



TABLE OF CONTENTS

• INTRODUCTION	WHY DO WE NEED THIS?	PAGE 3
• LIST OF FAKE MUGS	WHICH ICON MUGS HAVE BEEN FAKED?	PAGE 4
• CHECKLISTS		
• FAKE MUGS CHECKLIST	HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE MUGS?	PAGE 5
• «FALSE FRIENDS» CHECKLIST	THESE ARE NOT FAKES!	PAGE 7
• SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISONS	[IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER]	PAGE 8



INTRODUCTION

- **IS THIS AN OFFICIAL STARBUCKS GUIDE?**

No. This is an unofficial guide made by collectors for collectors. Any information given in here may be incomplete and/or incorrect.

- **THERE'S FAKE GUCCI, FAKE PRADA, EVEN FAKE FAKES. WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? WHY DO WE NEED THIS GUIDE?**

1. To keep things fun: Let's have this guide, but apart from it let's focus on what collecting mugs is all about: trade mugs and have fun.
2. To protect our community: If someone wants to buy himself cheap mugs which are fake, nobody cares. BUT some mug collectors are trading fake mugs to other people knowingly or unknowingly for real mugs. That has to stop.
3. To protect our investments: Nowadays, even a very rare mug has been sold by a fake mug seller via ebay. Although the mug has not yet been confirmed to be a fake, counterfeits of such valuable mugs may pose a serious threat to any existing collection of value.
4. There may be legal implications connected to the buying/selling/trading/possession of fake mugs, depending of your jurisdiction.

- **WHY ARE THERE NO SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISONS FOR SOME OF THE FAKE MUGS?**

Side-by-side comparison charts are the easiest way to identify fake mugs. However, this guide is work in progress, so more comparison charts may be added in future versions.

- **I HAVE ADDITIONS, CORRECTIONS OR QUESTIONS TO THIS GUIDE, WHAT SHALL I DO?**

GREAT! GET IN TOUCH WITH US VIA EMAIL KANZ@GMX.NET OR ON FACEBOOK: [FACEBOOK.COM/MARTIN.KANZ2](https://www.facebook.com/MARTIN.KANZ2) OR [FACEBOOK.COM/KUYUFAN](https://www.facebook.com/KUYUFAN).

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LIST OF FAKE MUGS

ANALYZED



TO DO

8

82

FAKE CONFIRMED

- ✓ Abu Dhabi
- ✓ Acapulco
- Amsterdam
- ✓ Antwerp
- ✓ Argentina
- ✓ Aruba
- ✓ Athens
- ✓ Australia
- ✓ Bahamas
- ✓ Bahrain 1
- ✓ Bali
- ✓ Barcelona
- ✓ Beijing
- ✓ Berlin
- ✓ Brasil
- ✓ Buenos Aires
- ✓ California
- ✓ Chicago
- ✓ Chile
- ✓ China
- ✓ Ciudad de Mexico
- ✓ Copenhagen
- ✓ Cozumel

- ✓ Curaçao
- ✓ Cyprus
- ✓ Dubai
- ✓ El Salvador
- ✓ England 2
- ✓ Florida
- ✓ Geneva
- ✓ Gold Coast
- ✓ Guanajuato 2
- ✓ Guangzhou
- ✓ Guatemala
- Hamptons
- ✓ Hangzhou
- ✓ Harbin
(HTR, KBI: RS 2012)
- ✓ Hong Kong
- ✓ India
- Indianapolis
- ✓ Jacksonville
- ✓ Jeddah
- Jinan
- ✓ Jordan
- ✓ Kuwait
- ✓ Lebanon

- ✓ London
- ✓ Macau
- ✓ Madrid
- ✓ Melbourne
- ✓ Moscow
(HTR, KBI: RS 2013)
- ✓ Nanjing
- ✓ New Orleans
- ✓ New Zealand
- ✓ Niagara Falls
- ✓ Ningbo
- ✓ Oman
- Oslo
- ✓ Paris
- ✓ Philippines
- Prague
- ✓ Puerto Rico
(HTR, KBI: CS 2011)
- Puerto Vallarta 2
- ✓ Qingdao
- Quebec
- ✓ Riyadh
- ✓ Sanya
- ✓ Shanghai

- ✓ Sharm El Sheikh
- ✓ Shenzhen
- ✓ Singapore (blue)
- ✓ South Island
- ✓ Spain
- ✓ Stockholm
- ✓ Suzhou
- ✓ Sydney
- ✓ Taiwan
- ✓ Tokyo
- ✓ Turkey
- ✓ United Arab Emirates
- ✓ Vietnam 2*
- ✓ Xiamen

FAKE SUSPECTED

- Brisbane

KBI: Known bottom imprint(s)

RS: Regular Series

CS: Collector Series

*fake mug is easy to recognize: Made in [China](#), Collector Series, 2010.



HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE MUGS (1/2)

THE BEST WAY TO IDENTIFY FAKE MUGS IS TO USE THE SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON CHARTS IN THIS GUIDE. HOWEVER, THERE ISN'T A CHART FOR ALL FAKE MUGS, SO FOR THE REST OF THE MUGS YOU WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS CHECKLIST.

JUST GO THROUGH THE LIST BULLET BY BULLET. THE MORE BULLETS OF THIS CHECKLIST APPLY TO YOUR MUG, THE MORE LIKELY IT IS THAT YOU'RE HOLDING A FAKE IN YOUR HANDS.

- Origin: So far, all known fakes have «Made in China» on the bottom. So if your mug is «Made in Thailand», it's not a fake.
- Year: So far, almost all known fakes are dated 2010 or later on the bottom (exceptions: Athens and Tokyo are dated 2009).
- SKU tag: Some fake mugs have a fake SKU tag on the bottom. This means such a tag or even a price tag does say nothing.
- Price: Mugs that are being offered below their retail price are likely to be fake. Retail prices of icon mugs do differ from country to country. A list of mug prices in every country is available in the files section of «Starbucks Best Collectors» group on facebook.
- Starbucks Font: Letters of «Starbucks Coffee» on the front of the mug are misaligned.



SKU Sticker on an original mug.



Starbucks font: Fake mug has thin «C» and the letters from «BUCKS» are positioned higher than «STAR»



HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE MUGS (2/2)

- Store: Fake mugs are mostly sold on wholesale and auction sites like ebay, taobao and aliexpress. Most fake sellers are sending from China (including Hong Kong), Taiwan and Thailand. Be aware: Fake mug sellers may advertise their mugs with pictures of an original mug but then send you a fake.
- Handle position: Handles may be placed with a bad angle.
- Bottom: Like on the front, there's often differences to be found in the print and font on the bottom.
- Coloring: The print of fake mugs does often look «washed out».
- Print alignment: The print on fake mugs is often badly positioned, leaving a large white gap on the bottom of pictures. In some cases, the print may even be completely misplaced and go over the handle.



Fake mugs with bad **handle position** (left) and wrong **print alignment** (right) which is crossing the handle.



This fake mug (Geneva) has three anomalies on the **bottom**:

- The letter "S" should be lowercase but is in a few situations bigger as the other lowercase letters. In "Starbucks", "All Rights Reserved", "Dishwasher"
- The slash after "oz" is connected with the "z"
- The "4" of "473" is bold.



«FALSE FRIENDS»

NOT FAKES! THE BULLETS IN THIS CHECKLIST – THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY A POSITIVE – CAN BE FOUND ON ORIGINAL MUGS, BUT ARE OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR PROOF OF FAKE MUGS.

- Size and weight: Not all icon mugs do have the same size and weight.
- Production errors: There are different production errors like pinholes and dents. Normally, mugs with errors are not being sold in stores (but we've seen exceptions).
- Damaged mugs: Typical damage does include scratches in the print or rifts and chips in the mug. Like mugs with production errors, damaged mugs are not being sold in stores.
- Off-centric bottom print: Some bottom prints on mugs are off-centric. This seems to happen seldomly, but can also happen with original mugs.
- Text errors: Some mugs have errors in the print.



Size (Norway vs. Oslo):
Different heights



Off-centric bottom print

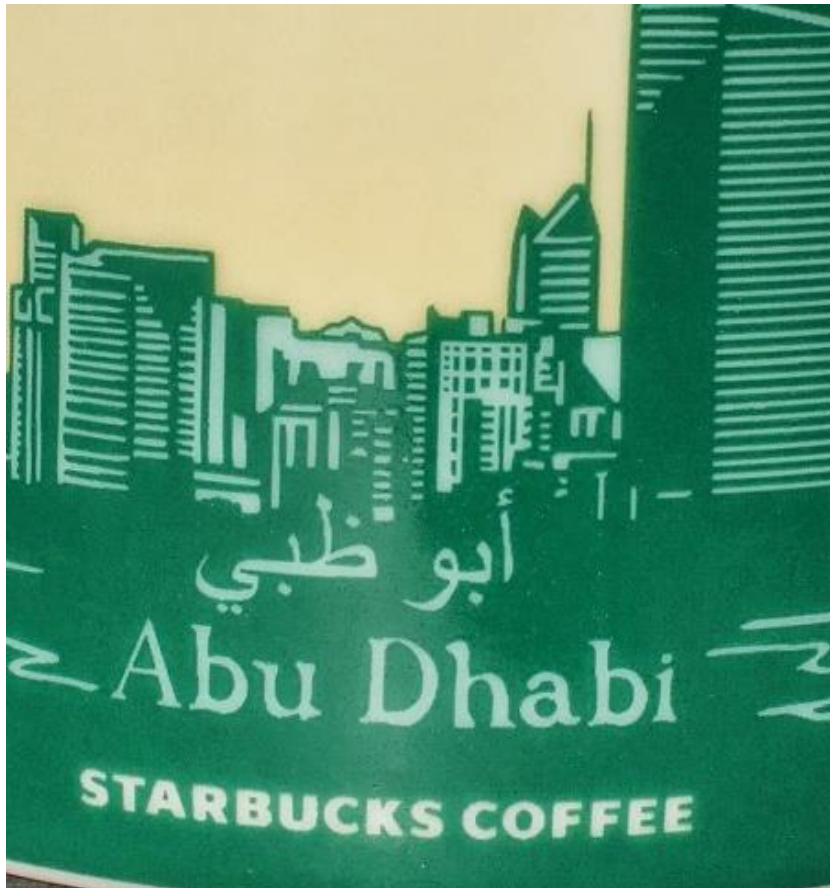


Text error (Houston): year
2011 and 2012



ABU DHABI

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

«Starbucks Coffee» on the back has wrong font and letters are in green instead of white color

2

Bottom imprint is missing line with «16 fl oz/473 ml»

Known bottom imprints:

- 2011 Collector Series



ACAPULCO

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Shading errors, most notably in 2 areas of the cliff with too much white

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series

ARGENTINA

ATTENTION: This side by side comparison is under review, because original mugs with the font further down as in the picture on the right with bottom imprint 2011 Regular Series do exist!

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

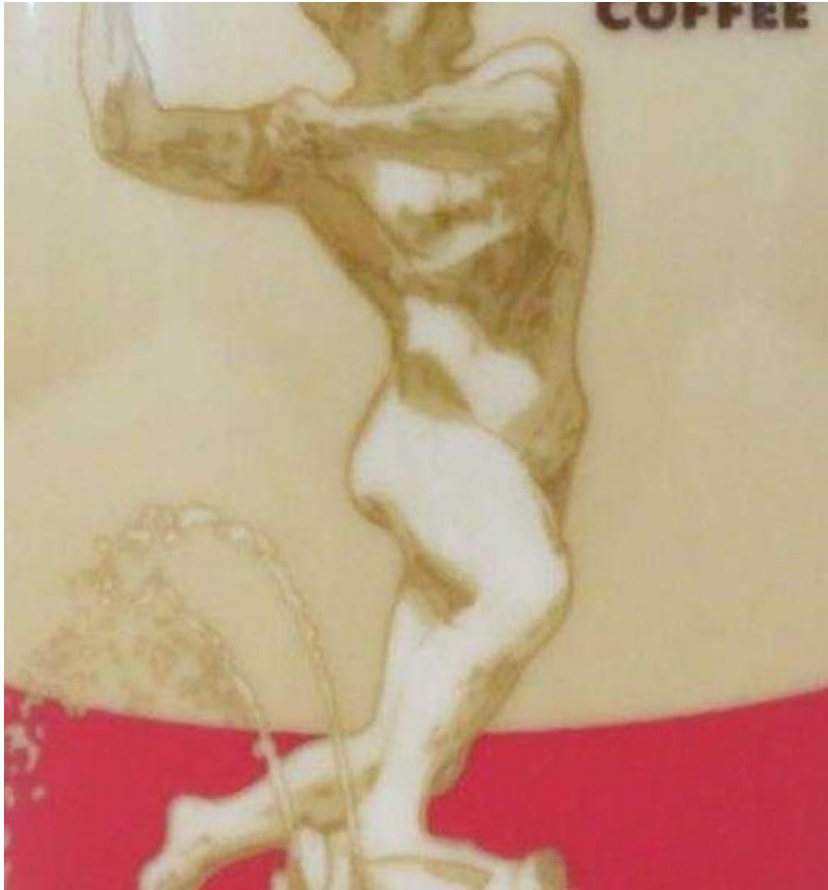
«Argentina» font too low with the «a» not going up above the handle. As a consequence, the image is noticeably squeezed.

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series

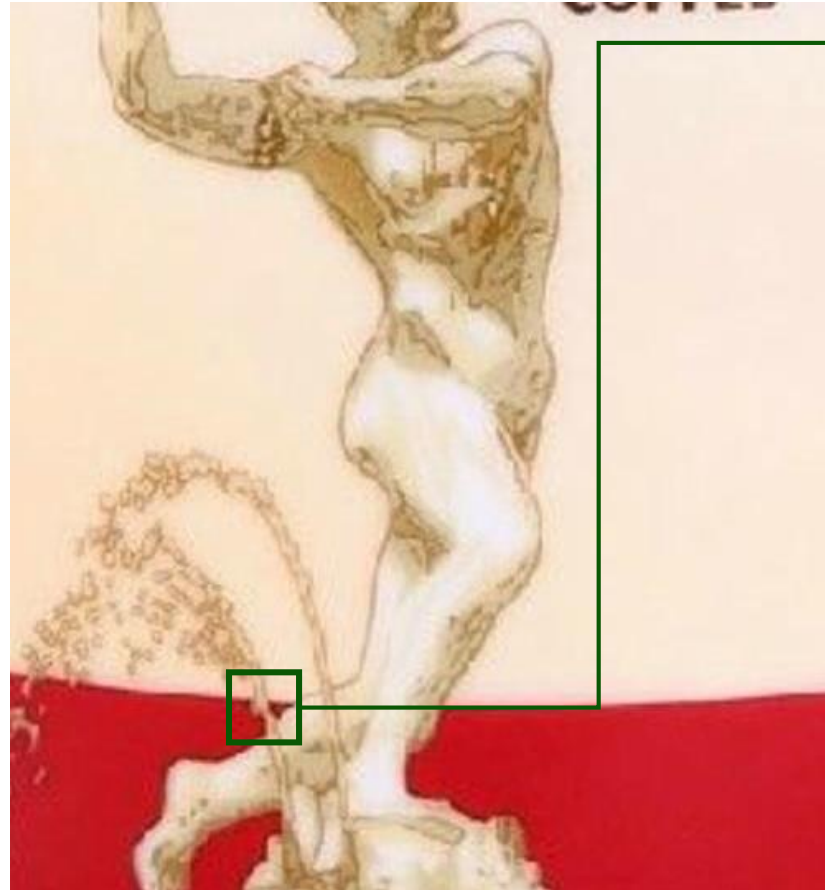


ANTWERP

ORIGINAL



FAKE



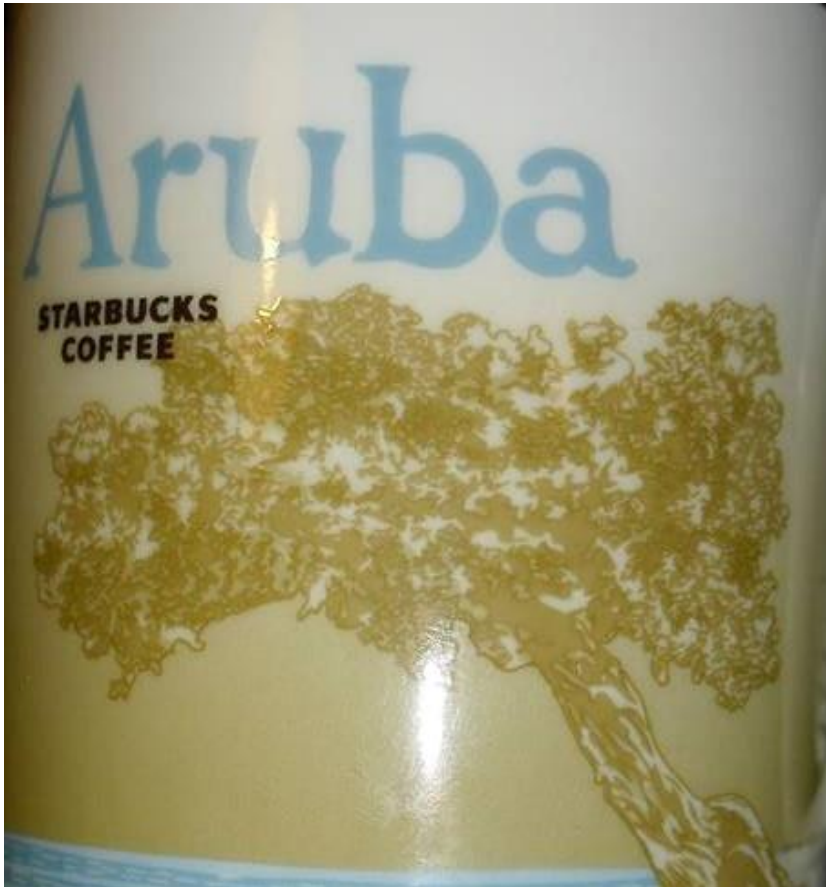
1 First water drop not fully inside the red bottom border

