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# ***The Sarawak Philatelist***

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## **Philatelic Society of Kuching, Sarawak**

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**For members only**



## Extreme Philately Top 2024 Releases

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### INTRODUCTION

We list the top 10 (and three runners-up) for the most unusual stamps of 2024. See our listing for 2023 (Das and Gee, 2024).

Our criteria are innovation as well as aesthetics. These include: the longest stamp(s), a stamp with glitter, a stamp that smells of menthol, a stamp printed on beer mat material, one like a jig-saw puzzle, a laser-cut stamp, stamps that resemble a deck of playing cards, in addition to stamps printed with gold foil, embroidered on cloth, silk paper or wood.

Congratulations are due to all postal agencies in the list for these ‘extreme’ issues!

We thank Rahul Das for his edits of the manuscript.

### REFERENCES

Das, I. & G.V.A. Gee. 2024. Extreme philately. Top 2023 releases. *Journal of the Philatelic Society of Kuching, Sarawak* 16(2):35–43.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Position: Singapore. Together, As One United People (Jigsaw Puzzle)



On 1 August 2024, SingPost, the postal authority of Singapore, issued a souvenir sheet of four se-tenant stamps, with a face value of Singapore Dollars (S\$) 2, in jigsaw format. It was on the occasion of the island nation's 59th Independence Anniversary. 'Singapore Together, As One United People' was the theme, the issue produced using offset lithography printing on unwatermarked paper. Sheetlet dimension is 101 mm x 91 mm and perforation is 13. The design is by Lim An-ling and the printer is Secura Singapore Pte Ltd.



**9<sup>th</sup> Position: Malaysia. Year of the Dragon (Gold Foil)**



Under Pos Malaysia's SetemKu (personalized) stamp programme is a semi-official philatelic sheetlet commemorating the Chinese Year of the Dragon, released on 6 February 2024.

The sheetlet of five Malaysian 60 sen stamps incorporates gold foil printing. Also sold over the counter in post offices across the nation where philatelic products are on offer were a greeting card and five different envelopes with stamps. The set retails for Ringgit Malaysian (RM) 28.

**8<sup>th</sup> Position: Joint holders– Philippines. Simbang Gabi Sa Ilog Pasig and Sri Lanka. Kandy Esala Perahera) (Longest Stamps)**



Two philatelic issues from 2024 are tied at this spot — Sri Lanka’s Kandy Esala Perahera and Simbang Gabi Sa Ilog Pasig from the Philippines.

The Esala Perahera festival commemorative from the Sri Lankan Post was issued on 20 August 2024. It measures 205 mm x 30 mm. One of the oldest festivals in the world, it is held in July/August in the city of Kandy, where thousands of Kandyan dancers, drummers, whip-crackers and fire-eaters, accompanied by around 100 elephants, parade the streets. The largest of the pachyderm carries the sacred tooth relic, taken from Buddha’s funeral pyre, about 2,500 years ago. The stamp has a face value of Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR) 500, and 300,000 were issued.

The issue by PhilPost, the Philippine Postal Corporation, exceeded the aforementioned release by Sri Lanka. On 29 November 2024, its Christmas stamp measures 234 mm x 40 mm. Entitled ‘Simbang Gabi Sa Ilog Pasig’ (Christmas Dawn Masses along Pasig River), it was held coinciding with the simultaneous Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Kartilya ng Katipunan (City Hall Park). Designed by Gelo Andres of Renacimiento Manila, it features iconic churches along the Pasig River (Binondo, Quiapo, Manila Cathedral, Santa Ana, San Felipe Neri, San Pedro Macati, Guadalupe, Pasig and Antipolo). It was printed using the four colors process, in addition to blue iridescent ink (on the river) and suprametal-multilevel embossing (on churches). Currently the longest stamp in the world, it has a face value of Philippines Peso (₱) 200.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Position: Mongolia. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Mongol Bank (Silk)



On 2 June 2024, Mongolia Post issued a souvenir sheet with a single stamp of face value Mongolian Tögrög (MT) 12,000. The sheet is printed on silk in both perforate and imperforate versions, and the issue commemorates the 100th Anniversary of the Mongol Bank.

The painting depicts the decree of Mongolia's most famous son, Kublai Khan (1215–1294), and also appears on the cover of the financial newsmagazine, Mongolian Economy.

The ebook is viewable at the following official website:  
<https://mongolianeconomy.mn/en/%D0%B1%D2%AF%D1%82%D1%8D%D1%8D%D0%B3%D0%B4%D1%8D%D1%85%D2%AF%D2%AF%D0%BD/100th-anniversary-edition-of-the-modern-banking-system-in-mongolia>.



**6<sup>th</sup> Position: Liechtenstein. 40<sup>th</sup> Years of Women Suffrage (Embroidered)**



Liechtenstein's postal authority is well known for its use of innovative technologies. On 3 June 2024, Liechtensteinische Post AG issued a Swiss Franc (CHF) 9.50 stamp entitled '40 Years of Women Suffrage'. It may come as a surprise to many that until 1984, women in Liechtenstein were excluded from the right to vote in the country's elections – an inequity that is acknowledged in this stamp.

