

Dice of the Caribbean

part 1

By Ralph P. Pollack #LM 749-13

The casino dice of the Caribbean has of today not been written about. The great hobby of dice collecting has been a passion of mine due to the history of the casinos and the logos that are so beautifully designed.



There are common and rare varieties within the same casino and other casinos. The reasons for this are multiple:

1. Different manufacturers such as Paul-son, B.C. Wills, the Bud Jones Co., Midwest Gaming Supply, H.C. Evans & Co., Taylor & Co., Ewing Manufacturing Co., Joe Treybal Sporting Goods Co., ACE Sport Works, Rigdon, H.C. Edwards, H.C. Evans & Co. and Marion & Co., etc.
2. Different ownerships of the casino
3. Forgeries or counterfeits
4. Change of logo design

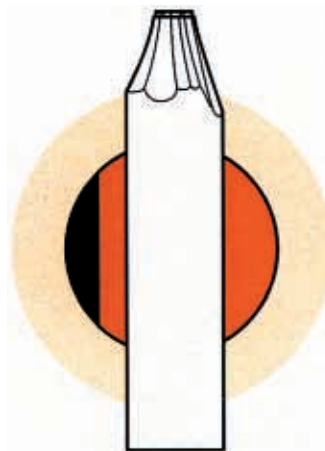
According to the 1935 catalog, the H.C. Evans & Co. of Chicago, IL, "Evans Perfect Dice" were made of celluloid in all colors. Joe Treybal Sporting Goods Co.'s 1939 catalog from St. Louis, MO. Offered most types and also a 'cross eye spot' design on their dice. The Taylor & Co. of Chicago on June 1, 1949 had 'flush spot', 'concave spot', 'bird eye spot', 'double ring eye spot' and 'special bird eye spot'. The early dice of the Caribbean usually had the 'double bird eye spot', while the newest ones had 'flush spot' design. The years in between the 1950's and 1970's had the 'concave spot' and the 'double ring spot'.

In order to make the logos on the dice, dice dies must be made. According to Pete Lowell, his 'die classification' the dies are either made of steel or brass. They can be of one piece machined metal or two pieces that are welded together.

Due the hundreds of casinos in the Caribbean and the series of dice associated with them, this article will highlight only some of them due to space limitations. I will use as a guide the only depicting book for some of the Caribbean dice dies in Pete Lowell's "Black Clay Dice Die Catalog" published in 2005. Some of his Caribbean dice dies will be described and associated with some of the similar logos as the casino chips and or slot tokens.

Since written records are not readily available, this article will use circumstantial documents that will aid in dating the dice dies and therefore the dice themselves.

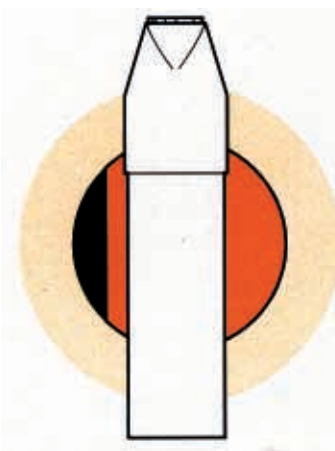
The imprints shown in this article depict parts of pages from Pete Lowell's catalog and shows the different types of dies. Some dies were made of steel while others were of brass. The neck diameters are all the same so they could fit into a 'chuck-like' device that would heat up the dies to make the incused imprint on the dice and also impregnate the different colors seen on some of the dice.



Steel - One Piece

Ace Sport Works, NY, NY

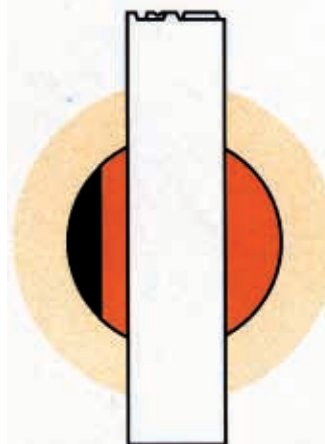
Single piece of hand-tooled, engraved steel.



