A COLLECTION OF CHINESE SNUFF BOTTLES
INCLUDING A SELECTION FROM

THE WHITE ORCHID
COLLECTION

Chinese Snuff Bottles XVIII
by
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FOREWORD

It is an enjoyable task for me to write a small introduction to this catalogue. The Chinese snuff bottles here are a fascinating group illustrating a fine cross section of the many beautiful designs used, and complicated techniques employed, to create a snuff bottle. An artist creating the design for a snuff bottle during the Qing period would have to be reasonably observant and educated, catering for the needs of Emperors, courtiers, the literati, and the wealthy. Their skill in adding value to the raw material of the piece is immense. I have seen a snuff bottle make a very large amount of money simply because the creator has made the most of some of the natural inclusions in the piece.

Most of these bottles come from The White Orchid Collection, (a brief biography of the owner was given in our last catalogue). The owner of the Ferrari Collection is a distinguished gentleman who shuns the public eye - but whose own ‘eye’ in the field of snuff bottles is impeccable and informed by his innate good taste. The bottles presented here embody the particular taste of these two collectors and their own specific predilections. Now that these collections have been disassembled, the bottles will be acquired by other collectors, inheritors of their tastes. Provenance is an important consideration in the purchase of a snuff bottle (indeed in any work of art). This is due, in part, to the proliferation of fakes on the market over the past several years, and collectors now seek assurance of age by attempting to trace the history of any bottle they are considering buying.

I am pleased to say that both of the consignors of the Chinese snuff bottles in our catalogue are kind, well balanced and congenial people, both have passionately enjoyed the experience of collecting with vigour and humour. Collecting is not all about money and glamour; in many cases bottles have been found in unlikely locations providing the collectors the necessary knowledge and belief that it is worth hunting.

Good luck with your hunting days

Robert Hall
February 2013
1 Enamels on copper, painted with a continued formalized floral design set between a band of red scrolling foliage on a white ground encircling the neck and a lime-green band around the outer footrim, the base with a stylized petal motif.

Probably Imperial, attributed to Guangzhou workshops, 1725 – 1775

Height: 6.1cm
Provenance:
Gallery Bertrand de Lavergne, Paris.
December 2001
The White Orchid Collection
2. Glass, translucent amber with splashes of black, white, yellowish-brown sandwiched between transparent layers in imitation of tortoiseshell.

18th century
Height: 5.1cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Million-Jutheau sale, 24 April 1983, Lot 76
The White Orchid Collection

3. Glass, opaque turquoise, the facetted octagonal body with raised panels on the front and the reverse, the base with the wheel-cut mark of the Daoguang Emperor.

Palace glassworks, Beijing.
Daoguang period, 1821-1850
Height: 6.3cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Millon Jutheau sale, 14 November 1989, Lot 74
The White Orchid Collection


19th century
Height: 5.2cm
Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection
A pair of enamelled copper snuff bottles of pear form, painted on the white base in famille rose enamels depicting a scene with red flowering prunus trees issuing from ornamental rocks; a squared formalized ruyi pattern circling the neck painted in dark blue.

Chinese; 19th Century
Height: 4.5cm (each)
Quartz, colourless crystal snuff bottle, carved with a round shape on a square base, an unusual variation of the more usual double gourd form, the round shape carved with a shou medallion, the square shape with prunus and pine.

1780-1850
Height: 6.6cm
Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Whispers, Chinese Snuff Bottles IX, no 35
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection

This is a derivation of the double gourd form which is one of the better known and more recognisable shapes for porcelain and works of art made during the Ming and Qing periods of Imperial China. It is the squared base which is the surprising factor with this snuff bottle.

Glass, of graceful oval shape with splashes of orange and yellow.

1780-1850
Height: 6cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, oval shaped, a pink-splashed layer sandwiched between layers of transparent glass, resting on a lightly dimpled base.

1780-1850
Height: 5.8cm
Provenance:
Paris Flea Market, St. Ouen, 1977
The White Orchid Collection

Rock crystal, with heavy black rutile needles diffused throughout, set on a neat protruding oval footrim.

1780-1850
Height: 5.9cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection
Glass, transparent pale green attractively splashed with bubbles and flecks of aventurine and yellow.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.8cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Jutheau sale, 17 April 1992, Lot 159
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, green overlay on a white bubbly ground, carved on one side with a crab clutching a millet stalk, the reverse with a butterfly hovering above a rice stalk growing from rockwork.

1800 – 1880
Height: 6.3cm

The crab is a pun for ‘harmony’ and a symbol of success in passing the civil service examinations. The butterfly is also an auspicious motif and symbolizes blessings and happiness.

Provenance:
Robert Hall, November 1991
The White Orchid Collection

An engraved green glass snuff bottle, with a lengthy inscription and seals on one side, the reverse with four lohan beneath a pine tree.

1780-1880
Height: 6.4cm
Sotheby’s London, June 1988

This is the first quarter of an 11th century (Song Dynasty) essay by the scholar official Su Xun, father of the poet Su Dongpo, entitled ‘On Detecting Treachery’. (Bianjian Lun'). Wang Yan and Lu Qi were both historical examples of treacherous officials, the former in the 3rd-4th century Jin court, the latter in the 8th century Tang court.

The inscription may be translated as follows:

Everything happens for a reason. Only the clear-hearted can tease out the bigger picture by examining the details. Everyone knows that a halo around the moon means a wind is coming, while damp stones presage rain. But the playing-out of human affairs with their overlapping causes and effects is much more obscure and difficult to grasp, and full of unpredictable change. There is thus no comparison between these on the one hand, and the workings of heaven and earth, or the sun and the moon, on the other. So why can even a wise man not understand these things? It is because his mind is a conflicted mess of love and hate, while the outside world is a turbulent morass of profit and loss.

