Best of the West

LIVE AUCTION

featuring the Jeff Wichmann Collection

November 13th, 2026

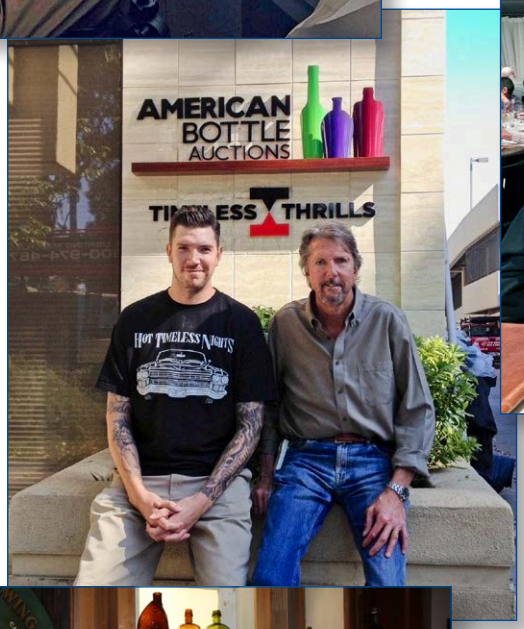
Golden Gate Bottle Auctions










AMERICAN
BOTTLE
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BOHEMIAN

Welcome to Golden Gate's Inaugural Live Auction!

For only the second time in history and the first time in ten years, bottle collectors in the West will have the opportunity to participate in a major live public auction. Featuring a spectacular selection of Western bottles from the Jeff Wichmann collection, this auction includes eye-catching pieces from a wide range of categories and price points.

Jeff was a life-long bottle collector and an important benefactor of the hobby on a national scale (FOHBC Hall of Fame). As proprietor of American Bottle Auctions, Jeff chose to operate in a way that was altruistic and nurturing to the bottle hobby. As a passionate collector of means Jeff could easily have used his position to acquire and hold onto a large majority of the best Western bottles until he passed — and become the "King of Black Holes."

But Jeff was cut from a different cloth. His personal wants and needs almost always took a backseat to his continuing desire to help build a strong bottle community on the West Coast. Unselfish to a fault, Jeff found happiness in building collections and relationships with others. He carried a lot of people around in his heart and this proved a source of tremendous inner strength when he needed it most, over the last few years of his life.

This auction is intended to honor the spirit in which Jeff lived; allowing everyone a fair and equal chance to acquire not only some wonderful pieces of Western glass, but to spread around many of the best bottles that were in Jeff's personal collection at the end of his life.

If Jeff was still alive, he would be 72; on behalf of Lynne and Tyler Wichmann, Chi Chi, the Auburn Bottle Show Committee and Andrew Koutsoutskos (a more than capable torch bearer in both Jeff's and my own estimation) it is my honor to present you with the opportunity to acquire one or more of Jeff's favorite bottles — the Best of the West!

— David Torre

LIVE AUCTION TERMS & CONDITIONS

Golden Gate Bottle Auctions

November 13, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Sierra Room · Gold Country Fairgrounds · Auburn, California

Held in conjunction with the 49er Historical Bottle Association's Bottle Show

REGISTRATION

All bidders must register and obtain a bidder number prior to participating in the auction. By registering for and participating in this auction, bidders agree to be bound by these Terms and Conditions. Golden Gate Bottle Auctions reserves the right to refuse admission or registration to any person.

Registration is available online at **www.goldengatebottles.com**. Advance online registration is strongly recommended. Limited on-site registration will be available on the day of the auction.

NEW BIDDERS

Golden Gate Bottle Auctions reserves the right to require identification, references, a deposit, or other verification from bidders with whom we have not previously conducted business. Bidding privileges and bidding limits may be established or modified at the discretion of Golden Gate Bottle Auctions.

BUYER'S PREMIUM

A 15% Buyer's Premium will be added to the hammer price of each lot and is payable by the purchaser as part of the total purchase price.

PAYMENT TERMS

Payment is due upon receipt of invoice unless prior arrangements have been made. We accept cash, check, wire transfer, Zelle, and major credit cards. Credit card purchases will be subject to a 3% processing fee. Payment by personal check will be subject to a clearing period before items will be released or shipped. Purchasers wishing to take possession of their lots on the day of the auction must pay by credit card, Zelle, cash, or other immediately available funds. Bidders intending to pay by Zelle are encouraged to verify their transfer limits with their financial institution prior to the auction. Several banks impose daily Zelle limits of approximately $3,500 or less, although limits vary by financial institution and account type. Cash payments in excess of $10,000 may be subject to federal reporting requirements. Purchasers may be required to provide identifying information necessary for Golden Gate Bottle Auctions to comply with applicable federal law. Golden Gate Bottle Auctions reserves the right to withhold release of any lot until payment has been received in full and, where applicable, cleared. Title to all lots shall remain with the consignor until payment has been received in full.

INVOICES AND PICKUP

Invoices will be prepared and provided to successful bidders as soon as practical following the auction. The primary pickup period will be Saturday morning, November 14, 2026, in the main room of the 49er Bottle Show.

SALES TAX

7.25% California sales tax will be collected where required by law unless a valid resale permit and a completed and signed California CDTFA Form 230 are provided prior to payment. Sales tax will not be removed without the required documentation.

SHIPPING

Shipping is available for most lots. Packing, shipping, insurance, and any applicable carrier charges are the responsibility of the purchaser. Shipping arrangements will be made following the auction, and the actual shipping-related costs will be added to the purchaser's invoice. All shipments will be insured for the hammer price, subject to the terms, conditions, exclusions, and limits of the applicable insurance provider or carrier.

NON-PAYMENT

Any bidder who fails to pay for their purchases may have the sale canceled and may be prohibited from participating in future Golden Gate Bottle Auctions sales. Golden Gate Bottle Auctions reserves all rights and remedies available under applicable law.

PREVIEW

Lots will be available for inspection at the Sierra Room, Gold Country Fairgrounds, Auburn, California, prior to the auction on November 13th. Preview will be conducted at times and in a manner determined by Golden Gate Bottle Auctions staff. Bidders are strongly encouraged to inspect all lots personally before bidding. Failure to inspect a lot shall not be grounds for cancellation of a sale.

CONDITION OF LOTS

All lots are sold AS IS, WHERE IS, with no guarantees or warranties expressed or implied.

Catalog descriptions, condition reports, color descriptions, rarity statements, and verbal comments are opinions only and provided as a courtesy. Bidders are encouraged to inspect all lots prior to bidding and satisfy themselves as to condition, authenticity, age, color, rarity, and desirability.

In the event of a significant error or material omission in the catalog description, Golden Gate Bottle Auctions may, at its sole discretion, accept the return of a lot; provided, however, that defects reasonably discoverable upon inspection shall not be grounds for return.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Any announcements made from the auction block shall take precedence over printed catalog descriptions or other published information.

BIDDING

The auctioneer has sole discretion in determining the successful bidder, recognizing advances, settling disputes, and regulating the bidding. In the event of any dispute between bidders, the auctioneer's decision shall be final and binding.

The auctioneer reserves the right to reject any bid, reopen bidding, withdraw any lot, at his discretion.

Bidding will generally open at the current absentee bid level or the published opening bid, as determined by the auctioneer.

If there is any dispute regarding the successful bidder or hammer price, the auctioneer may reopen bidding and resell the lot. The auctioneer's decision shall be final.

Bidders are responsible for paying attention to the progress of the auction. Any questions regarding the outcome of a lot must be raised immediately following the sale of that lot.

AGENTS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Bidders may be represented at the auction by another person. The registered bidder must notify Golden Gate Bottle Auctions in advance and provide the representative's name. The registered bidder shall remain fully responsible for all bids placed on their behalf, including payment for all purchases. Golden Gate Bottle Auctions is not responsible for any acts or omissions of a bidder's agent or representative.

MINIMUM BID INCREMENTS

$100 – $250: $10
$250 – $500: $25
$500 – $1,000: $50
$1,000 – $2,000: $100
$2,000 – $5,000: $200
$5,000 – $20,000: $500
$20,000+: Auctioneer's Discretion

ABSENTEE BIDS

Absentee bids may be submitted online at **www.goldengatebottles.com** and must be received no later than November 6, 2026.

Golden Gate Bottle Auctions will execute absentee bids competitively on behalf of the bidder. All absentee bids are treated as confidential maximum bids and will be executed at the lowest price permitted by competing bids and the applicable bidding increments, never exceeding the bidder's maximum authorized bid amount.

Absentee bids that do not conform to the published bid increment schedule may be rounded down to the nearest valid bidding increment.

It is the bidder's responsibility to confirm receipt and status of their absentee bid prior to the absentee bidding deadline. Golden Gate Bottle Auctions is not responsible for notifying bidders if they have been outbid or if an identical absentee bid has been received. In the event identical absentee bids are received, the first absentee bid received shall take precedence. Bidders may increase their maximum absentee bid at any time prior to the absentee bidding deadline.

It is the bidder's responsibility to ensure that all absentee bid forms contain the correct lot numbers and maximum bid amounts and that their bids have been received and entered correctly.