Steel - Two Piece

Ace Sport Works, NY, NY

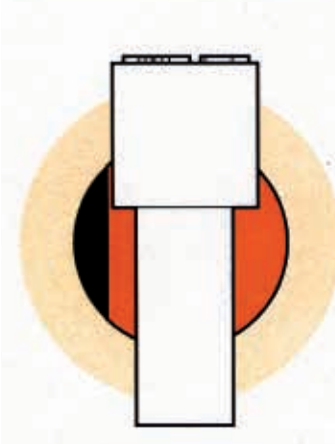
Hand-tooled, engraved steel die attached to a steel shaft



Steel - One Piece

Ace Sport Works, NY, NY

Solid steel rod that appears to be the first die to be machined



Steel - Two Piece

Ace Sport Works, NY, NY

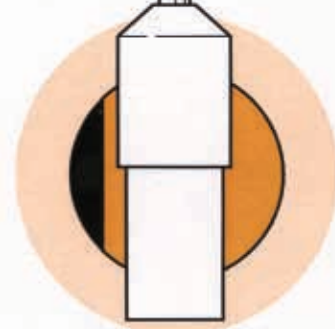
Round steel die attached to a steel shaft



Brass - Cylinder

Rigdon, Cincinnati, OH

Solid brass die with a distinctive "bullet" profile.



Brass - Two Piece

Rigdon, Cincinnati, OH

Two piece die with a distinctive "bullet" top.

ARUBA CARIBBEAN CASINO



The Aruba Caribbean Casino was opened by Jake Kozloff on July 18, 1959 and one of the original orders was the generic "Aruba" dice. Later, Jake had his and Clifford Jones' logo CJ / JK placed on some of their dice. The set of dice below was made by the Ewing Mfg. Co. There are other dice that just have Aruba Caribbean on them and I suspect that they date after Jake had left. Since the Aruba Caribbean Hotel & Casino was the first and only casino on



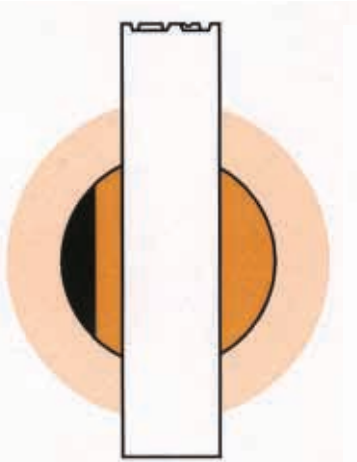
the Island of Aruba for eleven years many sets of various dice were used especially since several different owners ran the casino after Jake had left. In

fact, the same name of the Aruba Caribbean Casino was kept into the early 1980's when the Bud Jones Co. made Metal inlay and plastic center inlays casino chips. In my collection, six different designs were noted.

ARUBA PALM BEACH CASINO

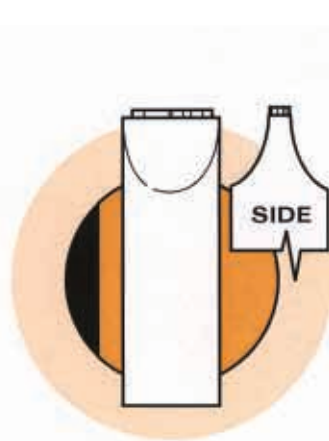


The Aruba Palm Beach Hotel & Casino was originally opened in 1968 as the Sheraton Hotel & Casino. The Palm Beach Casino opened in 1982 and closed in 1983 thus the dice below be attributed to that short era. Later the Palm Casino opened on December 9, 1983 and stayed open until 1999. After 1999, many different owners are attributed to this small casino, namely the Hart Casino, the Merenge Casino then the Centurion Casino. Today it is the Cool Casino in the new Rui Hotel.



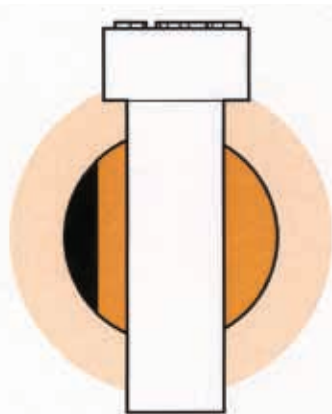
Brass - Cylinder

Can be found as a solid, single rod or in a two piece, screw-on configuration



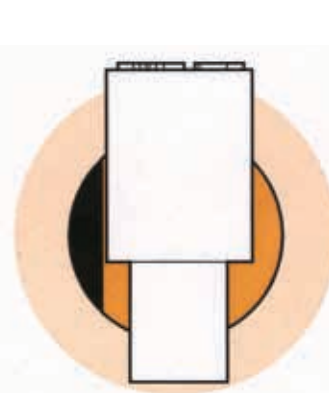
Brass - Cylinder

Solid brass rod, fluted on opposite sides



Brass - Two Piece Round

The die is usually circular, but can be found as an oval, rectangle and square. The thickness of die can also vary widely