In former times, Shan Juyuan said of Wang Yan, ‘He who harms the people is no other man than this!’ Guo Fenyang said of Lu Qi, ‘If this person gets what he wants, my sons and grandsons will be wiped from the face of the earth!’ Now speaking from the point of view of today, there are certain reasons for things that can be discerned. As I see it, Wang Yan no doubt had the features and disposition of someone who is able to build a name for himself by cheating others. And yet he was not filled with envy or covetousness, and generally let himself be carried along by things...
13 Glass, painted inside in ink and colours on each side with a scene of boys playing in a garden. Signed Ye Zhongsan April 1915.

Dated: 1915
Height: 6.4cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Mr Jutheau sale, 3 October 1988, Lot 62
The White Orchid Collection

14 Glass, painted inside with ink and colours depicting a continuous scene of boys playing in a garden surrounded by bamboo. Inscribed ‘One Bottle Studio’ (the workshop of Wang Xisan).

Dated: Mid winter 1978
Height: 6.5cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, M’ Millon sale, 22 February 1980, Lot 51
The White Orchid Collection

15 Glass, painted inside in ink and colours with a grasshopper on a rocky bank with plants below and bamboo above, an inscription above reads; ‘Painted by Ye Zhongsan, Autumn 1931’. The reverse with fish swimming amongst waterweeds and a grasshopper on a mossy bank with a tree.

Ye Zhongsan, 1931
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong 1950
The White Orchid Collection

16 Citrine, of tapering form, carved in light relief with four bats on one side and one on the reverse, the lateral sides with well carved mask-and-ring handles.

1740 – 1880
Height: 5.6cm
Provenance:
Bertrand de Lavergne Gallery, Paris, December 2001
The White Orchid Collection
17. Nephrite, lavender hue with natural brown inclusions, carved overall with a 'basket-weave' pattern, the base surrounded by a rope work design.

   Height: 5.4cm
   Possibly Imperial, 1736-1795

18. Gourd, grown into a mould which creates the design of a 'basket-weave' pattern, the neck with an ivory mouth.

   Height: 5.2cm
   Probably Imperial, 1736-1795
   Provenance:
   The Ko Family Collection
   Christies London 10 June 1974 lot 168
   The Ferrari Collection

19. Gourd, grown into a mould which creates the design of a 'basket-weave' pattern, the neck with the unusual addition of a neck manufactured from metal and decorated with blue enamel, and with an ivory mouth.

   Height: 5.6cm
   Probably Imperial, 1736-1795
   Provenance:
   Dr Mary Kaufman Collection, New York

20. Nephrite, pure white, carved overall with a ‘basket-weave’ pattern, resting on an oval protruding footrim.

   Height: 5.7cm
   Probably Imperial, 1736-1795
   Provenance:
   Pat Miller Collection, Hawaii
Glass, painted on the inside with ink and subdued colours to depict a sage reading in a covered pavilion by a gnarled old tree surrounded by towering mountains with other pavilions in the distance, with two seals and a short inscription which reads ‘as conceived by Kui Detian’, the reverse with a man fishing from a small boat near a stand of trees in the foreground and mountains in the distance.

Height: 5.8cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, painted inside with ink and colours depicting a cat on rockwork beside a peony looking up at a butterfly, and four characters: ‘cat, butterfly, rich and noble’, a rebus meaning ‘May you live long with wealth and dignity’. The reverse with a poem which may be translated:

The beautiful moonlight shines on the Eastern rampart, Smiling, I open the window over the courtyard to enjoy the coolness of the evening.

Like tiny dots the fireflies flutter unceasingly in the night

The perfume of the flowers drifts through the shutters.

Signed Ma Shaoxuan.

Dated: Second Summer month 1902
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Million-Jutheau sale, 22 September 1983, Lot 120
The White Orchid Collection
Cinnabar lacquer, carved with a figure seated at the front of a wagon watching another who is carrying packages balancing on a pole, the reverse with three other figures, the shoulder with cloud patterns above a branch of wutong leaves.

18th century
Height: 5.3cm
Provenance:
Arabella Richardson Collection, Singapore
Robert Hall, 20 January 2003
The White Orchid Collection
Chalcedony, warm reddish brown colour, the ochre skin carved with a Buddhist lion playing with a beribboned ball, the reverse with a bat and a fantastical animal.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.4cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, red overlay on translucent white, carved with three pomegranates and a finger citron on one side, and with a bat swooping amidst the branches of a fruiting peach tree on the other. The peach, the pomegranate, and the finger-citron together form a rebus for the Three Plenties or the Three Abundances meaning long life, blessings, and many sons.

Probably Imperial, attributed to Beijing Palace Workshops, 1750-1795

Height: 5.7cm
Provenance:
The White Wings Collection
Gallery Bertrand de Lavergne, Paris, November 1998
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Kleiner, The White Wings Collection, No. 60
Glass, red and yellow to imitate realgar, carved with a continuous scene of fish swimming amidst lotus plants and water weeds.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.2cm
Provenance:
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Robbins, U.S.A.
Robert Hall – 17 March 2000
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, single overlay of turquoise on a russet ground; carved in low relief on one side with a farmer beneath a gnarled prunus tree and a crescent moon; the reverse with various flowers and exotic fruit; the shoulders with mask-and-ring handles, the oval footrim carved from the turquoise overlay.