The item is embroidered on cloth with simple red letterings. A total of 25,000 pieces were produced by Hämmerle & Vogel GmbH & Co KG, Lustenau, based on the design by Peter Vogel, and it measures 49 x 60 mm.



**5<sup>th</sup> Position: Hong Kong. Year of the Dragon  
(Laser-cut and Hotfoil Stamping)**



Hongkong Post's annual Chinese zodiac issue for 2024 pertains to the "Year of the Dragon", and was released on 5 January 2024. The special issue was the Dragon Souvenir Sheet. Also released was the Gold and Silver Stamp Sheetlet (Rabbit/Dragon), the Gold and Silver Stamp Sheetlet (complete collectible set), in addition to the regular set of four stamps.

The Hong Kong Dollar (HK\$) 50 stamp sheetlet illustrated here is a laser-cut paper stamp sheetlet that creates a dragon silhouette, in addition to a hotfoil stamping feature.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Position: Austria. Beer Coaster (Beer Coaster Mat Card Paper)



On 10 October 2024, PostAG, also known as Österreichische Post, the Austrian postal agency, issued a €3.50 cardboard souvenir sheet celebrating the favourite beverage of the nation — beer. Designed by David Gruber and printed in offset and intaglio by Variuscard Produktions and Handels GmbH, the stamp measures 38 mm x 51 mm, the selvage area producing a sheet size of 100 x 100 mm.

For the issue, Austria Post used authentic beer coaster material of wood pulp cardboard, requiring multiple printing processes to also permit a 1.4 mm thickness, necessary for die-cutting of the gummed stamp. A tactile relief varnish enhances the beer bubbles, another innovative design of the stamp.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Position: Morocco. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of King Mohamed  
(Printed on Wood and Laser-cut)**



On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of King Mohamed VI, Poste Maroc, the postal agency of the Kingdom of Morocco, issued on 30 July 2024 a stamp and souvenir sheet (illustrated here) that show three special features- a wooden (oak veneer wood) stamp with gold foil and laser-cut.

Aside from the image of King Mohamed VI (1963–) himself on the 50,000 Moroccan Dirham stamp are several images on the selvage of the sheetlet, including the nation's location within the African continent, and major national achievement, such as the Morocco-Nigeria Gas Pipeline, the Mohammed VI Tower, the Grand Theater of Rabat, the Mohammed VI Football Academy and the Agadir desalination plant.



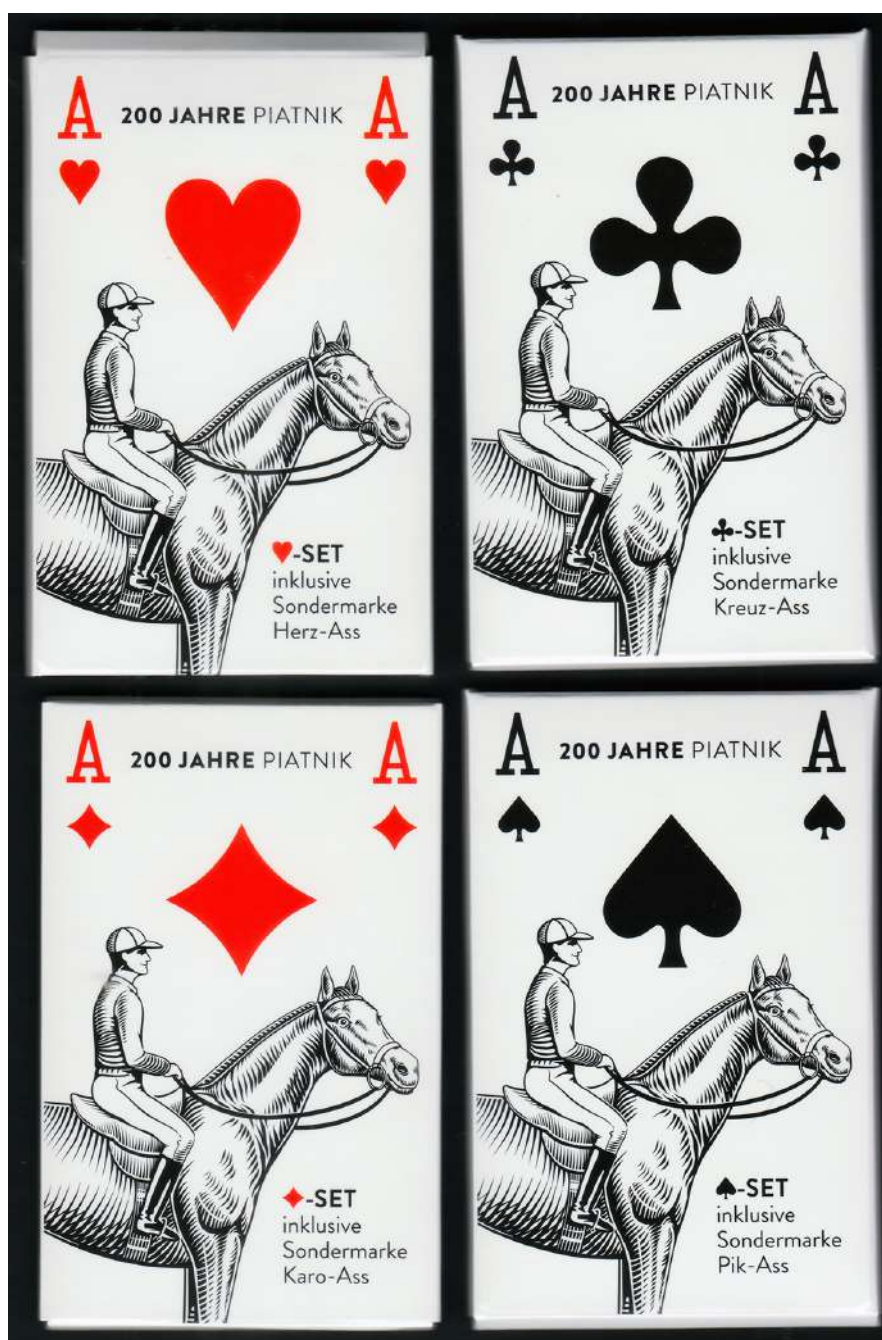
**2<sup>nd</sup> Position: Thailand. Valentine’s Day, Symbol of Love (Glitter)**