Brass - Two Piece Rectangle

Oversized rectangular or square die attached to a brass shaft

Since all logos are not the same size, each individual die had to be differently constructed. Most were round, some square and some oblong.



CONCORDE CASINO OF ARUBA AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

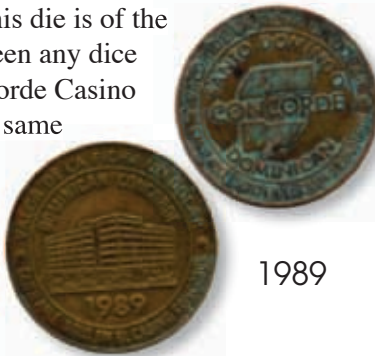


1981



The Aruba Concorde casino officially opened on December 1, 1977 with Thomas Chung as the manager. The same dice die depicting the logo 'Concorde' could also have been used at the Concorde Casino in the Dominican Republic, however, due to the age of the dice die

collection, I suspect that this die is of the 1977 vintage. I have not seen any dice from the Dominican Concorde Casino to compare the die to. The same token logo, however, can be seen on the 1981 token from the Aruba Concorde and the 1989 token from the Dominican Concorde token.



1989

LUCAYAN BEACH HOTEL, LUCAYAN - GRAND BAHAMA



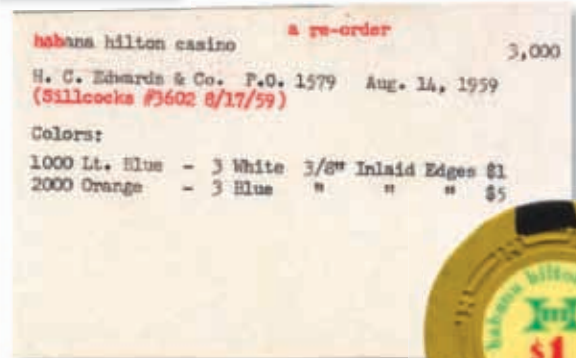
The Lucayan Beach Hotel's earliest chip order form from the Burt Co. records is on June 6, 1963, so the dice may have been of that vintage.



HABANA HILTON CASINO, CUBA



According to the order card from the Burt Co. records, a re-order of casino chips can be noted on August 14, 1959 and I suspect that the dice die was made prior to that date, however, these dice are in perfect condition and appear to have been so well preserved



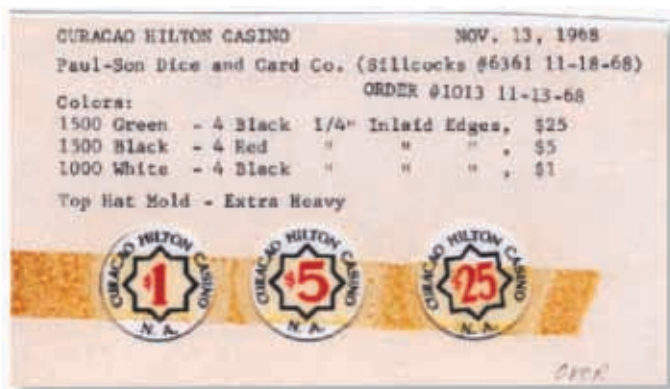
CURACAO HILTON CASINO



The Curacao Hilton ordered its first Christy & Jones casino chips as noted from the Burt Co. records on



November 13, 1968. The eight sided logo is noted on the dice and chips and was also chosen as the design of its famous eight sided swimming pool outside of the hotel.



DORADO DEL MAR CASINO OF PUERTO RICO



The Burt Co. records show the initial chip order for the H.C. Edwards Co. for October 5, 1973 and I suspect that the dice die was made around that date.