Yangzhou School, 1850-1900
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance:
Marion Mayer Collection, No.357
Robert Hall
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles II, including an important selection from the Marian Mayer Collection, no 118

Glass, black with cinnabar-red overlay, carved with plants issuing from rockwork: one side with a lush peony plant, the reverse with a begonia, one shoulder with lotus, and the other with orchid; the base with a rockwork surround also carved from the cinnabar overlay.

Palace Glassworks, Beijing 1736-1795
Height: 6.6cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Me Boisgirard, sale 19 January 1977, Lot 16
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, yellow with deep red overlay carved in relief with archaic confronting dragons contesting a flaming pearl, and with a pair of phoenix at the base; the sides with mask and ring handles, the base formed from the oval footrim.

Palace Glassworks, Beijing, 1736-1795
Height: 7.2cm
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection
30  Glass, rich toffee-brown, the sage-green overlay carved with a flowering spray on each main side, one of prunus, the other of begonia.

1780 – 1880
Height: 5cm
Provenance:
Marian Mayer Collection
Robert Hall
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles II, Page 128, No. 108

31  Glass, of elegant oval shape with a slightly flared neck, turquoise-blue with gold aventurine speckles and scattered air bubbles throughout.

18th century
Height: 4.8cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, M. Jutheau sale, 4 October 1993, Lot 106
The White Orchid Collection

32  Glass, of flattened oval shape, purplish-brown with yellow spots and swirls of maroon.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.6cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Millon-Jutheau sale, 12 November 1984, Lot 28
The White Orchid Collection
Agate, light honey colour with a darker inclusion with faint white hue carved with a large strutting long-beaked fat duck, with a butterfly hovering above its tailwings, the bird walking up a tree trunk from which grow a ruyi and a lotus, the silhouette continuing round the bottle to depict on the reverse a landscape design with a stellar object above.

1780-1850
Height: 6cm
Provenance:
The Button Collection
Robert Hall September 2003
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, *The Button Collection, Chinese Snuff Bottles X*, No. 90

Glass, opaque white, carved on each main side with a similar scene of a pavilion amidst tall rocks surrounded by pines and banana trees with formalized clouds overhead.

1770-1840
Height: 5.6cm
Provenance:
Madame Di Donna Collection
Gallery La Source, Paris, 10 March 2004
The White Orchid Collection

Jasper, the ochre skin on one side carved with three horses in varying positions, the reddish skin on the reverse carved with a horse lying on a rocky outcrop.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.7cm
Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection
36 Glass, of oval form, black with orange, yellow and aventurine spots, the base slightly dimpled.
18th century
Height: 5.8cm
Provenance:
Robert Hall, 23 December 2005
The White Orchid Collection

37 Amber, translucent reddish-orange, of rounded rectangular shape, carved on each main side with two boys playing in a garden beneath pine branches.
1780 – 1850
Height: 6.3cm
Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection

38 Jet, a fine and rare bottle of rounded rectangular form, left undecorated except for the neatly carved elongated mask-and-ring handles.
1780-1880
Height: 6.2cm
Provenance:
Lawrence and Florence Bier Collection, New York
Sotheby’s, New York, 23 March 2004, Lot 246
Robert Hall, May 2004
The White Orchid Collection

39 Amber, translucent reddish-gold, each main side carved with a bird amidst flowering branches.
1780 – 1850
Height: 6.6cm
Provenance:
Messrs. Boscher and Oriot sale, 19 December 1996, Morlaix, Lot 307
The White Orchid Collection
40. Glass, green overlay on an opaque white ground carved on each main side with a lotus flower and leaves growing from waves carved around the base of the bottle.

1750 - 1850
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance:
The Ferrari Collection
Robert Hall, 17 May 2000
The White Orchid Collection

41. Glass, turquoise overlay on an opaque white ground finely carved in varying relief with double gourds growing on a branch with leaves and tendrils.

1780 – 1820
Height: 5.1cm

The double gourd is an important auspicious symbol and has many meanings. Because of its numerous seeds, it is a natural symbol of fertility. Its massive network of vines and tendrils suggests continuity and is a pun for ‘ten thousand generations’.

Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection

42. Glass, opaque bubbly white glass with a vivid green overlay carved with a phoenix on waves, with a lotus above.

1750-1796
Height: 6.1cm
Provenance:
Neal & Frances Hunter, California
The Ferrari Collection
Glass, opaque white, finely enamelled in pale colours to depict a continuous scene of a gnarled flowering prunus with butterflies hovering near the blossoms; the base with the faint remnants of the mark Gu Yuexuan (Ancient Moon Pavilion), the neck encircled by a band of blue leiwen.

Beijing Palace Workshops, 1770 – 1795
Height: 5.6cm
Provenance:
Robert Kleiner, 19 September 2002
The White Orchid Collection
Glass, opaque white, of flattened baluster form, delicately enamelled in famille rose colours on one side with peonies springing from pierced rockwork and on the reverse with daisies and two seals, the base with the mark Daqing nianzhi (Made in the Qing period).

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.3cm
Provenance:
Robert Hall, 8 March 1990
The White Orchid Collection
Glass, single overlay of greenish-black on an opaque milk-white ground, carved on one side with two quail beneath millet and a raised inscription, *Suisui pingan* (peace year after year) in seal script; the reverse with a cat looking at two butterflies beside branches growing from rockwork, and a seal *Zheng ge* (just right).

Yangzhou, 1820 – 1870

Height: 5.4cm
It is unusual to find a Yangzhou bottle with carved relief in both ground and overlay colours. The word for cat (mao) is a homonym for age 70, and the word for butterfly is a homonym for age 80, so cat and butterfly together form a rebus to express the wish that the recipient will have a long life.

