

A TOKEN OF ELEGANCE

MARTIN BARNES LORBER – REBECCA MCNAMARA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN BIGELOW TAYLOR AND DIANNE DUBLER

A TOKEN OF ELEGANCE
CIGARETTE HOLDERS IN VOGUE
THE CAROLYN HSU-BALCER COLLECTION

Consultant
John Tancock

Thanks to **Courtney Bowers** for assistance in the early phases of research for the book.

Officina Libraria
via Carlo Romussi 4
20125 Milan, Italy
www.officialibraria.com

Editorial coordination
Marco Jelinek

Graphic design and layout
Paola Gallerani

Editorial assistant
Serena Solla

Editing
Bronwyn Mahoney

Color separation
Eurofotolit, Cernusco sul Naviglio (MI)

Printed by
Grafiche Corrà, Arcole (Verona), Italy

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

© Officina Libraria, Milan, 2015
© The Mattawin Company Inc. for the texts, 2015
© John Bigelow Taylor and Dianne Dubler for the images, 2015
Produced by The Mattawin Company Inc.

isbn 978-88-97737-62-9
Printed in Italy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword <i>by Carolyn Hsu-Balcer</i>	7
Introduction.....	9
CHAPTER I: Tobacco’s Journey from the New World to the Old: Medicine and Pleasure.....	12
CHAPTER II: The Rise of Cigarette Culture: The Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries.....	22
CHAPTER III: Smoking, Sociability, and a New Modern Era: From the First World War to the Second.....	38
CHAPTER IV: The Cigarette Holder’s Peak and Fall: A New Culture of Smoking since the Mid-Twentieth Century.....	52
ENDNOTES.....	62
CATALOG	67
APPENDIX: Materials Used in Cigarette Holders	188
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	191
PHOTO CREDITS	192



FOREWORD

A Token of Elegance is an expression of my love of beauty and functionality. It is also a way of paying tribute to the trade that allowed my family a comfortable living in Shanghai, a trade that provided them a lifeline when they were forced to leave their home after the Chinese Revolution of 1949 and migrate to the West, where they settled in Virginia's tobacco country.

I began collecting cigarette holders in 1991. My first acquisition was an 1890 Viennese telescopic silver cigarette holder in an enamel case. I was at the Columbus Avenue Flea Market in New York City, and I was attracted by the object's compactness and design. I was a smoker at the time, and I'd been toying with the idea of using a cigarette holder. This one seemed to fit my own personal style.

Over time I became less interested in smoking and more interested in cigarette holders. I was attracted by the endless variety of materials, the period styles, the marriage of artistry and practicality, all played out on a small canvas that looked equally at home between the fingers as it did between the lips.

Wherever I found myself in my travels, I would seek out holders unique to the particular country I was in. There wasn't one city or town where cigarette holders couldn't be found in small antique shops and flea markets—a testament to tobacco's global reach. But the fact that so many second-hand holders were available for sale was also a testament to their fall from fashion.

Antiques dealers didn't know what to do with holders, which often came to them as part of a larger lot. They were out of vogue, associated with a now-reviled habit. Dealers stuffed them away and forgot about them. When I happened into a shop, they assumed I was interested in jewelry or antique silver. Imagine their surprise—and joy—when I asked them for cigarette holders. Out of bottom

drawers and the backs of cupboards came some of the most beautiful expressions of functional craftsmanship.

While the collection has grown to over four hundred objects, the holders in this book have been selected to give the reader an encyclopedic view of the range of styles, materials, and origins—from disposable holders churned out by the thousands to exclusive diamond-encrusted fabrications of rare metals and semi-precious stones made by the most prestigious jewelry houses.

A Token of Elegance is intended as a catalog of these unique and often-forgotten items, and in its text, as a journey through time and place. It will, I hope, offer readers a greater understanding of tobacco's importance throughout history as it assumed many roles, not all of which seemed so ill-fated at the time.

The reader is asked to set aside any prejudice as regards tobacco and look upon the objects in this book as an expression of that very human desire—that very human *need*—to apply our innate creativity to turning even the most everyday articles into works of beauty, into what are, undeniably, works of self-expression.

CAROLYN HSU-BALCER
NEW YORK, 2015