TELEPHONE BIDDING

Telephone bidding is available on a limited basis. Requests may be submitted online at **www.goldengatebottles.com** and must be received no later than October 20, 2026. Bidders must specify the lot numbers on which they wish to bid by telephone. Telephone bidding is subject to staff availability, and Golden Gate Bottle Auctions reserves the right to decline any request.

Golden Gate Bottle Auctions will make every reasonable effort to contact telephone bidders before their requested lots are offered. Because the pace of the auction may vary, bidders must remain available by telephone until all of their requested lots have been sold. If a bidder cannot be reached after reasonable attempts, the auction may proceed without that bidder.

Bidders are encouraged to submit absentee bids as an alternative to telephone bidding.

NO RESERVES

Unless otherwise announced by the auctioneer, all lots are offered without reserve.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

Golden Gate Bottle Auctions shall not be liable for any consequential, incidental, special, or indirect damages arising from participation in this auction. The sole remedy for any claim shall be rescission of the sale and refund of the purchase price actually paid.

GOVERNING LAW AND DISPUTES

These Terms and Conditions and all matters relating to this auction shall be governed by the laws of the State of California. Any claim or dispute arising out of or relating to this auction shall be brought exclusively in the state or federal courts having jurisdiction in Marin County, California. By participating in the auction, bidders consent to such jurisdiction and venue.

ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS

The placing of a bid, whether in person, by absentee bid, by telephone, or through a representative, shall constitute the bidder's acceptance of these Terms and Conditions of Sale.

WELCOME

We encourage all bidders to carefully inspect lots during the preview period. Thank you for participating in this Golden Gate Bottle Auctions Live Auction. We wish everyone an enjoyable and successful sale.

1. Italian Soda Water Manufactory San Francisco



Circa 1852–1862, iron pontil. A popular San Francisco soda that every Western soda collector should own. Several variants are known, this being the example embossed "Union Glass Works Phila" along with slug marks on the reverse. Joseph Spinoni operated the business from 1854 to 1860. By 1860, ownership had passed to Simon Grellier and Frederick Monotti. The following year, Grellier partnered with the well-known San Francisco soda manufacturer James McEwen.

Description & Condition:
Uncleaned. Teal-green color with very minimal case wear. Retains iron residue on the pontil. A few light areas of wear and a shallow 1/8 flake off the base edge. A superior example of a pontiled soda.

Min. Bid $350 | Est. $700–$1,500

2. Fine Old Bourbon From Patrick Quinn Table Bluff, Cal.

Circa 1884–1885, applied top, pint. Oakland Glass Works base embossed flasks are scarce, but examples retaining their original labels are nearly nonexistent. This example bears the label, "Fine Old Bourbon From Patrick Quinn, Table Bluff, Cal." Table Bluff was an early supply town located at an important crossroads in Humboldt County, just a few miles inland from the Pacific coast. Historical records indicate that Patrick Quinn acquired a controlling interest in the Table Bluff Hotel in 1882 and operated the hotel and its saloon until 1892.



Description & Condition: Amber, clean glass, about 75% of label intact.

Min. Bid $150 | Est. $300–$600

3. S.H.M Superior Old Bourbon



Circa 1874–1878, applied top, fifth. This is the C&I base embossed variant of the S.H.M. fifth. Some collectors believe the mold was produced by the Cunningham & Ihmsen Glass Works of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and that the bottles were blown there before being shipped West. Another theory holds that the mold itself was sent to California and the bottles were produced in San Francisco. Regardless of its exact origin, it is one of the more attractive pictorial Western whiskeys, featuring a large fleur-de-lis prominently embossed on the face. While approximately twenty examples are known of the more common S.H.M. variant with the larger embossing, this C&I variant remains extremely rare, with roughly three examples known.

Description & Condition: Golden amber color with an abundance of whittle. A minor amount of staining is present in the shoulder and near the base, though it is not noticeable under most lighting conditions. Two tiny pinhead flakes on the top. Overall, an appealing example of this rare bottle.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$3,000

4. Bryant's Stomach Bitters



Circa 1859–1863, sticky ball pontil, 12 3/8". A highly desirable lady's leg bitters that was popular in the gold fields of California. G.N.W Bryant was a New York city druggist who concocted the bitters sold in these uniquely shaped bottles. Wm. Newell & Co. was the San Francisco agent for the product and based on the number of examples found broken in California, must have done a decent job marketing them. Many of these lady's leg examples were found on the famous Sea Lark shipwreck which sunk in 1863 off the coast of Brazil on its way to San Francsico.

Description & Condition: Likely a shipwreck example with moderate pitting, wear, and numerous open bubbles. An area of several deeper lines in the neck, possibly manufacturing-related or the result of deeper scratches. Two tiny potstones, one in the shoulder and one at the base of the neck, each with radiating legs measuring approximately 1/8" at their widest. Professionally cleaned.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000

5. Dr. Boerhaave's Stomach Bitters



Circa 1868–1869, applied top. A rare Western bitters dating to the golden era of Western bitters, the late 1860s. Named after the renowned Dutch physician and botanist Dr. Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738), whose medical reputation endured long after his death, Boerhaave's Bitters was one of many nineteenth century patent medicines that borrowed the names of famous physicians to promote their products. The embossing pattern closely resembles that of the famous Hostetter's Bitters, but of course this bottle is exponentially rarer. There are roughly 11 known examples.

Description & Condition: Medium amber. Original cork remains inside, suggesting the bottle was likely never buried. Minor amount of original contents stain.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$3,000

6. Paul Jeenicke San Jose

Circa 1890, applied top. The amber Paul Jeenicke Hutchinson is widely regarded as one of California's rarest Hutchinson sodas. Amber is an unusual color for a Hutch soda, and it has been suggested that Jeenicke may have bottled a cider or similar beverage, utilizing the darker glass to help protect its contents from light. Paul Jeenicke registered his distinctive trademark for this bottle with the State of California in August 1891, though it is possible the bottle had been in use for several years prior to that date.



Description & Condition: Amber color. Several checks ranging from 1/8" to 1/4" in length. Surface chip on the "K." Please refer to the online catalog photos.

Min. Bid $150 | Est. $300–$800

7. Crowell, Crane, & Brigham Yellow Dock Sarsaparilla



Circa 1856–1858, smooth base, 9 1/8". A rare Western medicine and one of the earliest embossed San Francisco medicine bottles, with at least one pontiled example known. Crowell, Crane, & Brigham operated from 1856 to 1858. After Brigham departed, the firm continued briefly as Crowell & Crane, appearing in the 1859 and 1860 San Francisco directories, before becoming Crane & Brigham by 1861. Crane & Brigham went on to become a large and successful West Coast drug firm associated with several Western bottles from the 1870s and 1880s.

Description & Condition: Good amount of whittle. Appears to have been professionally cleaned. Trace amount of dirt or other material remains adhered to the interior side of the neck.

Min. Bid $400 | Est. $800–$1,500

8. J. Monier & Co Clfrna



Circa 1850s, iron pontil. A rare Gold Rush era soda believed to have originated in San Francisco. Despite its rarity, very little has been discovered about J. Monier & Co. or the individuals behind the business. A Jerome Monier appears in San Francisco directories during the late 1850s, while a J.C. Monier was active in Grass Valley at about the same time, though neither has been definitively linked to the bottle. Known in aqua, green, and blue, with blue being the rarest color.

Description & Condition: Medium blue color with light whittle. Typical pontiled soda-type wear and some light scratching. Better than many Monier examples.

Min. Bid $500 | Est. $1,000–$2,500

9. McKennas Nelson County Extra Kentucky Bourbon



Circa 1874–1880s, applied top, fifth. Another popular full face embossed Western whiskey. The McKenna's have long been a favorite among collectors due to the extensive embossing, classic Western appearance, and overall collectability. Many examples suffer from weak strikes, making well struck specimens especially desirable.

Description & Condition: Good strike, old amber color showing a subtle olive tone, unlike most which are a typical beer bottle amber color. No condition issues. A nice example.

Min. Bid $400 | Est. $800–$1,500

10. Boley & Co Sac City



Circa 1850–1860, iron pontil. Variant with Union Glass Works on reverse. Boley & Co. is generally credited with establishing Sacramento's first soda water factory in late 1849 or early 1850. The firm occupied several locations along Front Street and the Sacramento levee during the 1850s and remained in business until approximately 1860.

Description & Condition: Cobalt color with almost no wear. Faint dirt remains around the embossing, with all iron intact. Light interior staining and a very light exterior patina. A great example of an early, uncleaned soda.

Min. Bid $250 | Est. $500–$1,000

11. Turner's Ess of Jamaica Ginger New York



Circa 1860s–1870s, applied top, 5 3/4". The Turner Brothers operated a San Francisco branch from the 1850s until 1865, when McMillan & Kester acquired the business and continued marketing some of their products. One famous San Francisco privy excavation produced more than one hundred Turner's jakes, yet not a single green example was found. These bottles are often encountered in stained or pale aqua glass with an Eastern appearance, while the green and fire aqua examples are believed to have been blown in San Francisco. Turner's jakes are not rare, but nice examples are. Green examples are tough to find and are seldom offered for sale.

Description & Condition: Lime green color. Clean Western glass. A patch of shallow hairline fissures along the reverse base edge, likely caused by pressure on the bottle during manufacture. Please refer to the online catalog photos.