Provenance:
Robert Hall, 25 February 1992
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles IV, No. 107
46  Coral, of rounded rectangular form, undecorated except for neatly carved mask-and-ring handles on the shoulders.

19th century
Height: 6.1cm
Provenance: Gallery La Source, Paris (Laurence Souks) March 2005
The White Orchid Collection

47  Amber, of rectangular form with rounded shoulders, the rich yellow material with swirls of orange, left undecorated.

1750 – 1850
Height: 6.3cm
Provenance: Dennis G. Crow Ltd.
The White Orchid Collection

48  Cinnabar Lacquer, well carved in deep relief on each side with figures and pavilions amidst pine trees, the lateral sides with pierced and tiered rockwork, beneath a lotus scroll on the shoulders. The base incised ‘Qianlong nianzhi’.

19th century
Height: 6.5cm
Provenance: Gallery Mme. Di Donna, 20 December 1984
The White Orchid Collection
49 Glass, blue, imitating aquamarine and carved on both sides with a crab and waterweeds.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.8cm
Provenance: Mme Boscher and Oriot, Morlaix, sale 19 May 1996, Lot 321
The White Orchid Collection

50 Inkstone, (Duan stone) carved on one main side with two stylized confronting dragons, forming the character long (’dragon’) and on the other with a mature scaly dragon and a young dragon, the lateral sides with mask-and-ring handles.

1736 – 1830
Height: 5.9cm
This type of mask-and-ring handles is found only on these inkstone bottles.

Provenance: Gallery La Source, Paris
The White Orchid Collection

51 Amber, of the variety known as ‘root amber’, of rectangular form with sloping shoulders, the opaque material ranging in colour from golden-yellow to orange to red, inspiring the artist to envisage an underwater scene in which different fish swim in the flowing current amidst waves and lotus leaves.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.2cm
Provenance: Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection
Glass, multicoloured overlay of pink, yellow, green, blue, and brown on a translucent frosted ground, carved on one side with a buffalo, insects and a small tree growing from pierced rockwork at the base; the reverse with two men in a boat, a crane carrying a fruiting branch, and another small tree growing from the rockwork at the base.

Yangzhou, 19th century
Height: 6.6cm
Provenance:
Mme Patrick Sausverd, Joigny, sale 18 November 1995
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony, of rectangular form and extremely well hollowed, with attractive abstract markings.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.8cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, of tall rectangular shape, opaque white with randomly scattered splashes of blue, pink, green and red.

19th century
Height: 6.6cm
Provenance:
Gallery Mme Di Donna, Paris, October 1990
The White Orchid Collection
Glass, imitating realgar with mixed shades of red and yellow, of rounded form.

1780 – 1850  
Height: 5.6cm  
Provenance:  
Hong Kong, 1950  
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony (of the type known as silhouette agate) beige, brown and grey, carved in very light relief to reveal three ducks swimming.

1780-1850  
Height: 5.6cm  
Provenance:  
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Mme Jutheau sale, 19 October 1990, Lot 413  
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, translucent brown, dark red, orange and yellow glass sandwiched between an outer clear and an inner pale amber-yellow layer, suffused with small air bubbles, with a flat lip and a concave oval foot.

1700 – 1800  
Height: 5cm  
This bottle is almost heart-shaped, a characteristic sign of 18th century blown glass bottles. The neck is very slightly flared, accentuating the attractive shape.

Provenance:  
Robert Hall, 23 December 2005  
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony, the honey-coloured stone with a dark vein on one side lightly carved to reveal a hawk perched on a branch with its head turned to look at leaves behind him, a dark vein on the other side carved with a dog biting a leafy branch.

1780 – 1850  
Height: 5.6cm  
Provenance:  
Gallery Le Style, Paris, January 1978  
The White Orchid Collection

Amber, of rounded rectangular shape, of rich reddish-gold colour, the entire surface densely carved, on one side, with two ladies seated on a bench in a curtained alcove, and on the other, with five boys playing in a garden, the whole resting on an oval, protruding footrim; the matching stopper carved with flowers.

1780 – 1850  
Height: 6.5cm  
Provenance:  
Eugène Corbin Collection  
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Ader-Picard-Tajan sale, 30 May 1983, Lot 75  
The White Orchid Collection
Chalcedony, of pebble form, with frosty white and ochre inclusions, carved with a fish on one side and lotus leaves on the other.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.7 cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, M. Godeau, sale 21 November 1986
The White Orchid Collection

Quartz, crystal, with fine net-like inclusions resembling finely crackled ice, extremely well hollowed, undecorated, although when held to the light traces of a an inside-painting can be seen.

1780-1850
Height: 6.7 cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Ader-Picard-Tajan sale, 16 February 1987, No. 71
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony, of the type known as ‘cameo’ agate, of rectangular shape with rounded shoulders, the white ‘skin’ on the front carved with a horse tied to a post, a monkey holding a stick above, the reverse with a hawk perched in a tree whose leaves are carved in a darker vein.

Official School, 1760 – 1850
Height: 7 cm
Provenance:
Bertrand de Lavierne Gallery, Paris, 7 December 2000
The White Orchid Collection

A man riding a galloping horse is a rebus for ‘Soon you will have peaceful tidings’.

Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection
66  
Chalcedony, pale blue with natural swirls and white spots, undecorated.
1800 – 1880
Height: 5.1 cm
Provenance:
Bertrand de Lavergne Gallery, Paris, October 2000
The White Orchid Collection

67  
Inkstone, (Duan stone) rounded form, carved on one side with two formalized confronting dragons forming the character long ‘dragon’ with a third dragon, smaller, in a lower corner, the reverse with two scaly four-clawed dragons framing a twelve-character inscription which reads:

‘The Duan river bears a fine substance
As warm and smooth as fine jade.
Made for the Emperor.’
(The Duan river in Guangdong is a famed source of inkstone) the lateral sides with the typical mask-and-ring handles.

18th century
Height: 5.6 cm
Provenance:
Karaagirov Collection
Robert Hall, 20 January 2003
The White Orchid Collection

68  
Glass, a nine-colour overlay on a blue bubble-suffused ground, depicting fish swimming amidst lotus and other water plants, the foot slightly indented.

1770 – 1850
Height: 7 cm
Provenance:
Collection Tsuchiya
Robert Kleiner, October 2001
The White Orchid Collection
Quartz, crystal, carved in the shape of a small purse with two lugs at the neck for suspension.

1750 – 1850
Height: 4.1cm

According to Chinese custom, anything used for containing money is automatically a symbol for wealth.


Quartz, crystal, of rectangular form with rounded shoulders, extremely well hollowed and perfectly formed.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.5cm
The White Orchid Collection

Quartz, crystal, double bottle of rectangular shape, the two rectangles joined on one side.

1780-1850
Height: 4.7cm
Provenance: Hôtel Drouot, M* Millon & Associates sale, 3 December 2003, Lot 609
The White Orchid Collection
Glass, single overlay of translucent ruby-red on a clear ground, carved in relief with a continuous design of four cranes amongst lotus and millet growing from formalized waves which form the foot of the bottle.

1750 – 1820
Height: 6.6 cm
Provenance:
Robert Hall & Viviane Jutheau, 10 October 1991 Auction at Ritz-Carlton, Boston, Lot 102.
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles IV, Page 103

Chalcedony, russet, with inclusions of opaque yellow, beige and café-au-lait, with a larger crystalline inclusion on one side, carved with lotus leaves and a lotus bud.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.8 cm
Provenance:
Madame Lu, Paris Flea Market at St. Ouen, 6 March 1983
The White Orchid Collection
Turquoise, a disc-shaped, radically flattened bottle made of turquoise matrix, beautifully patinated and with a very slightly flared neck. As turquoise is a relatively soft and porous material, it absorbs moisture and natural oils from the hand over a long period of time, thus changing colour over a long period of time.

1780 – 1850
Height: 4.9cm
Provenance:
Robert Hall, June 2002
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony, honey colour with a darker brown inclusion carved in relief with a squirrel under a fruit-laden grape vine, the bottle extremely well hollowed.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Mes Millon Jutheau, sale 5 March 1985
The White Orchid Collection
Published:
Viviane Jutheau, Le Guide du Collectionneur de Tabatières Chinoises, Page 104, No.2

Chalcedony, pale beige, of round, radically flattened form, carved in low relief using the darker veins in the material to depict a sage dozing in a sampan below a pine tree leaning over the water, and on the reverse with a sage seated beneath a pine bough and a bird.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.9cm
Provenance:
Mmes Boscher and Oriot, Morlaix, sale 19 May 1996, Lot 345.
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, opaque turquoise, the lateral sides finely carved in relief with chilong whose tails form the bottle’s foot.

18th century
Height: 6.7cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Mme Jutheau sale 13 October 1995, Lot 79
The White Orchid Collection
Chalcedony, ‘peanut agate’; a pebble-shaped bottle, striated to represent jujube (or Chinese date) with the ochre-coloured inclusions carved as peanuts, thus forming the rebus ‘May you soon give birth to a distinguished son’. These fruits were often placed in the bed of newly-weds to wish them the joy of a baby boy in the very near future.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, M. Boisgirard sale 19 January 1977
The White Orchid Collection

Amber, deep red, in the form of a tied bag, carved in relief with bats and double gourds.

19th century
Height: 7cm
Provenance:
The Palais du Mandarin, Paris, 1976
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony, square with rounded shoulders, honey-coloured with a caramel-coloured skin carved with a saddled horse tied to a hitching post.

1820 – 1880
Height: 5.9cm
Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection

Glass, russet-coloured in imitation of amber, of cylindrical shape, tapering toward the base, carved with vertical grooves and rings around the shoulder and foot, the flared neck providing an attractive balance to the bottle.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.6cm
Provenance:
Espace 4 Gallery, Paris, 10 November 2005
The White Orchid Collection

Coconut and bone, formed as an artemisia leaf, the coconut with natural small yellow dots and markings that are set off by the bone that joins the two parts at the edges.

19th century
Height: 5.1cm
Provenance:
Dennis Crow, 19 February 1996
The White Orchid Collection

Jasper, deep red with some orange, carved in deep relief with a dog and a bird on one side, and a tiger and two butterflies on the other.

1729 – 1880
Height: 6.9cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection
Chaledony, honey-coloured with red inclusions, carved with Lan Caihe, one of the Eight Immortals, punting a log boat with her attribute, a basket of flowers suspended from the pine branch which extends above her and the deer that is walking beside her.

1780 – 1850
Height: 6.3cm
Provenance:
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, December 1980
The White Orchid Collection

Coral, large bottle of good colour, carved on one side with two men in a boat, one reading and the other punting the little craft, a white sliver of moon overhead; the reverse carved with a lady in a flowing robe, wearing a chignon, holding a glass in a rocky garden beside a pot of incense putting forth clouds of vapour blowing over her head.

1750 – 1850
Height: 8cm
Provenance:
Hong Kong 1950
The White Orchid Collection
Amber, red with splashes of ochre, of rounded form resting on a protruding footrim.

