

Designing Your Own Lapel Pin

Have you ever thought of designing your own lapel pin? It is not as hard as you might think. You could do one for your local minor league sports team, for your non profit organization, for your company, for a family reunion or you can do a special interest type of pin for yourself. Before you even start thinking about producing a pin, you have to determine if there will be a demand for the pin design that you have in mind. This involves doing extensive research among the people and/or organizations that you are associated with and also consulting with family members and friends who might share your passion for this type of venture.

Since 1987, the Winnipeg Pin Collectors Club has been designing a different club pin every single year, each with a Manitoba theme. The pin club's 20th Anniversary pin will feature a cute little black bear cub standing up on its hind legs with its front paws resting on the trunk of a tree. To keep the costs down, our club has ordered 300 of these pins. For anyone considering ordering pins, 200 pins is probably the minimum quantity that you should consider. Anything less than that would be very expensive.



The size of the pin is also very important. Our club used to order one inch pins in the past but this proved to be too small. In the last few years, we have chosen either the 1 ¼ inch or 1 ½ inch sizes which has turned out to be an ideal size for our purposes. You don't want the pin to be too small (less than an inch) or too big (2 inches or more). The larger the pin the more details can be seen but also the more it will cost.

Selection of the various colours for the pin is very important. The more vibrant the colours, the more likely that the pin will appeal to a wider range of people. A pin manufacturer will normally allow you 4 colours for a standard pin. If you choose more colours, it will cost you more.

Pin designs that are square, triangular or rectangular are often not as interesting as pins that are cut out and/or are 3D. Although cut out and/or 3D pins do cost more, they tend to have more appeal to the average person.

Pins can be made using various manufacturing methods. The most popular methods are soft enamel and cloissone. The pin club uses the soft enamel method for all its pins. Olympic pins are often made in either soft enamel or cloisonné.

Once you have selected a pin design, manufacturing method, pin size, pin colours and the quantity you need, then you must select a pin manufacturer. There are a lot of good companies out there. Shop around for best price and best quality. Whichever company you choose, please make sure that you see samples of their work and that you obtain at least three references.

Some of the pins that I have personally designed in the past include:



(a) 25th anniversary pin of Don and Dana Starkell's world famous 12,181 mile canoe journey from Winnipeg to Belem, Brazil (a city of 1,330,000 located at the mouth of the Amazon River which is where this mighty river empties into the Atlantic Ocean). Don wrote an internationally acclaimed best selling book titled "**Paddle to the Amazon**" that outlined their two year journey to the Amazon which was fraught with many dangers. Some of the many dangers that the Starkells faced included disease, wild animals, insects, starvation, drug dealers, storms, unfriendly and very aggressive police and military personnel from several Central and South American countries, savage sea storms etc. Only 500 of these limited edition pins were made.

(b) In 1986, I discovered that there weren't any historical pins available that reflected my interest in the Napoleonic time period. It was at that time that I decided to design my own lapel pins using historical paintings and drawings as reference material.

Since I am an avid historian and lapel pin collector, I decided to spare no expense in producing limited edition lapel pins of the highest quality which would feature mounted soldiers and famous personages in action poses.

The 9 pin set includes: Pin # 1 of a **Polish Lancer** who fought at the 1812 Battle of Borodino; Pin # 2 of the **Duke of Wellington**; Pin # 3 of a **Scots Grey** who fought at the 1815 Battle of Waterloo; Pin # 4 of

Napoleon; Pin # 5 of **Marshal Murat** who was also the King of Naples; Pin # 6 of **Marshal Ney** of France who fought at the Battle of Moscow in 1812 and the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Napoleon called him the "bravest of the brave"; Pins # 7 and # 8 of a **British Hussar** (comes in both large and small sizes) who fought against the French in Spain from 1808 to 1814 and Pin # 9 of

a **Chasseurs a Cheval** who was one of Napoleon's Guard Cavalry and fought at the 1805 Battle of Austerlitz. Between 200 and 500 of each style of these very rare limited edition pins were made.



I hope the above article might encourage some of you to consider designing some of your own lapel pins. If I can be of any assistance in this regard, please feel free to contact me at the following address:

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