- Known bottom imprints:
- 2010 Collector Series
 - 2012 Regular Series

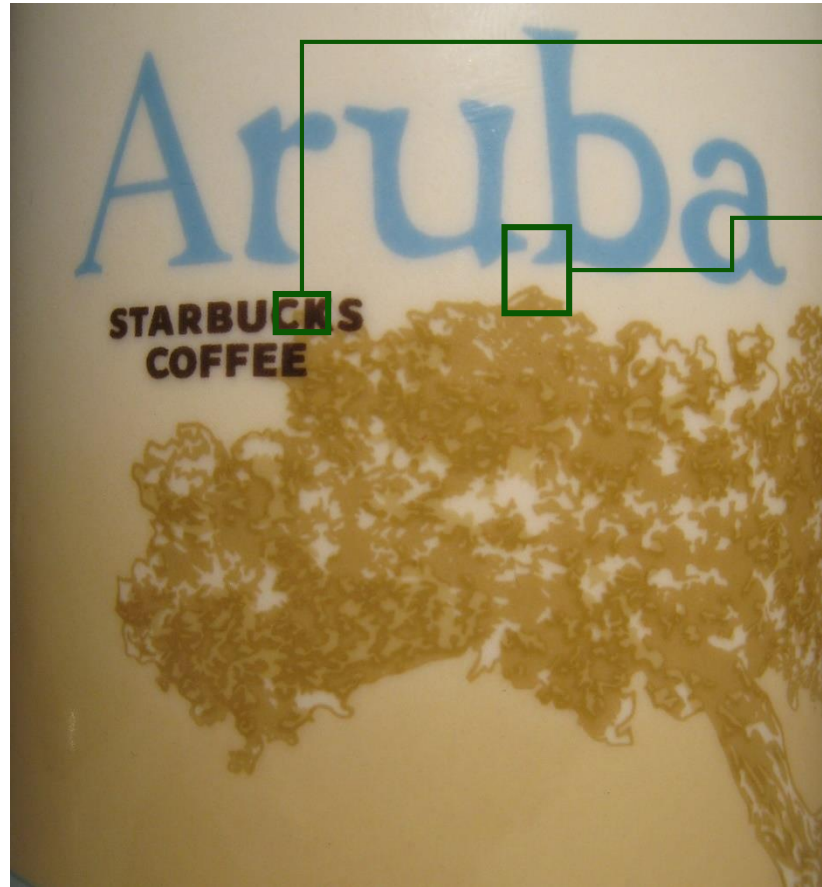


ARUBA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



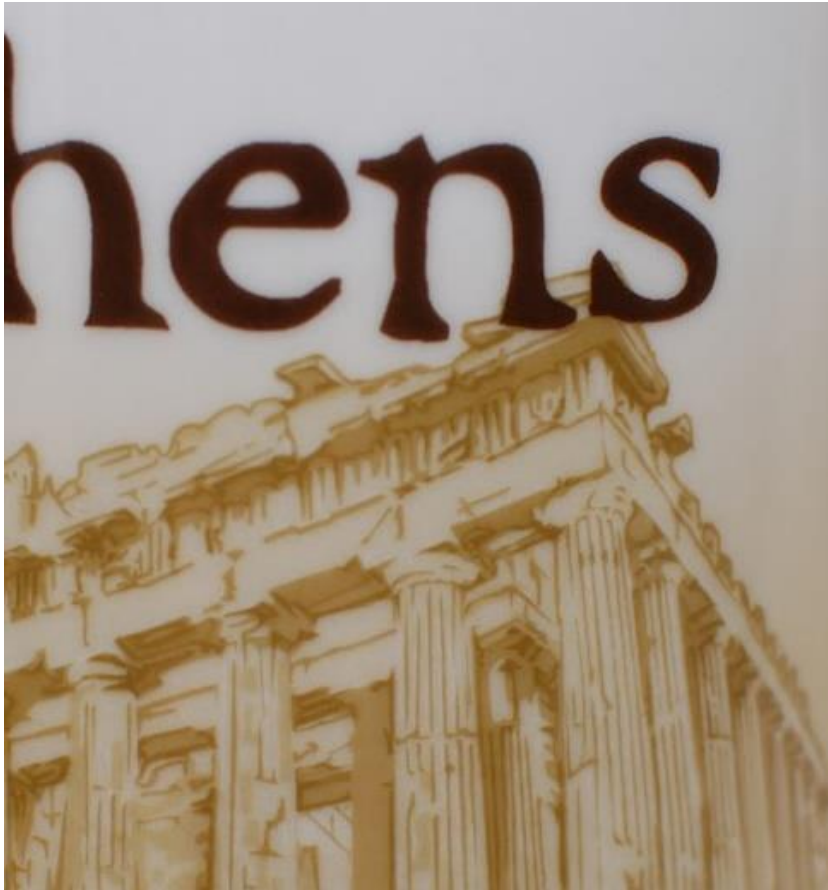
- 1 Tree goes up to the middle of the «C» of «Starbucks»
- 2 Top of the tree directly under the left lower end of the «b» of «Aruba», not slightly right of it

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series

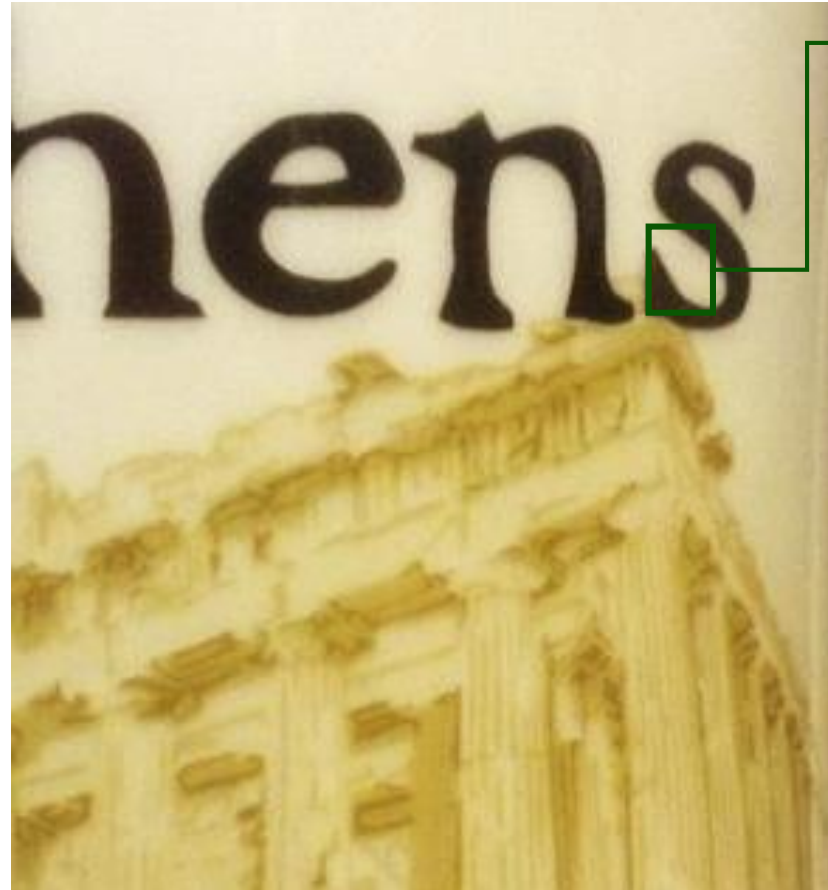


ATHENS

ORIGINAL



FAKE



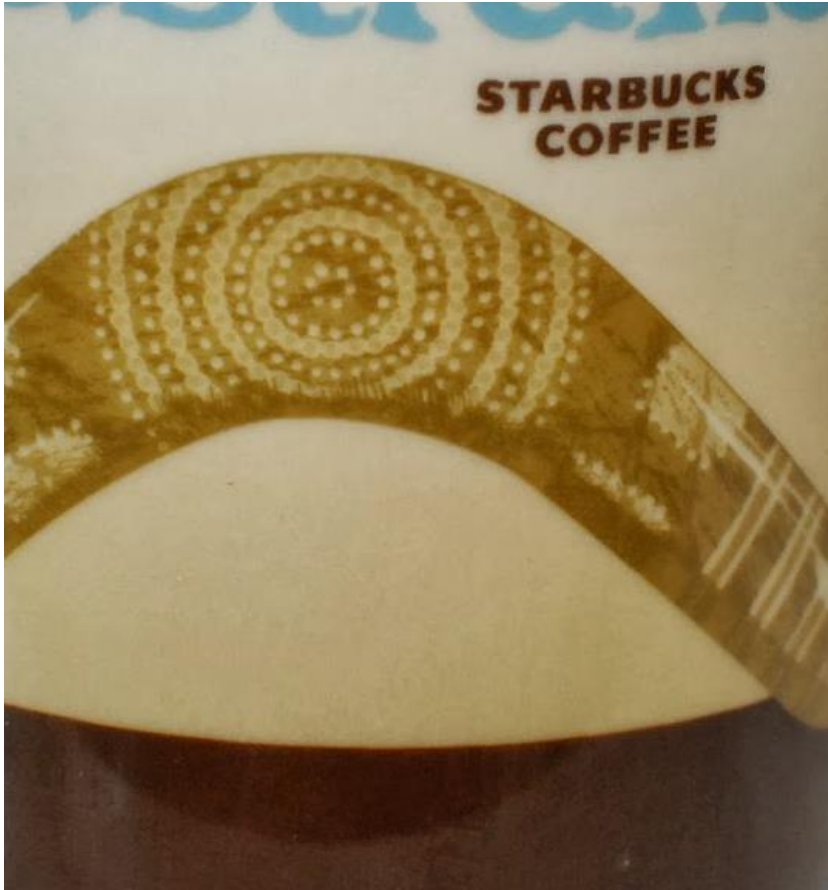
1 Parthenon not visible over lower end of «s» in «Athens»

Known bottom imprints:
• 2009 Collector Series



AUSTRALIA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

Shading errors on the boomerang, best visible on the right side, background under the line of points should be lighter.

Known bottom imprints:

- 2013 Regular Series

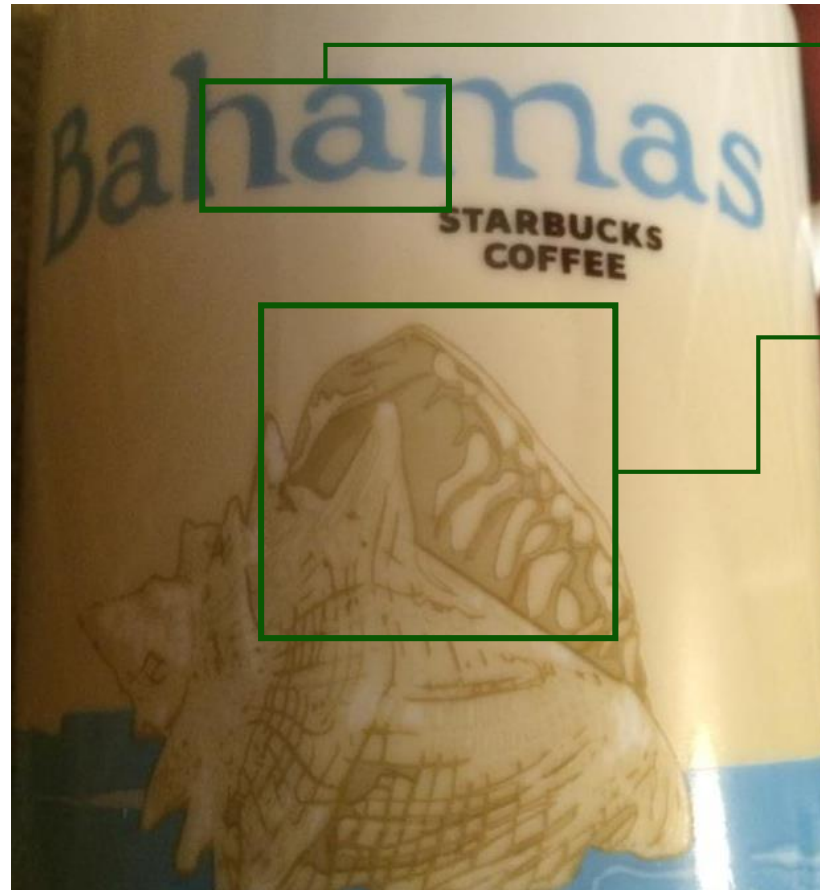


BAHAMAS

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Letters of «Bahamas» are noticeably further apart, easiest to recognize around the «ham»

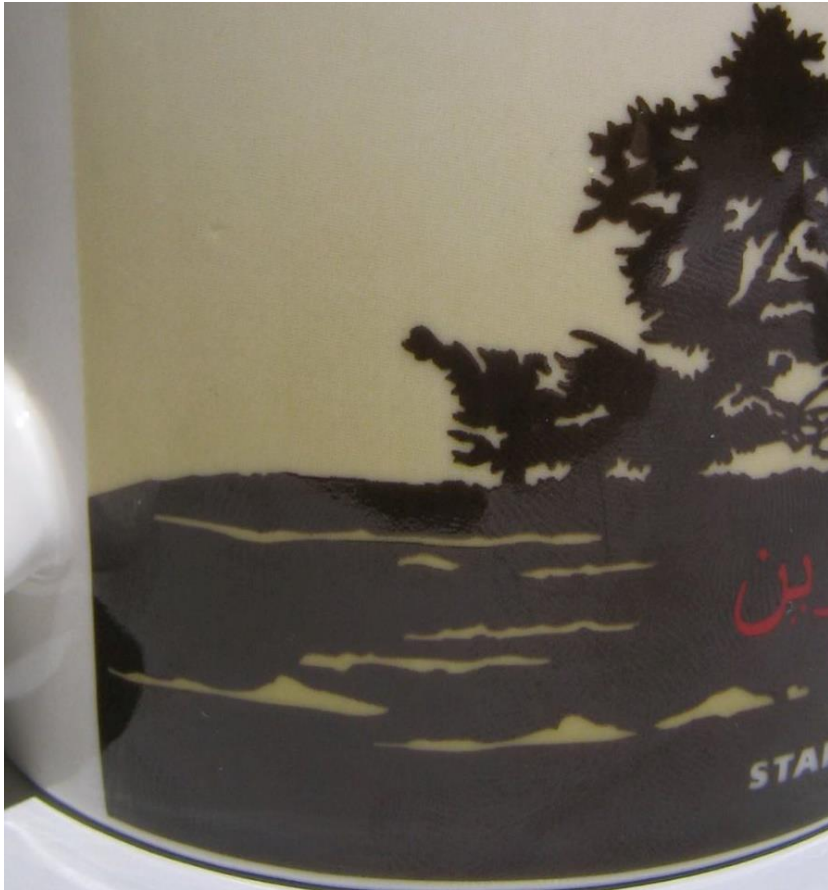
2 Classic coloring issues: Fake mug has 3 different brown tones instead of the original's 4

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Normal Edition

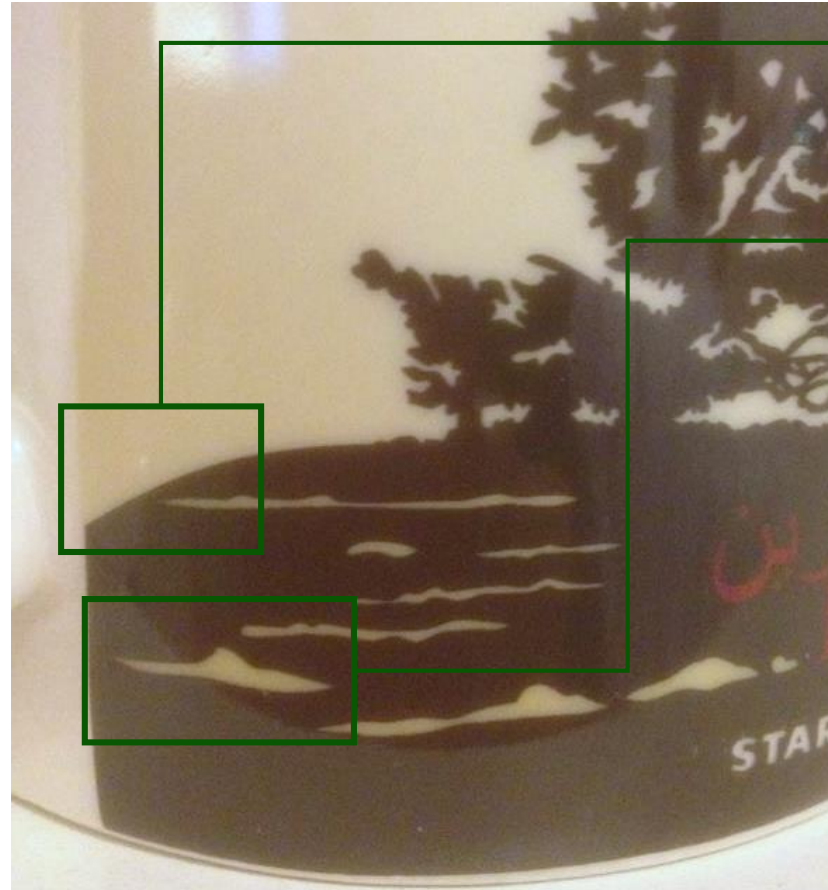


BAHRAIN 1

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Left side of the hill on mug backside is steeper