1750 – 1850
Height: 5.2cm
Provenance: The White Orchid Collection

Glass, blue overlay on an opaque white ground, carved with peach trees growing from rockwork with two cranes near a lingzhi (plant of longevity).

1780 – 1850
Height: 8.2cm

This bottle may have been intended as a birthday present; peaches, cranes and lingzhi are all symbols of longevity.

Provenance: The White Orchid Collection

Glass, dark blue overlay on an opaque white ground, carved as a sinuous dark blue chi dragon entwining the meiping-shaped bottle.

1780 – 1850
Height: 5.3cm
Provenance: The White Orchid Collection

Glass, translucent ruby-red, carved on each side with a formalized mallow flower (kui) the hexagonal profile with scalloped edges and six petals radiating from spiralled stamens in the centre with a wide mouth, a flat lip and an indented rounded-rectangular foot made up of elements of the design.

1750 – 1850
Height: 5.4cm

Like the sunflower, the mallow turns to follow the sun and, the sun being emblematic of the ruler, the mallow is a symbol of loyalty. As such, it would have been an ideal motif for bottles made at Court for presentation to officials serving the Emperor.

Provenance: The White Orchid Collection
90 Glass, pale brown overlay on opaque white, carved on one main side with a sage leaning out a window surrounded with leafy branches with a butterfly above ornamental rocks below, with one seal zheng ge (‘just right’); the reverse with two birds, one perched in a tree springing from an ornamental rock, another in flight; the lateral sides with the elongated mask-and-ring handles typical of Yangzhou bottles.

Yangzhou, 1800 – 1850
Height: 5.3cm

Provenance:
Hong Kong, 1950
The White Orchid Collection

91 Quartz, crystal, superbly carved with no imperfections, completely faceted, the centre of each side engraved with a shou character (longevity).

1770 – 1850
Height: 5.6cm
Provenance:
Mr. and Mrs. Newman, Australia
Robert Hall October 1999

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Whispers, No. 33

92 Glass, translucent cloudy pink with an opaque white neck and an unusually wide mouth.

18th century
Height: 5.1 cm

With sandwiched pink and white glass, the colour comes from ruby glass added between two layers of glass, the outermost of which must be at least semi-transparent. Sandwiched glass bottles were a popular staple at Court during the 18th century, and this colour of sandwiched glass was especially popular.

Provenance:
Dr Lionel Copley Collection, England
Robert Hall, 6 June 1994
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles VI, Part II, No. 91.
93 Coral, of attractive pink colour and irregular shape, carved on one side in high relief with a grasshopper, and a squirrel clambering over the grapevine from which hang several clusters of grapes, with leaves and tendrils.

19th century
Height: 9cm
Provenance:
Mademoiselle Logé, Paris, 1917
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Mme Beaussant Lefevre sale 18 November 2005, Lot 217
The White Orchid Collection

Exhibited:
Musée Cernuschi, March 1927, Jades and Hardstones of China, No. 1260

94 Lapis lazuli, of rectangular form and square section with chamfered edges, the stone deep blue with flecks of silver pyrites and smaller grey and white markings.

1850 – 1950
Height: 5.3cm
Provenance:
Dennis Cowell Collection, England
Robert Hall, 20 January 2003
The White Orchid Collection

95 Coral, of flattened, irregular form, richly carved on one side with three bats, one holding a stone-chime, and on the reverse with a large lotus leaf and another smaller one on the lower right side with a small frog seated upon it.

1790 – 1850
Height: 6.2cm
Provenance:
An old English collection
Bertrand de Lavierne Gallery, Paris, 4 January 2005
The White Orchid Collection
Cloisonné enamel, decorated with floral panels, the foot with a lappet border, the shoulders with animal masks, the stopper matching and original.
1780 – 1880
Height: 6.8cm
Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection


Chalcedony, of pale honey colour, the russet skin on one side carved with two dogs and two birds.
1780 – 1850
Height: 5.9cm
Provenance:
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony, the white skin on one side carved with Meng Haoran on his donkey followed by his attendant on foot carrying a branch of prunus.
1780 – 1850
Height: 6.3cm
Provenance:
Palais du Mandarin, Paris, 1974
Hôtel Drouot, Paris, Ader - Picard - Tajan sale 30 May 1983, Lot 47
The White Orchid Collection

Clmsonné enamel, of rounded form, decorated on each main side with a butterfly amidst flowers of various shapes and colours.
1780 – 1850
Height: 6.2cm
Butterflies flying among flowers form an auspicious design symbolizing joy, love and good fortune.
Provenance:
Palais du Mandarin, Paris, 1974
The White Orchid Collection

Chalcedony, moss agate, rounded rectangular form, very well hollowed, with green and maroon dendritic markings.
1780 – 1850
Height: 9.5cm
Provenance:
Bertrand de Lavergne Gallery, Paris, December 2003
The White Orchid Collection
101 Glass of opaque white colour blown in the form of an aubergine with a deep purple carved flower at the base and the stopper carved as leaves.

1780-1850
Height: 4.9cm
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection

102 Glass, of small bulbous form with opaque turquoise colouring and a slightly flared foot rim.

Height: 4.4cm
1780-1820
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection

103 Glass, translucent with an opalescent tinge, carved with overlay of red, turquoise, green, blue and yellow carved with a floral spray growing from rockwork, the reverse with millet and ruyi also growing from rocks.

Beijing Palace Glassworks, 1736-1795
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance: The S.L.Tan Collection
Robert Kleiner, London - October 2001
The White Orchid Collection

104 Glass, bubbly with red overlay deeply carved with a house under pine, also with a hut atop a rock with steps winding through rocks towards it: a chilong appearing one side through a rock.

