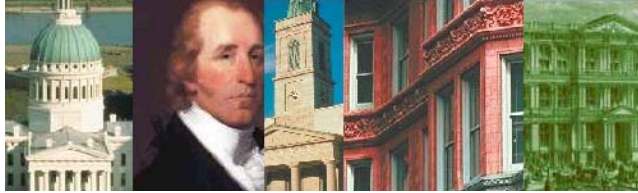




Majolica Matters!

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE MAJOLICA INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
www.majolicasociety.com

MARCH 2003



Meet Me in St. Louie!

15th Annual Meeting - May 2-4, 2003

Get away to the "Gateway City". Majolica lovers of the world are congregating the first weekend of May for the Majolica International Society's fifteenth annual meeting and Majolica Heaven '03.

The meeting site will be the Millennium Hotel, which is literally in the shadows of the famous Gateway Arch on the Mississippi riverfront. St. Louis offers a setting with both a cosmopolitan and historical ambiance for society members. The beautiful Millennium Hotel has a revolving restaurant at the top of its 28 stories, boasts a health club, and all the other amenities one would expect in a wonderful luxury hotel. LeRoy has been able to negotiate the great price of \$99/night/single and \$109 for a double. We have friends who have been there and say The Millennium is really a lovely place.

The Majolica Society will first convene at May 2 at 7:30 on Friday evening for MajoliCake, Cookies and Coffee. Jody Wilkie, (Senior Vice President, and head of International Division for Glass and Ceramics at Christies (New York) and Rebecca Pearce, (Director and specialist in Ceramics from the London office of Christies) will be talking about Majolica, its place in the ceramics world and its growing value over time. The talk entitled '**The French Connection' - Romanticism to Naturalism**, explores the historic Anglo-French majolica connection. A feast of lobster, crab, and shellfish, followed by strawberries, fresh fruit and cream will wet your appetite for wares made on both sides of the channel. The influence of the Great International Exhibitions of the day and the leading philosophical, scientific and cultural trends

will be discussed with an emphasis on their direct impact on today's art market.

Friday evening and Saturday morning are always wonderful times to bring you albums and photos to share your collections and your recent discoveries.

Saturday will begin with a Continental Breakfast at 8:30, in coordination with our entertaining and fun Barter 'n Buy, silent auction, which will be managed by the effervescent Jim Trout. (Don't forget that you have the option to donate pieces to the Society for Barter 'n Buy, to benefit the Literary Fund.) Majolica College begins at 9:30. Collectors will review their collections and selected pieces. Member Linda LaPointe, of Malvern Pa, will discuss "Needful Obsessions". An optional bus tour and antique shop/crawl will depart at 11:30 and will include lunch at an antiques store along the way. Cost is \$35/ person.

Our Saturday evening gala banquet begins with cocktails at 6:00. Dinner follows at 7:00. Our featured speaker is Richard Dennis, publisher with forty years experience in the collecting field. Mr. Dennis has published countless books, many relating to ceramics. A visit to his website reveals a wide array of published titles, ranging from "British Toast Racks, and the History of Toast", "English Earthenware Figures" and "The Minton Dictionary". He also has published a "Wedgwood Dictionary", an "Overview of Doulton Lambeth Wares" and a book on Susie Cooper. What we'd give to be able to spend a week in his warehouse. Failing that, I'm sure his talk is going to be enormously interesting and imaginative.

Sunday morning will begin with breakfast at 8:00 am followed by a short business meeting prior to highlight of the convention - Majolica Heaven '03 (doors open for MIS members at 10:00 am).

You can register for the convention and reserve a seat for the bus tour (first come - first serve) by mailing in

the registration form enclosed. Call the Millennium Hotel at 866-866-8086 (toll-free) for room reservation. Check the majolica society website for convention updates www.majolicasociety.com.

Meet Me in St. Louie!

Christopher Dresser

by Gerald Leberfeld

Even though Majolica was produced for the larger marketplace the major potters such as Minton, George Jones, and Wedgwood all competed for the best quality and creativity. They commissioned some of the best artists and designers of that period to create their majolica pieces. Names such as Emile Lessore, Augustine Pugin, Hughes Protat, Edourd Rischgitz, Frederick Bart Russel, Paul Comolera, Theodore Deck, John Henk, Pierre Emile Jeannest, Thomas Kirby, Albert Carrier De Belleuse and of course Christopher Dresser were all commissioned.