After completing a decade of philatelic releases of aromatic flower stamps, on 7 February 2024, Thailand Post issued a week before Valentine’s Day, a souvenir sheet of 20 Baht face value. Entitled “Symbol of Love”, it was produced using offset lithography, and features a rose brooch. The same was endorsed by Her Royal Highness Sirivannavari Nariratana Rajakanya (1987–), and named “Rosa Bhubing”, translating to “Love at First Sight Gradient Brooch”.

The original brooch is composed of sapphires adorned with diamonds and emeralds at the flower base. The sheetlet also has a QR code that links to the Thailand Post Website.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Position: Austria. Playing Card (Playing Cards Format)



PostAG, the Austrian postal agency, gets 2024's top-most rank in this list for the most innovative, aesthetic and relevant issue. The set's release date is 23 May 2024. Designed by Marion Füllerer and offset printed by Variuscard (a leading printer of plastic cards), the stamps are sized 43 mm x 53.5 mm, with a face value of €4.50 each, only being available in sets. The series, entitled '200 Year Anniversary of Piatnik' commemorates the card painter Ferdinand Piatnik (1819–1885) of Vienna, whose card painting business was founded in 1824, and is still in existence as the Viennese Playing Card Factory Ferd. Piatnik & Sons.

## Runners-Ups

### 4<sup>th</sup> Runner-Up: Indonesia. Chickens and Ducks (Plastic Holographic Printing)



On 29 November 2024, Post Indonesia issued a plastic holographic souvenir sheet that produces a three-dimensional effect, to commemorate China 2024 – Asian International Stamp Exhibition, Shanghai. The plastic sheetlet contained two circular foiled stamps of face value Indonesian Rupiah (Rp) 20,000 (x 2). Each has a perforation of 13.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Runner-Up: Austria. Menthol Smelling (Scented)



Another release from PostAG makes the list as an honorable mention. Issued on 18 September 2024, the single stamp is once again designed by Marion Füllerer and printed by Joh. Enschedé Stamps B.V. Printing. The stamp is offset printed and measures 42 mm x 29 mm.

Entitled “Diana with Menthol”, it commemorates the preparation and use of Franzbranntwein rubbing alcohol, which has been in use for over 125 years. The logo of the company features Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt, with a bow and arrow, symbolizing vitality as well as a connection with nature.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-Up: Spain. Discoverers of Oceania. Toribio Asensio de Salazar  
(Wood Paper)**



Continuing Correos' (Sociedad Estatal de Correos y Telégrafos, S.A., the Spanish Post) series entitled "Discoverers of Oceania", the stamp printed on wood-paper for 2024 commemorates Toribio Asensio de Salazar (?–1526). A Spanish navigator of Castilian origin, de Salazar was the first Westerner to arrive on the Marshall Islands on 21 August 1526.

It was released on 25 September 2024 and has a face value of €3.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-Up: Portugal. Pinhal de Rei (Pine Wood Dust)



On 31 July 2024, CTT – Correios de Portugal, S.A. (Correios, Telégrafos e Telefones), the postal authority of Portugal, issued a souvenir sheet printed with pine wood dust ink. Its design is by Hélder Soares of Unidesign, and its printer is Cartor, which used offset printing.

Sheet dimensions are 125 x 95 mm, and the indicated face value is €3.50. The title of the release is 'Pinhal do Rei'. A coastal forest comprising maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*), it is located on the coastal dunes to the south of the River Lis.