

Aren't These Charms, Spoons, & Bells Souvenir Buildings, Too?

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To many souvenir building collectors, charms in the shape of buildings are not, well ... very charming. So size does matter! Many collectors draw the line at miniatures smaller than an inch or so high, and casually dismiss charms as nano-buildings. But many other collectors accept (dare we say "seek") these most miniature of buildings. Here are a few reasons why:

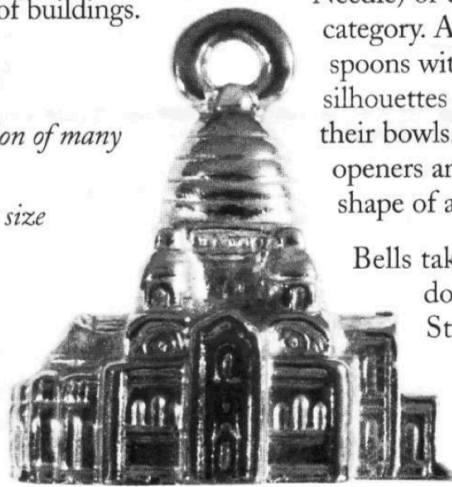
- Charms can have great detail
- Charms are the only 3D version of many buildings
- Some charms are big, for their size
- Charms are cheap
- Charms don't take up much room
- Charms may be the only building you find at a swap meet

So how do you know it's a charm? Well, if it's small and has a ring piercing it,

it's a charm. Some charms without rings are on the ends of spoons, or serve as handles on bells. These items have a little more dimension and don't seem so diminutive.

Souvenir spoons with handles shaped like buildings (Bunker Hill Monument, Space Needle) or city skylines are a related category. And, of course, there are lots of spoons with two-dimensional building silhouettes on their ends, or etched in their bowls. There are Eiffel Tower bottle openers and, my favorite, scissors in the shape of a German steeple!

Bells take on building shapes, with domes being the most popular: St. Peter's dome, US Capitol dome, Santa Barbara Mission tower (it's also an incense burner!). I've found a 6-inch mountain peak-shaped bell of the Rocher



The identity of this lovely silver charm is so far unknown. Bob calls it "The Church of the Holy Doughnut." It could be Sacre Coeur in Paris.

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CHARMING BUILDINGS

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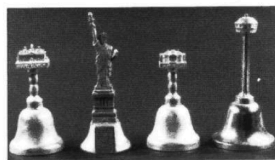
Bayard (Bayard Rock), near Dinant France. This sliver of a mountain peak was created when Louis XIV's troops blasted a passage through. Legends say that it was made by the hoof of the mythical giant Bayard Horse, when it jumped over the Meuse River.

Care and Feeding of Charms

Most charms are too small to polish. Silver charms can be brightened by any number of solutions on the market. But don't use a paste product, or you'll never get it of those little crevices.

Display Your Charms

Charms are best displayed where you can get your eyes closest to them, like a low-hung necklace, see-through glass display case, or spoon



Charms on Bells: (L to R): Mount Vernon, Statue of Liberty, Monticello, Tower of the Americas, San Antonio, TX.

rack. I have an all-glass "tower of charms" where I can see the charms from front and back, and let them, well, show all their charms. Some people pin their charms to black velvet, like bugs. Others hang them from rows of little rods, abacus-like.

Some people use their charms by assembling personalized charm bracelets and charm necklaces. Eventually, these aggregated collections of a charm building collector may grow large enough to be used as wrist weights or ankle

weights for exercising. And, instead of going around the world, you can have the world's buildings around you!

Charm bracelets, sold as tourist souvenirs in major cities around the world, usually have at least one building on them. Individual charms are also available at tourist locations and at fine jewelry stores everywhere.

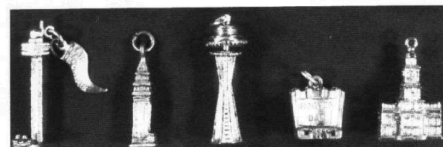
Composition

Composition is what charms aren't made of, usually. It's another good thing about charms - at least they're made of metal.

