



ARTS & CULTURE

Jigsaw Puzzles Gain Fans

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Jigsaw puzzles for adults are becoming more popular in America. The puzzles have pieces of different shapes that, when put together, form a picture.

People attend puzzle nights at coffee shops and libraries. Manufacturers design puzzles that have original artwork or even family photos.

A.J. Jacobs is working on a book about puzzles, including jigsaws and crosswords.

“I was not as passionate about jigsaw puzzles at first, but once I started doing them, I saw the loveliness of these puzzles,” he said. Jacobs added, “Puzzles are a very **soothing** and joyous way to spend a couple of hours.”

Jigsaw fans say the puzzles help ease daily stress. In addition, the puzzles give them a chance to step away from electronic devices.

Abby Matson, age 37, found puzzles helpful after the death of her dog three years ago.

“The puzzle was the only thing I could do to keep from crying,” she said.

Matson and her friend Abby McDaniel started a puzzle group that now has six members. Members send photos of a completed puzzle before mailing it to the next person.

“It brings out an inner competition,” McDaniel said.

Many puzzlers - a name for people who like playing puzzles - prefer **cardboard** puzzles. But some like wooden ones. Some fans buy special **frames**, glue and other tools to preserve finished jigsaw puzzles.

Stave Puzzles, a company based in the state of Vermont, makes many kinds of wooden puzzles.

Speaking with the Associated Press, company founder Steve Richardson described an increase in sales in recent years. “Our sales are up 25 percent in the last **decade**,” he said. Richardson added “We are now seeing orders from the children and grandchildren of some of our **original** customers.”

Shelby Comstock Britten attended the launch of Jiggy Puzzles, a New York-based puzzle company. Britten, who is 29 years old, said a puzzle night with drinks sounded perfect.

She said she liked the idea of puzzles that are made for adults.

“I’ve always loved puzzles and will occasionally get a **CVS** puzzle, but it’s kind of a **bummer** because it’s made for an 8-year-old,” she said. “I can’t Instagram that.”

I’m John Russell.

Tracee M. Herbaugh reported on this story for the Associated Press. John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

Jigsaw puzzle – *n.* a puzzle made of many small pieces that are cut into various shapes and can be fit together to form a picture

soothing – *adj.* producing feelings of comfort or relief

cardboard – *n.* a stiff and thick kind of paper that is used especially for making boxes

frame -- *n.* an open structure that holds something (such as glass or a picture)

decade -- *n.* a period of 10 years

original -- *adj.* happening or existing first or at the beginning

CVS – *n.* an American retail and drug store

bummer – *n.* something that is unpleasant or disappointing (informal)

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