



BESTTM
IN CLASS

HERITAGE AUCTIONS

Welcome to Heritage Best-In-Class (B-I-C)

Our Mission Statement:

To identify, certify and showcase collectibles that exhibit exceptional qualities within their given grade or category.

The sports collectibles market continues to evolve as hobbyists become more sophisticated and discerning. Veteran buyers have always been willing to pay premiums for collectibles that rise above the rest within a specific grade or category when those collectibles exhibit extraordinary eye appeal, or other elite attributes.

As the collectibles market matures, this practice becomes increasingly evident. When new participants enter the collectibles world, however, they might not have the experience or knowledge to decipher the difference, especially when two items share the same technical third-party assessment. This not only causes confusion, but it also hinders buyer confidence.

What Heritage aims to provide through our Best-In-Class services and collective expertise, is to help document superior quality so the special recognition can live with the item eternally, in hopes of unlocking its full potential value.

How does an item achieve Best-In-Class status?

Best-In-Class is not intended to be thought of as “singular” identification, or only limited to a lone representative in its category. While that will be the case in certain instances and Best-In-Class membership is designed to be exclusive, the goal of our system is to reward all items that qualify and stand out amongst their peers.

Most importantly, the Best-In-Class designation is defined differently within each collectible category. There is no one-size-fits-all formula. What constitutes “exceptional” differs from collectible type to collectible type and accurate assessment for each kind requires expansive and diverse expertise. The Heritage team offers over 100 years of combined, professional experience in the sports collectibles industry.

Context will be the key when reviewing each item. Best-In-Class evaluation is not the exercise of comparing a 1957 Topps Bill Russell card to one of his 1961 Fleer cards or a George Brett game-used bat from 1976 against one from 1993. Any of the aforementioned items can reach Best-In-Class status if they possess the requisite combination of attributes.

The following examples provides Best-In-Class guidelines, by category, so collectors can get a sense for what drives the core of our analysis.

Trading Cards

Here, the exercise is not comparing the eye appeal of a 1948 Bowman card to a 1955 Topps card, nor is it the process of comparing a 1955 Topps Ted Williams to a 1955 Topps Roberto Clemente. It is also not the practice of comparing an VG-EX 4 to a NM-MT 8 example of the same card.

The test for Best-In-Class is precise when it comes to cards. We are evaluating how one example of a particular card stacks up against others in the exact same grade.

The higher you climb the grading scale, however, the more difficult achieving Best-In-Class will become because we expect high-grade cards to naturally possess attractive aesthetics. The vital question is, "Does the card stand out amongst its peers from an aesthetic perspective?" The more visually attractive the pool of card contestants is, the harder it is for one to be noticed.

The caliber of a card's centering, registration, color, print quality, gloss, surface, and more are all important when it comes to evaluating eye appeal. One could argue this eye-appeal factor is even more germane in the lower half of the grading scale than it is in the top half since wide variances in appearance are more common in that range.

The greater the potential number of defects, the bigger impact those defects can have on a card's eye appeal. This provides ample opportunity for cards with exceptional eye appeal to stand out in lower-to-mid grades.

For cards, Best-In-Class status is primarily a reflection of its beauty at arm's length, which is how most collectors view and enjoy their cards, rather than an analytical conclusion about its technical grade.

Game-Used Bats

When it comes to professional model bats, eye appeal (which means something entirely different in this collectible category than it does in cards) is only one of the factors considered. Best-In-Class status is reserved, mostly, for high-grade examples. Attributes including the strength of a bat's player characteristics, evidence of use, provenance, historical importance, era, and scarcity are examples of relevant factors, to go along with eye appeal.

Many of these potential traits are also considered when third-party services render their grading opinion, yet wide variances in overall appeal do exist, even at the top of the bat grading scale. Not all high-grade gamers are created equal, and the Best-In-Class process is a way of separating the very best of the best from the rest, with a bat connoisseur's eye in mind.

Vintage Photos

While there are potential exceptions, Type I photos will be a virtual requirement for Best-In-Class consideration. They are, far and away, the most desirable Type on the photo classification scale.