Beijing Palace Glassworks, 1736-1795
Height: 7cm
Provenance: Mes Boscher and Oriot, Morlaix, France, sale 19 May 1996, Lot 297
The White Orchid Collection

105 Chalcedony, light grey with white dendritic markings; the bottle exceptionally well hollowed and the sides with mask-and-ring handles.

1780-1850
Height: 6.1cm
Provenance: Charles Pietsch III Collection, Hawaii
Robert Hall
The White Orchid Collection

Published: Robert Hall, Summer Exhibition, bi yan hu, 6-22 June 2001, No. 34
106  Glass, opaque turquoise, of octagonal faceted shape, with a raised panel on the front and reverse and with a Daoguang mark on the flat foot.

1821 – 1850
Height: 5.4cm
Provenance: Delbeke Collection, Belgium
Bertrand de Lavergne Gallery, Paris, 19 March 2003
The White Orchid Collection

107  Glass, turquoise, of flattened shield shape, delicately enamelled on one side with a bouquet of flowers beneath a fluttering dragonfly, on the reverse flowers and a bee above a flowering branch; the base with the mark Qianlong nian zhi (Made in the Qianlong period) in red enamel.

1750 – 1850
Height: 5.2cm
Provenance: Robert Hall, May 2000
The White Orchid Collection

108  Chalcedony, well hollowed, light honey with darker inclusions delicately carved with two birds perched on a prunus branch, with a green inclusion in the stone highlighting a leafy area, the reverse with two birds; their eyes picked out in dark brown.

1780-1850
Height: 5.7cm
The White Orchid Collection
Paktong, of slender baluster form chased with a continuous scene of a dense forest of bamboo between key fruit borders; the neck encircled by prunus flowers on a cracked ice ground.

Chinese 1780-1850
Height: 5.8cm
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection

Jasper, mottled green and red with an ochre skin carved with a smiling tiger and a bat.

1780 – 1820
Height: 6.7cm
The White Orchid Collection

Wood or pod, carved in the form of an aubergine, with a metal mount forming leaves around the neck.

1800-1900
Height: 7.7cm
The White Orchid Collection
Glass, opaque dark blue with a layer of white beneath a layer of black glass carved to depict two horses each side: one all black and one white with black hooves and a black mane, face and tail; the dramatically contrasting colour used to great effect.

1780-1850
Height: 6.8cm
Provenance:
Charles Pietsch III Collection, Hawaii
Robert Hall, May 2001
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall Summer Exhibition 2001
bi yan hu, No. 26
Glass, of flattened shield form narrowing to the foot, of olive light green colour, the body painted overall with a floral ‘burst’ of daisies, chrysanthemum, peonies and lilac and others, the foot with a four character mark, Da Qing Qianlong Nianzhi (made during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor).

Qianlong, dated 1736-1795
Height: 5.8cm
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection
Glass, rounded form painted in famille rose enamels with a boy seated on a buffalo flinging his hat into the air, with a pine tree above, perhaps the position where the reverse with a different boy resting on lush grass, holding a bird on his outstretched arm, with the bird’s cage to one side, his buffalo lying under a pine tree; the neck surrounded by a floral motif; the base with an iron-red four-character mark Qianlong nianzhi.

Qianlong, 1736-1795
Height: 5.1cm
Glass, single overlay of blue on opaque white; carved in low relief and low stylized manner with a similar circular panel on front and reverse of ducks in turbulent waters below overhanging willow trees growing behind ornamental rocks; the edges with vajra symbols; the foot in blue.

1780-1850
Height: 5.5cm
Provenance:
Dr Lionel Copley Collection, England
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles III, no 5
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles VI from the Collection of Lionel Copley, Part I, No. 16
Glass, opaque white painted in famille rose enamels with two yellow birds perched on rocks with flowers to the background; the reverse with two ducks swimming with delicate prunus blossom above; the base with the mark Qianlong nianzhi ('Made in the Qianlong period')

1736-1795
Height: 5.2cm
Provenance:
The Dev Barker Collection
Robert Hall, 23 December 2005
The White Orchid Collection
Albite or chert, of even mahogany brown colour, the simply flattened form with a flared neck and neatly carved oval foot.

1780-1880
Height 5.6cm
Provenance: Bob C Stevens

Published:
Bob C Stevens, The Collectors Book of Snuff Bottles, no. 625
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles III, no 77

Fossiliferous limestone, very dark grey, with grey and white inclusions of various water-bed fossils; the plain form elegantly carved in a tapering, flattened ovoid shape; the base with a neatly carved concave foot.

1780-1880
Height: 6.5cm
Provenance:
Bob C. Stevens
The Ferrari Collection

Published:
Stevens, Bob The Collectors Book of Snuff Bottles, no.678
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles III, no 78

Jasper snuff bottle, of mottled green ochre and red colours, the bottle of small vase form with a dimpled base.

Chinese 19th century
1780-1850
Height: 5.6cm
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection

Agate, of double form, with dendritic markings on one side. Double bottles were often made to carry two different flavours of snuff.

1780-1850
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection

Glass, imitating stone, of double form, with coloured glass overlay of flowers.