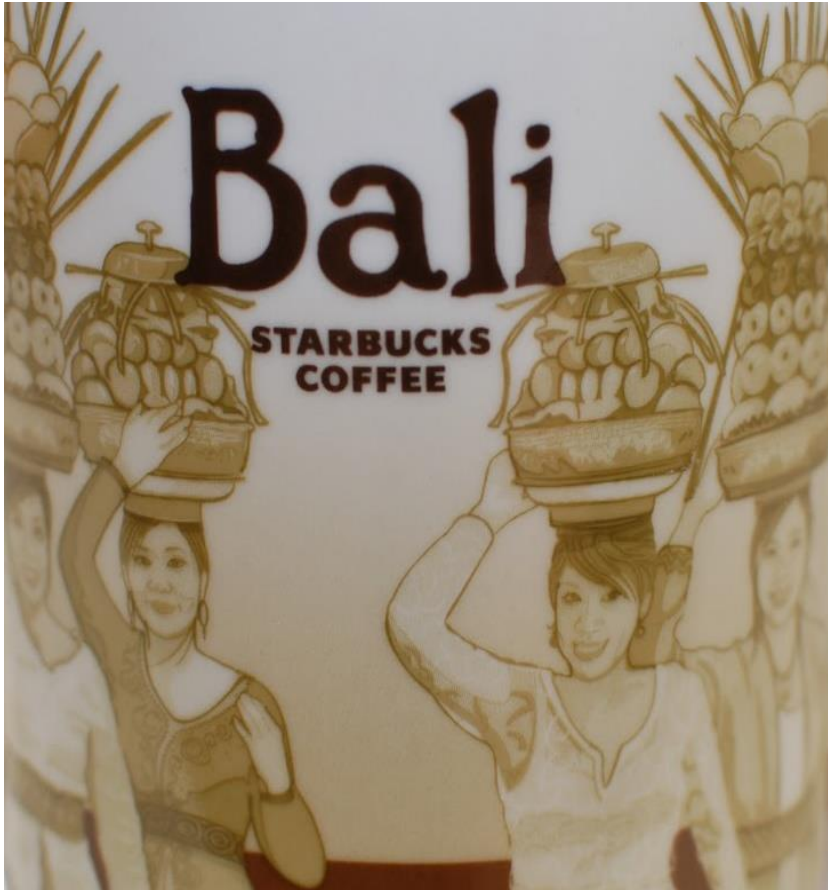
2 Obvious differences on the ground linings

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



BALI

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

«Bali» font is higher up

2

«S» of «Starbucks» does not touch the left chikku basket

...and some serious coloring issues

Known bottom imprints:

- 2013 Normal Edition



BARCELONA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 «e» of «Coffee» is placed left of the house edge instead of above it

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



BEIJING

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

Edges on the roof of the Great Wall's watch tower are shaded too lightly

Known bottom imprints:

- 2012 Regular Series



BERLIN

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Wrong font for «Starbucks Coffee» on front and back

2 The bear's feet don't have white claws.

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Collector Series



BRASIL

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

«Brasil» font very far up to the edge of the mug

Known bottom imprints:

- 2011 Collector Series
- 2012 Regular Series



BUENOS AIRES

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

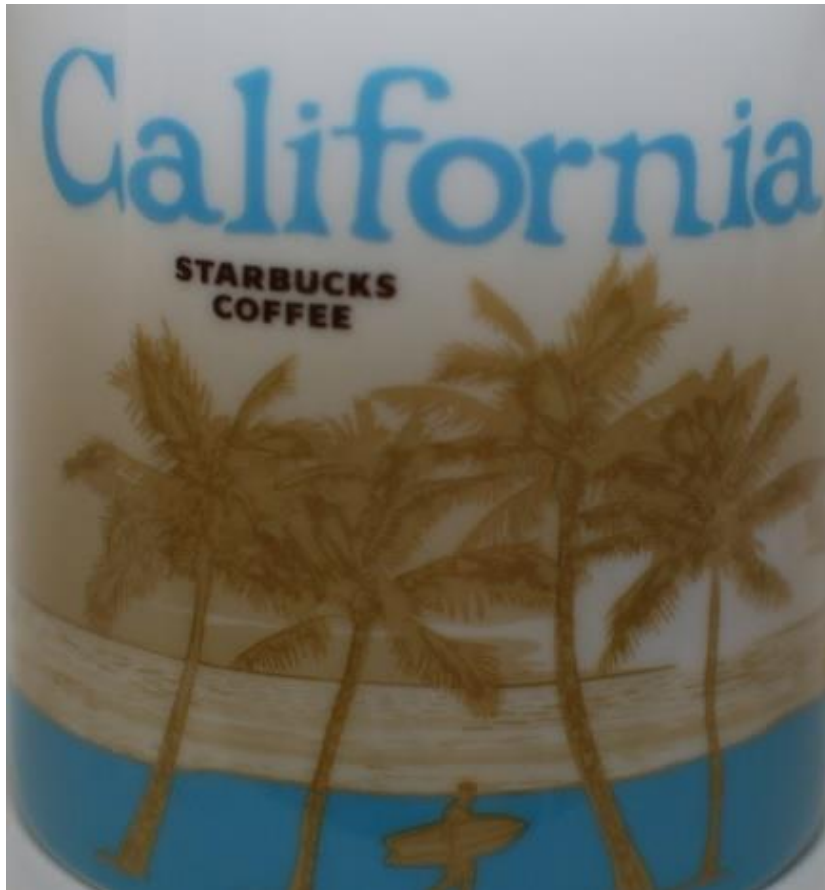
Upper end of «s» in «Buenos» reaching across right border of the Obelisco

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



CALIFORNIA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 «i» and «a» of California are almost touching
- 2 «s» of «Starbucks» ending straight below the lower end of the «f» of «California», not slightly right to it
- 3 Water crosses above the middle of the surfer's head in the background

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Regular Series



CHICAGO

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Enlarged gap between water tower and mug top
- 2 No horizontal lines and higher contrast on water tower

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Collector Series



CHILE

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Coloring error on the stones below the moai

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series

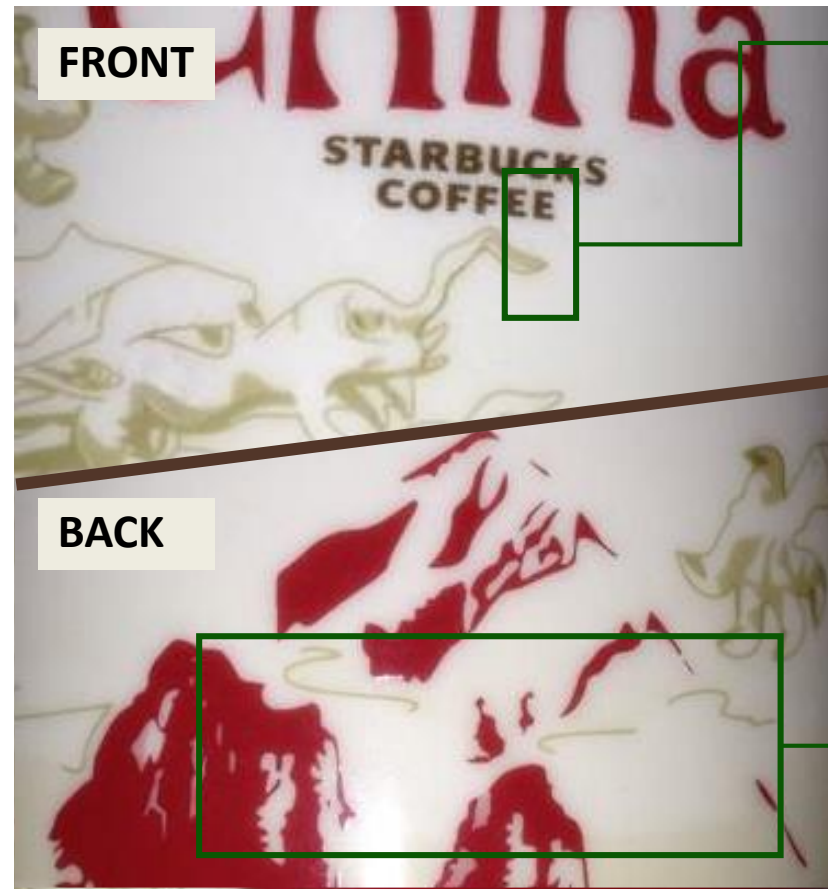


CHINA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 The dragon's nostril ends under the last «e» of «Coffee» instead of right to it
- 2 Coloring error on the middle of Mount Everest

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series



CIUDAD DE MÉXICO

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

The green background is visible above the Angel de la Independencia's pedestal

ATTENTION: This fake mug does often come with SKU tag.

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



COPENHAGEN

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 «Copenhagen» font further down, 4 lines of the tower crossing through the hole in the «a».

Known bottom imprints:
• [none yet documented, please help!]

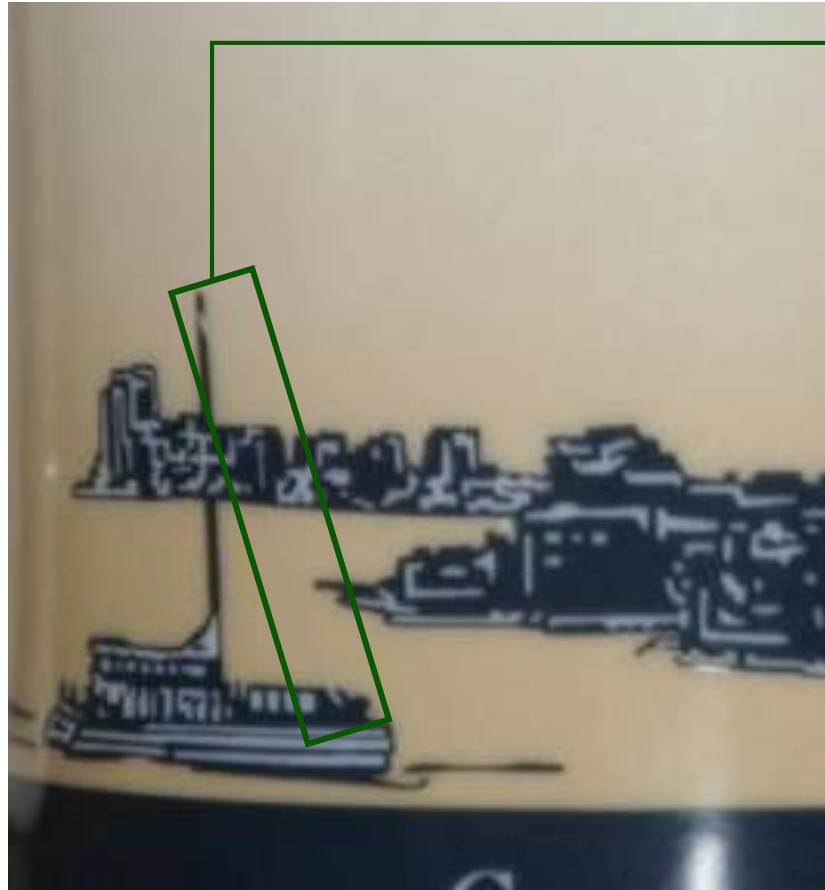


COZUMEL

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Rope going down from the ship's mast is missing on the backside of the mug.
- 2 Several small shading differences on the mug front

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series



CURAÇAO

ORIGINAL



FAKE



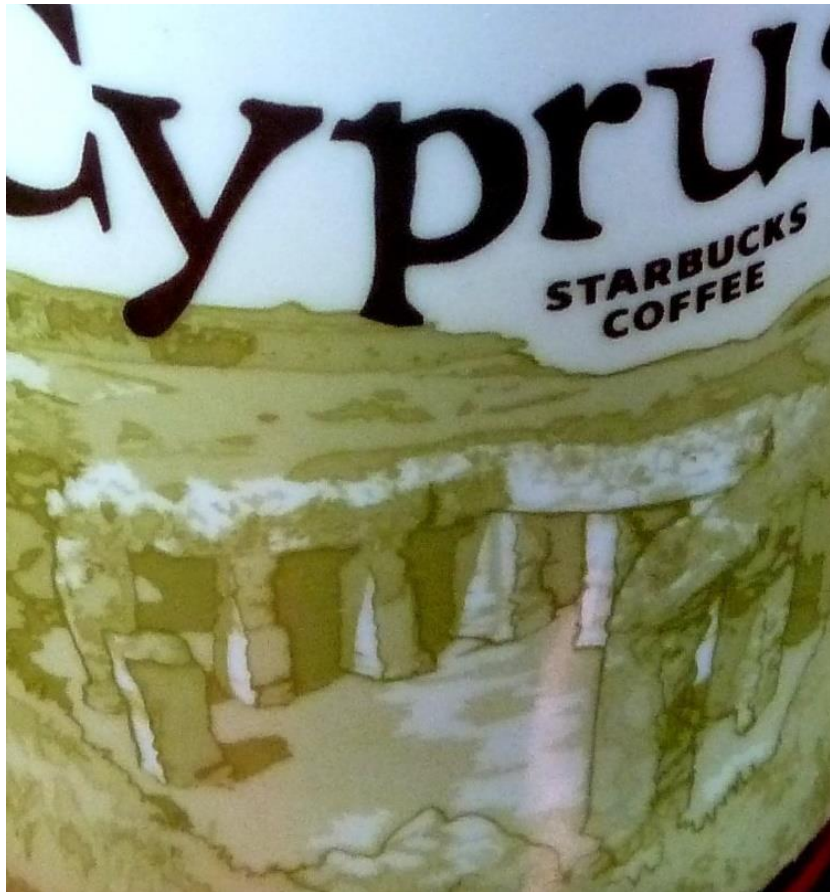
1 Major coloring errors: most notably, the brightest house fronts are darkened

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Normal Edition

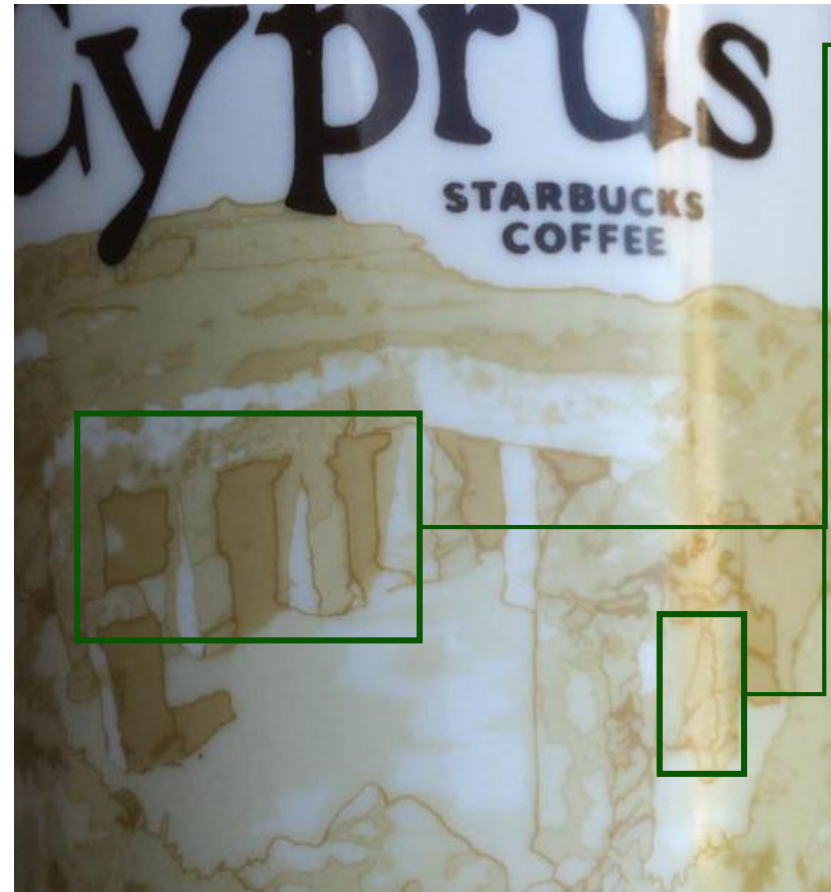


CYPRUS

ORIGINAL



FAKE



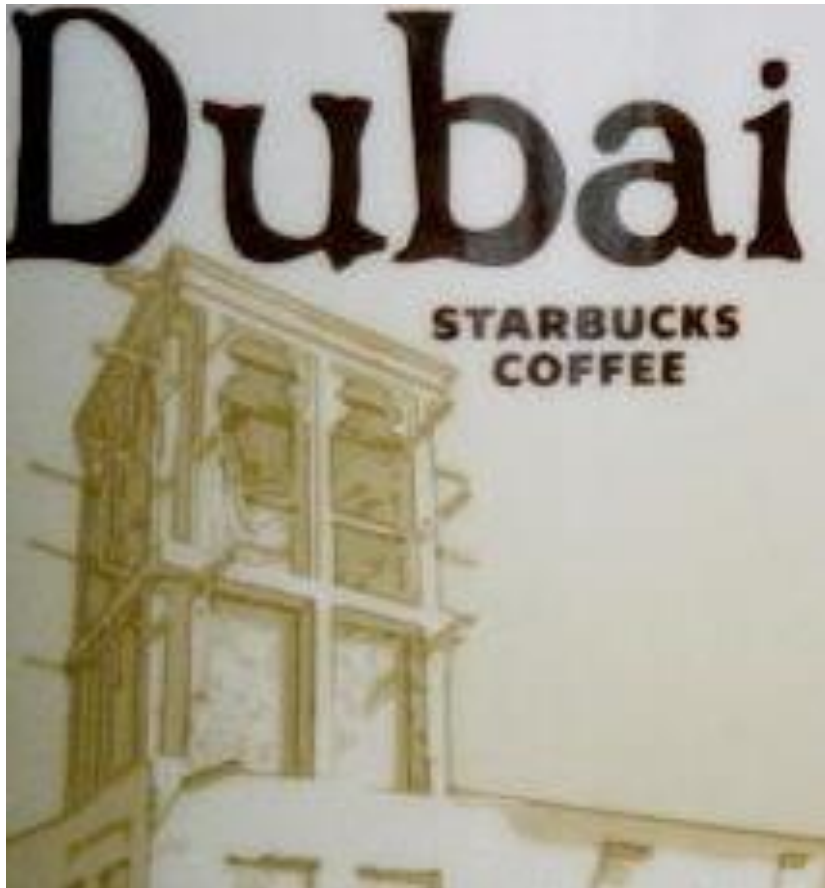
1 Major coloring errors: most notably, some areas have dark borders

