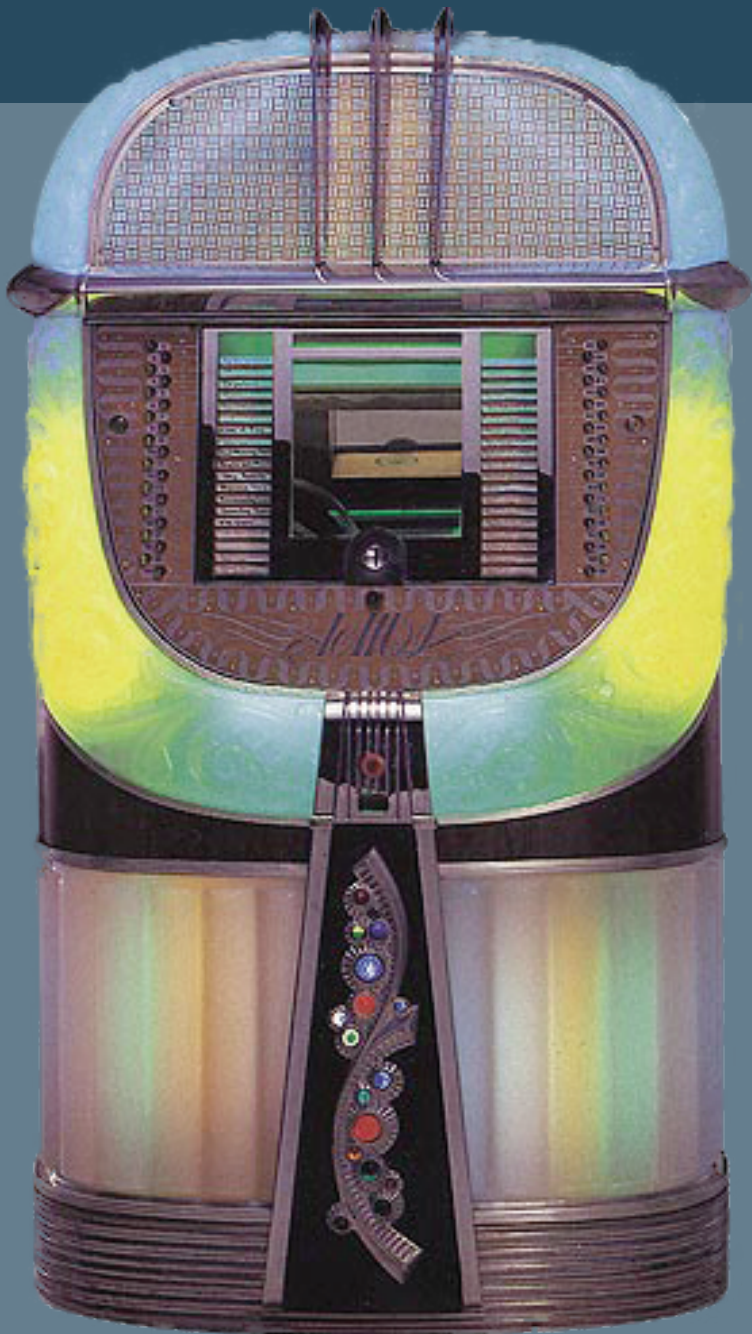


*Coincidental Discovery's*

# Jukebox Arcade

Jukebox Manuals & Literature



How to buy  
a used Jukebox

AIREON AMI ROCK-OLA MILLS Novelty Co. SEEBURG WURLITZER

# Jukebox Arcade

## Jukebox Manuals & Literature



### HOW TO BUY A JUKEBOX

Ninety five percent of jukeboxes now reside in family homes and give thousands of habitants and their friends' hours of musical fun and entertainment. A plus point, of course, is the ambience created by many of the wonderful shapes and designs and mesmerizing lights and colors, an art form say some experts. A focus and a talking point.

Anyway, here are some simple and important tips to bear in mind before you commit your hard earned cash to buying one of these wonderful machines second hand from a private seller, or an auction.

#### 1) Not in working order

If a jukebox is described as not in working order, i.e., "just few tweaks and I am sure it will work", "it worked OK until recently", "it's been in the garage for the last ten years and needs a little TLC", or "a restoration project". Common introductory descriptions. If you do not understand complicated jukebox mechanisms, the advice is do NOT buy it in the hope that your friend "who is usually pretty good at this sort of thing" will solve the problem even though the price is cheap. Apart from the complexity of the mechanisms and electrics often an important bit can be missing and it can be very difficult, or sometimes impossible, to find the necessary replacement. In the latter case you have bought a "lemon" and have wasted your money.

