ABSTRACT

A storage device for packaged collectibles permits a plurality of collectibles, pre-packaged within a clear acrylic envelope or blister and secured to an elongated, thin cardboard backing, to be stored and displayed in a secure manner within a plurality of elongate, vertically oriented, open-ended retaining channels. The retaining channels provide for the easy insertion and removal of the collectible from either end of the channel and allows at least three collectibles and their manufacturers packaging to be retained therein solely by friction.
STORAGE AND DISPLAY RACK FOR PACKAGED COLLECTIBLES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to a device for the safe storage and clear display of collectibles, such as die cast automobiles or the like, while still within their original unopened packaging.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] It is common that many miniatures come protectively packaged in a clear, generally transparent acrylic blister, which is affixed to an elongated cardboard display backing. The transparent blister allows a clear view of the miniature while the face of the backing generally identifies the name, edition and production number of the miniature.

[0003] This type of packaging has presented some difficulty for collectors in both the storage and display of these collectibles without either the eventual deterioration of the display backing or the need to remove the collectible entirely from the manufacturers’ packaging for adequate display.

[0004] Collectors of such miniatures such as die cast automobiles, determine the value of a specific item by the condition of both the packaging and the miniature. As a consequence there is a need for a storage and display device that will readily secure the package containing the collectible in an aspect which presents a series of collectible miniatures for viewing while also protecting the package backing from unnecessary wear and deterioration.

[0005] Advantageously, many collectors wish a display device capable of holding a large quantity of items, either the variants a single item, or as an example, the annual production of miniature die cast automobiles of a single type such as Hotwheels™ which could reasonably be expected to be between 120-160 items.

[0006] Further the storage and display device should hold the collectibles firmly to allow the display device to be relocated without loss of the items retained therein.

[0007] In the prior art the applicant is aware of U.S. Pat. No. 5,772,054 which issued Jun. 30, 1998 to Potter for a Display Rack, wherein the rack comprises a plurality of horizontally aligned ‘J’ channels attached to vertical support members. The vertical support members may then be secured to a wall. Blister packages are supported for display by the rack by first inserting the elongated cardboard display backing beneath an upper channel and resting the blister package within a lower channel.

[0008] The applicant is also aware of U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,799,791 and 5,370,223 which store collectibles only once the collectibles are removed from the manufacturers’ packaging.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The storage device for packaged collectibles according to the present invention permits a plurality of collectibles, pre-packaged within a clear acrylic envelope or blister and secured to an elongated, thin cardboard backing, to be stored and displayed in a secure manner within a plurality of elongate, vertically oriented, open-ended retaining channels. The retaining channels provide for the easy insertion and removal of the collectible from either end of the channel and allows at least three collectibles and their manufacturers packaging to be retained therein solely by friction.

[0010] In summary, the storage device for packaged collectibles, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention may be characterized as including:

[0011] (a) a generally rectangular backing plate which may be removably affixed to a wall or the like by suitable fastening means including screws, double-sided tape, or the like

[0012] (b) at least one pair of elongate package retaining rails mounted on a forward face of the backing member.

[0013] The pair of rails are spaced apart, parallel vertical rails affixed to the backing member, wherein each rail may have an ‘L’ or ‘T’ shaped cross-section or other shape defining a vertical groove between the rail and the backing member. The rails may be either integrally formed with or affixed to the forward face of the backing member, collectively referred herein as being mounted to the backing. Each adjacent pair of rails provides a pair of opposed facing grooves. The grooves for each pair of adjacent rails form an elongate retaining slot or channel which allows the laterally opposite edges of the cardboard display backing of the collectibles’ manufactured packaging to be inserted and retained on the slot or channel. Advantageously, each groove formed by the rails is sized so as to accommodate snugly a sandwich of a plurality of the edges of the backing members for example equal to the thickness of three overlapping cardboard display backing members.

