

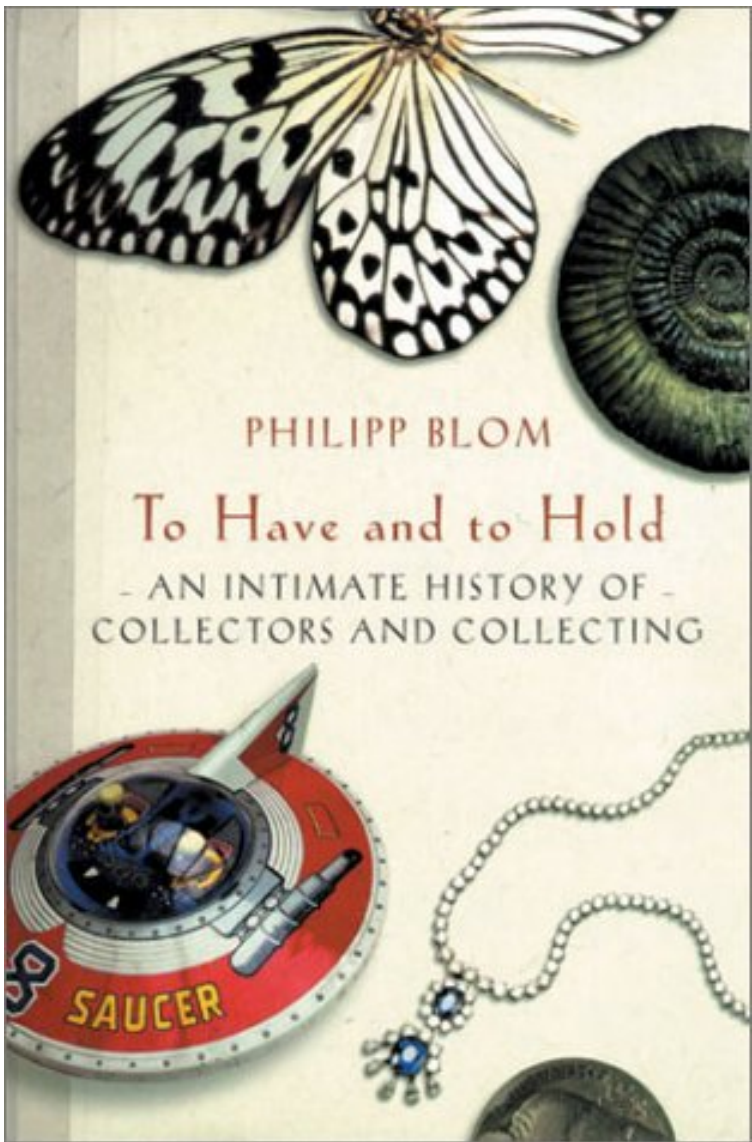
#1267181 in Books Overlook Hardcover 2003-02 2003-02-24Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 1.09 x 6.32 x 9.30l, 1.25 #File Name: 1585673773345 pages | File size: 35.Mb

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*Philipp Blom*

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(Download ebook) To Have And To Hold: An Intimate History Of Collectors and Collecting

## **To Have And To Hold: An Intimate History Of Collectors and Collecting**

**Philipp Blom : To Have And To Hold: An Intimate History Of Collectors and Collecting** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To Have And To Hold: An Intimate History Of Collectors and Collecting:

21 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Stories and more..By Stephen BalbachAt first I thought this was

going to be a survey of some eccentric collectors in history, on which it does not disappoint, but it turns out to be a lot richer and contain some real pearls of wisdom about life in general, and flashes of historical insight. Reading through the chapters of this book was a lot like rummaging through a private collector's cabinet of curiosities. The chapter titles alone don't provide direction and only after a few pages does it begin to reveal its treasure. Chapters cover aspects of collecting as diverse as: people who collected experiences with women (Casanova), the collecting of body parts (religious relics), collecting memories, American billionaires who bought up European heritage (JP Morgan, Hearst), collectors of mass-produced items (milk bottles, food wrappers), Princes and Kings such as Rudolf of Hapsburg (17th C) who filled his castle with the world's greatest collections and slowly went mad, collecting as a madness, as a substitute for love, as a form of autism, as psychology, as crime - and in the end, as a warning to all those who take it too far.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Detailed and nuanced. By SenecaA detailed, nuanced review of the history of collection since the sixteenth century as well as the reasons that make people collect. During a recent visit to London, it inspired me to visit one collection of whose existence I had not been aware before I read the book. I would have visited more, except that I did not have the time.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very well written and interesting; helpful to me as ... By Ess DeeVery well written and interesting; helpful to me as an archivist and as a collector. Sellers very responsive when book not exactly as described; would buy from them again w/no hesitation.