Known bottom imprints:
• 2009 Collector Series

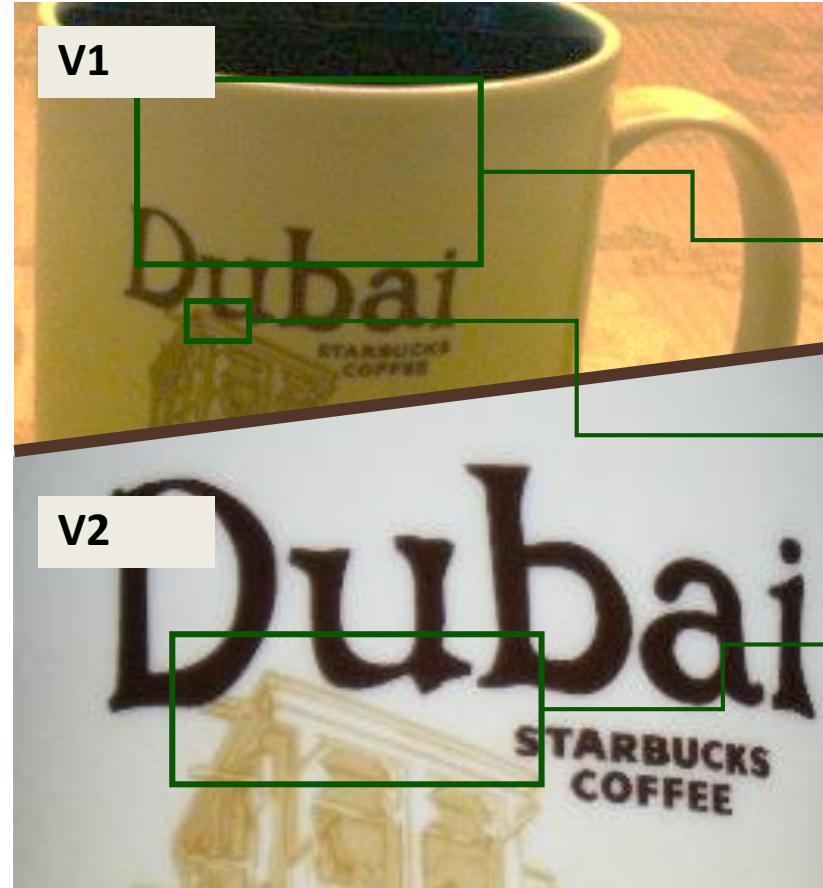


DUBAI

ORIGINAL



FAKE



There are currently two different versions of this fake.

V1
1 «Dubai» font very far down from the edge of the mug
Dabrin Fort

2 Bastakia Wind Tower touches the «u» of «Dubai»

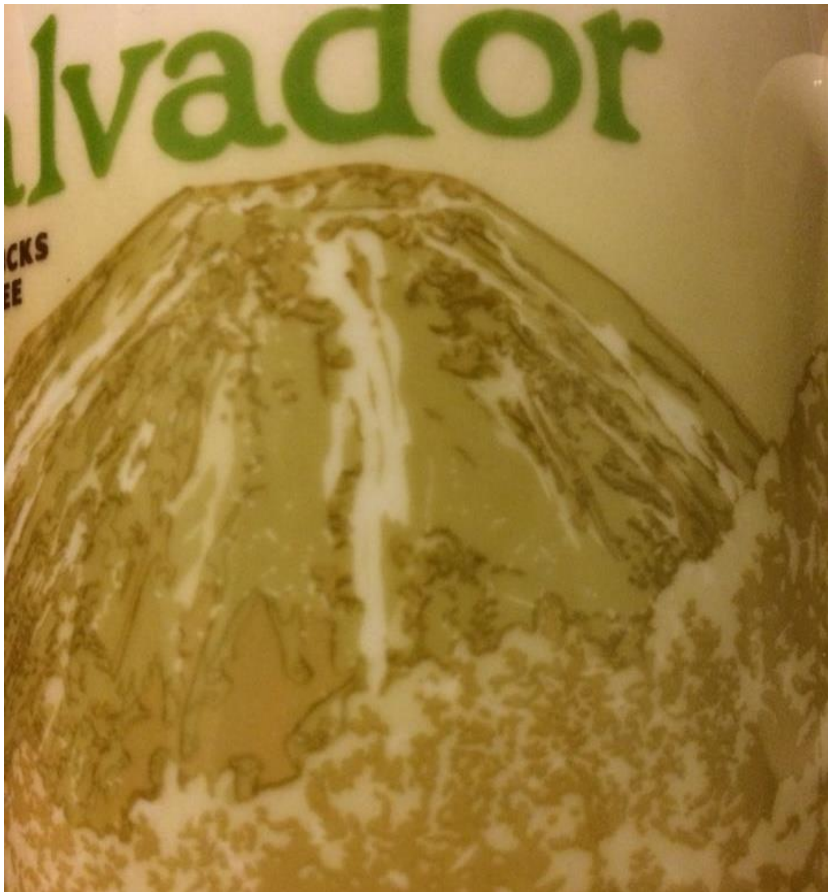
V2
1 Bastakia Wind Tower is closer to «Dubai» and «Starbucks Coffee»

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



EL SALVADOR

ORIGINAL



FAKE



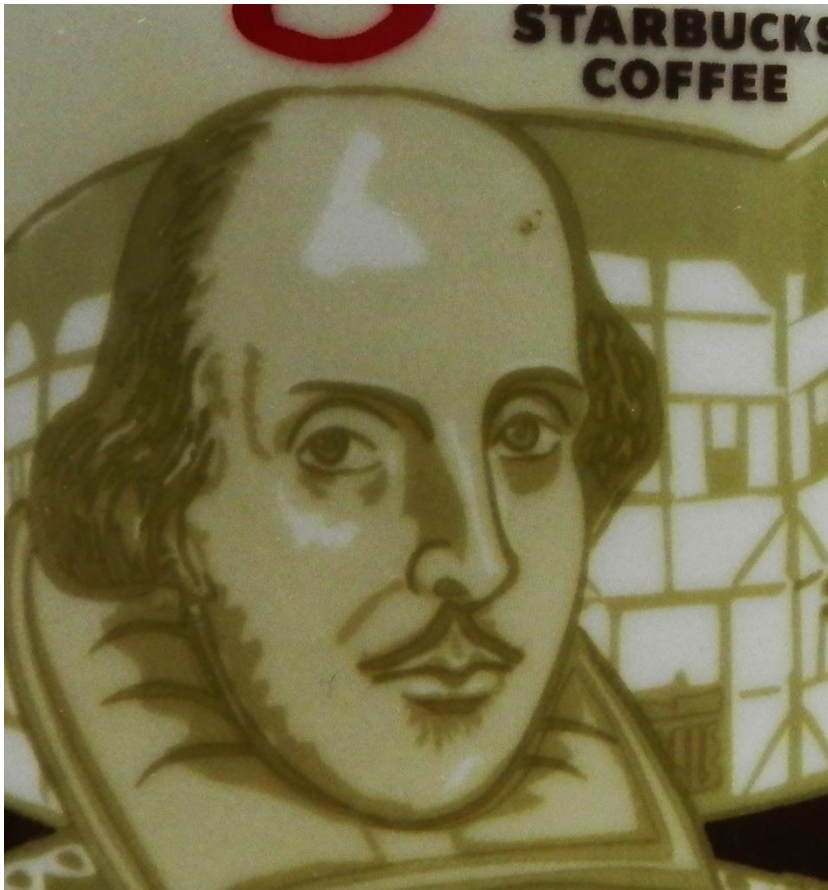
1 Coloring error in the lower part of the volcano

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



ENGLAND 2

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Fleck on forehead missing amongst multiple other coloring errors

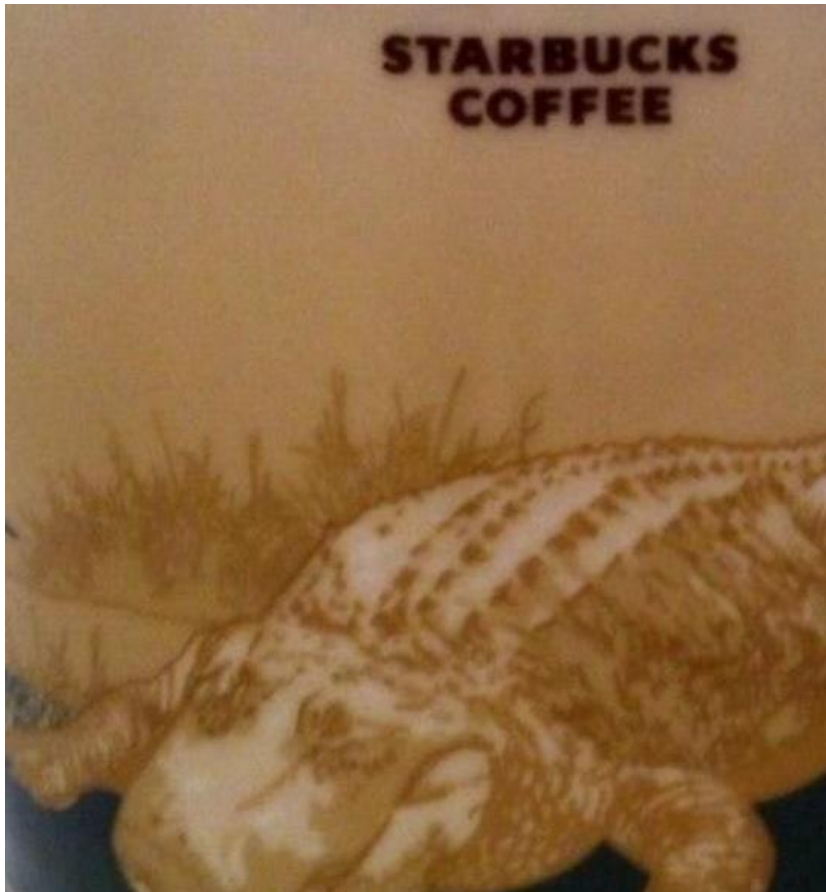
2 «Zombie» eye

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Regular Series



FLORIDA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Major detail missing on the grassland in the background

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Regular Series



GENEVA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Left end of the «v» of «Geneva» ends outside of the Fountain.

2 «n» of «Geneva» ends above «k» of «Starbucks» instead of between «k» and «s»

Known bottom imprints:

- 2011 Collector Series
- 2013 Regular Series



GOLD COAST

ORIGINAL



FAKE



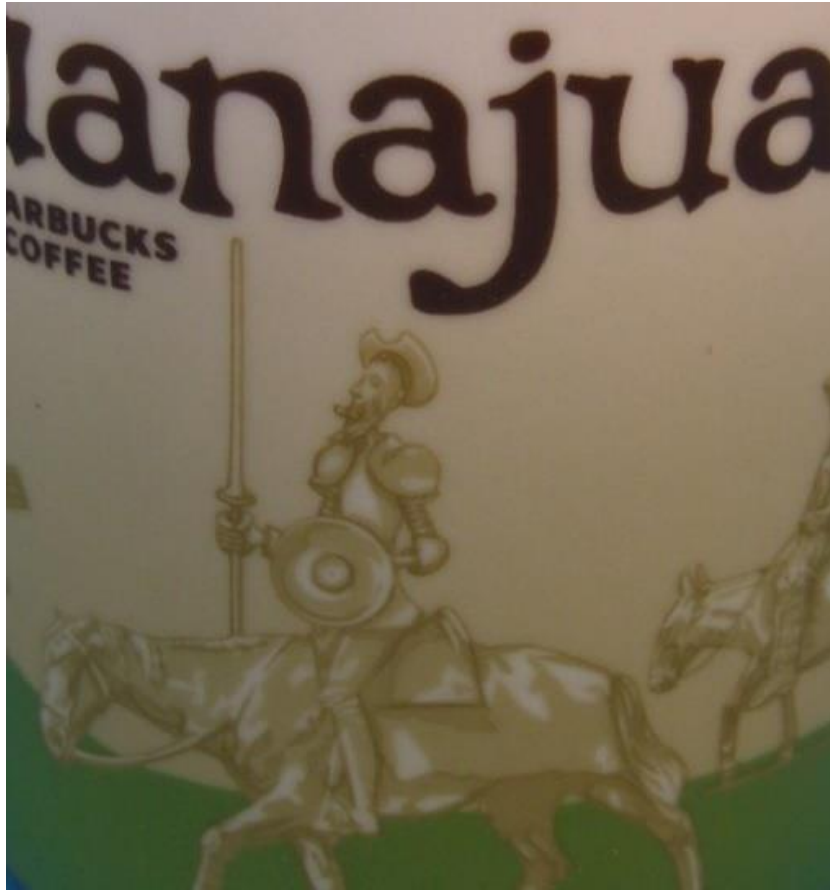
1 2 parallel lines and shadows on the surf board missing

Known bottom imprints:
• [none yet documented, please help!]

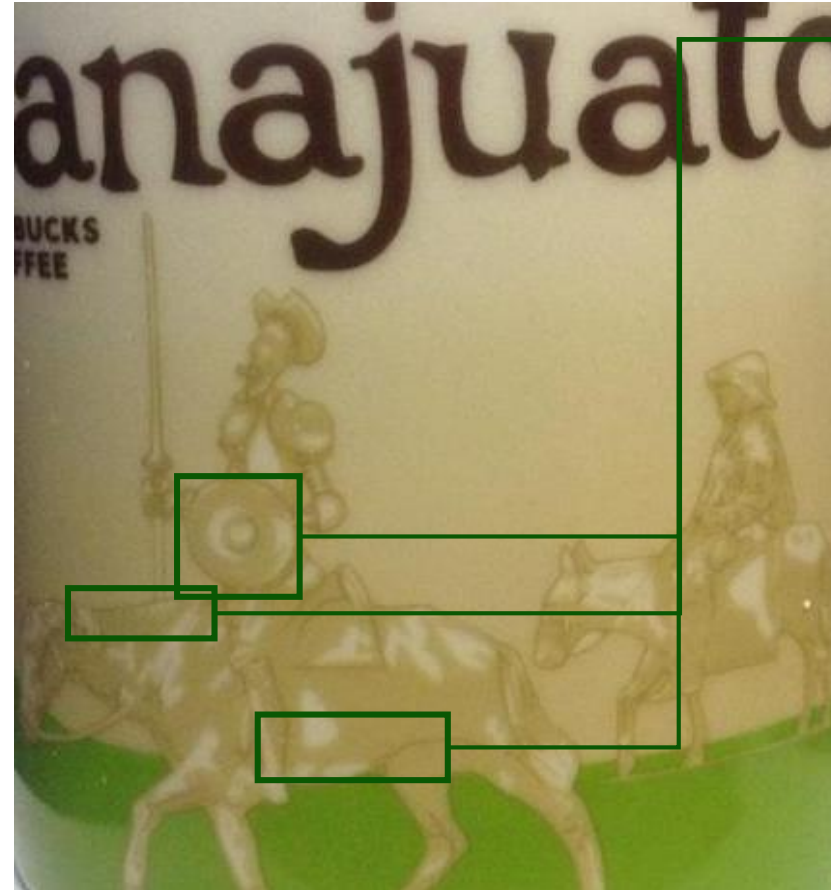


GUANAJUATO 2

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Major coloring errors: darker lines missing, most notably around Don Quichote's shield as well as Rosinante's neck and blanket.

