

The Saint Emilion or the Faber Castell ??

I suspect, like many of you, my family tolerate my collecting passion as an eccentric but harmless past time. However, "dad's expensive bits of old wood" must never become an eyesore and stay out of sight. Although one rather marvellous boxed Syke's set, complete with two boxwood proofing rules, is allowed to grace the hallows of our lounge. So the item on "*Slide Rule Storage*" in issue 13 of the Skid Stick struck a chord with me!

For new or aspiring collectors I recommend discarded cardboard wine boxes. The "6-pack" versions, especially if they still have their handy dividers, cost nothing and are ideal for storing the most commonly sized rules - 25-30cm linear models. In the beginning a collection can swell rapidly - later one learns to be a little more discerning. With wine boxes you can fool prying eyes on just how many new items you have recently acquired. However, for the serious and determined collector this recommendation comes with a health warning. As soon as any collection reaches three figures, the repeated freeing up of new boxes can endanger the liver - "*aha, once that last Saint Emilion is drunk, I have somewhere for that new set of Faber Castell's.*"

I saved my liver and moved on from wine boxes to multi-purpose utility boxes. Plastic or reinforced cardboard versions can be found in most high street household stores. The beauty of such storage boxes is the range of sizes they come in - including extra deep for LOGA-style 28cm discs. Besides being inexpensive, you can also see what they contain and they are built to stack neatly - remember tidiness can hide a multitude of "sinful" acquisitions! A worthwhile refinement for this storage solution is to number your items according to categories. I have preallocated a respectable (actually highly hopeful) series for: (i) <20cm linear, (ii) 20-39cm linear, (iii) 40-60cm linear, circular <15cm, (iv) data slides, (v) outsize/miscellaneous, (vi) demonstration/wall models. This way, when looking for a particular item, its size or shape immediately rules out (no pun intended) some boxes and avoids the endless rummaging when all items are just numbered sequentially.

My final tip is based on idea from a fellow Dutch collector, Otto van Poelje. My carefully stacked storage boxes now house a fair sized collection. The downside is that they are not on display for anyone to see- surely part of the enjoyment for any collector? I recommend designating part of a bookcase or better still invest in a small display cabinet to show off selected items. I find redoing my private exhibition every 3 - 4 months lets me enjoy some of my more prized items without arousing too much suspicion; "*oh that thing, I have had that for years!*"