend it for the collector of diner china.

Very interesting and I learned a lot. Good pictures and good info. Only drawback is you need books 1 and 2 for complete info.

Very informative.

Barbara Conroy's new volume on restaurant china is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature regarding this largely American genre of utilitarian ceramic art. Restaurant china represents an age of americana where restaurants cared enough to invest capital in individualized ceramic pieces that would advertise and represent their establishments. It is a practice that is being undertaken with less and less frequency in our time. Many manufacturers are no longer in business. It is accordingly a genre of increasing interest to collectors. Conroy's book chronicles this fine craft form well. It offers a fairly exhaustive listing of topmarks and backstamps of interest to collectors. Substantial full-color illustrations are both informative and entertaining. Historical information as well as primer material about production processes are welcome inclusions. The book's title is a bit misleading, however. It is really a volume focusing primarily on airline, ship, and railroad china... with some coverage of military, western, government, oriental, sports-related, casino, department store and corporate pieces. Logo china manufactured for restaurants and diners receives is afforded little coverage. And non-logo pieces in stock patterns receive virtually no mention at all; the topic is beyond the scope of the book (though Conroy plans, I believe, additional volumes which may address these areas in further detail.) Future volumes may benefit from including information on how to read backstamps to determine date of manufacture, information on stock patterns, and changes in ceramic form and decorative practices from the 1950's and 60's to the present day. No one volume, however, can be expected to exhaustively cover all facets of this increasingly valued utilitarian art form. On the whole, Conroy's volume enriches the literature currently available to growing number of restaurant china fans and collectors in our culture.

Barbara Conroy shares her extensive personal experience as a collector in this invaluable reference work. The photography is exceptional, with hundreds of examples of dinnerware pictured in each of the four main categories, along with copies of period advertisements and brochures. Each section

also includes a painstakingly assembled collection of hundreds of logos to assist the collector in identifying the company the dinnerware was produced for. A must-have reference book for the serious restaurant, airline, ship and railroad china collector! Pair this book up with Volume 2 of the series and you can push all your other books to the back of the shelf, you won't need them anymore.

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