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series



GUANGZHOU

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Missing very small spot of orange background color. The original mug has 4 such spots, while the fake only has 3

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series

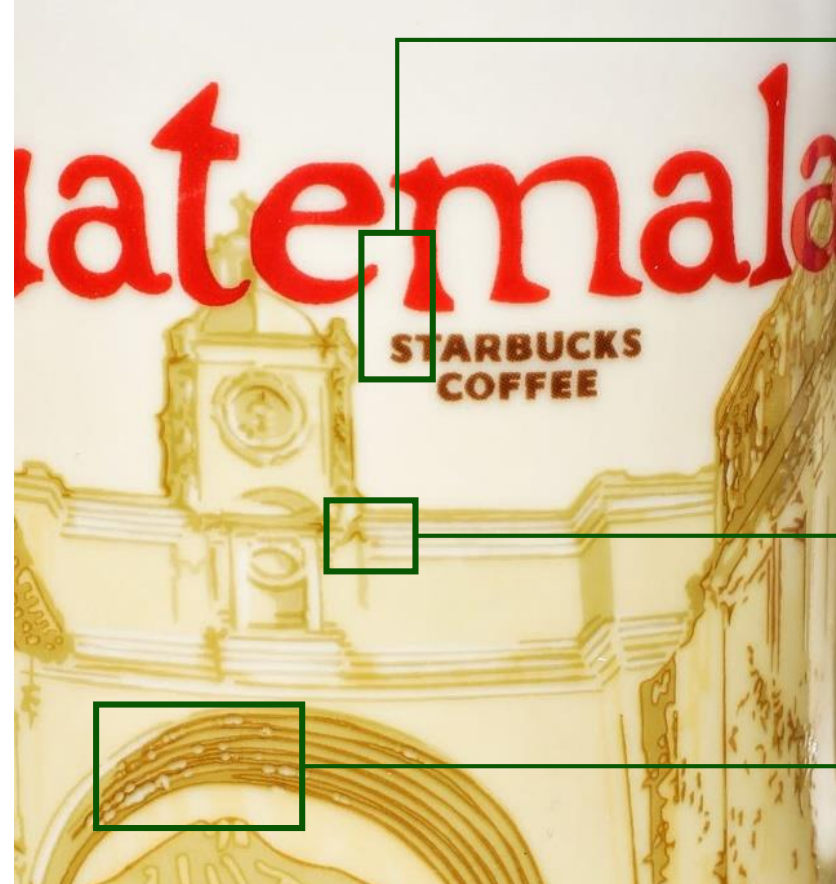


GUATEMALA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Starbucks font starts further on the left side of the «m» of «Guatemala»
- 2 Different coloring and lining in various areas of the Arco.

Known bottom imprints:

- 2010 Regular Series
- 2010 Collector Series
- 2011 Collector Series

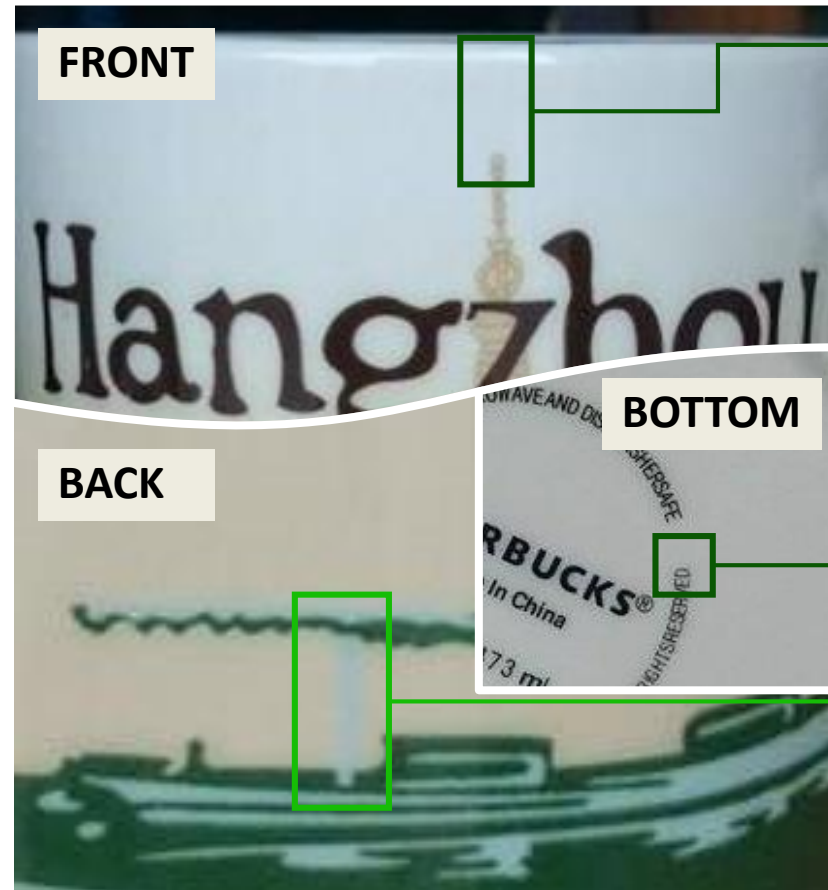


HANGZHOU

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Larger gap between Leifeng Pagoda rooftop and mug top

2 Missing dot after «reserved» on bottom.

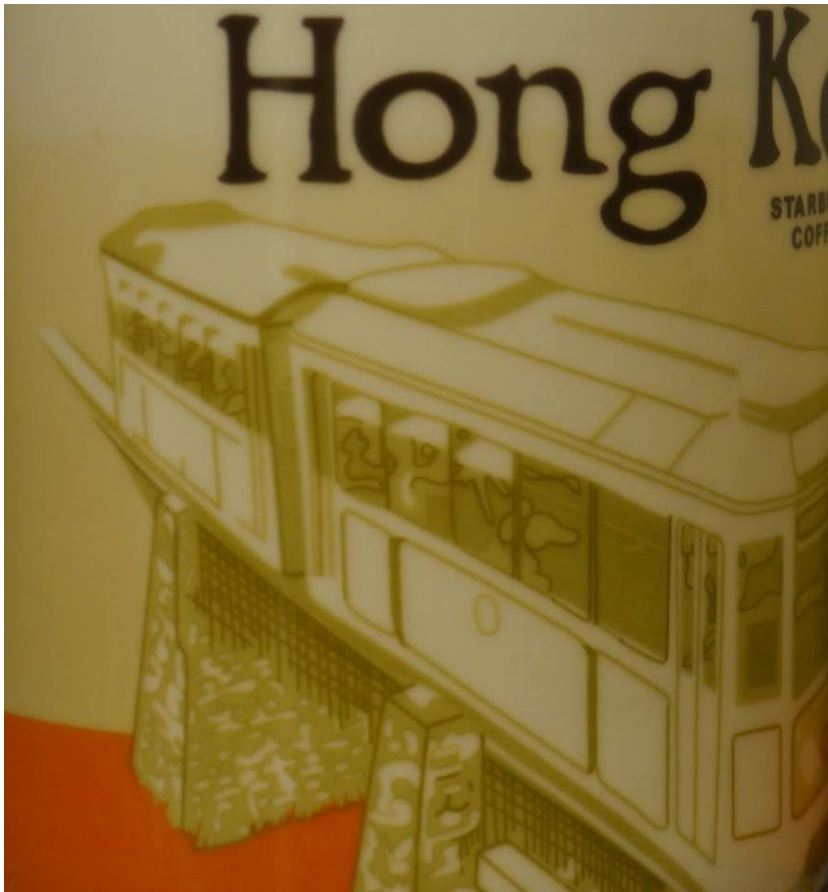
3 Ship's roof column light green instead of dark green

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Normal Edition

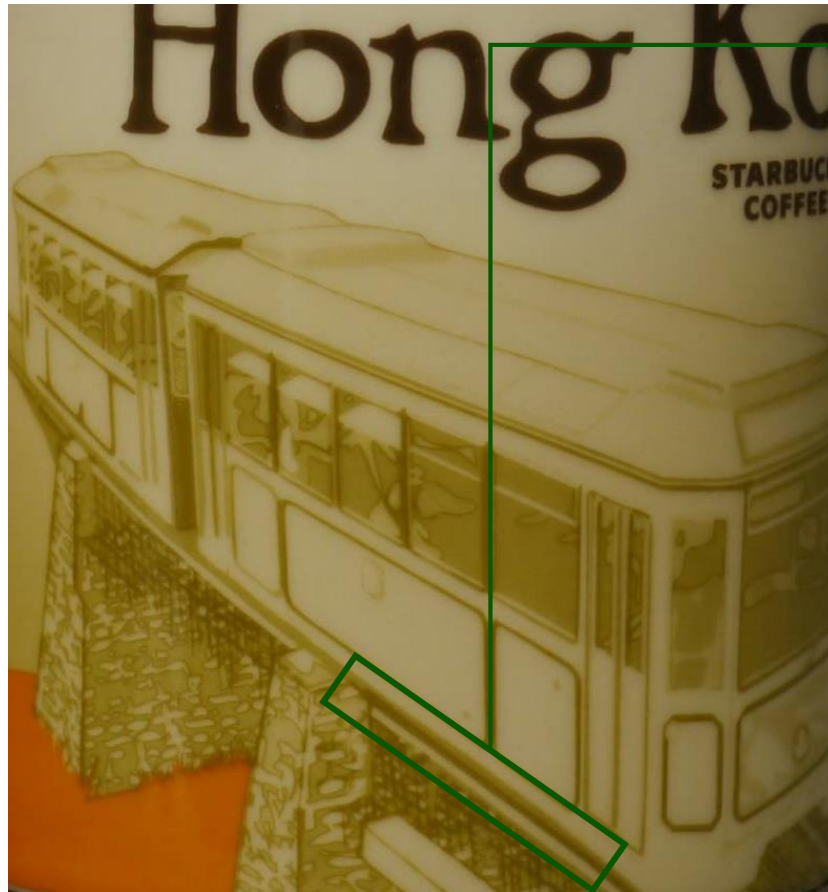


HONG KONG

ORIGINAL



FAKE



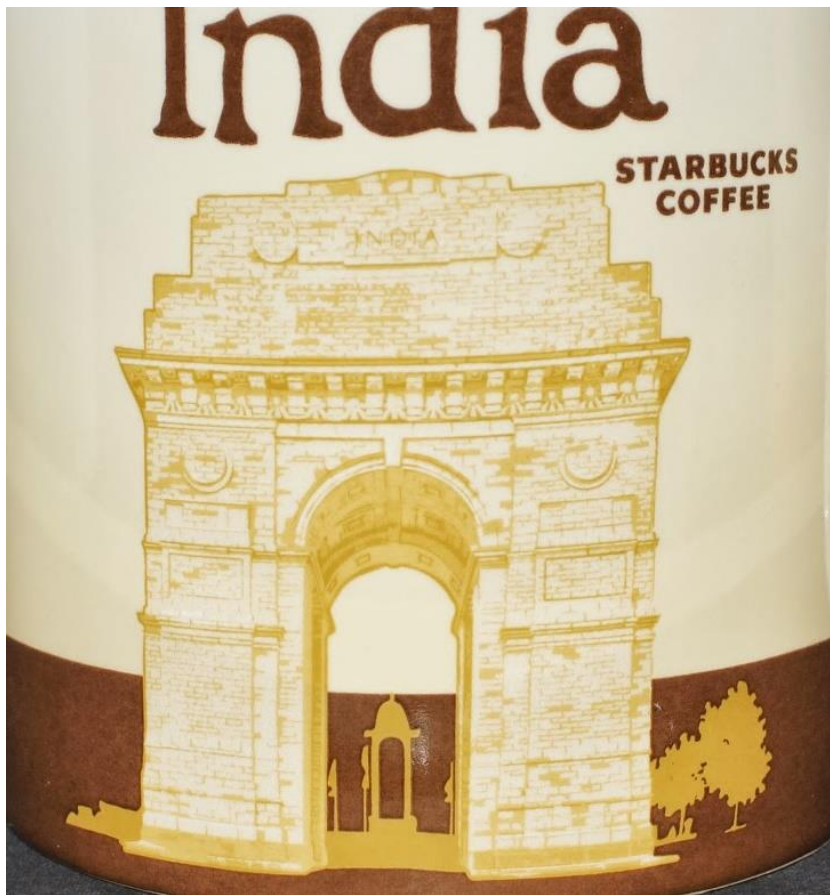
1 Train's lower edge is too dark on the first wagon

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Collector Series

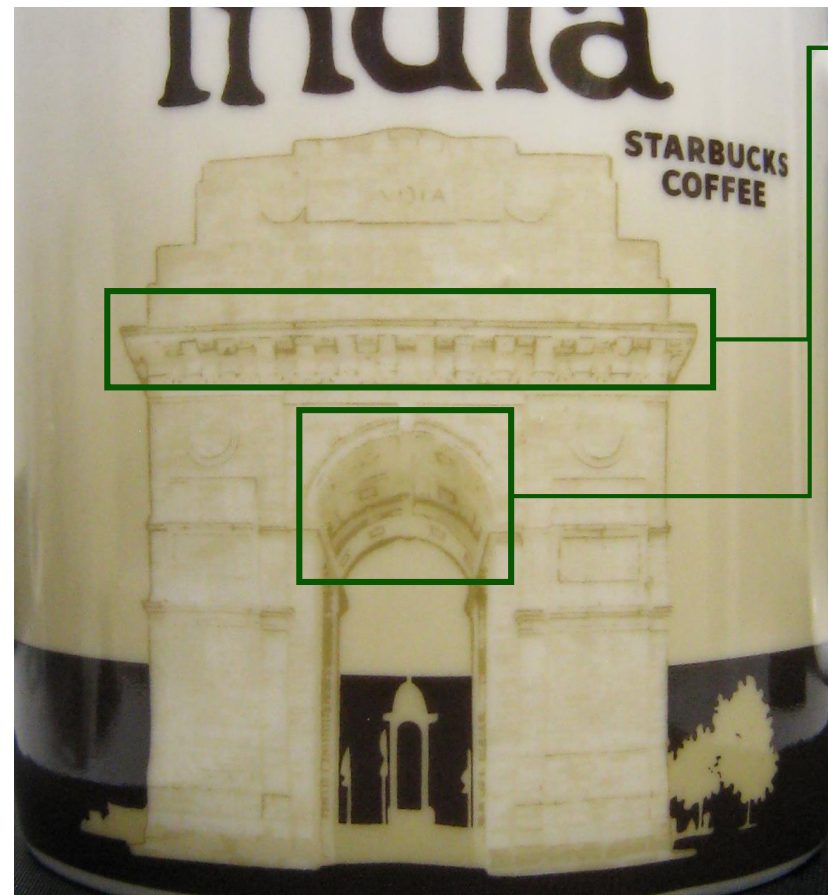


INDIA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Bad coloring with most details missing, especially bricks in the wall and shadows

ATTENTION: Besides the fake version, several originals exist of this mug. Here's a list of their bottom imprints

- 1) 2009, Made in Thailand, Normal Edition
- 2) 2012, Made in China, Normal Edition
- 3) 2012, no origin given (glossy, so probably Made in China), Normal Edition
- 4) 2012, no origin given (matte, so probably Made in Thailand), Collector Series

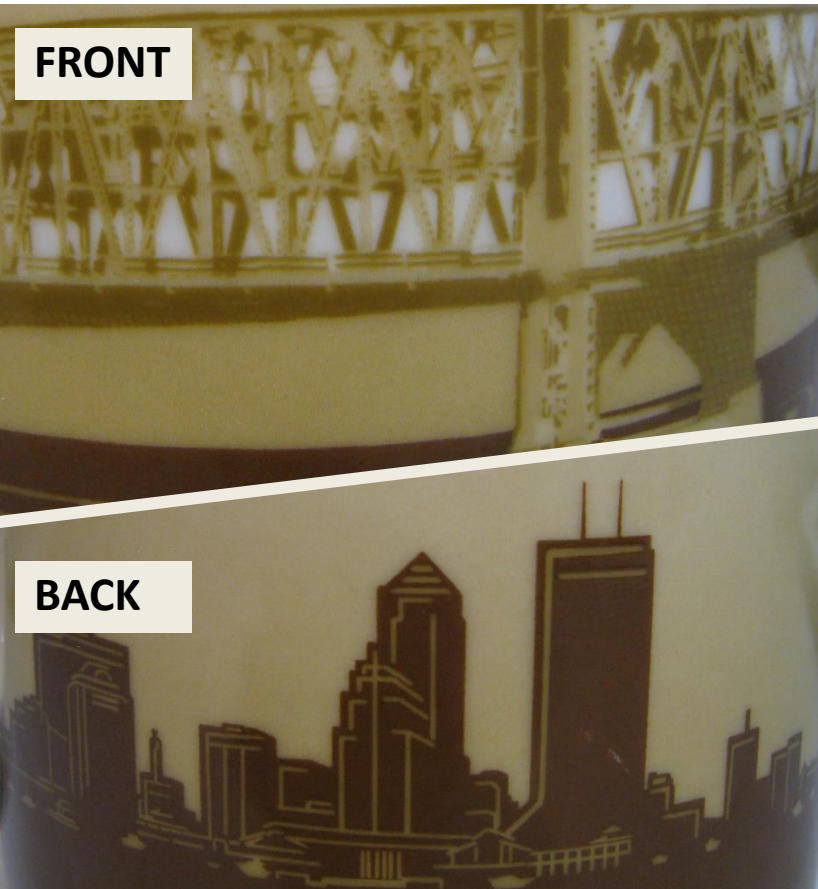
Known bottom imprints:

- 2012 Normal Edition (fake of v2 above)

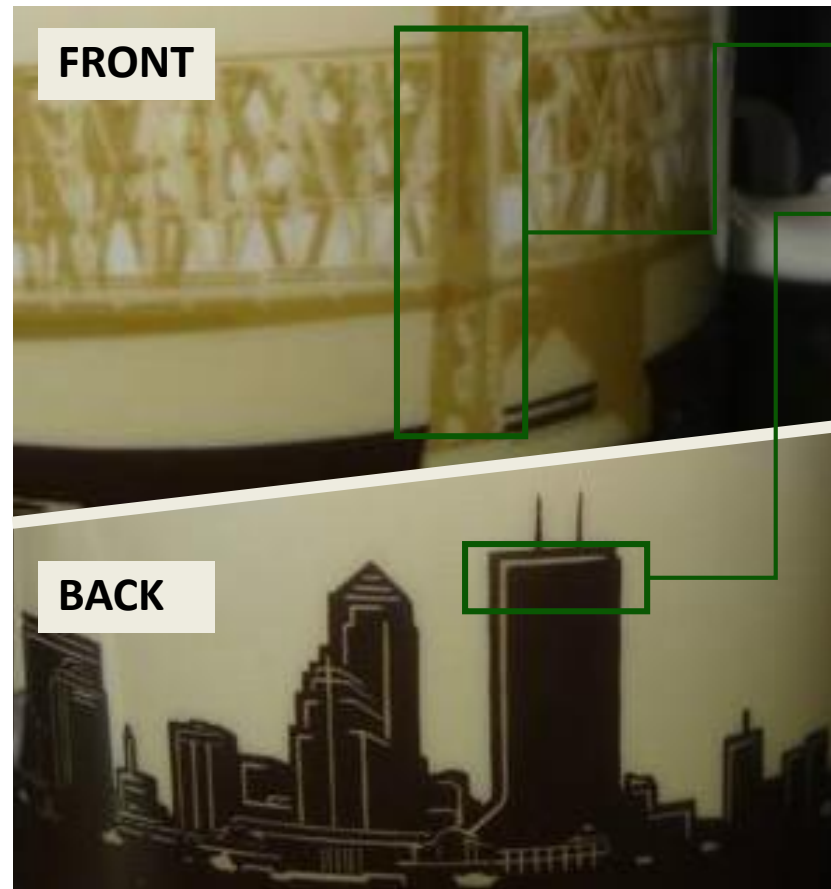


JACKSONVILLE

ORIGINAL



FAKE



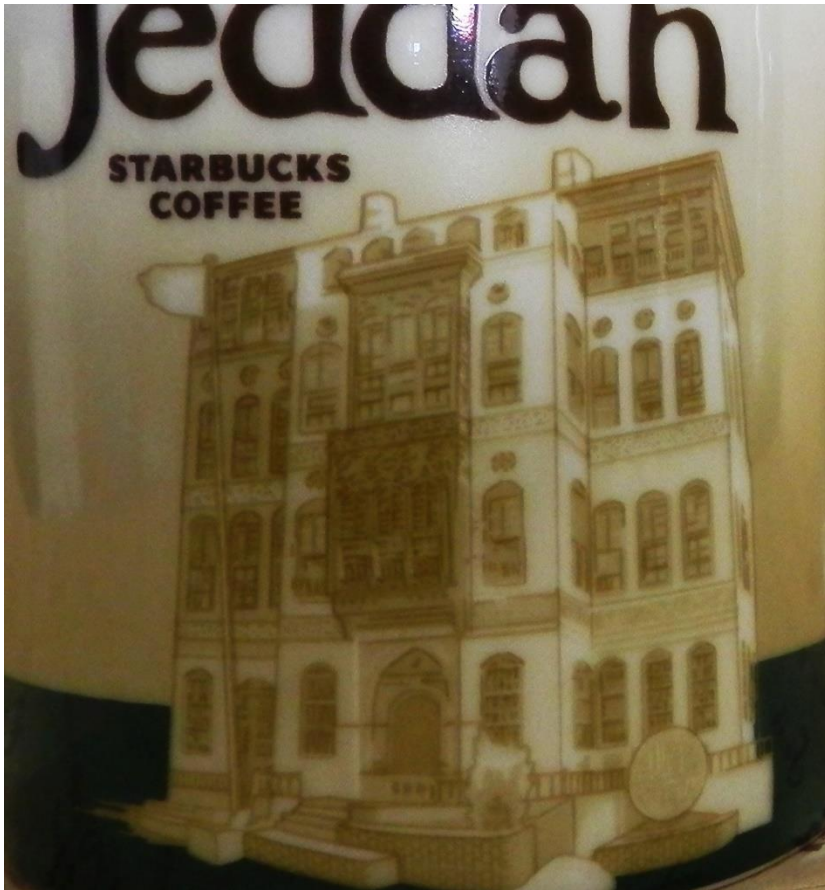
- 1 Right pillar of the Main Street Bridge is darker
- 2 Horizontal white line on Wells Fargo Center is missing
- 3 [to be verified:] As Jacksonville was first released in 2008, there is probably no legit Collector Series dated 2010.

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



JEDDAH

ORIGINAL



FAKE



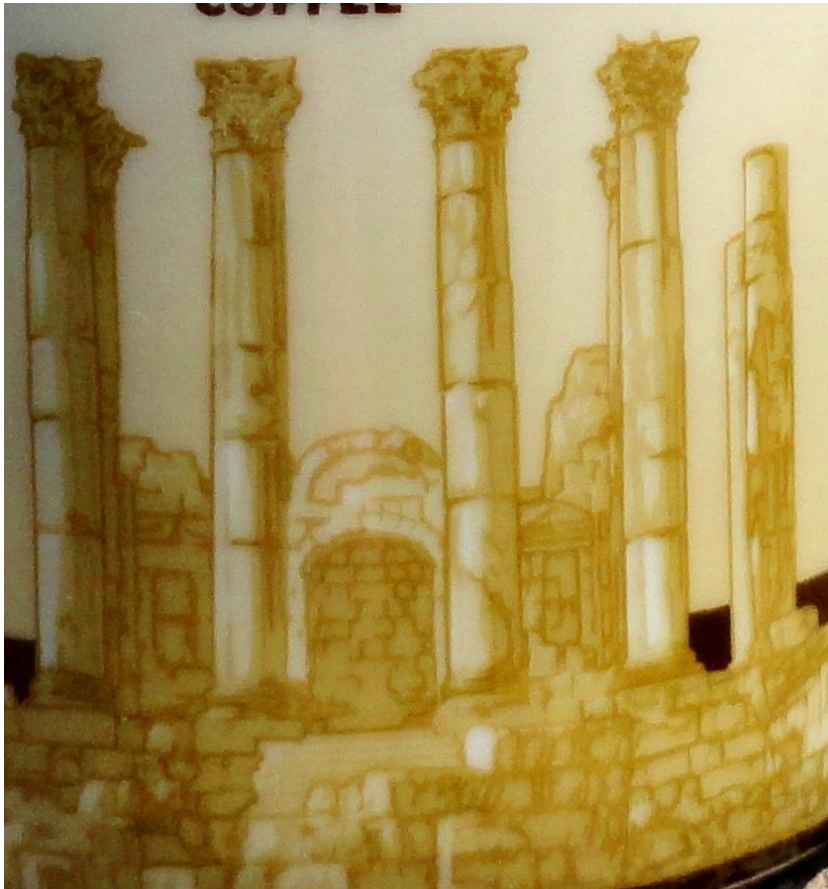
1 Some coloring errors, e.g. no shadow around this window

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series

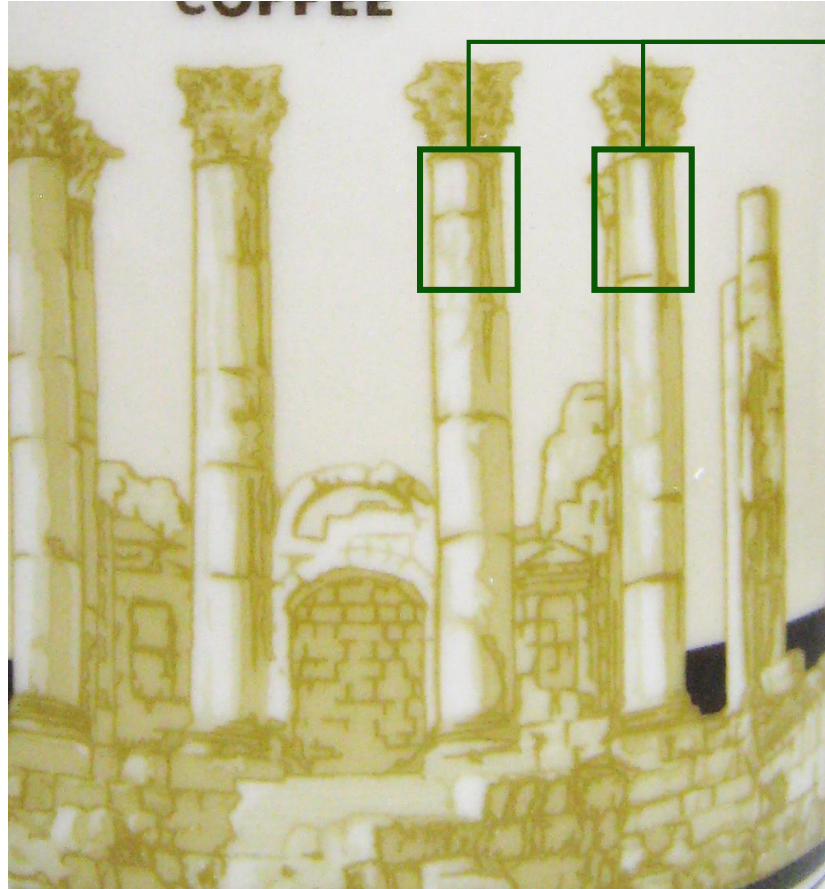


JORDAN

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

Top of two pillars on the right side is colored white instead of toned

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Normal Edition



KUWAIT

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

Lower right part of the Al-Boom's hull is of white instead of toned color

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



LEBANON

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Tree reaches far further left under «Starbucks Coffee»

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



LONDON

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Top of tower closer to «d» of London
- 2 Dark vertical line across tower bridge top missing
- 3 Blue background spot next to tower and above tower bridge missing

Known bottom imprints:
• [none yet documented, please help!]



MACAU

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Obvious coloring deviations, easiest to recognize on the left window (missing) and the bushes on the right.
- 2 Wrong «Starbucks Coffee» Font

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Collector Series



MADRID

ORIGINAL



FAKE



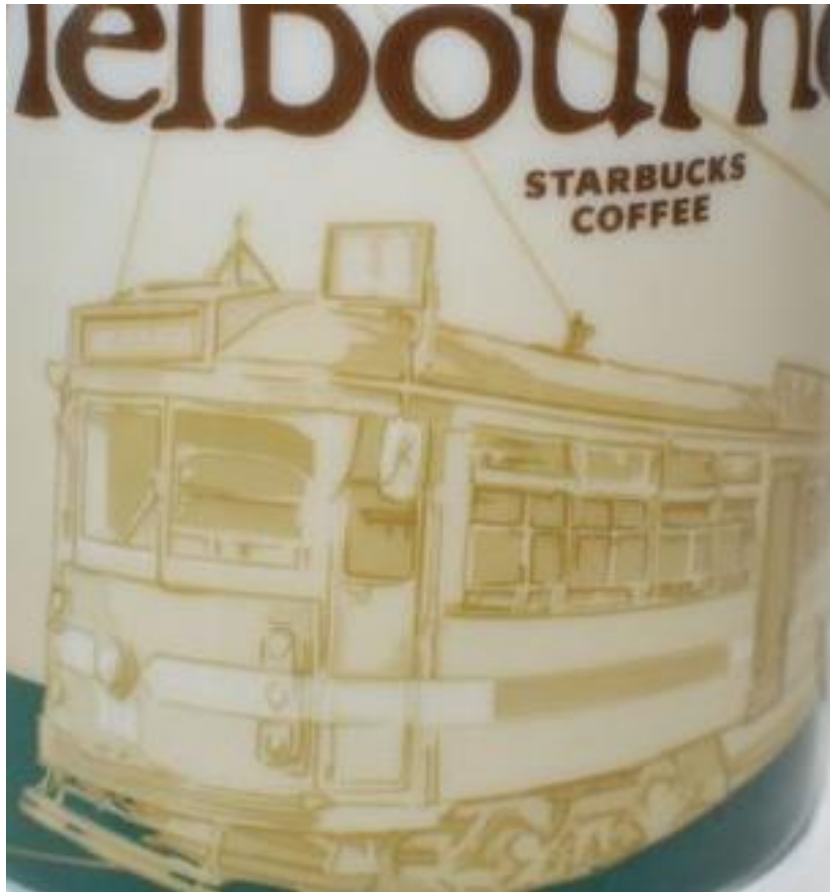
- 1** Obvious coloring deviations on the lower tree crown (shades only in one color) and on bear (e.g. ear)

- Known bottom imprints:
- 2011 Regular Series

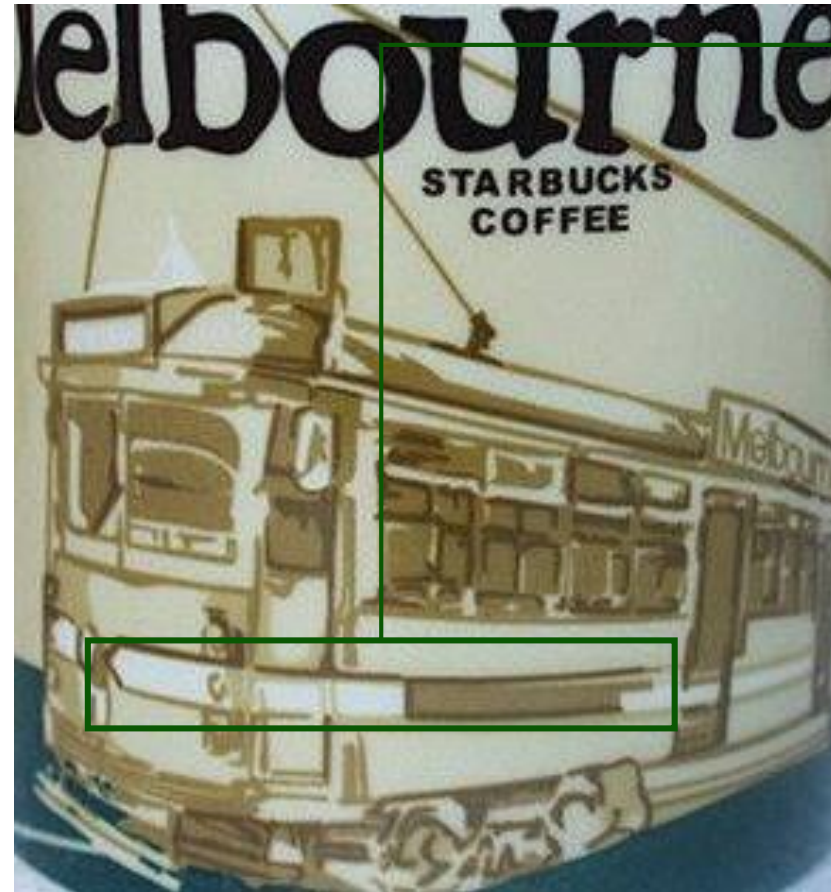


MELBOURNE

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Completely wrong shading, too much contrast, especially around the edges in the middle of the tram