Min. Bid $75 | Est. $150–$300

12. Napa Soda



Circa 1865–1875. Napa sodas have long been a cornerstone of Western soda collecting, with dozens of variants known in a remarkable range of colors and glass characteristics. This is one of the many block-letter Napa sodas. A few of the earlier variants dating to the 1860s appear to have been Eastern blown. This is one of the Western blown variants and is an incredible bottle that has everything collectors look for: color, character, and crudity. Jeff loved this bottle, and it proudly occupied a prominent position in his display case for at least the past twenty years.

Description & Condition: Vibrant medium blue. A spectacular profusion of bubbles in varying sizes cascades down the body, complemented by light and dark swirls throughout the glass. Displays a few minor 1/16" pecks along the base edge. An exceptionally crude and visually dynamic Napa soda that will stand out in any advanced collection.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$3,000

13. Dr. Murray's Magic Oil S.F. Cal



Circa 1868–1880s, applied top, 6 3/8". A popular Western medicine with a great name. Murray's Magic Oil must have lived up to its name, as numerous examples have been recovered throughout the West. The colorful product name and classic Western form have made it a longtime favorite among collectors. Advertised as the "King of Pain!", it was promoted as a cure for an astonishing range of ailments, including rheumatism, neuralgia, toothache, burns, scalds, earache, cramps, colic, sore throat, and even diphtheria. The broad claims made in period advertisements reflect the era's enthusiasm for patent medicines.

Description & Condition: Applied top with heavy whittle. Small divot on the base edge that appears to be manufacturing crudity. A stellar example that may likely be the crudest example known.

Min. Bid $150 | Est. $300–$600

14. Livingston's Pure Blackberry Brandy Distilled From The Berry



Circa 1877–1884, applied top, sixth. A fairly rare Western sixth with extensive embossing and about as many curved Rs as can be found on a Western bottle. It sounds like a product that should have been a success, but the scarcity of the bottle suggests otherwise. Whatever the reason, relatively few examples were produced or survived, and the bottle remains elusive today, with hardly any new examples coming to light in recent decades.

Description & Condition: Medium amber with a solid strike. Six ray star on the base. Lighter color than many other examples.

Min. Bid $300 | Est. $600–$1,200

15. Dr. Henley's IXL Wild Grape Root Bitters



Circa 1873–1882, applied top, 11 3/4". Second variant with circle. A very rare colored circle variant of the I.X.L. Most examples are found in aqua or lighter shades of green, making deeper colored examples like this one especially desirable. A fantastic color that will stand out in any I.X.L. run.

Description & Condition: Rich pastel green color. Small chip, 3/16", to the side edge of the lip that is not visible when the bottle is displayed. Shallow hairline annealing fissure about 1/8" in the neck approximately 1" below the top. A tiny potstone with 1/16" legs and an associated bruise on the inside of lip. All very minor issues that are difficult to see. Please refer to the online catalog photos. Possibly professionally cleaned.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$5,000

16. EC&M Insulator



Circa 1870–1878, CD 123, B Mold, 3 3/4". Founded in 1870, the Electrical Construction & Maintenance Company (EC&M) played an important role in the construction and supply of telegraph infrastructure throughout the American West. Although the company was established in 1870, evidence from surviving telegraph lines indicates that these insulators may not have been introduced until approximately 1873. These insulators are perhaps the most well-known and collectible of all Western insulators. While found in several different molds and colors, the majority of examples are found in shades of aqua.

Description & Condition: Deep olive green. Minor 1/4" area of wear along the edge of the wire groove. Minimal chipping on the skirt. An attractive example in great condition.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000

17. Dr. H Adolphus Anti Rheumatic Cordial San Francisco California



Circa 1860, open pontil, 7 1/4". An early and important Western bottle being one of the first bottles blown on the West Coast by the San Francisco Glass Works in 1860. Although this product was being advertised at late as 1863, it is likely only one batch of these were made in 1860. These are extremely rare with around 8 known examples, most being a blue aqua, and many being damaged. Due to their early age, they're often very primitive looking with great crudity and character. As one of the very few Western blown pontiled bottles, this is an exceptionally important example of early California glassmaking. Examples are rarely offered for public sale.

Description & Condition: Crude, bubbly glass. Blue aqua with a stronger strike than many examples. Three approximately 1/2" chips around the circular indentation on the base, likely incurred during manufacture when the glass adhered to the mold.

Min. Bid $2,500 | Est. $5,000–$10,000



18. Dickey's Pioneer 1850

Circa 1866-1868, tooled top, 6 1/4". Considered the holy grail of Dickey's bottles, this is believed to be the earliest mold, briefly used in the late 1860s before being revised into the more commonly encountered variant. Known among collectors as the Stovepipe variant for its distinctive elongated neck. These are also known in a clear coloration, but no mint examples exist. This example was dug about 5 years ago in the Woodland area.

Description & Condition: Light crudity with a few large bubbles in the neck. Minor shovel scuff on the reverse and a scratch along the panel edge near the base with an associated 1/16" bruise. Scattered areas of exterior UV crazing that are barely noticeable with backlighting.

Min. Bid $500 | Est. $1,000–$2,000

19. Dr. Henley's Eye Opener



Circa 1872–1873, applied top, 12 1/4". One of the rarest Henley's products, with only about 5 known examples, virtually all of them aqua except for one incredible yellow example. Its rarity suggests it may have been one of Henley's least successful products, although the reason for its limited production remains unknown. Regardless, it is a striking bottle with large embossing and an attention-grabbing product name.

Description & Condition: Strong strike, some light crudity. Hard to see 1/8" flake that was filled with resin on the side of the lip. Two small scratches near the base.

Min. Bid $1,500 | Est. $3,000–$4,000

20. Chalmer's Catawba Wine Bitters



Circa 1873–1874, applied top, fifth. This is one of the West's most iconic bottles, featuring an image of Sutter's Mill where gold was discovered in 1848. These bottles are coveted by collectors of all kinds for their historic and unique embossing. The mill was located at Coloma, California, where James Marshall's discovery of gold in January 1848 sparked the California Gold Rush. Few Western bottles so directly commemorate one of the most significant events in California history. Most known examples have been found in Nevada, with only about three reported from California. A truly historic and iconic bottle that remains one of the cornerstones of any advanced Western bottle collection.

Description & Condition: Aqua with a slight green tone. Strong strike with a good amount of whittle. A few light exterior scratches and several patches of exterior wear, with remnants of rust on the neck. The pattern of wear is consistent with prolonged use, possibly from being carried in a leather satchel or similar container. Despite these signs of use, it displays beautifully.

Min. Bid $4,000 | Est. $8,000–$12,000

21. Chicago Lager Beer



Circa 1888–1895, applied top. The Chicago Brewery was one of San Francisco's longer-lived breweries, remaining in operation from at least the 1870s into the 1890s. This bottle dates from the later years of the applied-top era and features bold block-letter embossing characteristic of the period. While not as early or rare as some Western quart beers, nice examples are surprisingly difficult to find and remain desirable representatives of San Francisco's brewing history.

Description & Condition: Amber. Light interior brush marks and scattered exterior scuffs.

Min. Bid $50 | Est. $100–$200

22. Choice Old Cabinet K.Y. Bourbon



Circa 1878–1890, applied top, fifth. A popular Western fifth featuring bold, extensive embossing. Although the trademark for this design was not filed until 1885, advanced West Coast diggers have reported recovering examples from late 1870s and early 1880s contexts on numerous occasions. It is therefore likely that Crane, Hastings & Co. had been using the design for several years prior to officially registering the trademark. The brand appears to have been particularly popular in Washington State, where a surprising number of examples have been dug. Applied-top examples occur in two molds: an earlier variant characterized by flatter, rounder embossing, richer color variations, and a smaller applied top, and a later reworked mold with sharper embossing, less color variation, and a larger, distinctly mid-to-late-1880s style top. Finding an example that combines a strong strike with any shade of yellow or olive is extremely difficult.

Description & Condition: Strong strike in the early mold. Great color with a pleasing amount of olive. Appears to have been professionally cleaned. Minor interior stain remains in the neck and shoulder. A few insignificant surface impacts, the largest measuring approximately 1/16" on the U in Bourbon, along with two smaller flakes on the base edge.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000

23. J.H. Cutter Old Bourbon A.P. Hotaling & Co Portland, O.



Circa 1880s–1890s, tooled top, pint. A rare Hotaling flask from Portland, Oregon. These come in both the pint and half pint sizes, with around 15 known examples. By the 1880s, A.P. Hotaling had established a significant presence in the Pacific Northwest and made a variety of embossed bottles from both Oregon and Washington.

Description & Condition: Medium dark amber, clean glass.

Min. Bid $250 | Est. $500–$1,000

24. AAA Old Valley Whiskey



Circa 1870s, applied top, pint. A classic Western flask popular throughout the mining regions of the West Coast, especially California's Gold Country and many areas of Nevada. While often referred to as pints, these actually held roughly 20% more than a true pint. They are known in a wide range of colors from yellow to dark amber, with about two examples reported in an incredible light green, almost lime color. Most examples are amber, and many suffer from a weak strike.

