



Typewriter Ribbon Boxes

An [Auction Rebel](#) Special Report

In years past, before the advent of the computer and word processing, typewriters were a mainstay of every office and school across the country. And, just as today's printers, they need a constant diet of ink. For typewriters this diet was fed by typewriter ribbons.

These ribbons were produced by a large number of companies, and marketed under an even larger number of brand names – each in their own distinctive packaging. Early on, most of ribbons were packaged in small tins and these tins have become extremely collectible and today they enjoy a well established collector base.

Like all companies, the manufacturers of typewriter ribbon tins eventually found the use of tin was becoming more and more expensive and, over time, most of them switched to paper packaging. In this case, boxes.

Until recently there has been no real collector interest in these boxes, but that began to change a little more than a year ago. There is now a small number of collectors who are paying significant money for some of these boxes.

This presents a window of opportunity for the savvy eBay seller. While most antique dealers and flea market sellers are aware that typewriter ribbon tins have value, nearly none of them are yet aware of the emerging market in typewriter boxes.

You won't find a lot of these in antique shops or at flea markets because, as stated, most dealers aren't aware they have any value yet. But they are showing up more and more in shops, and when they do, they are nearly always priced at less than \$5 a box. At that price there are huge profits to be made with many of them on eBay and I recommend you pick up any you find priced at \$5 or less with the following caveat.

The group of collectors now adding these to their collections, although growing, is still quite small, probably consisting of less than a dozen serious collectors. This means that prices can fluctuate significantly for individual boxes, so there is some risk involved. However, that risk is minimal as long as you don't spend more than \$5 for any individual box and the profit potential far out-weighs the risk.

Since this is an emerging market that a small number of sellers are just now becoming aware of, and what I've shown here is just a small example of what is out there, it's very likely you will come across examples not shown here. Unless, this report shows there's no market for a particular box, I'd recommend you pick up any examples you find for \$5 or less. Some will turn out to be losers, but the what you make on the winners will more than make up for those that don't sell.

Antique shops, antique malls, flea markets, and antique shows are the places you are most likely to find these. However, if there should be an office equipment store that has been in business for 20 or more years near you, you might talk to the owner and see if they might have old-stock of these sitting in a storeroom or basement. You may be surprised what you can find.

This report, containing between 50 and 100 typewriter ribbon boxes that have been listed on eBay over the last few months, should give you some idea of what boxes tend to be more valuable and what boxes are common enough that they don't attract bids.

Each of the typewriter ribbon boxes listed below were listed on eBay withing the last few months and contains a link to the actual auction. I recommend you follow the links to each auction and try to familiarize yourself with what they look like – both the expensive ones and the ones that didn't attract any bids.

Since the links are to the actual auctions, some may no longer have photos available, and as time goes by the auctions will disappear from eBay's database, but if this is an area you are interested in exploring you should be able to get an idea of some of what is out there and of the potential there is for ribbon boxes at this time.

The condition provided here is my own estimate based on the photos in the listings and not the condition the seller has given them.

[Western Auto Store ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \\$191.27](#)

[Here's another Western Auto ribbon box that held two ribbons](#) – Very Fine condition – sold for

\$9.99 (quite a difference in prices and reflects how prices can vary dramatically with a small collector base as we have here)

Dayton Power & Light Company ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$172.38

Bethel Steel ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$171.29

Robert S. Leete & Co. ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$159.15

This group of three different Indiana ribbon boxes, all in Very Fine, or better, condition sold for \$159.15, \$159.15, and \$120.00 respectively

Columbus ribbon box – Very Fine condition – sold for \$159.15

Victory ribbon box – Good to Very Good condition – sold for \$142.29

Lumirol ribbon box (I don't believe this was for an actual typewriter, but rather some kind of other office machine) – Very Fine condition – sold for \$139.13

Master Copy ribbon box (held two ribbons) – Very Good condition – sold for \$132.42

Peerless (round) ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$129.12

Premier ribbon box – Very Fine condition – sold for \$129.12

Underwood T-142 ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$129.12

Decker's ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$99.89

Maycrest ribbon box – Very fine condition – sold for \$97.69

Marvel Rite-Type ribbon box – Very Fine condition – had a BIN of \$95.00 and didn't sell, but definitely would have sold if in the auction format with a lower starting bid

Thistle Down ribbon box – Very Fine condition - had a BIN of \$95.00 and didn't sell, but definitely would have sold if in the auction format with a lower starting bid

Midwest ribbon box – Very Fine condition - had a BIN of \$95.00 and didn't sell, but definitely would have sold if in the auction format with a lower starting bid

Park Avenue ribbon box (held two ribbons) – Very Fine condition - had a BIN of \$95.00 and didn't sell, but definitely would have sold if in the auction format with a lower starting bid

Supreme ribbon box – Good condition – sold for \$95.00

Crystal ribbon box – Fair to Good condition – sold for \$92.88

Art brand ribbon box – Very Fine condition – sold for \$90.00

Aladdin ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$88.00

Early American ribbon box – Good condition – sold for \$85.00

Official Snelling ribbon box – Very Fine condition – sold for \$85.00

Imperial ribbon box – Good condition – sold for \$78.77

Sure-Rite ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$76.88

Oregon ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$72.78

Steno Queen ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$70.87

These two different Duro Clear ribbon boxes, both in Very Good condition sold for \$55.45 and \$38.00 respectively

Old Town ribbon box – Fair condition – sold for \$52.00

Fort Pitt ribbon box – Very Fine condition – sold for \$48.00

Pure Silk ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$37.00

Prosperity ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$34.77

Chesapeake and Ohio Railway & Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$28.00

Imperial ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$25.00

Klear Kopy ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$25.00

Old English ribbon box – Poor to Fair condition – sold for \$24.95

Write ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$24.95

A. B. Dicke ribbon box – Very Fine condition – sold for \$24.95

Progress ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$18.00

Gopher ribbon box – Very Good condition – sold for \$14.60

Canadian National Railroad ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$11.00

Carter's Midnight ribbon box – Fine condition – sold for \$9.00

Below are some additional ribbon boxes that didn't sell.

[Beaver ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[A. Allen Co. ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Klean Type ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Tomahawk ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower (I'm surprised this one didn't sell with the Native American motif)

[Long Life ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition - - had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Pan American ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Empress ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[High Grade ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[International ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Finest Quality ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Character ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Wonder Brand ribbon box](#) – Very Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Tulips ribbon box](#) – Fine condition – had a starting price of \$24.95 and didn't sell, but probably would have created some bidding interest if the starting price had been lower

[Challenger ribbon box – Fine condition – starting bid of \\$16.00](#)

[Peerless ribbon box – Fine condition – starting bid of \\$15.00](#)

[Star ribbon box – Very Good condition – starting bid of \\$15.00](#)

As I said previously, this is a relatively new area of collector interest and the number of collectors is still quite small. However, interest in typewriter ribbon boxes is growing and that means two things:

1. As more collectors enter the market antique dealers will start to learn the value of these boxes and prices in shops and at shows will begin to escalate.
2. Many of the boxes that aren't attracting much interest on eBay currently will also sell for nice prices as additional collectors enter the market.

With this in mind, it might be a good idea to buy up nice examples of the boxes that aren't currently attracting a lot of attention when you can buy them for under \$5 each with the intention of holding them until the collector base widens more.

This should provide you with a small idea of what is available. If you buy any of these, even though they aren't tins, be sure to include the words typewriter, ribbon, and tin in your auction headline. These are the three keyword collectors will use when searching for these boxes on eBay.

A headline similar to "Beaver Typewriter Ribbon Box – Not A Tin" will work fine.

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