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series

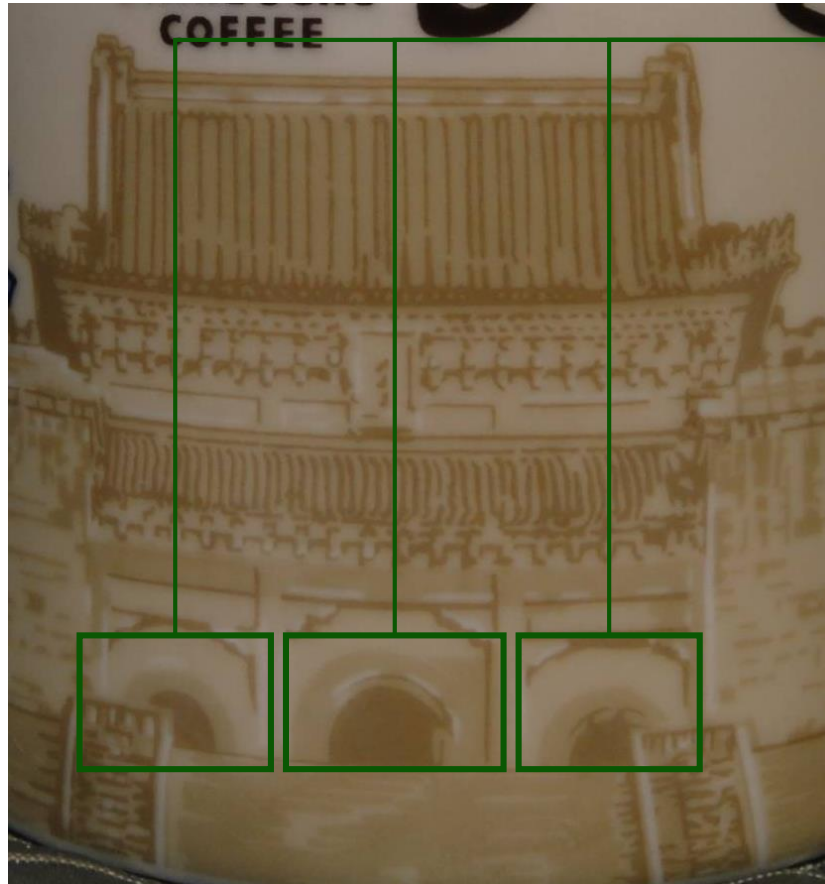


NANJING

ORIGINAL



FAKE



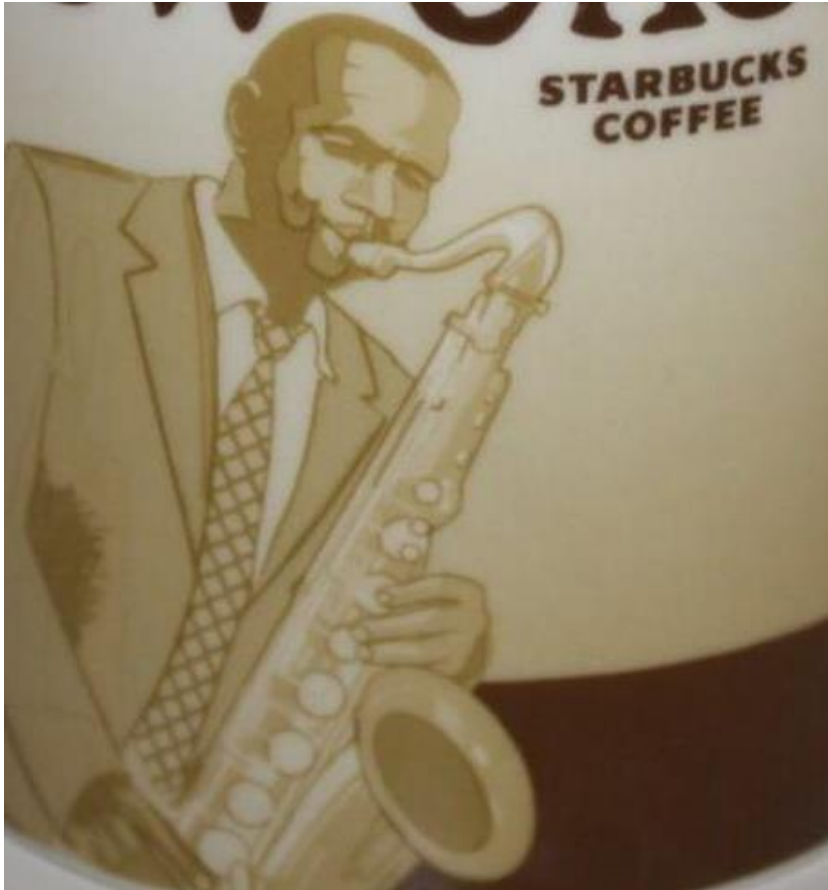
1 Round dark lines above the three entrances missing

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series

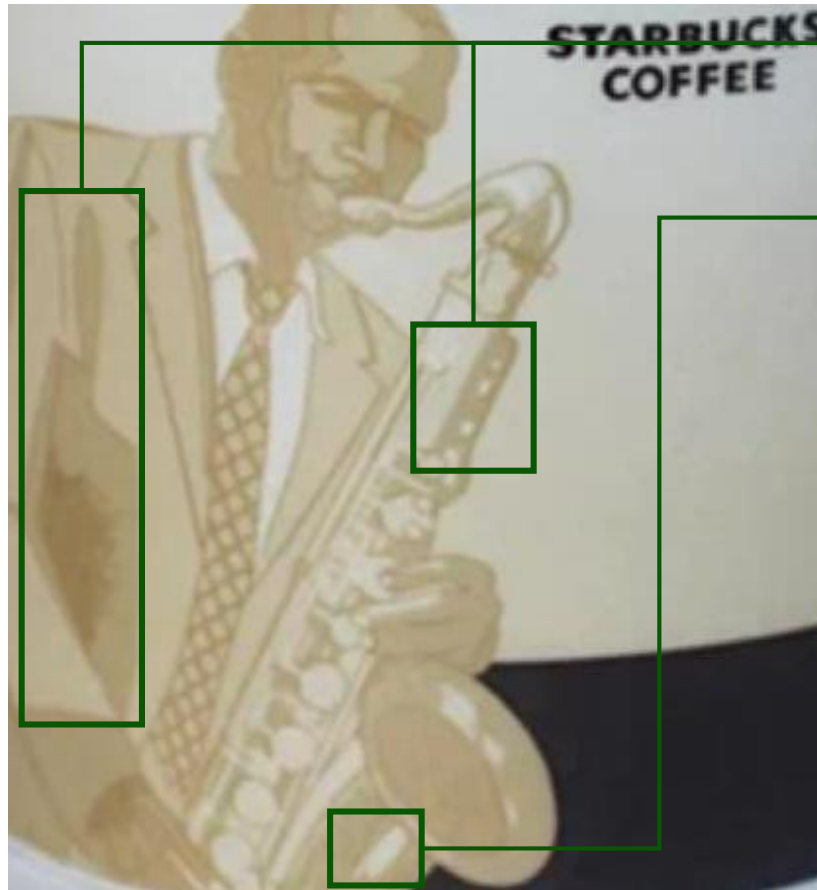


NEW ORLEANS

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Shading too dark non both the saxophone and the player
- 2 White reflection on the lower outside of the saxophone

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



NEW ZEALAND

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Kiwi Bird's eye coloring error

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series



NIAGARA FALLS

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

Much larger blank space on top. As a consequence, image has been significantly squeezed

ATTENTION: This fake mug does often come with a USA SKU and price tag.

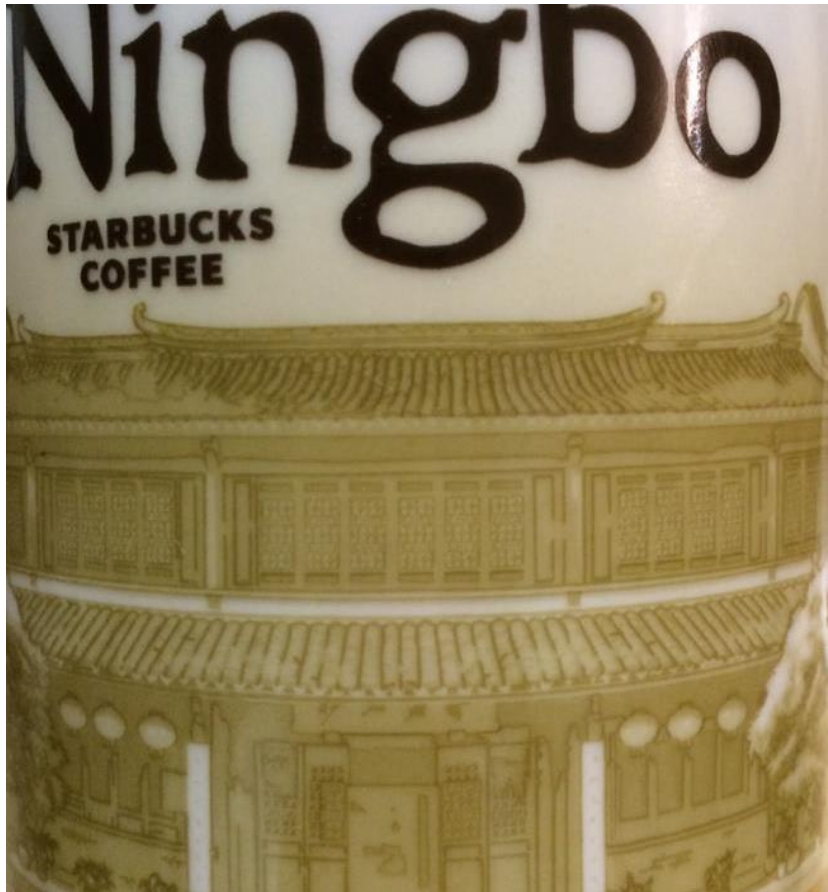
Known bottom imprints:

- 2010 Collector Series



NINGBO

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Shading errors. Most notably, the windows on the upper floor have dark shadows and shadowing around the main entrance door is too dark, especially on the left side.

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series

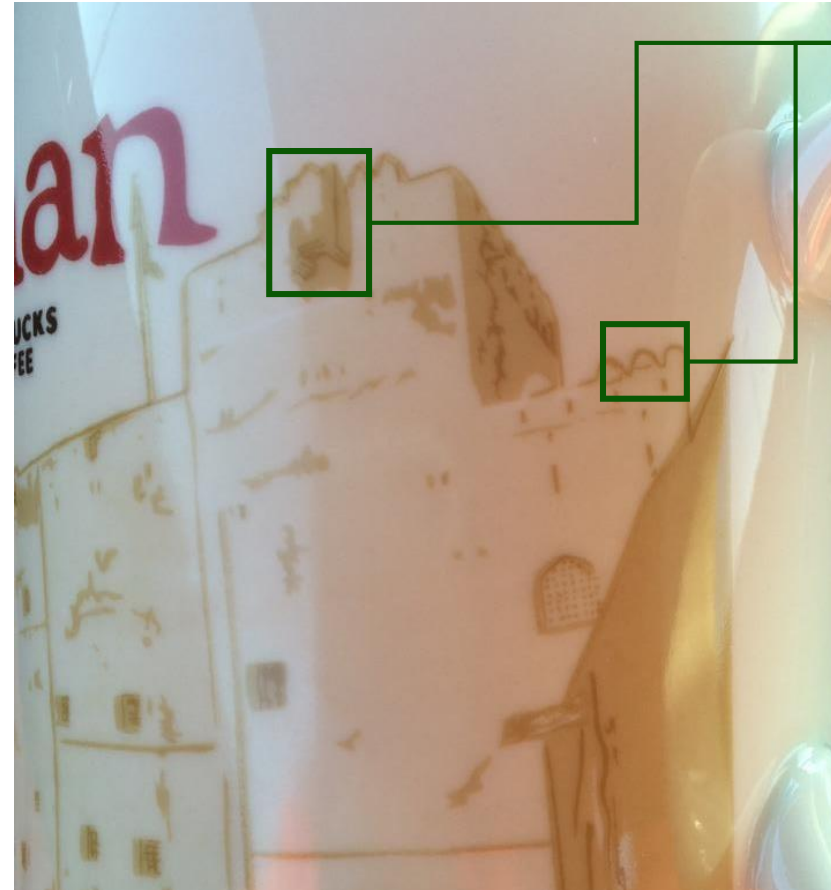


OMAN

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Obvious coloring differences on two details of the Jabrin Fort

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series



PARIS

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 «i» of «Paris» is crossing the Tower
- 2 Coloring error on the lower left side of the «Eiffel Tower»

Known bottom imprints:
• [none yet documented, please help!]



PHILIPPINES

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Major shading errors
- 2 Bottom imprint missing
- 3 Inside color missing

Known bottom imprints:

- none

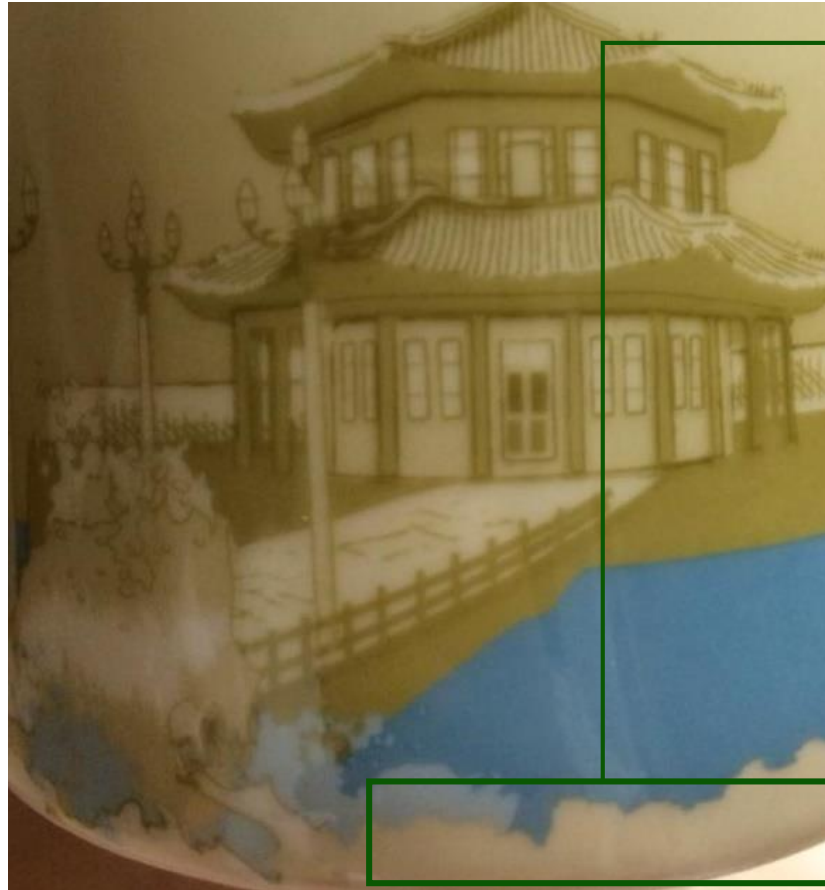


QINGDAO

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Water foam should be white, but is slightly toned.

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series



RIYADH

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 «Riyadh» font is about half an inch further down. This however does not result in the image being squeezed notably
- 2 Noticably more white spots on the palm tree

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



SANYA

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Edge of palm tree leaf visible above «y» of «Sanya»
- 2 Lighter shading color on palm tree leaves missing

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series

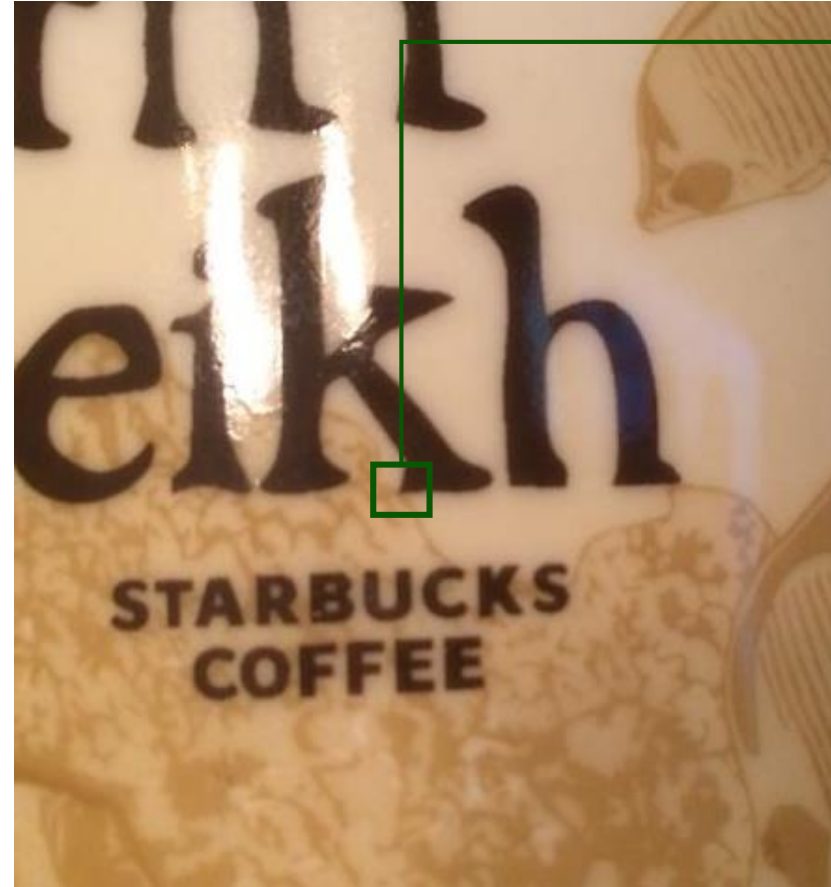


SHARM EL SHEIKH

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Bottom right leg of the «k» in «Sheikh» touches the coral reef

2 Bottom imprint shows «Made in China»

Known bottom imprints:

- 2012 Regular Series



SHANGHAI

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Tip fo the Magnolia's petal ends further right under the «n» of «Shanghai»
- 2 Font for «Starbucks Coffee» too thin

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series

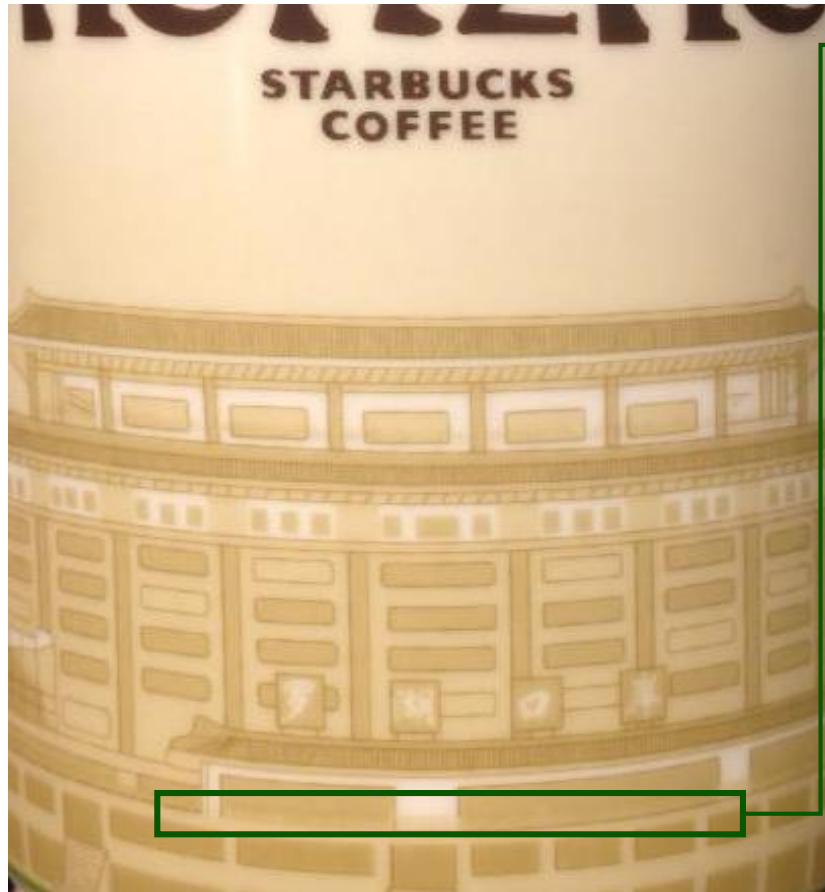


SHENZHEN

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Lower floor fence missing dark shadow

Known bottom imprints:
• [none yet documented, please help!]