[0014] A primary backing plate, of generally rectangular configuration, may have an edge contoured similarly to an edge of the elongated, thin cardboard backing member comprising a portion of the collectible packaging. One or more secondary backing plates having generally parallel, non-contoured edges may be abutted to primary backing plate to form a vertical contiguous array of backing plates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. 1, is a front perspective view of a primary backing plate of the storage and display rack according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a secondary backing plate of the rack according to the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 3 is an enlarged view taken on line 3-3 of FIG. 2.

[0018] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the racks of FIGS. 1 and 2 assembled into a vertical array of plates having cooperating slots.

[0019] FIG. 5 is an enlarged partially cut away perspective view illustrating two collectible packages inserted into a slot of the rack of FIG. 1.

[0020] FIG. 6 illustrates in side elevation, a typical overlapping of a plurality of collectible packages, overlapping within the slot of FIG. 5, partially cut away so that the sandwiching of the packages in the slot may be seen.
[0021] FIG. 7 is an enlarged partially cut away sectional view taken on line 7-7 in FIG. 6.

[0022] FIG. 8 is an enlarged view of a portion of FIG. 6.

[0023] FIG. 9 is, collectively, the racks of FIGS. 1 and 2 almost completed filled with collectible packages suspended between the vertical rails.

[0024] FIG. 10 is a front elevation view of a collectible package.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

[0025] With reference to the drawing figures, wherein similar characters of reference denote corresponding parts in each view, storage and display rack 10 includes a primary backing plate 12 and one or more secondary backing plates 14. Backing plates 12 and 14 may be manufactured from plastic, acrylic or other suitable lightweight rigid or semi-rigid material and may be generally rectangular in shape. Rack 10 may be removably fastened to a wall 18 or the like by any suitable fastening means such as screws or double-sided tape (not illustrated). Backing plates 12 and 14 respectively may be placed snugly together where lower edge 12b of plate 12 abuts with upper edge 14a of plate 14 to provide a vertically aligned array of backing plates. A user may add additional secondary plates 14 to the array as found necessary to extend the height of the rack.

[0026] Primary backing plate 12 may have its upper edge 12a contoured as shown at 20 so as to emulate the shape of the manufacturers packaging for the collectible item or to simply provide an eye-appealing shape. Secondary plates 14, of course, need no such contouring and generally have parallel upper and lower edges.

[0027] Backing plates 12 and 14 have one or more package retaining devices 24, in the form of a several pairs of laterally spaced apart parallel rails 28. Rails 28 may be manufactured from transparent acrylic and affixed to the backing plates 12 and 14 respectively. Rails 28a affixed adjacent to side edges 12c and 14c of backing plates 12 and 14 respectively are generally an inverted ‘T’ shape while intermediate rails 28b may be a single ‘T’ shaped rail. Although as illustrated by way of example in FIG. 7 as composed of two separate L-shaped rail components, this is not intended to be limiting as it is understood that the T-shaped rail may be a single unitary component. By affixing rails 28a and 28b to backing plates 12 and 14 along the respective distal ends 30 of the generally vertical arms 34, an elongate recess or groove 38 is formed between flanges 28c on rails 28 and the respective backing plate. The opposed facing recesses between a pair of rails, for example rails 28a and 28b, forms a longitudinal retaining slot 42 within which several packages 44 having the collectible item within a blister 45 may be inserted. Rails 28 are preferably transparent so that details identifying the collectible that is normally located on the face 48a of cardboard display backing member 48 near it’s edge, can be clearly seen.

[0028] As may be seen in FIGS. 6 to 8, when four such packages 44a-44d are inserted in direction A within a retaining slot 42, at least three packages 44b-44d will overlap the cardboard display backing 48 of the initially inserted package 44a thereby sandwiching in a firm frictional engagement the overlapped series of packages within recess 38, and in particular an overlapped portion of maximum thickness 49 where the four backings 48 overlap one on top of the other.