Mr. Dresser, a pioneer of modern design, is considered one of the leading industrial designers of the 19th century and is often referred to as the "Father of Modernism". His most famous accomplishments appear to be in the area of metal works but his genius extended to art glass, textiles, art furniture and many forms of ceramics including majolica. This is where I got involved. Through my obsession of buying everything with creative shapes and bright colors that shine I have by accident developed a fine collection of Christopher Dresser majolica. It is recorded that Mr. Dresser worked for both Minton and Wedgwood. About 18 pieces of majolica have been attributed to him with 10 of them actually documented.

It is interesting that his work is so loved in the U.S.A. since he was born on July 4, 1834 in Glasgow, Scotland, a real Yankee Doodle Dandy. He visited the United States in 1876 appearing at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia at the Daniel & Sons booth exhibiting Minton majolica. His presence inspired a New York Times headline "Who is this Cockney coming to lecture us on taste?"

His works are almost always influenced by his two greatest passions - Botany (plants and nature) and Japanese culture and design. His education at both student and teacher levels has Botany at its core. Dresser traveled to Japan as often as possible bringing gifts from England including pieces of Minton. So serious collectors when visiting Japan keep your eyes open.

My wife, Aviva, and I have accumulated 8 pieces with Mr. Dresser's creative signature on them.



Minton Bamboo Pitcher



Minton Garden Seat



Minton Japanese Birds Jardinière, with Turtles



Minton Teapot with Bamboo Handle

These photos of our pieces should clearly indicate Christopher Dresser's majolica style and influence thru his aesthetic designs that mix Japonism elements with nature.



Minton teapot, Bat top, Turtle & Bird sides



Minton Dragon Jardinière



Pair of Minton Owl Vases, Circa 1871



Wedgwood Elephant Bowl

I've run out of writing space so please meet us in St. Louis so we can compare more photos and information.

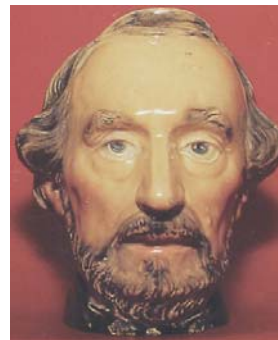
References:

- Christopher Dresser* by Windar Halen
- Dictionary of Minton* by P. Atterbury & M. Batkin
- Minton Majolica* by V. Cecil
- And the personal archives of my friend - Nic Boston
- See and learn more at: www.christopher-dresser.com

On History . . .

by Helen Cunningham

As one of the leading producers of majolica in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the French factory of Sarreguemines widely exported its production. Besides orders for items of regular production, the factory also received special orders for commemorative pieces from countries such as England, Russia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and even countries in South America. Some orders requested majolica character jugs in an exact likeness



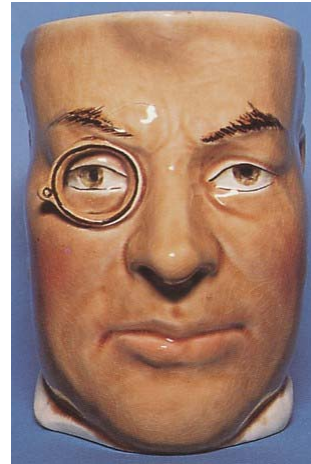
of an important historical figure. What a unique way of paying homage! Lifelike images of royalty, dignitaries, war heroes, and presidents would be instantly recognizable by citizens of the respective countries.

One such special order arrived at Sarreguemines from Argentina. The order consisted of a character jug to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of a very important president of Argentina: Bartolome Mitre. Born in 1821, Mitre

was president of Argentina from 1862-1868. Although Argentina had declared itself independent of Spain in 1810, the country was far from unified. Conflicts arose between centralized government represented by Buenos Aires and the provinces. Problems with the neighboring countries of Bolivia and Brazil distracted the citizens from domestic issues and Juan Manuel de Rosas was able to establish a dictatorship in 1835. Because of disputes with Rosas, Britain blockaded Montevideo from 1845-1847.

After Rosas was defeated, a provisional government under Urquiza tried to unify the country. However, Buenos Aires declared that it was the true Argentina. Bartolome Mitre led the forces of Buenos Aires against Urquiza, but lost. In 1861 fighting began again and this time Mitre was successful.

He established the national administration in Buenos Aires. Besides unifying the country and establishing the capital in Buenos Aires, this president is remembered for the construction of railroads. Mitre died in 1906.



Joseph Chamberlain



Paul Kruger

Editor's note: All the photos for this article were extracted with permission from Helen Cunningham's book "Majolica Figures". If you want to know more about figural jugs and Sarreguemines you can visit Sarreguemines at: www.sarreguemines-museum.com or find her book at:

www.majolicasociety.com/majolicabookstore.htm



Francis Joseph



Ferdinand Foch

Immortalized in majolica, Mitre will be remembered for his accomplishments. Other historical figures honored in majolica include Paul Kruger, Joseph Chamberlain, General Ferdinand Foch, Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, Dranem, and Prime Minister Michelsen of Norway. For history buffs, these character jugs make an interesting collection. However, they are often difficult to find since they were made only for export to particular countries. Perhaps the quest tantalizes all of us chasing majolica pieces to add to our collection. The harder to find, the more intriguing the quest!

Which is the Phony?



Do you remember the TV ad "Which twin has the Toni"? Well, which game pie dish is the phony? One is a legitimate Minton game pie dish, the other a knock-off, to put it kindly. We won't talk about marks, except to say they both have them. We have to learn to trust our eyes. Once you've decided which is the forgery, quiz yourself as to your reasons. The first clue is the color. Neither God nor Minton ever made that yellowy orange hue of the one on the top. The splotchiness of the interior is wrong for Minton. The colors on the bottom one are much more naturalistic and subtle. Also, notice the bulkiness and coarseness of the modeling. The Minton modelers were famous for their deft touch. Notice how thick the pottery is. Oddly enough, the forgery is larger than the original. Usually, if the forger is using a legitimate mold, he gets a smaller piece. The forgery has a "British Registry Mark". Close inspection reveals it to be hand modeled, not stamped.

Using Majolica Tiles in a Bathroom

by Elizabeth Kropf

Editor's note: As part of a continuing series of articles on the subject of "Decorating with Majolica", we have invited Washington, DC interior designer, Elizabeth Kropf to chronicle her adventures with majolica tiles. Elizabeth's firm, Interior Studios, handles all kinds of projects but has often worked on residential historic renovation.

Serendipity? Into my unsuspecting hands have been delivered three perfect, new cabinets, which just happen to match my lot of majolica tiles won off eBay. I've got a nice little group of sienna and turquoise glazed 3x3" rosettes and five matching liners, but the poor things have been collecting dust for years! So I know this stroke of luck for what it is. It's the fates: they're daring me to redo my bathroom.



My majolica tiles



My free cabinets with tiles stacked below

Easier said than done. One of the perks of being a designer is that occasional freebies fall your way, but on the other hand, for some reason, we tend to be caught like deer in the headlights of our own home renovations.

Why? I'll try not to bore you with my anxieties; so let me just quickly say that while we might display clear vision and a firm hand with our clients, it's not so easy to discipline ourselves! And sadly, we know all too well the misery that is renovation. Suffice it to

say my own bathroom has gone unfinished for five years.



The bathroom - BEFORE

But the fates have lined up, and are shouting: Coward! Free cabinets! Majolica tiles that have been collecting dust!

All right, all right, I accept the challenge, and more than that, the masochist in me thought you all might have fun following me through the process. Lots of tiles are readily available and are fairly inexpensive, so using them to create a Victorian look, or to make a suitable backdrop for the rest of your collection might be something worth thinking about. You can use my project as inspiration, or come with me to a tile showroom where we'll look at lots of ideas for mixing our antique tiles with new ones. And, you can test my restraint. As I said, I found these on eBay, but I've also seen them at architectural salvage shops and antiques fairs. If you've got a good local flea market, you might try that. You could also use a quantity of individual tiles, which would give your space a great "collected" look.

But, I'm getting ahead of myself. For now, take a look at my tiles, cabinets, and the grim "Before" photo. In the next issue, we'll focus on some design solutions, and on how to liven up this space with majolica!

2003 Society Dues Process

by Jim Trout

There has been no change in the dues amount for 2003. Please check your address label on our mailing envelope. The red date "**2003-Mar**" indicates when you owe annual dues. Some members have paid ahead and won't receive any 2003 dues notice. Thanks for your support and your help.

Walters Art Museum Exhibition

As part of the activities celebrating the re-installation of the 1904 building, the Walters Art Museum is showcasing decorative arts of the late Victorian period. Included in the displays are some majolica pieces from the English Collection, including the pieces in this photo.