Chinese 1780-1880
Height: 4.8cm
Provenance: The Ferrari Collection
122  Jadeite, white of rounded form, with grooved sides, on a flat foot.
    1780-1850
    Height: 5.7cm

123  Nephrite, pure white and unusual squared form carved with the three friends of winter: the pine, prunus and bamboo, all on a raised rounded footrim.
    Qianlong, 1736-1795
    Height: 5.6cm

124  Jadeite, of unusual light apple-green hue of pleasing rounded form with an everted lip and small mouth.
    1750-1850
    Height: 5cm
    Published:
    Hugh Moss, *Snuff Bottles of China*, page 66, # 4
125  Nephrite, carved in the form of a lotus bud with lotus lappets, all sitting on a raised round footrim.

1780-1850
Height: 6.4cm
Provenance:
Pamela R Lessing Friedman

Published:
Pamela R Lessing Friedman, *Chinese Snuff Bottles from the Pamela R Lessing Friedman Collection*, no 71;
Robert Hall, *Chinese Snuff Bottles XI, The Snowy Peaks Collection* no 84

126  Nephrite, of natural pebble form with a brown skin, the bottle well hollowed through a narrow hole.

1780-1850
Height: 5.2cm

127  Nephrite, pale and of rounded form, incised in low relief with figures under a pine tree seated beside a lake with another group of men seated on a boat; the reverse with figures on a sampan punting beside a large house which is beside a willow and pine and other trees, and with rockwork to one side.

Bottle 18th Century, incised design early 20th Century
Height: 4.8cm

128  Nephrite, of pebble form, the cream and ochre inclusions carved in low relief with a pine against rocks and the reverse with a flowering prunus with the trunk of the tree curled round the base of the bottle; well hollowed through a small mouth.

Suzhou School, 1736-1795
Height: 5.4cm
Nephrite, of pebble form with the skin side highly polished showing the natural ochre markings; the base with an oval footrim.

Qianlong, 1736-1795
Height: 5.8cm

Nephrite, olive green and grey with an ochre skin carved in relief with a farmer and a woodcutter walking in a field near rockwork, the other side with a scholar seated on a buffalo reading a book under a gnarled pine tree. The sides carved with mask and ring handles and sitting on an oval foot rim.

Master of the Rocks School, 1780-1850
Height: 6.1cm

Nephrite, delightful light green hue, carved in low relief with a sage under a gnarled pine tree, the reverse with a waterfall tumbling through craggy rocks with a bat and ruyi the sides carved with mask and ring handles.

Master of the Rocks School, 1780-1850
Height: 5.9cm

Nephrite, olive green with ochre skin carved in low relief with an archaic design of a stylised phoenix, its head turned round towards its tail, the skin extending to the neck, sitting on a small oval footrim.

Qianlong, 1780-1850
Height: 5.9cm

Nephrite, stained brown and concisely carved in low relief taotie masks on each face, the bottle exceptionally well hollowed through a small hole in the neck, resting on a flat foot.

Qianlong, 1736 - 1795
Height: 5.1cm
Provenance:
Private Collection, France
134
Ivory, carved in the form of a bamboo shoot. Such fruit and vegetable forms were a popular court staple from the Yongzheng through the Qianlong reigns, and possibly a little earlier.

Chinese 1800-1880
Height: 5.7cm

(For an identical example see Hugh Moss and Stuart Sargent This Snuff Bottle Monkey Business: The Mullin Collection and its Story, # 252)

135
Wood, of warm, brown colour; the compressed, oval carved on each side with a cloud shaped panel which is set on each side with a similar scene of three figures in houses with open terraces. The foot with a formalized border design and concentric rings.

1760-1900
Height: 5.7cm
Provenance:
Dr and Mrs Stephen Weisz
The White Orchid Collection

Published:
Robert Hall, Chinese Snuff Bottles III, no 86

136
Lacquer on papier mache or wood, of purse form, with loops at the shoulders to receive a cord; the mouth bone with matching and original stopper.

1780-1850
Height: 4.7cm
Lacquer, on bronze, papier mache or textile carved through a layer of cinnabar to a yellow base; the panels each side of large leaved begonia plants against a lozenge design, the panels surrounded by floral scrolling motifs; the neck with key fret design and showing with a bronze collar.

Imperial Palace Workshops, Qianlong, 1736-1795
Height: 6.5cm
Provenance: Italian Collection
Glass, Imperial yellow of rounded flattened form, and carved with wave design, the foot raised and oval.

Palace Glassworks, Beijing, Qianlong, 1736-1795
Height: 5.8cm
Provenance: Jean Gelis Collection, Paris

The geometric pattern on this bottle is referred to as a ‘wave design’, and may have been inspired by European glassware. This bottle has great formal integrity and the control required to create the design shows technical mastery of the medium.
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Chinese Snuff Bottles XVII, including a selection from the White Orchid Collection, London: Robert Hall, 2012
QING DYNASTY CHRONOLOGY

- Shunzhi 1644-1662
- Kangxi 1662-1722
- Yongzheng 1723-1735
- Qianlong 1736-1795
- Jiaqing 1796-1820
- Daoguang 1821-1850
- Xianfeng 1851-1861
- Tongzhi 1862-1874
- Guangxu 1875-1908
- Xuantong 1909-1911
Johnny Skepper has played an integral part in the conception of our catalogues since February 2011. We were delighted by his fresh approach and loved the new design. More to the point, we loved working with Johnny. He was a wonderful English Gentleman, who had, as all the best English Gentleman have, a real twinkle in his eye. Johnny had a passion for life which manifested itself in everything he did: whether it was skiing, running his company in Thailand or enjoying a good pint in a Suffolk Pub. He had drive and enthusiasm and brought joy to those he worked with. Johnny fought a long and brave battle against his illness. Sadly he died, unexpectedly, just as we were beginning to work with him on this present book.

We dedicate this catalogue to Johnny.