These include cast sterling silver, silver metal sheet, pot metal, and even gold.

Inventory of Your Charms

How big is the charm universe? Who knows! Probably charms number in the thousands. The identity of the charm is frequently found on the bottom, or in the bowl of the spoon, etc. But beware of generic charms! Closer inspection may reveal them to be a doghouse, toaster, or brick. Listing all the known charms would take forever, and you still wouldn't have a bushel full. Below are some of my favorites from my collection. SBC



Charms: Magic Mountain Thrill Ride Tower, Disneyland, CA; St. Mark's Belltower, Venice; Space Needle, Seattle (it rotates!); Hoover Dam, NV; Independence Hall, Philadelphia.

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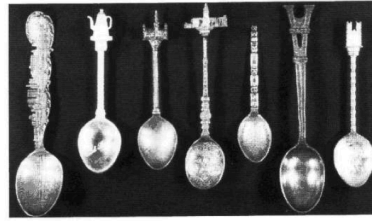
Charms on the Ends of Spoons

- * Big Ben
- * Brighton Pavilion, England
- * Dallas cityscape, TX
- * Eiffel Tower, Paris, France
- * Ellis Island, NY
- * Empire State Building, NY
- * Empress Hotel, Victoria, B.C.
- * Giant Coffee Pot, Winston-Salem, NC
- * Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, CA
- * Liverpool Cathedral, England
- * Mormon Temple, Salt Lake City, UT

Brass bell in the shape of the Bayard Rocher, Dinant, France



- * Neuschwanstein, Germany
- * New York (together): WTC, Statue of Liberty, Empire State
- * Pittock Mansion, Portland, OR
- * Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI
- * Rheims Cathedral (Façade on both sides, "faux 3D")
- * Saddledome, Calgary, Canada
- * Sears Tower (plus 2 nearby buildings), Chicago, IL
- * Shakespeare Theater, Ashland, OR
- * Tower of London
- * United Nations, New York
- * Vancouver cityscape, Canada



Spoons Whose Shafts are Buildings

- * Bunker Hill Monument, Boston, MA
- * Soldiers & Sailors Monument, Indianapolis IN
- * Eiffel Tower, Paris, France
- * Space Needle, Seattle, WA
- * Totem Pole, Skagway, AK
- * Tower of the Americas, San Antonio, TX
- * Trylon (shaft) and Perisphere (bowl), 1939
- * New York World—Fair

Charms on Bells

- * Empire State Building
- * Monticello
- * Mount Vernon
- * Space Needle
- * Statue of Liberty
- * Sydney Tower
- * Tower of the Americas, San Antonio, TX

Charms all by Themselves

- * Astrodome, Houston
- * Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles
- * Brooklyn Bridge

Charms and Buildings on Spoons: (L to R) New York City Skyline; Coffee Pot Monument, Winston-Salem, NC; Brussels Town Hall, Belgium; York Minster, York, England; Totem Pole; Eiffel Tower (inverted); Rheims Cathedral.

- * Cadet Chapel, Colorado Springs, CO
- * California State Capitol, Sacramento
- * Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles
- * Chipping Camden Market Hall, England
- * Coit Tower, San Francisco
- * East College Building, DePauw University, Greencastle, IN
- * Garfield Memorial, Cleveland, OH
- * Hearst Castle, San Simeon, CA
- * Hoover (Boulder) Dam, AZ/NV
- * Independence Hall, Philadelphia, PA
- * Lincoln Statue in Lincoln Memorial, Washington, DC
- * Little White House, GA
- * London Bridge, Lake Havasu, AZ
- * Marina City, Chicago
- * Parliament, Ottawa, Canada
- * Parthenon, Athens, Greece
- * Prudential Building, Chicago
- * Round Tower, Universal City Studios, Los Angeles
- * St Paul's, London
- * Salzburg Castle, Austria
- * Space Needle (top rotates)
- * Toronto City Hall
- * (former) Wachovia Bldg., Winston-Salem, NC