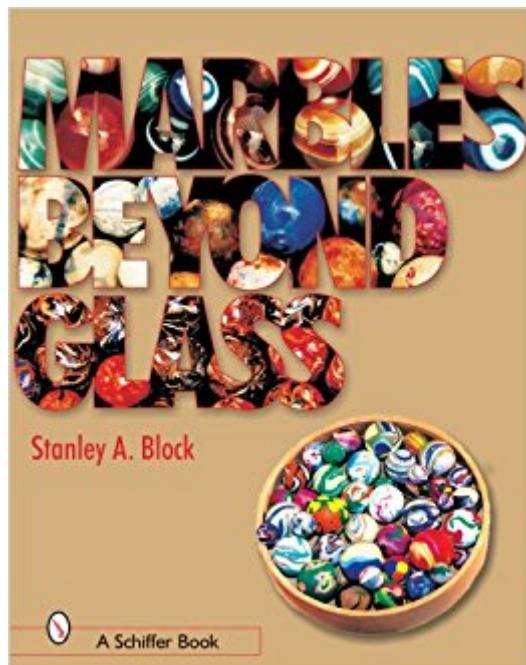


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# Marbles Beyond Glass



## **Synopsis**

Marbles made in many materials other than glass. Minerals, stone, clay, crockery, pottery, china, porcelain, cloisonne, gutta-percha, scrimshaw, wood, metal, and more appear here in over 930 color photos of ! Featured are some of the most highly prized marbles of years-gone-by, including hand cut, milled, and polished banded agates, and hand-painted chinas. The text also provides valuable information on marble types, clubs, and meets, and includes online sites, values tables, an extensive glossary, bibliography, and appendices. You don't have to be passionate about marbles to enjoy the varieties.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Stanley A. Block has been collecting, studying, and writing about marbles for many years. In 1975, he founded the Marble Collectors Society of America.

Collecting the full spectrum of non-glass marbles is collecting the history of toy marbles. It should have been impossible to produce a book on non-glass marbles without mentioning details of their history and production, but this has now been accomplished, unfortunately. The hundreds of individual marble pictures vary greatly in interest. Many are redundant and the inferior pictures detract from the few excellent examples illustrated. Antique agate marbles are interspersed with modern mineral marbles. There is very little or nothing mentioned of wooden, hollow brass, limestone, alabaster, stoneware, sewer-tile or ivory toy marbles. Any ceramic marble coated with a

colored glaze is called a "bennington", which is not helpful. There is no mention of the largest US agate marble factory which cut and ground Mexican onyx in the 1920s and 1930 in Los Angeles, California. No contemporary marble makers are named, although their marbles are illustrated profusely. No distinction is made between earthen ware, red ware, stone ware (very old German as well as 100 year old Akron), yellow ware (generally from the US) white ware or porcelain (usually German). Any marble with surface lines is arbitrarily called "line pottery" or "line crockery" or "lined china". Unfortunately, since rarity does not greatly influence price (value) amongst many ordinary ceramic toy marbles, it appears there was no incentive for the author to accurately categorize them. I'm not looking for a treatise on ceramics, but at a list price of \$50, some attempt should have been made to progress from the folksy and sloppy jargon of the past to well established classification used by ceramic collectors. Such impaired communication inhibits progress; ceramic marble collectors will have to wait for a better book, which is long overdue.

This book is mostly a collection of pictures of individual marbles, seven to a page, supposedly marketed as an identification and price guide. It turns out to be a terrible waste of time and money for everyone. Promulgation of confusing and inaccurate terminology should have ceased long ago, with the publication of more factual marble books such as Gartley and Carskadden's "Colonial Period and Early 18th Century Children's Toy Marbles" and Paul Baumann's "Collecting Antique Marbles". There is a minimum of text, probably because of a scarcity of knowledge on the author's part. An obvious lack of appreciation of the origins and manufacturing techniques of these marbles creates some major errors and omissions. For example, a variety of distinctly different marbles are lumped together as either "lined pottery" or "lined crockery" or both. Painted clay marbles, variegated porcelain marbles as well as decorated American stoneware marbles are all called "lined pottery". The same photograph is sometimes repeatedly used with a different caption. The term "sponge ware" is used so frequently and inaccurately as to be meaningless. No mention is made of the ubiquitous limestone marble, nor the uncommon marble cut and ground from red veined marble, which probably gave toy marbles their name. No distinction is made between modern machine ground, semi-precious stone marbles, (cheaper by the pound at rock shops) and expensive hand cut German agates from the 19th century. We don't need seven individual pictures of blue "Bennington" marbles (a misnomer by the way) on a single page! Cane handles are lumped together with distinctly different painted china marbles, and the artists responsible for modern painted china marbles are not acknowledged. There is not a single reference to any of the numerous and often inaccurate statements, and the short bibliography is useless. A lack of an index

is not surprising, as I doubt the author could ever come up with one, given the disorganization of the book. This is a book any experienced collector would find useless and to which no new collector should ever be exposed.

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