Description & Condition: Rich old amber color with a strong strike and light whittle. A solid example.

Min. Bid $400 | Est. $800–$1,500

25. Dr. Renz's Herb Bitters



Circa 1868–1872, applied top. This is the earliest variant of the notorious Dr. Renz's Herb Bitters, affectionately known by collectors as the "Small Letter Renz." These bitters were first marketed in August of 1867 by Dr. C. M. Renz and his son John. Around 1872, John Renz relocated to San Francisco to expand the business, helping establish what would become one of the most famous bitters brand on the West Coast. Produced into the early 1870s, this variant is highly regarded for its vibrant colors and glass crudities. Examples are known in a remarkable range of colors, including aqua, lime green, olive green, yellow green, and even deep emerald green. Surprisingly, amber is one of the rarer colors for this variant. Examples are also found with a variety of lip finishes, ranging from the extremely rare tapered top example known as the "Cone Top Renz" to the more traditional whiskey lip finish found on most examples. This particular example was dug in Virginia City about 10 years ago.

Description & Condition: Olive amber with light whittle and an oversized top. A small amount of interior dirt remains.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$2,500

26. E.G. Lyon's & Co. Manufacturers SANFco



Circa 1863–1870. The E.G. Lyon's square is another early and desirable Western bottle. The earliest examples are believed to have been made during the mid–1860s, although some collectors believe a second run was produced later in the decade or perhaps even into the early 1870s. It is not known exactly what product these bottles contained, and it is likely they served as a generic container for a variety of E.G. Lyon's bitters and cordial products. These bottles feature the unusual abbreviation "SANFCO" for San Francisco, as well as the famous backwards "N" in LYON'S, a characteristic long noted by collectors. Examples are known in a surprising range of colors, from deep olive green through various shades of yellow and amber. This beautiful colored example was excavated by Bob Franconi in 2003 during a bottle digging expedition in Oakland, California.

Description & Condition: Light seafoam green, possibly the only known example in this color. Minor 1/8" chip on the edge of the lip. Some very light, spotty exterior dullness and patina.

Min. Bid $3,000 | Est. $6,000–$12,000

27. Dr. Henley's IXL Wild Grape Root Bitters



Circa 1873–1882, applied top, 12 1/8". This is the second variant of the I.X.L. Bitters, featuring a circle surrounding "I.X.L." While this variant is most often encountered in aqua, and occasionally in lighter shades of green, examples in stronger colors are considerably scarcer. Crude, character-rich examples such as this are also much more difficult to find.

Description & Condition: Aqua with a strong strike. Crude glass, full of bubbles.

Min. Bid $75 | Est. $150–$300

28. Dr. Harvey's Blood Bitters



Circa 1881–1885, applied top, 8 3/4". A recently discovered 1881 advertisement identifies Paul Oesting, a Visalia druggist, as an agent for Dr. Harvey's Blood Bitters. Interestingly, the advertisement notes a London depot for Harvey & Son and states the product dated back to 1628, suggesting a connection to the famed English physician William Harvey. Another advertisement from 1884 identifies an agent in Fresno marketing the product as well. Given the bottle's distinctly Western curved R embossing and the documented California distribution network, it seems likely these bottles were produced in San Francisco during the early 1880s. Supporting this theory is the fact that many of the known examples have been recovered in the San Joaquin Valley near Visalia. A rare bitters with a great name.

Description & Condition: Medium amber with some whittle. Light exterior scratching, mostly on the rear recessed panel. Potstone on the reverse with an associated 1/4" bruise.

Min. Bid $500 | Est. $1,000–$2,500

29. Dr. Miller's Ratafia Damiana



Circa 1878–1882, applied top, sixth. An incredible Western bottle featuring a large embossed sphinx. These bottles have it all: an embossed animal, extensive embossing, and the coveted "Pacific Coast" embossing prized by collectors. Ratafia was a type of cordial, while damiana was a popular herb native to Mexico and Central America that was often promoted as an aphrodisiac. A few years ago, a broken example was excavated behind a former bordello in California's Central Valley, perhaps a fitting place to find such a product. Approximately a dozen examples are known, with the majority either damaged or suffering from a weak strike. Most examples occur in dark amber or orange amber, although at least one olive-toned example is known. Undoubtedly one of the most decorative and visually striking Western bottles, the Dr. Miller's Ratafia remains a favorite among collectors.

Description & Condition: Medium amber with a strong strike and in much better condition than most examples. The A in Damina has a small white circular mark measuring approximately 1/4". There is no glass loss, and it appears to be a circular bruise, although we are not certain. Please refer to the photographs in the online catalog.

Min. Bid $2,000 | Est. $4,000–$8,000

30. Gold Dust Kentucky Bourbon N. Van Bergen Sole Propts.

Circa 1880–1885, applied top, fifth. A popular Western whiskey fifth that has remained a collector favorite for decades. This is the third Gold Dust variant, likely introduced around 1880 when N. Van Bergen & Co. became the sole proprietor of the brand. These bottles are notorious for weak embossing and condition issues, making this example particularly desirable.

Description & Condition:
Strong strike with abundant bubbles and a nice large top. Possibly professionally cleaned.

Min. Bid $600 | Est. $1,200–$2,000



31. Indian Tla-Quillaugh's Balsam Dr. Parker S.F.

Circa 1864–1865, applied top, 8 1/2". Dr. Ralzemond Parker established his San Francisco business in 1860 and advertised his balsam in 1864 and 1865 before relocating to Oroville by 1866. The product's unusual name likely derives from the Upper Columbia term "Tla-quill-augh," meaning a medicine man or healer. Nineteenth century accounts describe Tla-quill-aughs as individuals possessing supernatural powers and extensive knowledge of medicinal herbs. There are approximately eight known examples, with nearly all exhibiting some form of damage. These bottles are primarily found in two colors: deep olive green and the beautiful peach puce shade seen here. They are believed to have been blown at the Pacific Glass Works and share colors found in the Salutaris Bitters, Wideman & Chappaz, and some of the early Pacific Glass Works whiskey cylinders. Possessing the color, crudity, and rarity sought by advanced collectors, this bottle ranks among the most desirable of all early California medicines and remains near the top of many Western collectors' want lists.



Description & Condition: Beautiful peachy apricot color with crude early glass loaded with champagne bubbles. The top was professionally replaced above the drip by Maxine Hines in the 1980s and is very difficult to detect with the naked eye. Well-hidden 1/2" bruise on the base, a shallow sliver of a chip on the base edge, and a few minor 1/8" surface impacts scattered throughout the body. Several annealing checks in the neck. All condition issues are subtle, and the bottle displays beautifully. No additional examples have surfaced in more than 30 years, and it is highly unlikely that others will ever be found. For the serious collector, opportunities to acquire a Parker's may not happen for many years to come.

Min. Bid $3,000 | Est. $6,000–$12,000

32. Wormser Bros San Francisco



Circa late 1860s, applied top, 9 5/8". The Wormser Brothers of San Francisco produced the only known barrel shaped bitters from the West, likely drawing inspiration from the numerous barrel bitters produced on the East Coast during the same period. Due to their scarcity today, it appears the product may not have achieved the commercial success of some of its competitors. Examples are typically found in shades of amber, though a few are known in yellow and even green. A staple of advanced Western bitters collections, the Wormser remains one of the more distinctive bitters bottles produced in California.

Description & Condition: Light honey amber color with some whittle. Interior open bubble in the neck, a 1/8" surface check on the ring near the base, and a few very small surface pings measuring 1/32" or smaller. Better color than most examples.

Min. Bid $350 | Est. $700–$1,400

33. Cal Ink Co. S.F.

Circa 1880s–1890s, tooled top, 2 3/8". A very rare Western ink with only a couple of known examples reported. This example was recovered from an Oakland, California privy about ten years ago alongside a Hostetter's Bitters and a Bliven Soda. It is documented that the California Ink Company was not operating in San Francisco until the 1890s, yet more than one of these bottles have been found in contexts predating the 1890s by at least five to ten years. Interestingly, a California Ink Company was operating in National City, California, as early as 1881. Perhaps that firm maintained an agent or distributor in San Francisco and marketed its products in these embossed bottles. Additional research is needed to better understand the history of this bottle. The design closely resembles the aqua NE PLUS ULTRA FLUID schoolhouse ink bottle, a form that likely predates these examples by several years.



Description & Condition: Amber. Tiny 1/16" bruise/flake to the bottom of the lip and a 1/16" flake near the base edge. Professionally cleaned.

Min. Bid $500 | Est. $1,000–$2,000

34. R.T. Carroll & Co. Sole Agents S.F.



Circa 1875–1882, applied top, fifth. A very rare 5th with only a handful of known examples. An 1880 advertisement for R.T. Carroll shows the company was marketing several brands of Kentucky whiskey, including Kentucky Cabinet, Imperial, and Park Rye. Another advertisement from 1881 notes that the firm was the sole Pacific Coast agent for Robertson County Tennessee Whiskey. Perhaps that exclusive agency prompted the production of this slug plate 5th.

Description & Condition: Light amber color transitioning to honey amber in the shoulders. A large swirl passes through the slug plate. Regarded as the finest known example of this rare bottle.

