

Honus Wagner baseball card sells for record \$2.35 million

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Mona Lisa of Baseball Trading Cards Now Owned by Private California Sports Collector

MISSION VIEJO, Ca. - A private California sports collector has paid a record-shattering \$2.35 million for the legendary T206 Honus Wagner baseball card, long recognized by collectors and industry experts as the most famous and valuable baseball card in existence, it was announced at a Dodger Stadium news conference. The card is now owned by the private California sports collector and renowned sports card and memorabilia auction company SCP Auctions Inc., a minority partner.

The Wagner card, which has nearly doubled in price three of the previous four times it has changed hands in the past 20 years, last sold for \$1.265 million in 2000. The card once was owned by Wayne Gretzky and Bruce McNall. It also was once the top prize in a national contest conducted by Wal-Mart.

"We are overjoyed to be able to join in partnership in the ownership of this unique collectible," said David Kohler, president and CEO of SCP Auctions. "The T206 Honus Wagner card is the most iconic object in the field of baseball card collecting. It has been dubbed 'The Mona Lisa of all trading cards,' and its legacy has transcended popular culture. This example is the finest specimen by a wide margin among the limited population of T206 Wagners known to exist."

The legacy of the T206 Honus Wagner Card dates to its creation and initial release by the American Tobacco Company in 1909 as part of a series that included more than 500 different cards. T206 tobacco cards are among the most widely collected, popular and sought after cards among current collectors.

It is estimated that only 50-60 examples of the T206 Wagner have surfaced. Numerous myths have been perpetuated and debated during the course of the last century as to the reason for its scarcity. One of the prevailing theories is that Wagner, one of the premier players in the history of baseball, insisted that he be paid by the tobacco company for the use of his image, causing the production of his card to be halted. A more common and well-documented theory is that Wagner simply did not want children to be influenced into buying tobacco products just to get a "picture" of him, and thus forced the early withdrawal of his image on this principle. The volumes that have been written and countless tales that have been spun make the T206 Wagner card a part of classic American Folklore.

The card has been graded NM-MT 8 by Professional Sports Authenticator (PSA), the nation's foremost third-party card grading service. PSA has authenticated, graded and encapsulated 28 of the known T206 Wagner cards. Of those, only three have earned grades of 4 (VG-EX) or better, three examples earned 3 (VG) status, with the remainder garnering grades of either a 1 or 2 due to substantial wear or significant physical imperfections.

"Whether it's the Hope Diamond, the Inverted Jenny (stamp), the Mona Lisa, or the 1933 Double Eagle (coin), every collectibles or antiques field has its definitive object," said Dan Imler, managing director of SCP Auctions. "This example of the T206 Honus Wagner is universally recognized as the ultimate baseball card treasure. It is always difficult to place a dollar value on items of such singular importance. In 2000, it came to be known as 'The Million Dollar Card.' Someday it may be referred to as 'The Ten Million Dollar Card.'"

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