

The Rare Speed Dice (Diswirl) Mold Of the Caribbean



by Ralph P. Pollack

Ever since I was fortunate enough to purchase a rare Nevada 50 center originating from the Stateline Casino, I was fascinated by the **Speed Dice** Mold. The seller, a knowledgeable collector and writer, Doug Saito, educated me in 1993 to recognize this unique mold. Not long after that, my appetite was whetted again. I located a series of less rare chips with the **Speed Dice** mold from the Horseshoe Casino in Las Vegas. The common 25 and 50 centers, and the One-Dollar chip were readily available, while the Five and Twenty-Dollar denominations were more elusive.

It was John (Mac) Mc Mennemy, who started the Midwest Game Supply Company in 1945, originally sold dice, while going from casino to casino. Later Mac manufactured casino chips with the **Speed Dice** mold. The exact time that this mold was first introduced is unknown; however, 'The Chip Rack' lists both the Stateline and Horseshoe Casinos chips with the date in the 1950's. 'Mac' owned this company until 1986 when Linda Sohm took over the ownership.

In Bill Borland's 'Blue Book', he describes the Speed Dice Mold as 'Dice with a Comets Tail' while Howard & Gregg Herz in their 1995 book, 'A Collector's Guide to Nevada Gaming Checks & Chips' described this mold as 'Diswirl'. In either case, this mold is by far, one of the prettiest molds ever produced. Not many

casinos are currently using this mold primarily due to the added cost to produce them. Since selling casino chips is a highly competitive market, casino owners may not choose to assume the added cost. The Bud Jones Company, Paul-son and Chipco International companies are manufacturing the more popular and less costly designs.

In Puerto Rico, in the Caribbean, the Speed Dice mold was used on a chip in the Clarion Hotel & Casino. This casino issued a \$5.00 'No Cash Value', 'Non Refundable' chip.

(*SYMBOL KEY: 'PUR' stands for the Island of Puerto Rico, 'CLA' stands for Clarion Casino, '5' refers to the denomination. 'SPD' refers to the SPEED DICE MOLD, while '.1' refers to the first chip in a series. This classification is derived from Pollack's Reference Code System in Pollack's new book, 'The Casinos of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Maarten & Suriname', Copyright 2000*)

Two examples of the Midwest Game Supply sample chips are shown below:



PUR – CLA - 5 SPD.1 NCV
(Obverse side)



PUR – CLA – 5 SPD.1 NCV
(Reverse side)



USA – MID – SPD .1



USA – MID – SPD .2

In my research and travels to St. Maarten, in the Caribbean, the Kalliste Casino, now defunct, had issued and used casino chips with the Speed Dice mold. These beautiful chips were used as 'credit' chips. The denominations of the Speed Dice chips were \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500, \$1000, \$10,000 and \$100,000

in United States Dollars! To the best of the author's knowledge, the \$100,000.00 denomination is the highest known valuation of any chip in the entire Caribbean! The regular issue, non-credit table chips for the Kalliste Casino had the same center inlay logo but had the Large Greek Key mold.

As one can see, these Speed Dice chips are a knockout. The unusual

insert designs of the '1/4 PIE' on the \$10,000.00 chip and the '1/2 PIE' on the \$100,000.00 chip needs to be further explained. Only a relatively few casinos in Nevada had chips with the 'PIE' insert. Some of these casinos that had the 'dove-tail insert' design were the Diamond Jim, Castaways, Mint, and Fort Lucinda Casinos. However, even fewer casinos such as the El Cortez and the Golden Gate in Nevada ever used 'center inlays' with

the '1/4 PIE' and '1/2 PIE' inserts. Please note that the above high denomination chips from the Kalliste Casino have 'center inlays'.

In the next issue of our club journal, I will discuss in detail the chips with '1/4 PIE' and '1/2 PIE' inserts. Technically, Herz's description of inserts denotes the '1/4 PIE' is actually a '1/2 PIE' and the '1/2 PIE' is the 'PIE' insert. Happy Chipping! ♦



STM-KAL-5 SPD.1



STM-KAL-10 SPD.1



STM-KAL-25 SPD.1



STM-KAL-50 SPD.1



STM-KAL-100 SPD.1



STM-KAL-500 SPD.1



STM-KAL-1000 SPD.1



STM-KAL-10K SPD.1
(1/4 PIE-type) inserts)



STM-KAL-100K SPD.1
(1/2 PIE-type) inserts)



Common 'Reverse side' center inlay