Min. Bid $1,500 | Est. $3,000–$6,000

35. Pratt's New Life A.M. McBoyle & Co San Francisco

Circa 1868–1875, applied top, 7 1/2". A rare Western medicine that was virtually unknown before the famous San Francisco "Big Dig" of 1999. We can account for only two examples found outside of the "Big Dig", one in Carson City and one in Oakland, California. This medicine was promoted as a botanical blood purifier and liver invigorator, claiming to strengthen the stomach, regulate the bowels, and cure a wide range of ailments. Contemporary advertisements stated it was prepared from fresh Shaker roots and herbs, reflecting the era's growing popularity of botanical patent medicines.



Description & Condition: Honey amber color, slightly lighter than many known examples. Crude, slightly crooked neck. Two small 1/8" chips to the underside of the top, a few areas of light scratching along the panel edges, and two 1/8" areas of light abrasion on the panel edges. Still in better condition than most examples, many of which have significant damage or repairs.

Min. Bid $200 | Est. $400–$800

36. WM. H. Spears & Co. Old Pioneer Whiskey



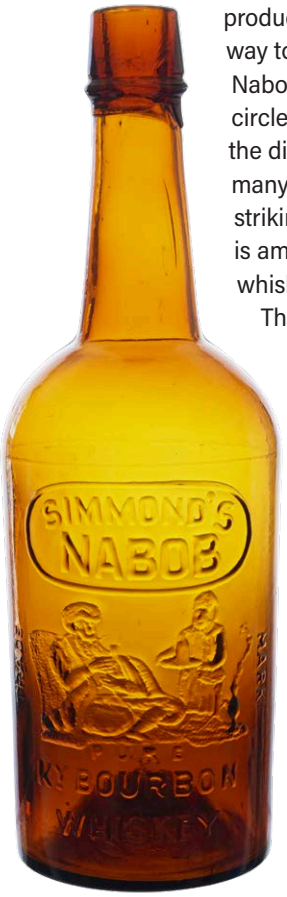
Circa 1890s, applied top, fifth. One of the rarest of all the Fenkhausen fifths, this is the highly desirable German red whittled variant. These bottles are prized for their heavy whittle and beautiful shades of red. This particular variant appears to have enjoyed greater popularity in the logging regions of the Pacific Northwest, where a number of broken and whole have been found. With its boldly embossed walking bear and prominent Old Pioneer name, this bottle is likely to remain high on the list of any serious Western whiskey collector.

Description & Condition: Red amber color with abundant whittle and a strong strike. A beautiful German "red whittle" fifth.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$3,000

37. Simmond's Nabob KY Bourbon Whiskey

Circa 1879–1887, applied top, fifth. The rarest of all the picture Nabob fifths. While the entire bottle was produced from a different mold, the easiest way to identify this variant is the "Simmond's Nabob" embossing enclosed within a circle. In addition, the embossing exhibits the distinctive Western curved Rs found on many Western blown bottles of the era. The striking image of a Nabob smoking a hookah is among the most memorable Western whiskey designs of the nineteenth century. The term "Nabob" was commonly used to describe a wealthy or influential person and was likely chosen to convey an image of prosperity and refinement. An exceptionally rare Western fifth that may not surface again for many years.



Description & Condition: Light amber color. Large drip off the applied top. Paper-thin bubble, about 1/8", on the interior edge of the lip, likely opened during manufacture. Small patch of wear on the reverse, approximately 5/8" long.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000

38. O.P.S Bourbon Whiskey KY Bourbon Whiskey



Circa 1879–1885, applied top, fifth. A boldly embossed Western fifth featuring a large and ornate monogram that makes it one of the more distinctive Hotaling whiskey bottles. Like many Western fifths of the era, examples have been found across several Western states, with concentrations in early mining camps and logging communities. The combination of extensive embossing, Western history, and broad frontier distribution has long made this one of the more popular Hotaling 5ths among collectors. This is the rare variant lacking the "Old" before "Private Stock." There are believed to be less than 5 known examples of this variant. Thomas 53.

Description & Condition: Amber color with a strong strike and abundant whittle. Very faint exterior patina and a minor area of wear on the front left shoulder.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000

39. Jesse Moore Old Bourbon



Circa 1880–1885, applied top, fifth. This is the second mold of the Jesse Moore fifths, distinguished by the vent mark on the shoulder. Jesse Moore began as a Louisville liquor dealer before expanding into whiskey production, eventually building one of the best known bourbon brands in the American West. Its iconic stag antlers make it one of the most recognizable Western whiskey bottles. An 1890s trademark filing states the design had been in use since 1860. Distributed through San Francisco by Moore, Hunt & Co., Jesse Moore whiskey became one of California's most recognizable bourbon brands by the early 1880s. As a testament to the brand's popularity, Jesse Moore bottles have been excavated in nearly every Western state. While Jesse Moore fifths are obtainable, examples in anything other than medium or dark amber can be extremely difficult to find.

Description & Condition: Vented variant. Bright yellow color with a touch of citron. Never cleaned, retaining a tiny amount of interior residue. An exceptional example that was in the Ken Schwartz collection for many years.

Min. Bid $250 | Est. $500–$1,000

40. R.L. Higgins Virginia City



Circa 1871–1875, applied top, 6 1/2". Rufus L. Higgins was a Virginia City pioneer who arrived around 1863 and participated in a variety of business ventures. An 1871 advertisement notes he operated the "Virginia Dollar Store," where everything from women's undergarments to picture frames could be purchased for one dollar or less. By 1873 he had moved into a new location and shifted his focus to stationery and writing supplies. Unfortunately, his business was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1875, and he was forced into bankruptcy shortly thereafter. This bottle is one of the few embossed Western ink bottles and the only known Western master ink besides the base-embossed Pacific Glass Works master ink. These are exceptionally rare, with only two amber examples and approximately three aqua examples known. Both amber masters were discovered in California: one by Mike Dolcini in Davis and the other by Randy Haumann and Ralph Van Brocklin in San Francisco. The example offered here is the latter bottle, excavated by Randy and Ralph in San Francisco.

Description & Condition: Dark golden amber color with abundant whittle and crude glass. A beautiful early Nevada bottle.

Min. Bid $4,500 | Est. $9,000–$14,000

41. Dr. Henley's Regulator



Circa 1872–1875, applied top, 8 3/8". A rare Henley's product that was advertised from 1872 well into the 1880s, although the bottle itself likely dates to the early to mid 1870s based on the age of the layers in which examples have been dug. Dr. Henley's Regulator was one of the many proprietary medicines marketed by the prolific Dr. Henley during the height of the patent medicine era. Advertisements boldly proclaimed it to be "The Great Family Medicine" and even offered a $100 reward for any incurable case of sickness where the bones had not been destroyed by disease. Today, the bottle remains one of the more desirable Henley products and an excellent example of the extravagant claims commonly made by nineteenth century medicine manufacturers. It is believed that only about eight examples of the Regulator are currently known.

Description & Condition: Attractive bubbly glass. Approximately 1/2" bruise to the top of the lip.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$3,000



42. WM. H. Spears & Co. Old Pioneer Whiskey A. Fenkhausen & Co.

Circa 1881–1886, applied top, fifth. This is the "One Name Bear" variant, made after Fenkhausen & Braunschweiger dissolved their partnership in 1881. These fifths have long been popular with collectors due to the embossed walking bear and the Pioneer Whiskey name, both of which immediately bring to mind California's frontier past. One of the more recognizable pictorial whiskey bottles from the American West. These bottles are very difficult to find with a strong strike.

Description & Condition: Honey amber, very strong strike. A top example.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$3,000

43. Jule's Bourbon Julius Goldbaum, Inc. Tucson, A.T.



Circa 1887–1903, quart, 12". Julius Goldbaum was one of Tucson's best known wholesale liquor dealers during Arizona's territorial period. This impressive back bar is embossed "A.T." for Arizona Territory, indicating it was produced prior to Arizona achieving statehood in 1912. Remarkably, nearly all known examples trace their origins to Goldbaum's former Tucson residence, where three examples were discovered in the basement during the 1940s along with business papers, labels, and other artifacts relating to his liquor business. Today, only a single mint example is known, underscoring the extreme rarity of this bottle in any condition.

Description & Condition: Professionally replaced top. The workmanship is exceptional, and the repair is extremely difficult to detect with the naked eye. Some loss to the original gold detailing. Overall an attractive example, with a possible touch-up to the white enamel in the A in A.T.

Min. Bid $1,500 | Est. $3,000–$5,000

44. EC&M Insulator



Circa 1870–1878, CD 123, A Mold, 4 1/4". Another EC&M insulator, this time in a deep cobalt and a different mold. EC&M molds differ in several identifiable features, including dome and skirt shape, embossing size and style, ampersand form, wire groove characteristics, seam lines, button placement, and the presence or absence of slug plates.

Description & Condition: Exceptional deep cobalt blue. Excellent condition with only minor chipping on the skirt.