SINGAPORE (BLUE)

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Serious coloring issues with the orchids, best visible on peduncle of the right orchid (missing shading)

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series



SOUTH ISLAND

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

«a» and «n» of «Island» and several letters of «Starbucks Coffee» have larger spacing on mug's backside

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series



SPAIN

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Left end of «Spain»'s «S» ends over Don Quichote's little finger instead of his middle and ring finger
- 2 Various coloring issues, easiest to recognize at Don Quichote's eyes (dark color missing)

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series



STOCKHOLM

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

Upper edge of the city hall tower's base not visible underneath «h» and «l» of «Stockholm»

Known bottom imprints:

- 2012 Regular Series

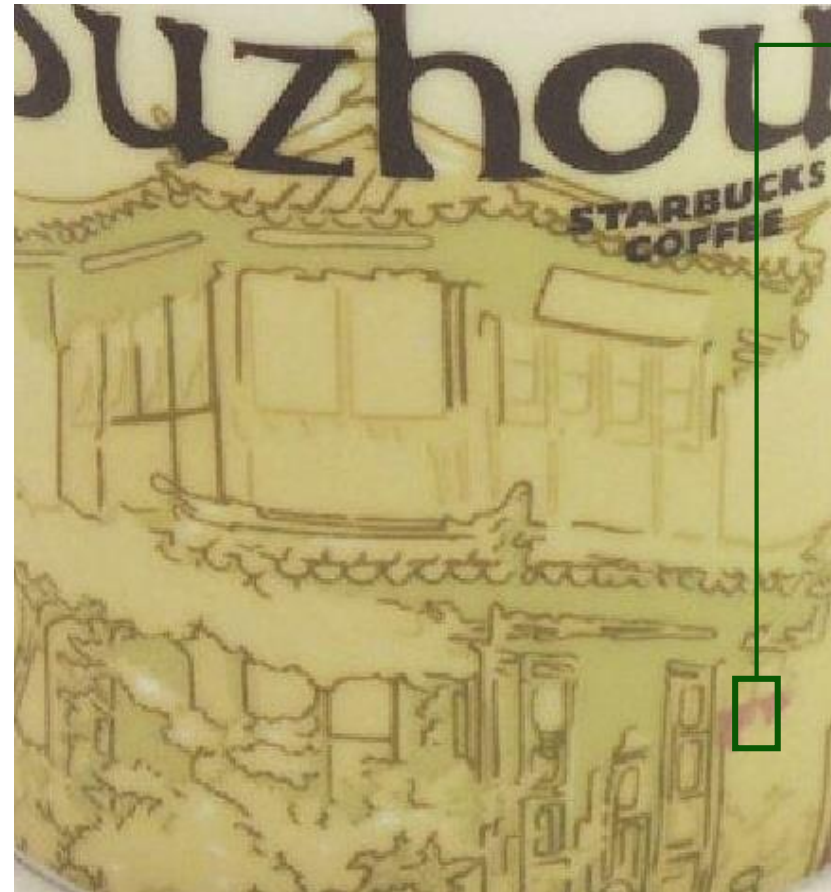


SUZHOU

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Bushes in the background not overlapping the red bottom border
- 2 Major shading errors

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series



SYDNEY

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 «Starbucks Coffee» much closer up to «Sydney»

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series

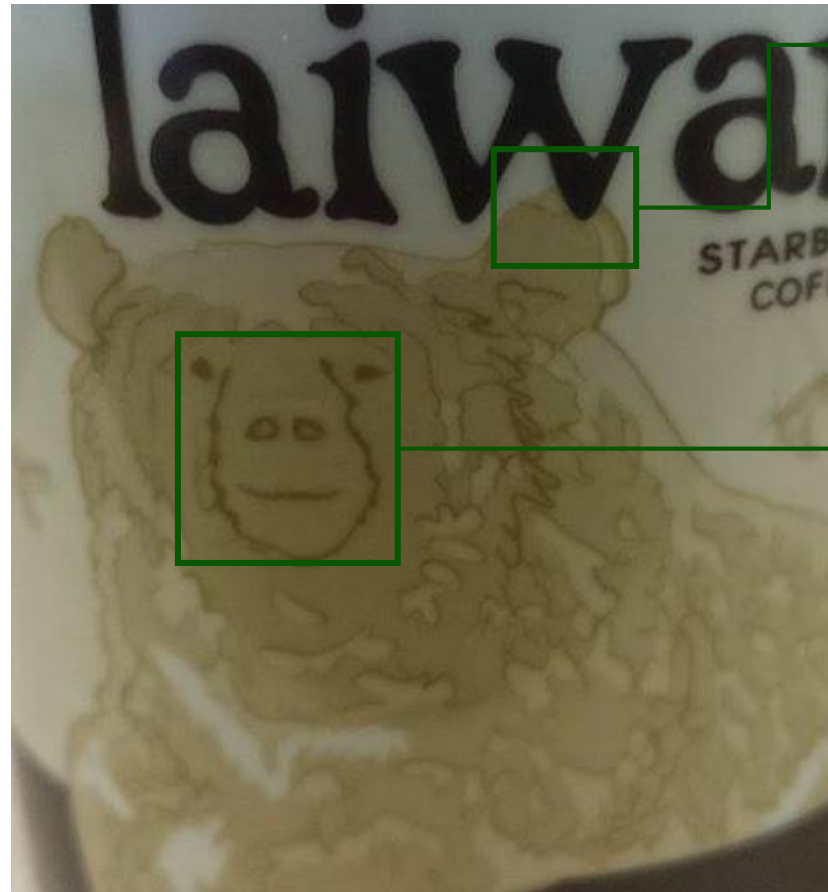


TAIWAN

ORIGINAL



FAKE



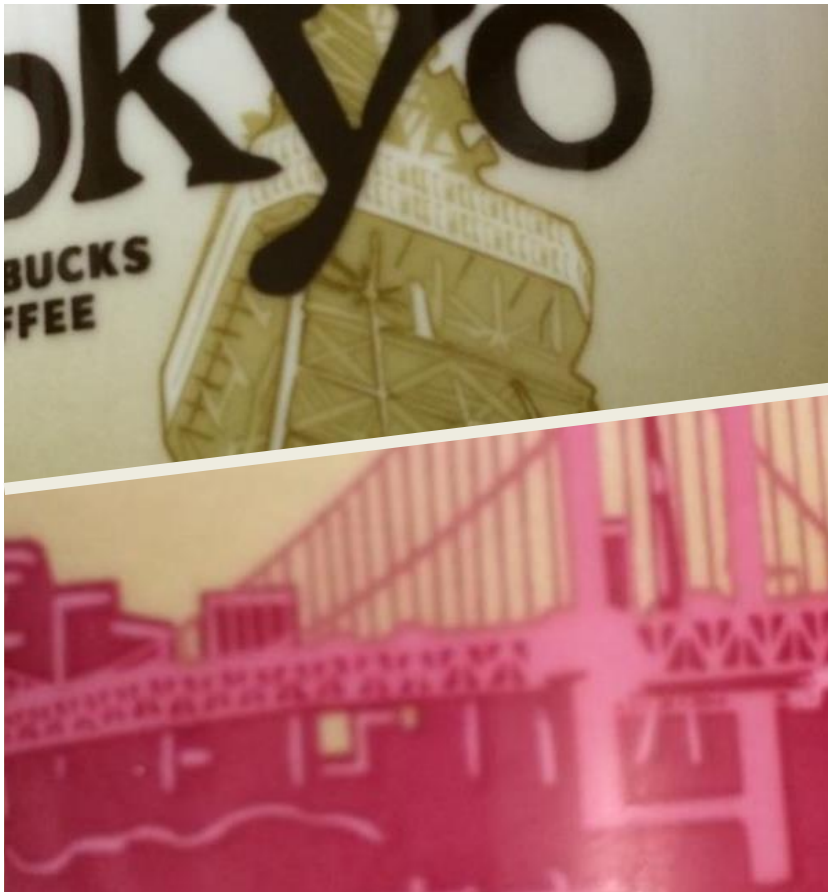
- 1 Bear's ear covered differently by «Taiwan» font
- 2 Obvious coloring issues, most notably on bear's nose

Known bottom imprints:
• 2011 Collector Series

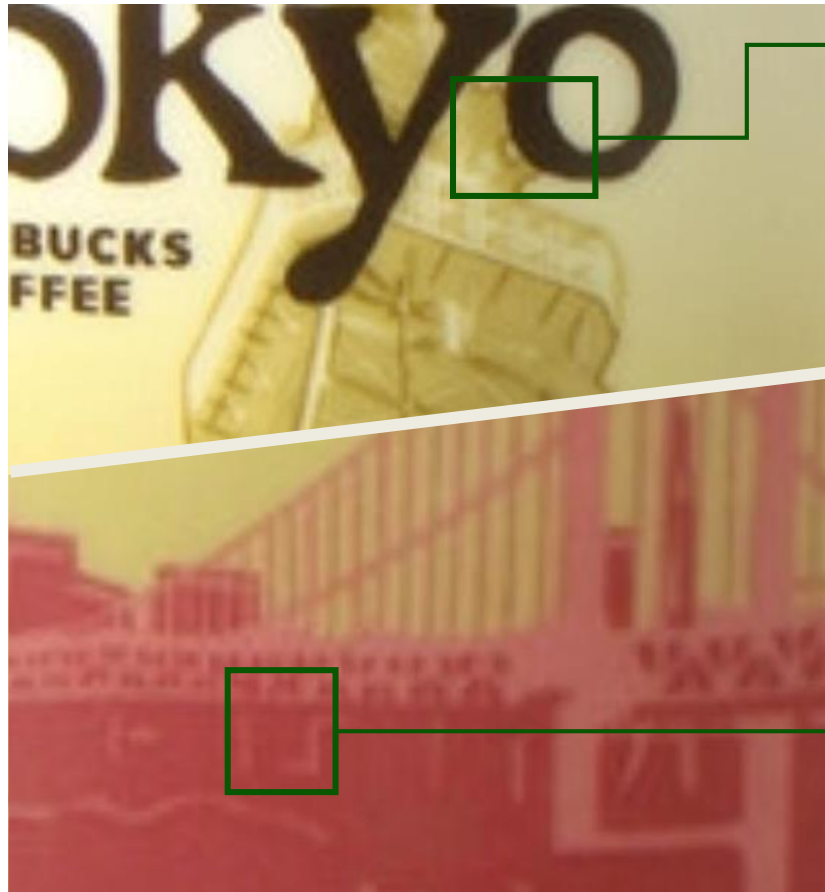


TOKYO

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 Second «o» of «Tokyo» touches the tower
- 2 No space under the bridge

Known bottom imprints:
• 2009 Collector Series

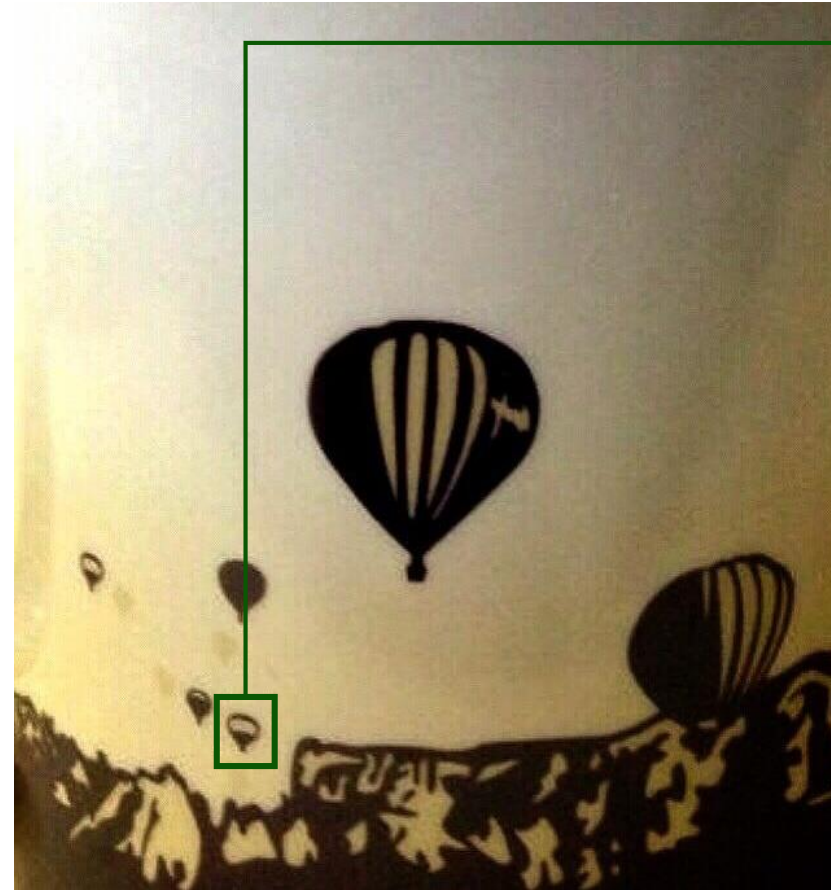


TURKEY

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1 Extra hot air balloon on the back

Known bottom imprints:
• 2013 Regular Series

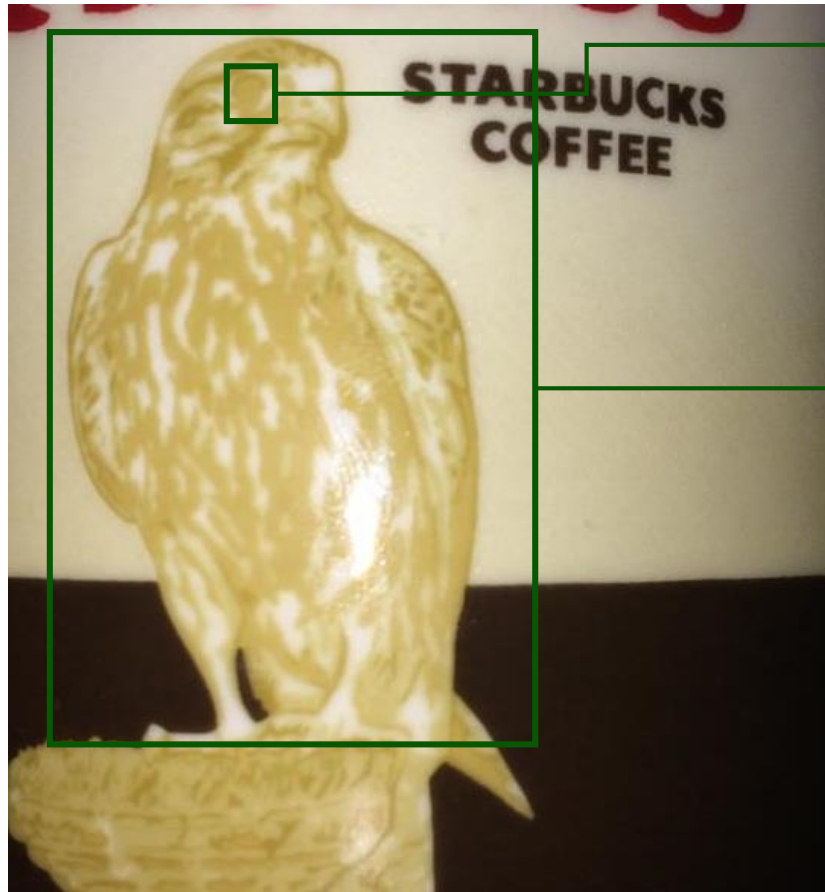


UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

ORIGINAL



FAKE



- 1 No white dot in Peregrine Falcon's eye
- 2 Less white on the Peregrine Falcon

Known bottom imprints:
• 2010 Collector Series

XIAMEN

ATTENTION: This side by side comparison needs a better pic of the fake mug, please send us one if you possess the fake mug.

ORIGINAL



FAKE



1

Right egret's tail feather has much less detail and is closer to the blue background

Known bottom imprints:
• 2012 Regular Series