

The ChessBaron Guide for Buying Chess Sets

Introduction

This guide is designed to assist the purchase of the right chess set for your needs. It covers weighting, woods and other material, price, size, colour, style, casing and price appreciation. It attempts to ease the process of buying a product amidst the wide choice available.

1. Weighting

More expensive chess pieces have alloy weighting added into the base of each piece to aid stability on the board. Economy chess sets rarely have such weight added because of the time and expense of the process. The advantage is that accidental brushing of pieces with a stray finger or thumb doesn't dislodge a piece so easily from the board.

Budget allowing, a weighted set is well worth the extra price. The set is generally of superior wood and feels much better when playing. The human mind judges the object it's about to move with a certain weight and is constantly surprised with the extra weight. The feeling is one of quality and sustainable pleasure.

Weighting can be double or triple, although there is no real defined standard as to what each of these categories is.

Inexpensive examples of weighted chess pieces:

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-E2009.htm> (double weighted)

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-M2038.htm> (triple weighted)

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-M2037.htm> (triple weighted)

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-M2027.htm> (triple weighted)

Expensive examples of triple weighted chess pieces:

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2053.htm>

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2054.htm>

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2031.htm>

2. Wood and other material

Which material is the best for chess set manufacture. Obviously there is a strong degree of individual preference. Traditionalists prefer wood as the material, but many like metal, stone, bone and marble.

Wood is a living material and can show beautiful strains and colours by polishing. It's ability to be hand carved means that allow weight be added and repairs can be effected. Metal is intrinsically heavy which is generally desirable in good chess pieces. Marble is often regarded by British consumers to be a luxurious material with an element of exotic origin. Bone chess pieces are liked by many in Europe and North America and not so much in the British region.

An example of the beauty of Wood: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2041.htm>

An example of Metal chess pieces: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2026.htm>
An example of Bone chess pieces: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2009.htm>
An example of Marble chess pieces: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-M2046.htm>
An example of stone chess pieces: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-TH2030.htm>

As far as wood is concerned – the woods used are sheesham, rosewood, budrose (also called redwood and bud rosewood) and ebony, with some other woods creeping in to cope with the shortage of some woods. The most expensive wood used in chess manufacture is budrose, closely followed by ebony.

3. Price

Obviously price is one of the main considerations of a purchase. But most households that play chess only have one set in the house. So it's wise to make sure that it's a good set that is going to last some time, even passed to the next generation. Also, it's advisable not to skimp on the price of the board, which is an important part of the chess set experience.

As a rough guide, a decent triple weighted set is going to cost in the region of £150. The board is going to cost around £100 for this price of set.

Here's an example of a superb board for many luxury sets – it's a substantial piece of wood and is as beautiful itself as any set of chess pieces that would grace it: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-B2009.htm>. The board is well worth the money and compliments fine chess pieces superbly.

4. Size

The size of the pieces is something to give some thought to before purchasing. If the diameter of the King is more than 1.75 inches, the overall board size would be 20 inches or so. If your room allows for that size, the size is preferable and is a tournament size set of pieces.

Other sizes that still look great are readily available. Here are some examples: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X3001.htm> (1.4 inch diameter King)
<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X3005.htm> (1.6 inch diameter King, but the height means a smaller board would not result in a crowded board space)
<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-M2036.htm> (1.2 inch diameter King)

If you can have the room for a 20 inch board, the choice of the full size, four inch high King is much preferable. There are also larger Kings, such as this one: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2019.htm> which is nearly 6 inches high and requires a special case.

5. Colour

Demand is fairly evenly matched between the rosewood colours and the black ebony colours. Black is seen as more traditional in chess pieces. Fortunately the board darker colours are made up of darker rosewood that has strains of browns and blacks – so it

matches the colouring of either. Black squares tend to clash with black pieces. Consider the furniture in your home to see which colour pieces would look best.

Here's an example of ebony pieces on a rosewood board:

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2016.htm>

and then an example of Bud Rosewood pieces on a rosewood board:

<http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-X2018.htm>

6. Casing

If the pieces are to remain out for long periods a case may not be needed. But if they are to be placed away for some periods of time or constantly in and out, then a case is needed. There are economical sliding boxes, pine boxes, faux leather boxes, leather boxes and full display style boxes.

Sliding example: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-C2013.htm>

Leatherette example: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-C2017.htm>

Leather example: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-C2018.htm>

Display example: <http://www.chessbaron.co.uk/chess-C2001.htm>

7. Price Appreciation

Obviously in retail terms there is a profit made when a retailer buys a set and sells a set – the normal economy of the retail dynamic. Today's online environments allow a much better consumer price, but there is still a profit made. So appreciation in price for an item already bought has first to cross that margin before being valued at a higher price, something that generally only time allows. However some consumers have procured sets made in a material known to be short in future supply in the expectation that price will increase.

With a fine product such as a fairly expensive chess set – it will last a long time and may safely be passed to the next generation. In time, it will appreciate in price if maintained in original condition and preserved.

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