

# MARBELOUS MARBLE COLLECTING

BY BERT COHEN (AKA MR. MARBLES)

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TODD AUSTIN



Spheres are everywhere in our lives—the sun, the moon, our eyes (which are looked upon as the window to the soul). They can also be found in many of the foods that sustain us (oranges, grapes, coconuts), stones, and many other things that are a part of our world. They influence, warm, and nourish, so it is natural to try to capture their beauty and power. Holding a beautiful glass marble in one's hand is a moving and sensuous experience.

As a serious collector for fifty years, I have the privilege of owning marbles as old as 4,300 years that date back to the Egyptians, some that were played with by Rembrandt that I found in Holland, and Roman marbles that are 2,300 years old. They have been authenticated by the Smithsonian Institution and the Corning Glass Museum. Today my major collection is with the magnificent contemporary marbles being created by outstanding glassmakers who are primarily in America.

At one time, marbles were made for industrial use or as toys for children. They had swirls of color, lovely but not as unique as the ones that have emerged in the past thirty years. As some of the most gifted artists in glass developed their own styles, statements, passion, and vision, marbles took off as a rewarding, valuable art form to be collected, admired, and displayed in museums and private homes. Some of the most talented and collectible artists today are Coupal, Fine, Hulet, Jorgenson, Judeman, Kabuki, Maslach, Matthews, Purser, Recko, Rice, Richardson, Salazar, Simpson, and Stankard, to name just a few. There are over one hundred creative glassmakers out there.

Aside from the intrinsic beauty of marbles and their increase in value as a rewarding collectible, marble safaris can be a family affair. I started collecting on weekends with my family when we would drive to Cape Cod, New Hampshire, and Maine to search for marbles many years ago when my children were very young. Having a family hobby that includes all ages and budgets, appeals to boys as well as girls, and encourages reading is very cohesive and contributes to bonding and better communication as the family researches and explores these glass treasures.





CATHY RICHARDSON

ZACHARY JORGENSEN



JOHN KOBUKI



RO PURSER



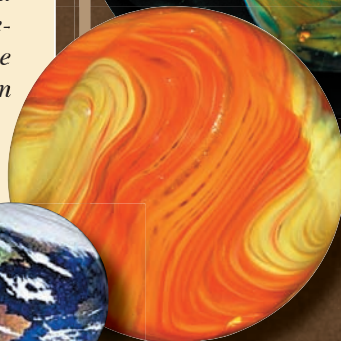
MARK MATTHEWS



CHRIS AND  
JACQUELYN RICE



GATESON RECKO



GEOFFREY BEETEM



DREW FRITTS

So where do new collectors go to get started? The best places are marble conventions. They are held in many parts of America. I have one annually in — where else? — Marlborough, Massachusetts, which is about thirty-five minutes outside of Boston. The next one will be held on Saturday and Sunday, October 11–12, 2008, at the Marriott Courtyard. There are special discount prices for convention guests and dealers who are staying overnight. All of the dealers display on Sunday in the Grand Ballroom for only two dollars. Dealers in attendance are from all over America as well as Canada.

Another good place to find marbles is on eBay and other places online. Of course, you will want to go to a place where you can see a marble and hold it in your hand. Some towns have stores that carry them. Also check out antique stores, flea markets, yard sales, classified ads, art glass stores, and the like.

To the seasoned collector, you know that you should always try to buy the best you can afford in all things. There are some amazing artists doing remarkable things with glass. I try to show the latest, greatest creations being made by new glassmakers as well as what is evolving from the well-established artists on my website. Check it out — and happy hunting to you all!

*I recommend that you check out marble books and do some reading. Various books with gorgeous pictures of what to look for when collecting marbles have emerged and cover the gamut of old and new marbles and glassmakers. I sell about twenty of these. You can contact me for titles and prices. Visit [www.marblebert.com](http://www.marblebert.com) or e-mail me at [marblebert@aol.com](mailto:marblebert@aol.com). I take pleasure in assisting marble collectors and especially in helping new collectors, many of whom are children. I will happily e-mail information to you for free.*

