

Great photos stories; missed opportunity
By James N. McNally
This book has incredible details about the business of Matchbox, its incarnations over the years, and its related companies. The production quality of the book itself is top-notch (for example, the photos jump right out at you), but there are some features that detract from what could have been the definitive coffee-table book on the subject. There are some notable errors in the photo captions, and some photos are re-run on the same or neighboring pages. The book identifies "rare" color schemes for the models, but inaccuracies makes one wonder about the credibility of those assessments (examples of glaring errors: reversing the identifications of the Iso Grifo and the Ford GT, or showing regular wheel vehicles from the mid-1960s under the caption of "Superfast" vehicles, which did not come around until 1969). At times the photos are shown on page after page with no real connection to each other. In that respect, the book lacks basic organization of the photo content (although the informative articles are arranged chronologically). This is not a price guide, nor is it a comprehensive listing of the multitude of Matchbox products over the 50 years covered by the book. I suspect the typical customers of this high-end book will be devout Matchbox collectors. They may not perceive this as the valuable half-century compilation the publishers had probably hoped for.

For over half a century Matchbox vehicles have entertained children and collectors of all ages. This book is a celebration of the classic toy car from its inception to today. Take a historical journey through the past fifty years with Matchbox vehicles. Along the way, you'll read about how Matchbox cars were invented, the history of diecasting, and the large variety of vehicles produced over the years. Have you ever wondered why certain vehicles are considered more collectible than others? Or why Matchbox cars are numbered and what those numbers mean? The answers to these questions and more can be found throughout the pages of this authoritative book. Accompanying the informative text are photographs of more than a thousand spectacular vehicles from throughout Matchbox history and its diverse product lines.

From Booklist
This is an unabashedly commercial paean to the wonder of the die-cast toy called Matchbox, now in its fiftieth year. This more-pictures-than-words toy-table book takes its readers through the origins of not only the namesake company but also its predecessors (Lesney Products was the first) and its competitors that eventually blended into the business now owned by Mattel. Factoids blitz the many pages of color photographs; a single 1961 afternoon, for instance, saw more Rolls Royce Silver Ghosts produced (albeit in Matchbox style) than in a span of 60 years. Products are, naturally, front and center in this commemorative edition, from the cartoon colors of Sesame Street-character mobiles to the intricately detailed airplane collectibles. At the end is a celebration of the unknown creators and manufacturers behind the brand, the Matchbox Road Museum, and--what next?--the Matchbox Club. A happy birthday song for a never-aging product. Appended is a trademark listing.
Barbara Jacobs
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About the Author
Richard J. Scholl has been a consultant, award-winning creative director, and author who has written about collectibles and the industry for more than fifteen years. He has written numerous articles on collecting and was managing editor of *The Matchbox Collector*, a newsletter published by Matchbox Collectibles for many years. Scholl worked full-time for The Franklin Mint for several years and has since developed advertising and reference material for many of America's most prominent direct marketers of collectibles, including The Hamilton Collection, Lenox, Bradford Exchange, Action Performance, Ashton-Drake Galleries, Disney, America Remembers, and Matchbox Collectibles. Scholl has also worked for toy companies including Tyco Preschool and Tyco R/C. A published poet, Richard is the author of *The Running Press Glossary of Baseball Language*, and he has been a research consultant and contributor to many other books. An adjunct professor of communications at Drexel University for eighteen years, he is president of The Scholl Group, a full service advertising, communications, and marketing firm. He earned his Bachelor of Art degree in Writing and his Master's Degree in English from the Pennsylvania State University. Born in Pittsburgh, Richard now resides in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Catherine, and two children, Geoffrey and Jennifer.