

## MINT JULEP GLASSES

Since its inception in 1938, the Kentucky Derby mint julep glass has grown in popularity and is now viewed by many authorities as the leading Derby collectable.

For collectors, the value of Derby glasses is primarily based on their rarity. From 1938-1952, less than 100,000 glasses were annually produced. In 1966, the production number rose to 250,000, with the number increasing to 400,000 for the 100<sup>th</sup> running of the race in 1974. Today, the production run is approximately 750,000.

The tradition of the mint julep glass began inconspicuously with the 64<sup>th</sup> running in 1938 as the first glasses were actually water glasses. There so popular they “disappeared” from the tables in the track’s dining rooms. Track management decided to charge an additional 25 cents to each meal and allow patrons to keep the glass. In 1939, the Libbey Glass Company was contracted to create the glasses in color, making them attractive for mint julep sales. The idea of allowing patrons to keep the glass increased the sales if mint juleps a reported threefold.

Nearly all of the glasses were manufactured by Libbey of Toledo, Ohio from 1939-2015, including the 12-ounce tumblers in 1938 and '39.

In 1940 and '41, apparently over concern from broken glass found on the racetrack grounds the previous two years, aluminum tumblers were produced. A very limited number of the glass version were produced in 1940, and distributed only on the backside area.

During the war years, 1942-44, aluminum was at a premium and a ceramic-type tumbler of various colors was produced by the Beetleware Company.

Libbey began producing the glass again in 1945.

In 2016, PB Licensing USA began to manufacture the Mint Julep and Oaks Lily glasses. Of the 750,000 officially-licensed Kentucky Derby mint julep glasses that are annually produced more than two-thirds of those sold off-track for private parties. The glasses were only sold at the track until the 100<sup>th</sup> Derby in 1974.

There have been many different designs on the glasses over the years, but generally the Twin Spires, the name Kentucky Derby and racehorses have been featured. Since 1949 all previous Derby winners are listed on the glasses, a tradition that has continued (except in 1950, '52, '58 and '69) to the present.

The Kentucky Oaks received its first-ever glass in 2005 with a limited trial order of 7,200.