

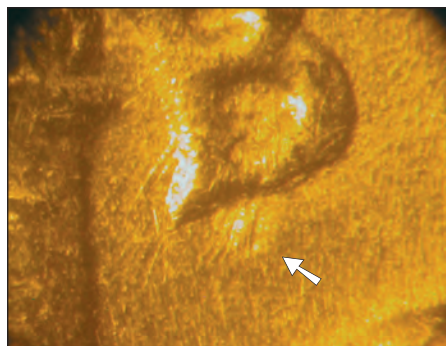
1924 Saint-Gaudens \$20

Sculpted fields and satin luster can complicate authentication.

THE SAINT-GAUDENS double eagle (gold \$20) series always has been popular with counterfeiters, although not to the extent of

smaller-denomination gold, mainly because larger amounts of precious metal are required to produce them. Among the Saint-Gaudens issues, 1924 seems to be the favored date in the series, given the number of documented counterfeits in articles and my files.

Unlike most Liberty Head gold pieces, with their flat fields and denticles that make toolmarks and depressions relatively easy to spot,



▲ Cluster of toolmarks at base of B in LIBERTY is highly visible, even without magnification. However, the presence of such marks is not sufficient to condemn a coin.

the Saint-Gaudens \$20 coins have “sculpted” fields, a satin luster and no denticles. These characteristics can make finding diagnostics more difficult, at least until you familiarize yourself with the series.

Generally speaking, you can expect counterfeit Saints to display depressions, toolmarks, irregularities, diminished details or even missing edge lettering. You also will notice minor differences in color and luster compared to genuine specimens. Weights and diameters typically meet U.S. Mint specifications or fall within acceptable ranges. Low-quality fakes might differ more significantly in this area and usually have prominent, easy-to-detect diagnostics. However, high-quality counterfeits are pro-

duced from one-to-one transfer dies, most likely using a lathe or hubbing process not unlike the Mint's. The results tend to be far superior to those of other methods, and the diagnostics subsequently are harder to spot.

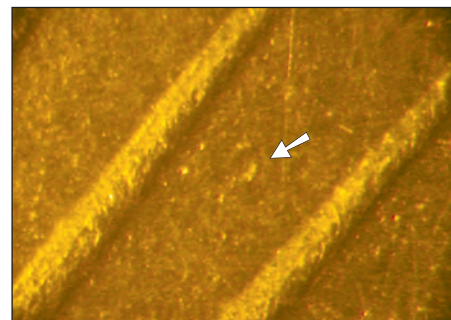
The 1924 \$20 counterfeit shown here is very well made and displays only a few, readily apparent diagnostics. But under close examination, numerous depressions and a few toolmarks can be found in sufficient number to reasonably conclude the piece is not genuine.

As with many counterfeit Saint-Gaudens \$20 gold coins, depressions are found on and between the rays on both the obverse and reverse. Depressions also are evident on Liberty and the eagle, with a few faint ones in the field. The most prominent diagnostic is a cluster of toolmarks below the B in LIBERTY.

silliman@money.org



▲ Counterfeit 1924 \$20: Slight loss of detail is typical of most fakes.



▲ Depression between rays above 2 in date, one of several on obverse.

■ Specifications ■

	WEIGHT (grams)	DIAMETER (millimeters)
Genuine 1924 \$20 Gold	33.43	34.00
Counterfeit	33.43	34.17