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# Mah Jongg: The Art Of The Game: A Collector's Guide To Mah Jongg Tiles And Sets



## Synopsis

"I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Whether used as a reference or a beautiful keepsake, it's a very worthy addition to the world of Mah Jongg." — Ruth Unger, President, National Mah Jongg League

This is the first book to fully capture the story of the exotic and exciting game of Mahjong or "Mah Jongg", offering an intimate look at the history of the game as well as the visual beauty of the tiles. When authors Ann Israel and Gregg Swain began playing Mahjong, they were unaware of the vintage collections that existed not only in the United States but also as far ranging as Africa to New Zealand. Slowly, they started to collect their own sets of Mahjong and as their collections grew, so did their appreciation of the history of, and interest in the game. Finding few references, Israel and Swain set out to create a book that chronicles the early beginnings of the game and documents Mahjong sets from the most basic, made simply of paper, to the most precious materials such as ivory and mother-of-pearl. Recognized and respected scholars and game experts have collaborated with Israel and Swain, contributing important chapters on the game's history and its pieces as well as technical information on the tiles. Lastly, great collectors from around the globe have shared their incredible sets and memories for the first time in one book for everyone to enjoy. With hundreds of beautiful new images by renowned photographer, Michel Arnaud, and including historical documentation and ephemera, Mah Jongg: The Art of the Game fills the void between the past and today's game, providing vision, inspiration and resources. Anyone who has ever been intrigued by a Mahjong tile will find in these pages visually stunning photographs that will entice them into becoming an enthusiast of the timeless game of Mahjong.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I remember the sound of the clacking tiles being mixed and the bams, cracks and dots being called as they were discarded from when I was growing up. Whether you're a player like me or just fascinated by the designs of the tiles, this book is for you. The authors dispel many of the myths that have surrounded the game - no it doesn't date from the time of Confucius; yes it was based on a Chinese card game. But besides tracing the origins of the game and explaining its roots and its history, the book illustrates with sumptuous photographs some of the most beautiful sets I've ever seen. What a great gift to yourself or any Mah Jongg player you know.

This fabulous book, the first of its kind, is a richly illustrated, informative and treasured resource in my library. It enabled me to identify and learn fascinating details about one of my sets from a photo that matched it exactly. As a Mah Jongg player and art history enthusiast, I was in awe of the beauty, depth and breadth of the information revealed within. This marvelous book will continue to both inspire and capture the attention of Mah Jongg players and collectors alike as word of its existence sweeps the globe! Giving new meaning to the term "Eye Candy" it is difficult to put down once started, so give in to the temptation and read it all at once!

This book is absolutely beautiful! If you are interested in a gorgeous book with fabulous photographs that tell the story, culture and history of the game of mah jongg and the tiles, this is the book for you. What a great gift for your mah jongg friends. I absolutely love mine.

"Mah Jongg - The Art of the Game" First of all, I thought this was a wonderful title for this beautifully photographed and researched book about Mah Jongg. The authors, Ann M. Israel and Gregg Swain took me on their painstaking journey of discovery. The lush photographs are a compilation of tiles created from a variety of materials starting with simple paper sets, tin, rubber, and Bakelite, to exquisitely engraved mother-of-pearl and ivory. Many of these elaborately carved tiles depict celebrations featuring musicians and dancers. The artistry is lovely with their full color palettes. Chapter I provides a brief history of the game whose earliest name was "Beating the Sparrow." I was always under the impression that Mah Jongg was an ancient game and was surprised to learn that it dates to the early to mid 19th century in China. Joseph Babcock, an American working in China was astute and very entrepreneurial. He became fascinated with the

game and exported it home. Some of the members of my Mah Jongg groups own sets. Most of them are plastic. Their cases are aluminum or faux leather. The Lucite pushers help keep the rows of tiles as straight as soldiers as each player breaks her wall. But none of our sets have the charm and amazing presentation of the colorful tiles, racks, and storage cabinets featured in this book. There is a definite rhythm and cadence as each tile is discarded in the center of the table. This book "Mah Jongg - The Art of the Game" rekindled in me an appreciation of this lovely art form's both frustrating and exhilarating experience of playing this game with friends of all ages. I am looking forward to sharing this book with both my artist and Mah Jongg friends and placing it front and center on my coffee table.

A beautiful book that should not be relegated to coffee table perusal. Read it and be happy that the authors have created such a tribute to a fascinating game. The photographs are stunning and the text well-written and informative. Clearly these are lovers of art, beauty and a wonderful game.

Enjoy

Anyone who loves art, history, or mah-jongg would simply be in love with this book! The photographs are rich and lush, and the text goes deep into the history and how the tiles are made in a way that no other book on mah-jongg does--I would highly recommend this to everyone!

A feast for the soul of the mah jong player. Beautifully illustrated, this book is a must have for all mah jong players. It is a one of a kind reference book. After receiving mine, I ordered 3 more copies for the rest of my group. Kudos to Ann Israel, Gregg Swain, and Michel Arnaud.

The 'Art' of Mah Jongg indeed! This enchanting book does not disappoint - I found myself captivated from beginning to end. After much anticipation I was spellbound from the moment this eye-popping book arrived. Every Mah Jongg player and anyone ever interested in Mah Jongg will be fascinated by the stunning photography and precise descriptions of so many wonderfully exquisite vintage Mah Jongg tiles. This lovely book is truly an elegant addition to the memoirs of the beloved exotic game of Mah Jongg. Thank-you!

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