[0029] Flange 28e defines a stand-off distance S between it and backing 48. If T is the thickness of each backing member 44a, 44b, 44c and 44d, then the number N of backings 48 that will snugly fit into slot 42, that is, into a groove 38 equal is S/T; that is, S=NT. As seen in FIG. 10, backing 48 may in one embodiment be a card having an overall length dimension D3, for example, of 16 cm, of which the length D2 of blister 45 occupies approximately 3/4, that is, approximately 4 cm. Where the cardboard backings 48 are stacked or sandwiched into grooves 38 so as to wedge them vertically within slots 42, the number of backings N equals D2/D3. Thus the ratio of the length D2 of the package backing 48 to the length D3 of the blister 45 occupies at the bottom of backing 48 determines the number backings which may be overlapped, and hence the stand-off distance S of grooves 38.

[0030] A transparent pocket 50 may be provided near upper edge 12a of primary backing member 12, within which the user may choose to keep details of missing collectibles or other data for speedy reference.

[0031] As will be apparent to those skilled in the art in the light of the foregoing disclosure, many alterations and modifications are possible in the practice of this invention without departing from the spirit or scope thereof. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is to be construed in accordance with the substance defined by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A storage and display rack for storing and displaying a package having a flexible backing member and wherein the backing member has a thickness, a height, and a width, and wherein a package compartment is mounted onto the backing member so that an upper surface of the packaging compartment adjacent the backing member is a first length from the lower edge of the backing member and wherein the packaging compartment has compartment width,

said rack comprising:

a pair of rails for mounting to a plate in laterally spaced apart, parallel, vertically extending array wherein each rail of said pair of rails has an elongate flange extending along the length of said rail so that the shape of said rail in lateral cross section defines an elongate groove extending along said length of said rail between said flange and the plate when said rail is mounted to the plate,

and wherein said flange is a stand-off distance from the plate when said rail is mounted to the plate so that said groove has a corresponding stand-off dimension between said flange and said plate, and wherein said flanges on said pair of rails are opposed facing so that said grooves form an opposed facing pair of grooves when said pair of rails are mounted to the plate,

wherein said rails for mounting to the plate are laterally spaced apart so that the width of the backing member fits in sliding engagements snugly within, so as to extend between, said grooves when said rails are mounted to the plate,
and wherein said stand off distance is a multiple of the thickness of the backing member so that exactly a plurality of the thicknesses of the backing member slide in snug frictional engagement within said grooves between said flanges and the plate when said pair of rails are mounted to the plate,

and wherein the number of the plurality of said thicknesses is equal to number of the backing members which, when stacked overlaying one another will snugly fit within said stand off distance of said grooves between said flanges and the plate.

2. The device of claim 1 wherein said flanges extend over said grooves by a lateral dimension not exceeding the width of exposed lateral edges of the backing member, exposed where the lateral edges of the backing member extend laterally from the packaging compartment.

3. The device of claim 1 wherein the ratio of length of the backing member to the first length is substantially equal to said number of the plurality of said thicknesses so that said stand-off distance is substantially equal to said ratio multiplied times the thickness of each of said backing members.

4. The device of claim 3 wherein said rack comprises a plurality of said pairs of rails.

5. The device of claim 4 wherein said plurality of said pairs of rails are a laterally adjacent array of said pairs of rails.

6. The device of claim 5 wherein abutting pairs of said pairs of rails abut along common rails having a pair of said flanges disposed oppositely so as to form oppositely disposed said grooves on either side of said common rails.

7. The device of claim 6 wherein said common rails are T-shaped in lateral cross-section and wherein said rails which are not said common rails are an inverted L-shaped in lateral cross-section.

8. The device of claim 3 wherein said ratio is four.

9. The device of claim 3 wherein said backing plate is modular so that a plurality of said backing plates modularly assemble in abutting vertical array.

10. The device of claim 3 wherein said backing plate includes an upper backing shaped to emulate the shape of a corresponding upper portion of the backing member.

11. The device of claim 3 wherein said backing plate is shaped to emulate the shape of said backing member.

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