The dice dies, dice and chip logos are almost exactly the same. In order to design two different

color designs, two different dice dies needed to be manufactured and separately struck and different color materials were used.

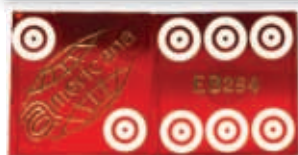


PUERTO RICO AMERICANA CASINO



The Americana Casino dice die logo is the same for Aruba as is for Puerto Rico. The Aruba Americana opened in Aruba in 1975 while the American, San

Juan opened in 1966 according to the Burt Co. records. I suspect that this dice die from Puerto Rico dates back to 1966. The same and similar chip logos can be seen on the Puerto Rico Americana and a Bud Jones metal inlay chip without a country nor Island location.



JAKE KOZLOFF & CLIFFORD JONES



The famous Caribbean pioneers, Jake Kozloff and Clifford Jones have their initials on several casino chips and also dice. They are responsible in opening the Mamora Bay (Mamora Beach) in Antigua. In Suriname, the Surinam Casino, Torarica, Paramirabo, and Palace casinos. However, on these dice, their initials were not placed. The following dice had their initials on them:

1. Aruba Caribbean Casino
2. Little Bay casino in St. Maarten
3. Generic CJ / JK (several varieties)

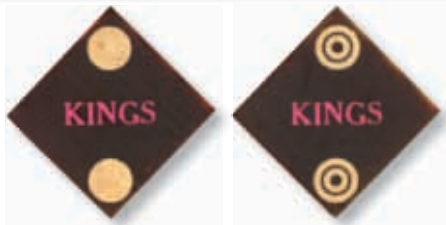
The dice shown on the right



were used in the Torarica Hotel & Casino in Paramirabo, Surinam and not in the nearby Palace Casino.



ANTIGUA KINGS CASINO



Two variations for the Kings Casino in Antigua.

ANTIGUA FLAMINGO CASINO



The Flamingo Casino from Antigua is seldom if ever discussed. According to Robert Coram, this casino was part of the Castle Harbour Hotel

& Casino. Via the Burt Co. records, the Castle Harbour ordered their H.C. Edwards Co. chips on September 3, 1973. I suspect that the dice were of that vintage.

MAMORA BAY CASINO



The Mamora Bay casino in the Holiday Inn was opened by Jake Kozloff with Mario Vrolijk as a dealer and croupier in 1964. Later, in the same location,

the Mamora Beach Casino opened in 1965 with different owners, the Burt Co. records show the original order cards on September 17, 1965.

MAMORA BEACH CASINO		NOVEMBER 17, 1965	
(Antigua, West Indies)		(Sillcocks #5588, 11/17/65)	
H. C. Edwards & Co. Order #2079			
Colors:			
1800 Gray	- 3 Br. Yellow	3/8" Inl. Edges	\$1
3500 Blue	- 3 White	" " "	\$5
800 Lavender	- 3 Lt. Blue	" " "	\$25
1500 Green	- 3 Black	" " "	\$25
600 Dk.Red	- 3 Br. Green	" " "	\$100
(Maroon)-	- 3 Br. Red	" " "	\$100
500 Orange	- 3 Br. Orange	" " "	\$1000
300 Black	- 3 Br. Orange	" " "	\$1000
NEW #1 SMALL H MOLD - Spec. Heavy Checks with			
ALL Inl. Edges <u>Reg. Wgt.</u> OVER			

LITTLE BAY BEACH CASINO OF ST. MAARTEN



The Little Bay Beach Hotel was the first tourist hotel in 1952 in St. Maarten. The Little Bay Beach Casino was a very small casino and was only three meters by six meters long and was opened by Jake Kozloff in 1962 with the dice depicting the Little Bay Beach Hotel and the CJ / JK logos on them.

CAPRI CASINO OF CUBA



The above examples are just the tip of the iceberg as far as information is concerned. Due to space limitation, scores of examples could not be included. I wish to thank Pete Lowell for permission to use and copy the images of the die imprints that were copied from Pete Lowell's book, "Black Clay Die Catalog" 2005 and to Jim Blanchard for his input on the Burt Co. records. This article could not have been complete without their help.