Blom's gripping narration and bizarre cast of eccentrics, visionaries, and fanatics provide a fascinating glimpse into how a pastime becomes an all-consuming passion. From amassing sacred relics to collecting celebrity memorabilia, the impulse to hoard has gripped humankind throughout the centuries. But what is it that drives people to possess objects that have no conceivable use? *To Have and To Hold* is a captivating tour of collectors and their treasures from medieval times to the present, from a cabinet containing unicorn horns and a Tsar's collection of teeth to the macabre art of embalmer Dr. Frederick Ruysch, the fabled castle of William Randolph Hearst, and the truly preoccupied men who stockpile food wrappers and plastic cups. An engrossing story of the collector as bridegroom, deliriously, obsessively happy, wed to his possessions, till death do us part.

From Publishers WeeklyThe mania of collecting, a pastime usually reserved for the most wealthy of individuals, has a long history, says German-born journalist Blom. For many collectors, "money is no object, and objects are everything." Blom begins his formal, idiosyncratic chronicle in the 16th century, when the Renaissance-fueled explosion of scientific inquiry led to a boom in what the Dutch referred to as cabinets of curiosities. Typically stocked with small antiques and remains of strange animals and men (fake and real), they were popular among the rich and bourgeois across Europe through the next few centuries. Blom follows the tradition into the dark castles of crazed aristocrats and obsessed collectors (such as the 18th-century German doctor who had a collection of skulls taken from the local gallows and asylum) who thought to compile small, neurotically labeled and catalogued worlds, which countered the chaotic one outside their walls. Although Blom's book sticks mainly to highbrow collecting-e.g., old master drawings, snuffboxes, architectural models, human skulls, books-and does not come to any conclusions on what drives people to collect, it is an admirable attempt to chart the history of an obsession. 53 bw illus. and photos. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From The New YorkerTaking as its inspiration Walter Benjamin's dictum that a collector's passion borders on "the chaos of memory," this curiously moving history argues that collecting is driven by the desire to control that chaos. Blom traces the development of collections since the Renaissance through lively portraits of famous collectors, like the Englishman Sir Thomas Phillips, who believed that he was meant to own one copy of every book in the world; the Austrian Franz Joseph Gall, who lined his walls with row upon row of skulls; and the American Alex Shear, who has amassed more than a hundred thousand relics of nineteenth-century America. Blom shows that there is no limit to what can be collected, or to the intensity of the pursuit. Ultimately, he suggests, "the shadow looming over every cabinet" is a kind of willful, if unacknowledged, futility. To collect is to freeze the world in its tracks and hold it still. But if this succeeded what would be left to collect?

Copyright 2005 The New YorkerFrom BooklistIt does take one to know one. Journalist Blom waxes lyrical about the art and craft of collecting--and the results of collectors' labors. His own interest started with his grandfather's "The Yellow Finch" shop in Amsterdam, and here he relates stories of some of the oddest hobbies-of-passion known to history. Prince Rudolf of Habsburg, later Holy Roman Emperor, amassed amazing things of nature--a musk pouch, Seychelles nut, a bezoar (a poison antidote), among other "miracles," housed in a huge rococo chest. Czar Peter the Great was obsessed with dwarfs and freaks, so much so that he bought the entire collection of a Dutch doctor and moved it to St. Petersburg. Then, the business moguls, including J. Pierpont Morgan and William Randolph Hearst, had their arts and oddities, too. Throughout these well-documented stories, Blom probes the heart and soul of collecting's appeal, whether it be for the beauty of the superficial (a book's hand-wrought leather binding, for example) or the beauty of the content inside. An intellectual journey worth taking. Barbara Jacobs Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved