

KOVELS ON ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

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NEWS FLASH

Reproduction milk bottles are showing up at the flea markets. The repros include a green glass Liberty Dairy pint, and a Deitrich's Dairy square cream-top with a black cow and red lettering, "You can whip our cream but you can't beat our milk." (*The Milk Route*, National Association of Milk Bottle Collectors)

Zippo lighters are heating up in Japan. The lighters were first made in 1932. A full-page ad in a recent newspaper offers up to \$1,000 for a platinum Zippo, \$600 for 18K gold, \$300 for 14K gold, and \$150 for Zippos with enameled scenes. The ad says the buyer represents Japanese investors. A Japanese collector just bought a 2,000-lighter collection from a Pennsylvania collector. There are even full-color coffee-table books on Zippo lighters written especially for the Japanese market.

Shaker labels used on bottled medicines and herbs are being faked. Compare labels with known examples to check color, size, and density of letters. (*Ephemera News*, Spring 1993)

Cracker Jack is reissuing some of the best toy prizes they have used in the past 100 years. Look for them in boxes sold between August and December. There also will be a special commemorative tin.

Copper is selling well in the gift shops because of renewed interest in the Arts and Crafts movement and Old West decor (*Gifts & Decorative Accessories*, June). Look for more interest in copper vases and trays at the antiques shows.

Amber jewelry and chunks of amber are suddenly attracting new buyers. The movie *Jurassic Park* has informed the world about insects trapped in amber. Watch out for fake amber. Real amber will glow under a black light.

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MAKE MINE MAJOLICA

Turn-of-the-century majolica is still the darling of the decorators and prices are still going up. This 11½-inch-high cheese dome with mottled rope and fern decoration brought \$495 at a Pennsylvania auction. See page 136 for more prices and pictures.

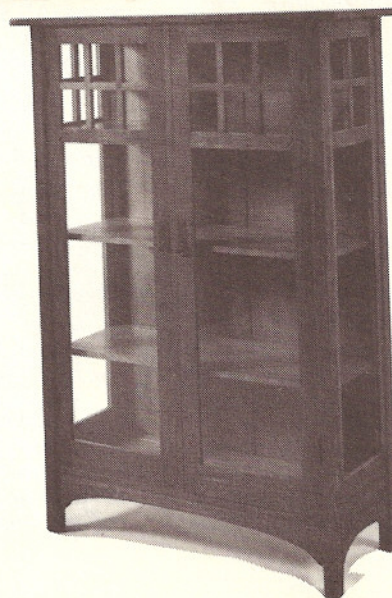


TOY TREASURES

No clowning around with this circus. Schoenhut circus animals sell well. This 6-inch brown gazelle in the early style I with glass eyes, leather horns, ears, and tail was \$1,018, even with a crack in the left eye. Discover clues to the old and new styles, plus prices, on page 135.

COOKIE JAR TIME

Wise buyers go for cookie jars like this Robinson Ransbottom "Gold Wise Bird." The mint-condition jar with gold decoration brought \$325 at a cookie jar auction. More goodies on page 140.



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Display your collection in a mission-style oak china cabinet like this one by L. & J.G. Stickley. The \$3,220 cabinet was auctioned at a sale of 20th-century collectibles in New York. Price report on two sales on page 141.

The Majolica Market

Victorian majolica brought prices ranging from \$11 for a pond-lily butter pat to \$2,310 for a Minton game pie dish at an all-majolica auction held in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

Majolica is riding a new wave of popularity that began about 20 years ago. In the late 19th century, English potteries such as Minton, Wedgwood, and George Jones had a hard time keeping up with demand. American makers, including Edwin Bennett and Griffen, Smith & Hill, adapted English designs and created new ones. Then tastes changed. Majolica fell into disfavor and was virtually ignored until the late 1970s. Then it was rediscovered, books were written, and prices soared.

The market for majolica continues to be strong, according to auctioneer Michael Strawser. Prices were high despite the fact that this was a consignment auction, not a famous collection, and that many pieces had chips, cracks, or repairs. (Majolica is fragile. Complicated designs are seldom found in mint condition.) He says interest in majolica is still climbing. There was a 50 percent increase in attendance at the Majolica International Society convention this year.

Strawser says Etruscan majolica by Griffen, Smith & Hill sold especially well. An Etruscan Shell & Seaweed teapot, mint, brought \$1,815. Etruscan swan cheese keeper, pink background, (minor hairline), 8 in., \$1,980. Etruscan sardine box with underplate, cobalt, \$1,100.

Typical pieces from the auction are illustrated. Other top lots: George Jones footed strawberry server with large and small decorated baskets, and 7½- and 4½-in. spoons, \$1,980. Minton Chinaman teapot, (chips restored), \$1,925. Minton garden seat, cobalt with white, 1876, 18 in. h., \$1,925. Minton cobalt wine cooler with cherubs, 10½ in., mint, \$1,760. Minton cachepot and underplate, Daisy and Wicker, 15-in. plate, 14-in. pot, turquoise with green, pink and white, pink interior, (repair), \$1,550.

Additional prices: Cobalt urn with twig handles, yellow and pink applied flowers, leaves, birds, and snake, (some damage), 11¼ in. h. by 14 in. diam., \$220. Wedgwood umbrella stand, hexagonal, sunflower design, gray, turquoise, \$275. George Jones pieces: Cheese dome, picket fence and floral design on brown background, pink flowers, green leaves, lavender interior, 7½ in. by 10¼ in. diam., \$1,430. Vase, lavender with white and red daffodils, green leaves, \$1,375. Cheese dome, apple blossom and woven fence, green/turquoise background, pink flowers, twig handle, 10½ in. h. by 10½ in. diam., \$1,870.

The priced, illustrated catalog is available from Michael Strawser, 200 North Main, PO Box 332, Wolcottville, IN 46795.

The Majolica International Society (1275 First Avenue, Suite 103, New York, NY 10021) publishes a newsletter.

For more information, see *Majolica* by Nicholas Dawes (Crown, NY, c1990); *Majolica: A Complete History and Illustrated Survey* by Marilyn G. Karmason with Joan B. Stacke (Harry N. Abrams, NY, c1989); *Majolica* by Mike Schneider (Schiffer, Atglen, PA, c1990); and *Majolica: British, Continental and American Wares 1851-1915* by Victoria Bergeson (Barrie & Jenk-ins, London, c1989).

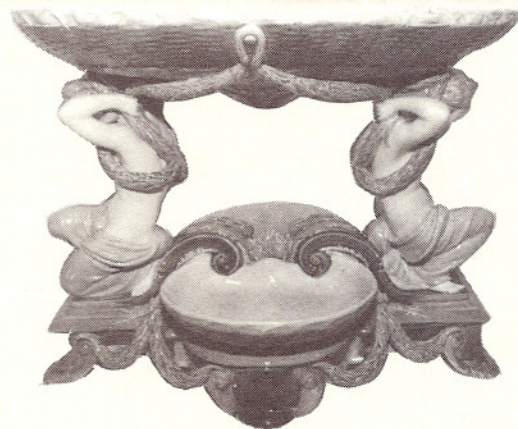
Note: prices include 10% buyer's premium.



Minton game pie dish, hare and duck, (professional repair to lid), 13½ in. l., \$2,310.



Figural group, tavern scene, German, red, lavender, brown, gray, yellow, green, (minor repair), 21 in. h. by 17½ by 9½ in., \$880.



Copeland centerpiece, women supporting basket, (professional restoration), 11½ in. h. by 14½ by 9 in., \$1,760.

REPRODUCTIONS

VICTORIAN FAIRINGS

Victorian fairings are amusing, surprisingly valuable, and fun to collect, but beware: they have been reproduced.

Fairings are little china figures that were sold at English fairs. They were most popular from 1860 to 1890, but some were made as late as 1920. Many have slightly bawdy scenes of courtship and marriage. Other themes include events in the daily lives of people, war scenes, children, politics, and animals. Each has a short title on the base, such as "Kiss Me Quick" or "After Marriage."

Interestingly, although fairings were designed for the British market, most were made in Germany. German firms were able to produce the trinkets and sell them more cheaply than the English Staffordshire potteries could.

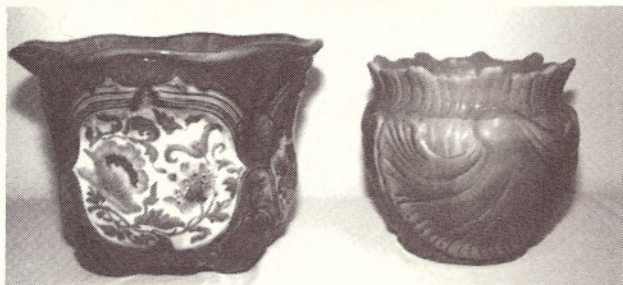
Fairings were originally intended to be affordable souvenirs, and they remained inexpensive until the 1960s, when W.S. Bristowe wrote a book on fairings. Then prices started to rise (a rare fairing showing a bicycling couple sold for over \$2,000 in 1974) and reproductions became profitable. Today, even common Victorian-era subjects sell in the \$100 range, so it is important to be able to tell old from new. Here are some clues that will help.

Most old fairings have a plain, rectangular base that is either solid or has a small drain hole or two. This makes the piece fairly heavy. Many bear the impressed "elbow in shield" mark of Conta & Boehme, Possneck, Germany. They may also be marked "Made in Germany." Bases on reproductions often have a scalloped front, and the entire base is hollow, so the figure is lighter. Some may be labeled "Made in Japan."

The best information on fairings is in two out-of-print books that may be available via interlibrary loan. See *Victorian China Fairings* by W.S. Bristowe (Taplinger, NY, c1965); and *Victorian China Fairings and Their Values* by Margaret Anderson (Lyle, Selkirkshire, Scotland, c1975).



George Jones game pie dish, pheasant, (hairline, rim chip restoration), 10½ in. l. by 8 in., \$1,980.



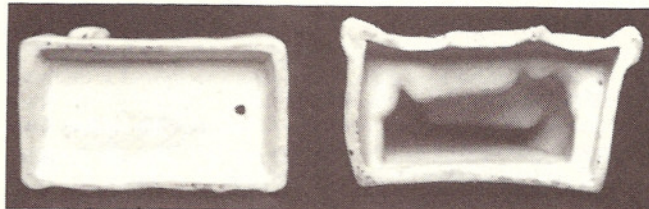
Left: Minton jardinière, brown background, turquoise panels with yellow flowers, 10 in. h. by 13 in. diam., \$1,000. Right: Minton jardinière, oyster shell in relief, Palissy style, yellow, 9 by 9 in., \$660.



Continental heron vase with cattails and pond lily, (repair), 21 in., \$880.



Left: Old Victorian fairing, "Twelve Months After Marriage," woman sleeping, man holding baby, plain, rectangular base, solid bottom, 3 in. Right: Reproduction Victorian fairing, "Twelve Months After Marriage," ornate base, hollow bottom.



Left: Original fairing, solid bottom. Right: Reproduction fairing, hollow bottom.