Min. Bid $1,500 | Est. $3,000–$6,000

45. Miller's Extra Old Bourbon

Circa 1871–1880, pint, large design variant. The Miller's flask is probably the most iconic and recognizable of the applied top Western flasks, with numerous examples having been recovered throughout the West Coast. Miller's flasks were especially popular in the mining camps of California and Nevada, with the famous ghost town of Cerro Gordo accounting for many of the known examples. E. Martin & Co. appears to have conducted a successful marketing campaign with hotels, as numerous examples have been excavated from hotel privies across the West. One hotel privy in San Diego alone produced more than fifteen Miller's flasks. There are two recognized variants, the large design and the small design. Miller's may not be a rare bottle, but outstanding examples such as this remain highly sought after by collectors.



Description & Condition: Yellow olive amber, strong strike, and abundant whittle. Double roll top with a minor 1/16" flake to the base edge. A top example.

Min. Bid $750 | Est. $1,500–$3,000

46. Dr. Wonser's U.S.A Indian Root Bitters



Circa 1870–1875, applied top, fifth. The Dr. Wonser's U.S.A. Indian Root Bitters ranks among the most desirable of all Western bitters. The brand originated with I. H. Wonser of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who was manufacturing Indian Root Bitters by at least 1863. At some point he met William Hawkins of San Francisco and the two partnered to produce and distribute this product. As is often the case with California's great bottles, many of the known examples have been recovered from Nevada, where the product appears to have enjoyed considerable popularity. The bottle remains a favorite among collectors, its bold embossing, prominent U.S.A. lettering, and distinctive design combining to create one of the most recognizable bitters bottles of the nineteenth century. Examples are known in a remarkable range of colors, from chocolate amber and yellow amber to green and even aqua.

Description & Condition: Yellow olive color with abundant whittle. Remnants of the original neck foil remain. Small 1/8" chip off the edge of the base, a 1/16" peck off the base edge, and a 1/16" peck on the shoulder above the embossing. All minor issues.

Min. Bid $4,000 | Est. $8,000–$12,000

47. Beer Steam Bottling Co. WM. Goeppert & Son San Francisco



Circa 1882–1885, applied top, quart. William Goeppert & Son was operated by William Goeppert and his son George during the early to mid–1880s. At the 1883 Mechanics' Institute Fair, Goeppert & Son received an award for the best California–made beer for their Bavaria and Felsen Beer products. By March of 1885, the firm was no longer listed, and George partnered with Fred Haussler to form the Bavaria & Felsen Beer Steam Bottling Company. As is the case with most applied top Western quart beers of the 1880s, examples are scarce today, with only about 20 or fewer known. These bottles are found with either a banded champagne top or the more widely encountered tapered top, as seen on this example. There is also an extremely rare aqua variant known, produced with the champagne top and a slightly different embossing pattern.

Description & Condition: Amber color with essentially no wear. 1/4" and 1/16" checks in the body, a 1/2" check in the neck, and a couple of bruises in the neck below the top. Despite these issues, it remains in better condition than most early beer examples.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000



48. Western Spice Mills

Circa 1865–1870, applied top, 8 1/2". A rare gothic pepper sauce produced by the Western Spice Mills, which were located in St. Louis and advertised as one of the oldest spice mills in the West. While St. Louis is considered part of the Midwest today, it was widely regarded as a Western city during the mid nineteenth century and served as a major gateway to the frontier. One of the few embossed pepper sauce bottles produced during the nineteenth century and a favorite among serious food collectors. Most examples are found in aqua, with only a few known in shades of yellow.

Description & Condition: Vivid yellow color. Crude glass full of bubbles. Well-hidden 1/2" hairline fissure in the shoulder, blending into a run of impurities. Excellent character and eye appeal.

Min. Bid $2,000 | Est. $4,000–$8,000

49. Tea Kettle Old Bourbon



Circa 1871–1880s, applied top, fifth. Perhaps the best known pictorial whiskey fifth of the Wild West era. Examples have been found throughout the American West, though the greatest concentration has come from Nevada, particularly the Comstock region. The whiskey sold in these bottles was produced by the famous Tea Kettle Distillery in Trimble County, Kentucky. The distinctive embossed tea kettle served as the brand's trademark and, much like the horse on a Gold Dust or the antlers on a Jesse Moore, helped the bottle stand out on a crowded saloon shelf. These bottles are highly collectible because they occur in a wide range of colors, from various shades of amber and yellow to yellow-green and olive. Despite their popularity, it can be surprisingly difficult to find examples combining color with a strong strike.

Description & Condition: A yellow olive shade with a good strike and abundant whittle. Retains a tiny amount of interior residue.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000



50. Old Man's Stomach Bitters

Circa 1876, applied top. An extremely rare Western bitters from San Francisco with only about four known examples. This particular bottle is the most recently discovered example, having been dug in Contra Costa County in 2019. Interestingly, known examples occur in several distinct shades of amber, suggesting that multiple batches were produced over a period of time rather than as a single limited run. If so, one is left to wonder where they were sold and what became of the others, as only a handful survive today. Perhaps the product's unusual name worked against it; after all, few customers may have wanted to be seen purchasing a product that implied they suffered from an "old man's" ailment.

Description & Condition: Amber. Exterior UV crazing. Several horizontal annealing checks in the neck. Please refer to the online catalog photos.

Min. Bid $500 | Est. $1,000–$3,000

51. Thomas Taylor & Co Importers Virginia, N.



Circa 1870–1874, applied top, fifth. One of the most famous whiskey bottles of the Comstock era, produced in both fifth and sixth sizes. Approximately 15 fifths and 7 sixths are believed to exist, making either size a rarity today. Thomas Taylor was an early West Coast liquor merchant who arrived in California during the Gold Rush era and later established himself in both San Francisco and Virginia City. His business prospered during the height of the Comstock mining boom, supplying liquor to one of the wealthiest and most influential mining regions in the American West. Taylor's bottles are highly sought after for their direct connection to Virginia City and the legendary silver mining history of the Comstock. They are also among a very small group of embossed bottles from the 1860s and 1870s bearing the name Virginia, joining such rarities as the Morrill Citrate, Higgins Ink, and Stephens & Jose gravitating soda.

Description & Condition: Olive amber color with a touch of yellow. Abundant whittle and crude, stippled glass. A beautiful example.

Min. Bid $3,000 | Est. $6,000–$12,000

52. J. Angeli & Co

Circa 1868–1871, applied top, 7 5/8". One of the earliest Western blown flasks that likely dates only a year or two later than the horizontal Wormser flask, which is believed to have been introduced around 1866–1867. The Angeli and Wormser are closely related in concept, both featuring unusual bases and capacities exceeding a pint. This has always been a difficult flask for collectors to acquire, even among advanced Western collectors. Most known examples are shades of amber, although one or two exceptional specimens are known with a strong yellow olive influence. With its early date, large size, and distinctive form, the Angeli remains one of the top ten Western flasks with around 7 known examples. This one was dug by the late Ken Salazar in a deep West Oakland well full of bromo seltzers.



Description & Condition: Old amber with a good strike, light whittle, and clean glass. Very light minor scuff above the embossing and a minuscule amount of interior stain. A very strong example of this rare flask.

Min. Bid $3,500 | Est. $7,000–$14,000



53. J.F. Cutter Extra Old Bourbon

Circa 1875–1880, applied top, pint. A popular Western flask full of large embossing, these have been found throughout the Pacific Coast, from San Diego to Washington and eastward into Nevada. Most examples occur in shades of amber, with olive toned examples being exceedingly rare.

Description & Condition: Medium honey amber color with a good strike and attractive bubbly glass.

Min. Bid $400 | Est. $800–$1,500

54. Lacour's Sarsapariphere Bitters

Circa 1867–1869, smooth base, 9 1/4". Variant 1. A legendary Western bitters and one of the few figural bitters produced on the West Coast. In addition to its iconic lighthouse form, the Lacour's is especially prized for the remarkable range of colors in which it is found, with some advanced collectors being able to assemble color runs of the various shades. Variants 1 and 2 are generally considered the most desirable, as they occur in the widest range of colors and are typically found in the crudest glass. The easiest way to distinguish the three mold variants is by the raised center dot on the base: Variant 1 has a small dot, Variant 2 a larger dot, and Variant 3 no dot.



Description & Condition: Yellow olive color with a strong strike. Small surface potstone on the base with an associated 1/8" chip. Better condition than most examples, with no checks, cracks, or bruises. Some interior content stain, mostly in the shoulder.

Min. Bid $5,000 | Est. $10,000–$15,000

55. Jewel Bitters A. Fortlouis & Co.



Circa 1885–1889, applied top, 9 3/4". These rare bitters are known in two variants, one embossed John S. Bowman & Co. and the other A. Fortlouis & Co. The Fortlouis variant is by far the scarcer of the two, with only a handful of examples known. Both the bottle and the brand remain somewhat mysterious, as no advertising for the product has yet been discovered. The Bowman variant is believed to originate from San Francisco, where Bowman was based, while the Fortlouis examples may have originated in Tombstone, Arizona, San Diego, California, or Washington State, where Fortlouis was active during the mid to late 1880s. Until additional information comes to light, a degree of mystery will continue to surround these intriguing Western bitters. This example was dug at a logging camp in Washington state.

Description & Condition: Light honey amber color, nearly yellow in natural light. Crude glass filled with champagne bubbles. Believed to be the finest known example of this rare bitters.