All the photo's additional attributes, including but not limited to condition, content (the subject of the photo), context (the circumstances surrounding the subject), clarity, and contrast are relevant to the Best-In-Class assessment.

Other Sports Collectibles and Memorabilia

For all other types of sports collectibles and memorabilia, from game-worn jerseys to unopened material to display pieces; the key, universal question to remember is, "What makes a collectible exceptional within the specific category?"

Once again, these are mere examples of the thought process, so collectors have a better understanding of what the Best-In-Class designation does, and does not, mean.

What is included in the Best-In-Class service?

- **Best-In-Class Letter of Opinion (LOO) or Certificate of Opinion (COO)**

The LOO will not only summarize why Best-In-Class status was achieved but also include high-resolution images of the exact item certified for reference. Furthermore, each letter will feature a unique alphanumeric serial number that can be used to confirm the collectible's Best-In-Class status in the database.

- For encapsulated items such as trading cards and tickets, a pre-printed Best-In-Class Certificate will be issued with the aforementioned alphanumeric serial number, but the Best-In-Class summary and high-resolution images will be found in the online database only.

- **Best-In-Class Sticker**

A tamper-evident sticker will be affixed to either the item (if encapsulated by a third-party service) or the LOO. The security feature of the sticker will prevent unscrupulous individuals from removing it and affixing it to other items.

- **Best-In-Class Database Registration**

All Best-In-Class certified items will be registered into a database that is accessible online.

- **Best-In-Class Online Verification**

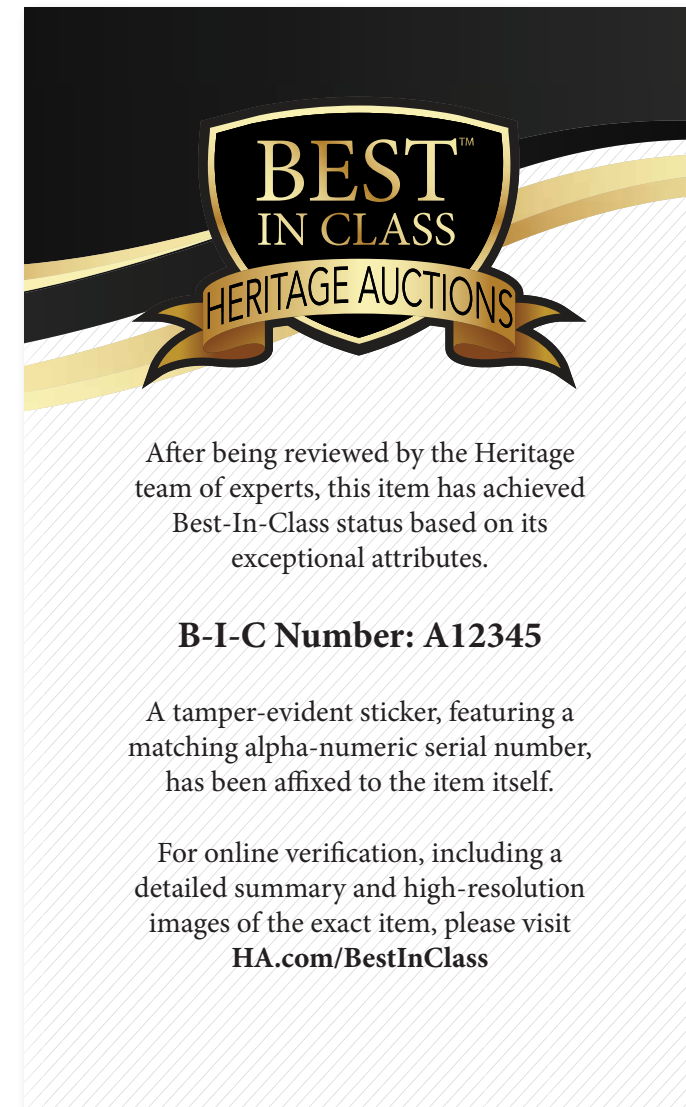
All Best-In-Class items can be verified online by inputting the unique alphanumeric certification number found on each certificate, letter or sticker..

- **Best-In-Class Online Showcase**

Once an item is registered into the Best-In-Class database and ready for cert verification, it automatically becomes part of an online showcase. Each Best-In-Class item will receive its own page, which will include the assessment summary found on the printed letter and high-resolution images of, and in support of, the item.

- **Make-Offer-to-Owner (MOTO) Program**

Submitters of the items have the choice of opting into our "Make Offer to Owner" (MOTO) program if they want to be notified of interest in their items and review inbound offers. Keep in mind that owners remain anonymous even if they opt into the program.



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B-I-C Certification Number: A12345

After being reviewed by the Heritage team of experts, the following item has achieved Best-In-Class status based on its exceptional attributes:

PSA/DNA GU 10, 1924-25 Ty Cobb Game-Used Bat

A tamper-evident sticker, featuring the matching alpha-numeric serial number noted above, has been affixed to this document.

Best-In-Class Expert Analysis/Summary:

In the realm of Ty Cobb gamers known, this bat remains one of the hobby's finest overall examples. It combines extraordinary player characteristics, including Cobb's trademark tape application along the handle (which is entirely intact and darkened from extensive use) and cleat marks that are visible along the barrel, with a level of provenance that not only sheds light on its origin but also helps tell a story about Cobb's relationship with a noteworthy baseball family.

This bat is accompanied by a letter of provenance from the grandson (John Pflueger) of former major leaguer Luke Sewell, brother of Hall of Famer Joe Sewell. The relationship between the Sewell family and Cobb is well documented. Sewell is quoted in *The Man In The Dugout*, a 1977 book authored by Donald Honig. While commenting on the changes in the game, including the difference in bat construction over time, Sewell would say, "You see, the bat changed. I've got one that Ty Cobb gave me years ago, and you can see the difference. Those bats didn't have big ends on them; the weight was more evenly distributed, with bigger handles and smaller barrels than what you've got today."

The quality of the provenance is only surpassed by the immense eye appeal the bat offers due to its Cobb-specific modifications, degree of use, and stellar state of preservation. This bat checks all the relevant boxes for the astute collector.

For online verification, which includes high-resolution images of this exact item, please visit [HA.com/BestInClass](https://www.ha.com/BestInClass)



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B-I-C Certification Number: A12345

After being reviewed by the Heritage team of experts, the following item has achieved Best-In-Class status based on its exceptional attributes:

1889 Cap Anson/Buck Ewing "Burke Ale" Beer Poster

A tamper-evident sticker, featuring the matching alpha-numeric serial number noted above, has been affixed to this document.

Best-In-Class Expert Analysis/Summary:

If you asked experienced sports advertising enthusiasts to create a list of premier pieces, this 1889 Cap Anson/Buck Ewing "Burke Ale" poster would undoubtedly rank near or at the very top. In fact, its appeal and historical importance extend beyond sports in general. At the time of this writing, this poster symbolizes the first time a baseball player was paid to endorse any kind of product, alcohol-related or otherwise. Guinness Brewery was able to secure the two biggest stars of the American Association in Cap Anson and Buck Ewing to help promote their "Finest Pale Ale" and "Extra Foreign Stout" products under the "E & J. Burke" label, a controversial move at the time.

The combination of the Guinness brand, star player endorsement, and the stunning stone lithography by Wagner & Co. Lithographers, resulted in one of the most significant visual treasures ever produced in the advertising world. Only a handful of these 18"-by-24" (unframed) posters have been discovered, and this example is, without question, the finest of the few known by a wide margin. While the poster was professionally cleaned many years ago, it has not been restored in any way, which is miraculous considering its condition. The beautiful graphics alone make this poster exceptional in its category, but its added value as a time capsule for America's National Pastime and society itself cements its place in the upper echelon of vintage advertising pieces.

For online verification, which includes high-resolution images of this exact item, please visit [HA.com/BestInClass](https://www.ha.com/BestInClass)



**For more information, or
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