#### 2) Perfect working order

Many sellers will tell you, or describe, their jukebox as in perfect working order. Our long experience dictates that about one in ten, yes one

in ten, justifies this description. As a very basic guide before you hand over your money insist on playing at least five random selections first. Then carefully watch the selection process and how smoothly it works and then listen to the quality and volume of sound, make sure there is no background hum, popping, fading in and out and such produced before you hand over any money. If you're not happy do not buy.

### **3) Cabinet and metalwork**

The condition of the chrome/metalwork and the cabinet surround can make a huge difference to jukebox value. To bring uncared for, or abandoned machines back to their pristine glory can be very time consuming and if you are not doing the restoration yourself, expensive. It should not be forgotten that much of the joy of owning one of these wonderful machines is its appearance and lighting effects.

### **4) Non visible mechanism**

A non-visible mechanism jukebox, (a cabinet jukebox – 1965 onwards generally), can also be very attractively designed and provide a great sense of fun and presence. But even in good order they are worth a third or a quarter, or even less, of the value of a silver, or golden age, (thirties to early sixties), visible mechanism jukebox. I mention value because if a prospective purchase requires attention one has to consider how much it might be worth spending to bring it to satisfactory condition. If a jukebox is in poor condition, even with all of its parts, it is not unusual to have to pay an expert \$500 or even a \$1000 or more to bring it back to life.

### **5) Visible mechanism.**

Golden age, ( 1932 to 1951 approx.), Silver age, (1951 to 1964 approx.), and Bronze age, ( approx. 1965 onwards), all produced a variety of jukeboxes where one can see the record being picked up by the arm, placed on the turntable and played. There are a considerable variety in popularity and value, but generally the most sought after and therefore more expensive, are the Golden and Silver age models. Because of the demand they can fetch in good condition, upwards of

\$6,000 or more for popular models – there is often leeway, provided the buying price is right, to be able to spend more on restoration of a neglected example.

## **6) Later seventies to mid-nineties Vinyl and CD**

The quality of sound output of these analogue and electronically driven jukeboxes is largely, but not exclusively, a step forward from the fifties and sixties output. Individual taste in sound appreciation can be a big influence here. Whilst the source of spare parts and valves for the more popular fifties and sixties jukeboxes is quite good there can be serious difficulties obtaining small but important chip and laser replacements in some later models should any of these become faulty. You should ask an expert before dipping your hand in your pocket.

## **7) Last but not least!**

Jukeboxes are made to be played 24/7 and bearing the Golden and Silver age jukeboxes particularly in mind plus most early Bronze age ones, their electro mechanical mechanisms need to be played regularly otherwise there can be a tendency for some of the moving parts to stiffen up as the lubricants harden through lack of use. Use and plenty of it, is the best form of “service” you can render them. If a problem arises **DO NOT** use that old standby WD 40 under any circumstances to free stiff mechanisms. It may work for a short time but eventually it will cause mechanisms to cease up. The valve amplifier may require attention occasionally but this is not usually a very expensive nor difficult problem to have fixed. Please do not forget that on vinyl versions the needle will need changing from time to time according to use.

## **8) Jukebox Dealers vs Antique Dealers**

If you have concerns about buying privately, or at an auction, then many jukebox dealers will often offer at least a limited guarantee on an older jukebox. It will cost you more, but at least you will have the satisfaction of knowing that everything is there and you have seen it working properly. Buying from antique dealer is different, just because they have a jukebox does not mean they know all about it, ask

questions, ask them to let you play it, ask for a guarantee, if it's as good as they claim, they should offer some sort of return policy, other than that, treat the jukebox as if you are buying it from a "private party".

If a jukebox has been working regularly in your own home and after a period of time it develops a stutter or a hiccup; maybe one of the selections does not work properly, or a light flickers, or the sound is not quite right, then it is highly unlikely that it is going to cost a fortune to repair. I recommend you have it attended to reasonably quickly. The expenses start to increase the longer a jukebox is left "untreated" and not played for a long time.

I have been buying and servicing jukeboxes for over 30 years and believe me when I say "trust what you can see, hear and feel", a jukebox in "perfect order" will run smoothly and somewhat quietly.

Good hunting.

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