Min. Bid $1,250 | Est. $2,500–$5,000

56. A&R Postel



Circa 1885–1887, applied top, quart. There are two early Western beers bearing the Postel name: the C.D. Postel with the sheaf of wheat and this A. & R. Postel featuring the embossed bear. Both are difficult to acquire, but the A. & R. is the rarer of the two and is highly coveted for its outstanding embossing pattern featuring a large bear. This example is a beautiful citron yellow, possibly the only known early Western beer in this color. Found in the bay near Port Chicago, California, this is an extremely rare bottle that would stand out in any collection of early Western beers.

Description & Condition: Bright citron yellow. Substantial exterior wear, likely from prolonged exposure in a watery environment such as San Francisco Bay. Minor 1/8" flake to the edge of the base and a 1/8" partially radiating potstone in the side shoulder. Professionally cleaned.

Min. Bid $5,000 | Est. $10,000–$20,000

57. Fisher Electric Railway System



Circa 1887–1889, CD 265, 4". Designed for use with Frank E. Fisher's pioneering underground third-rail electric railway system. The first known embossed Fisher insulator was discovered in San Jose, with additional examples later recovered in Michigan. The Fisher Electric Railway operated between San Jose and Santa Clara after opening in 1888. Its underground conduit system proved unreliable, with mud and debris frequently interrupting electrical contact, and the line soon failed. Today, these remarkable insulators are prized for their rarity and their association with some of the earliest electric railway experiments in the United States.

Description & Condition: A light green example in very good overall condition. Has a chip to the right arm measuring approximately 1", along with two minor chips to the top measuring 1/8" and 1/16". The base is free of damage.

Min. Bid $2,500 | Est. $5,000–$10,000

58. Henley's Indian Queen Hair Restorative

Circa 1871–1873, applied top, 7 5/8". This product was trademarked in 1871 and advertised extensively from 1872–1873. One of the rarer Henley's products, these medicine bottles feature bold embossing and an attractive overall design. An 1872 advertisement noted that, like many hair restoratives of the era, Henley's Indian Queen Hair Restorative claimed to cure baldness and restore gray hair. The trademark depicted a beautiful "Indian Queen" holding a bow and arrow and draped in a red robe, while the product itself was promoted as "a beautiful clear tincture." Examples are known in both blue and green shades, with only about five or six examples presently known. As such, it ranks among the rarest Western hair bottles known. This example was dug in downtown San Francisco in the 1980s.



Description & Condition: Attractive light blue-green color with abundant whittle. Shallow 1/8" flake to the edge of the lip and a 1/8" area of light roughness on the front near the base.

Min. Bid $1,000 | Est. $2,000–$4,000

59. California Fire Extinguisher



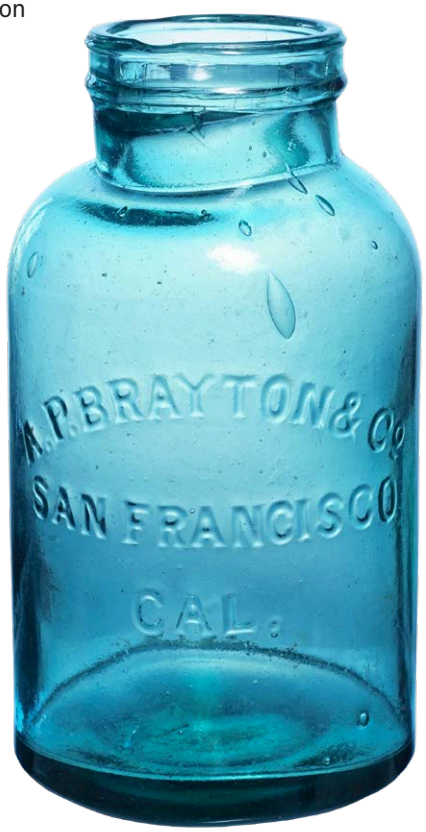
Circa 1885, applied top, 6 1/2". These unique fire extinguishers, commonly known as hand fire grenades, became popular during the early to mid–1880s as a means of combating small fires. A California newspaper advertisement from early 1885 proudly noted that "the California bear is blown into the bottle," referring to the embossed bear featured on these bottles. Advertisements indicate that the California Fire Extinguisher Company was located at 858 Howard Street in San Francisco and was managed by A. Muiller. Interestingly, we could locate no listing for the company in the 1885, 1886, or 1887 San Francisco city directories. Additional research is needed, but it appears the company and its product may have had an extremely short lifespan. The glass bottle was filled with a chemical solution and intended to be thrown directly into a fire. Contemporary accounts noted that the liquid itself was not primarily responsible for extinguishing the flames; rather, when exposed to heat, it generated large quantities of fire extinguishing gas that smothered the fire and prevented combustion from continuing. Numerous varieties of these so called hand fire grenades were marketed during the 1880s, but few can match the Western appeal of this grenade with its boldly embossed California bear.

Description & Condition: Medium amber with the original cork still inside. Minor 1/8" chip near the base on the reverse, not visible when displayed.

Min. Bid $2,500 | Est. $5,000–$10,000

60. A.P. Brayton & Co. San Francisco Cal.

Circa 1863–1865, applied top, quart. These jars are the earliest Western fruit jars and may have been among the first bottles blown in California, occurring in both iron pontiled and smooth base examples. They were produced in pint, quart, and half-gallon sizes, with fewer than ten examples known across all sizes in any condition. Due to their early manufacture, many exhibit a beautiful Western fire aqua color, as seen in this example. Albert P. Brayton was an early California pioneer in the foundry business, founding what would eventually become Pacific Iron Works, and is believed to have manufactured the iron Haller-type closure used on these jars. In 1863, Brayton advertised himself as the sole agent for "Haller's Patent Airtight Fruit-Jars." It is possible that he licensed the closure, commissioned a jar bearing his embossed name, and contracted the recently established Pacific Glass Works to produce a small run around 1863. Undoubtedly the holy grail of Western fruit jars, the A.P. Brayton is coveted by both Western and Eastern jar collectors alike. This may be the only undamaged smooth base quart known.



Description & Condition: Rich deep aqua color. Two tiny flea bites to the lip, along with some very light exterior scratching. Two small dips in the lip appear to be manufacturing crudity. All are minor distractions, noted for accuracy. An impressive example that displays beautifully.

Min. Bid $7,500 | Est. $15,000–$25,000

61. H. Metzler San Francisco

Circa 1885–1887, applied top, quart. An extremely rare beer featuring a fantastic embossed eagle perched atop a barrel. Herman Metzler was listed as an agent for the San Francisco Stock Brewery in 1885, and by 1887 was operating as a beer bottler under his own name. This is another of the coveted Western quart beers from the mid to late 1880s that is seldom offered for sale, with only about seven examples known. As is often the case with these early beers, most known examples exhibit condition issues ranging from lip chips and bruises to more significant damage, making high-grade examples particularly difficult to acquire. Considered by many collectors to be the best-looking and most desirable of all the early Western beers.



Description & Condition: Dark amber color. Surface bruise approximately 3/4" wide extending from the top down into the neck, a 1/4" bruise on the edge of the base, and a potstone with an associated 1/4" check in the shoulder. Regardless, a very difficult bottle to acquire and in better condition than most known examples.

Min. Bid $2,000 | Est. $4,000–$8,000

62. J. Moore Old Bourbon E. Chielovich & Co.



Circa 1871–1875, applied top, fifth. An iconic Western fifth loaded with bold embossing and the distinctive stag antlers that have made this bottle a favorite among collectors for generations. These bottles simply exude the spirit of the Wild West and rank among the earliest full face embossed whiskey bottles produced in the West. The brand was particularly popular throughout the mining regions of California and Nevada, with examples occasionally turning up as far east as Utah. Few Western whiskey bottles are as instantly recognizable or as sought after by collectors as the J. Moore.

Description & Condition:
Medium amber color with a good strike and plenty of whittle. Small 1/8" crushed bubble on the reverse. Very light exterior scratching throughout, heavier on the reverse, likely from being dug and difficult to see except under strong lighting. Possibly professionally cleaned. Overall a solid example.

Min. Bid $1,250 | Est. $2,500–$4,000

63. Dr. Henley's IXL Wild Grape Root Bitters



Circa 1868–1873, applied top, 12". First variant. Without a doubt, this is the most famous of all the Dr. Henley's products. This is the earliest variant of the I.X.L. Bitters, lacking the circle around "I.X.L.," and is highly sought after by collectors for the wild colors and glass crudities in which it is often found. Introduced during the late 1860s, the I.X.L. Bitters would become Henley's flagship product and one of the best known California bitters of the nineteenth century. Today it remains a cornerstone bottle in advanced Western bitters collections and is eagerly sought whenever a quality colored example comes to market.

Description & Condition:
Medium yellow olive. Heavy whittle. Minor 3/16" chip on the upper edge of the lip. An outstanding example in a very rare color.

Min. Bid $4,000 | Est. $8,000–$12,000

64. Cal Electric Works Insulator

Circa 1877–1880s, CD 130.1, 4 1/2". California Electrical Works was organized in 1877 as the successor to the Electrical Construction & Maintenance Company (EC&M), one of the pioneering telegraph supply firms on the West Coast. Operating from San Francisco, the company played an important role in the expansion of telegraph and electrical infrastructure throughout California and the Pacific Coast. The CD 130.1 is believed to have been used on one of California's earliest long distance telephone lines. Constructed in the late 1870s by the Ridge Telephone Company, the line connected French Corral and French Lake in the Sierra Nevada and provided telephone service for the region's hydraulic mining operations. Widely regarded as the most desirable insulator produced by California Electrical Works and one of the premier insulators of any type, it is highly prized by collectors throughout the country. This represents an important opportunity to acquire one of the hobby's most celebrated insulators.



Description & Condition: A rich, deep cobalt blue. The skirt is in excellent condition. Two of the four fluted wire groove sections are relatively clean, with only a few small chips measuring approximately 1/8". Each of the other two sections has a chip measuring roughly 3/8". Overall, a very good example of this notoriously damage prone form.

Min. Bid $3,000 | Est. $6,000–$12,000

65. United We Stand Old Bourbon Whiskey Wilmerding & Co.

Circa 1878–1883, applied top, fifth. One of the more popular Western fifths, and for good reason. Beyond the patriotic name, it has been suggested that the brand may have been introduced in response to the national attention surrounding the assassination of President Garfield in 1881. While examples surface from time to time, there are still not enough to satisfy collector demand, with perhaps fewer than 10 examples known. A rare and highly desirable Western fifth with a great name and strong collector appeal.



Description & Condition:
Amber color with a good strike. A solid example.

Min. Bid $1,250 | Est. $2,500–$5,000

66. V. Squarza



Circa 1863–1866, applied top, 8 5/8". Vincenzo Squarza, an Italian immigrant, came to San Francisco in 1860 and established himself as a manufacturer and dealer of punches, cordials, and miscellaneous spirits. Squarza was best known for his popular "Squarza's Punch," though advertisements show he also marketed a Cholera Bitters in 1866. It is possible this bottle served as a generic container for any of his various products. Likely produced by Pacific Glass Works, it ranks among one of the earliest bottles blown in San Francisco, with only about five examples known today. Its unusual form sets it apart from virtually every other Western bottle of the period, and it is rare enough that most collectors have never had the opportunity to see one in person. It is also part of a very small group of known cobalt Western bottles from the 1860s that were used for products other than soda.

Description & Condition:
Deep cobalt color with light whittle and early glass character. A small flake is present on the Q, along with minor abrasion to the side and top of the lip. The neck has a tiny potstone with an associated cluster of shallow, interconnected fissures just below the top, likely originating during manufacture. Overall, an impressive example with strong color and visual appeal.

Min. Bid $3,000 | Est. $6,000–$10,000

67. Lacour's Sarsapariphere Bitters

Circa 1867–1869, smooth base, 9 1/4". Variant 1. An iconic Western bitters and one of the few figural bottles produced on the West Coast. Louis Lacour trademarked these bottles in 1867 in the shape of a lighthouse. The unusual name "Sarsapariphere" appears to have been a proprietary trade name associated with Lacour's sarsaparilla–based blood purifier, although the exact meaning and origin of the term remain unknown. There are three recognized variants of Lacour's bottles, this being the first variant. Long considered one of the most desirable of all Western bitters, the Lacour's is highly sought after by both Eastern and Western collectors alike. Collectors are particularly drawn to the vivid colors, crude glass, and distinctive figural form for which these bottles are known. With its early date and iconic design, it remains a cornerstone bottle in advanced collections.



Description & Condition:
Vibrant apple green. Displays a large, shallow, partially open interior bubble, likely as made. A minuscule flake to the neck with an associated bruise measuring approximately 1/16", along with a minor 1/16" flea bite on the body, are the only notable issues. Remarkably, this example is otherwise free of the larger cracks, checks, bruises, and fissures commonly encountered on Lacour's bottles. An exceptional example in fantastic condition and color.

Min. Bid $6,000 | Est. $12,000–$20,000

68. Jesse Moore Old Bourbon

Circa 1878–1882, applied top, pint. A highly desirable Western flask that matches the larger Jesse Moore fifth, featuring the same bold embossed antlers and extensive full-face embossing. Examples are known in a variety of amber shades and occur with both single and double roll tops, with the single roll examples being the scarcer of the two variants. Like the fifths, these flasks enjoyed a broad distribution and have been found throughout California, Nevada, and even as far north as Washington. Though not the rarest Western flask, they are consistently in high demand and remain a staple in any advanced flask collection.



Description & Condition: Medium amber. Desirable single roll top with a strong strike and some attractive crudity. Tiny fleabite to the base edge, light shovel scuffs on the reverse, a 1/16" bruise on the front near the base, and a minor amount of interior stain on the reverse. All minor issues, a great example.

Min. Bid $1,500 | Est. $3,000–$5,000

69. Gold Dust Kentucky Bourbon N. Van Bergen Sole Agents

Circa 1874–1880, applied top, fifth. This is the second variant of the Gold Dust 5th, made after Nicholas Van Bergen took over the company in 1874. There are similar amounts of Johns and Ns, but the N remains slightly rarer. This example was in the famous Ken Schwartz collection for several years before Jeff purchased it a few years ago. An outstanding example loaded with whittle in a beautiful yellow olive color with an unusually small and crude top.



Description & Condition: Honey olive color with a strong strike and abundant whittle. An exceptional example, formerly in the famed Ken Schwarz collection.

Min. Bid $4,000 | Est. $8,000–$15,000

70. Eastern Cider Co.



Circa 1876–1880s, applied top. A popular Western soda and one of the few known Western sodas found in colors outside the typical aqua, green, and blue spectrum. While Eastern ciders occur in virtually every shade of amber, from yellow to olive green, undamaged olive or green examples are exceedingly uncommon. This is one of the greenest examples known and was personally dug by Jeff in a creek near Aptos in 1969. Fortunately, he was able to reacquire it later in life, adding an interesting provenance to an already exceptional bottle. Most of the known green examples suffer from some form of damage, usually cracks or checks.

Description & Condition: Outstanding olive green with good whittle and a pronounced front drip. One of the greenest Eastern Ciders known. Minor areas of glass loss on the E in Eastern and the D in Cider, both insignificant. Combining color, condition, and provenance, this example would be a highlight in any advanced Western soda collection.

Min. Bid $2,000 | Est. $4,000–$8,000

71. Cassin's Grape Brandy Bitters

Circa 1867–1868. Variant 2. A bottle that hardly needs an introduction. These legendary figural bitters were produced in San Francisco by Francis and Patrick Cassin, early California merchants involved in the liquor and bitters trade.



Coveted by collectors for their vivid colors, distinctive viola form, and often crude, character rich glass, Cassin's Bitters ranks among the most iconic bottles of the American West. Like many of San Francisco's rarest bottles, surprisingly few examples have been found in the city itself, with the majority of known examples discovered in California's Gold Country and Nevada. The bottles occur in two mold variants, with this example being a Variant 2. It is believed the deeper body panels found on Variant 1 made the bottle more prone to damage, resulting in the mold being redesigned into what collectors now recognize as Variant 2. This particular example is noteworthy as the most recently discovered Cassin's known to us, having been found beneath a tree in California's Gold Country just a few years ago. The second Jeff saw this bottle, he knew he had to own it.

Description & Condition: A beautiful example in a rich golden amber, loaded with thousands of trapped air bubbles. Several annealing checks are present, along with numerous manufacturing related stress cracks throughout the bottle. Although extensive, these are believed to have occurred during the manufacturing process rather than from post production damage. Regardless, it remains a truly stunning and incredible piece of early California glass.

Min. Bid $5,000 | Est. $10,000–$15,000

72. California Club House Pure Bourbon Imported Only By Jno C. Morrison 316 Sac. St. S.F.



Circa 1871–1873, applied top, fifth. John C. Morrison Jr. was one of California's early pioneers arriving in San Francisco in June 1849 during the Gold Rush. He briefly mined at Horseshoe Bar before moving to Sacramento and eventually returning to San Francisco, where he established himself in the liquor trade during the 1860s. By 1872, Morrison was advertising his California Club House brand. Although rare, these bottles enjoyed a wide distribution and have been found in San Jose, Marin County, Portland, and, of course, Nevada, where multiple examples have been discovered. After more than 60 years of searching, bottle collectors can account for only about ten examples. Considered by many to be the finest Western whiskey fifth, owing to its head-to-toe embossing, iconic name, early age, and highly coveted street address. There are believed to be about 5 amber, 3 green, and 2 olive examples known. This is the famous example once owned by the legendary John Thomas, who purchased it from Frank Shoengarth shortly after Frank dug it in Columbus, Nevada, in 1970. Frank had dug two olive examples: this example and another that was missing its neck and was later repaired.

Description & Condition: Olive amber with heavy whittle and an outstanding strike. Moderate scratching and scattered surface impacts, likely the result of spending nearly a century in the Nevada desert. Includes a small 1/16" impact with minor glass loss on the C in C. Morrison, along with a few other harmless surface impacts measuring approximately 1/32" to 1/16". While not perfect, it is about as well preserved as one could reasonably expect for a bottle that survived the rigors of the Wild West before lying buried in the Nevada desert for nearly a century.

Min. Bid $5,000 | Est. $10,000–$20,000

Notes

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