Additionally, there are two Minton Ram's footed pedestals with tri-pod garden pots. These two exhibits flank a mammoth Gringling carved sideboard, which originally belonged in the Walters family. The majolica will be at the Museum until Spring. The Walters Art Museum, 600 North Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.



Sideboard with Minton Pedestals

Members Speaking on the Road

Authors Marilyn Karmason, MD and Joan Stacke are in Dallas, Texas on April 24, 2003 to lecture on Victorian majolica to the Dallas Woman's Club.

Meet Me in St. Louis!

Fit 400 Pieces of Majolica in a 100 Piece House!

by Roberta McDonnell

As you know from past articles of mine on majolica, majolica is to me what cigarettes are to the chain smoker. It's a hobby, though, I am not addicted, and I can give it up at anytime?

In a constant struggle to fit more and more majolica in my modest home, I have devised all sorts of ways to display my collection. It all stems from a native New Englander's method of winter dress. It is called "layering." So I thought why not take this approach and apply it to my majolica? Now, I calculated I could fit four times as much on each shelf. I call it organized clutter, a very sociable shelf.



Now in socializing your majolica on a shelf and layering, there are some dos and don'ts! Never let a T. Sargent alligator share space with a Minton putti. It is sacrilegious. No Minton whimsical frogs should ever grace a shelf with a Jones' classical vase. I am afraid my layering has to have a caste system. Like sneakers with a gown, walking shoes with a dress, a definite no no....when only heels will do. Once you have separated your pieces into their own separate worlds, let the fun begin. Platters and plates serve as backdrops. I have been known to "hang plates on the open bottom doors of cupboards, to the back and side of cupboards leaving more shelf space while still exposing the colors of the plates. Remember now your pieces should create a symphony of color not a cacophony! Tipping pieces like big Jones shell compotes can expose that dreamy mauve! Large pieces to the back, smaller to the front, like arranging a family photo shoot. Remember to use every spot. You bought a compote because it was \$300 less than the plate version but you hate compotes? Not to worry. Find a corner; tip it on its side and "voila" you have a plate. Want another layer of plates but the plate holders take up too much space? Grab some

pushpins and securely use them as stops to hold plates up!



Now I realize some people like one piece to a shelf ...I tried that once...the family came home and panicked. They thought we were moving. If you cannot get used to the layered look there is still hope. Time to assess your home for areas to spread to. Now we all have to have a refrigerator and a television so to prevent a mutiny in the home leave them alone, but what about bookcases? When is the last time you reread a book collecting dust? Even being an English teacher in what seems like another lifetime, the only books I reread are my Karmason and Dawes and Cunningham bibles! Sneak those old encyclopedias to a garage sale, put those books into Rubbermaid containers to the attic and satisfy those shelves with majolica. How about that china cabinet with too many goblets and delicate stemware? If it is anything like my house we use it every New Year for one glass of champagne. Get them out of there. Put them in a closed buffet. Stemware aesthetically cannot compete with majolica!! Satisfy that china cabinet and give it some beauty to boast! Any glass front kitchen cabinets? Move those dishes....move in some majolica ...there are always paper plates!



I found space for 17 hutches, china cabinets, and corner cupboards in a modest cape cod style home! Rule out no room! Bathrooms, offices, bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, family rooms, living rooms, 4 season rooms.....do it, expand, make life maj-beautiful! Use dealer's websites, and books to visualize just the right piece for just the right spot. Create wish lists, aims and establish direction for that next piece! Things are looking up and speaking of up I have been staring at the ceilings a lot lately, so white, so empty, so drab. Ya think?



Help! Who Made It?

by Carla Benhardt

We have this very heavy 10 ¾" pitcher. The detailing is excellent. It was love at first sight. The bottom has impressed numbers 5403. Can you help us learn more about our find? Send any information to Carla Benhardt, cbee@swbell.net



Auction Calendar



April 4 & 5, 2003:

Member Michael Strawser will be hosting another **Majolica Auction**, April 4 & 5, 2003, Hatfield, Pennsylvania. He has the "The Beverly Emrick Estate Collection" and others. www.strawserauctions.com

May 3, 2003:

Barter 'n Buy - Silent Auction - the ever-popular annual event of the Majolica International Society's. This is an opportunity for you to dispose of an item you have multiples of or that you've outgrown. Bring or send your items to the 15th MIS Convention. Jim Trout will be managing this lighthearted event for sellers and buyers! Remember that your proceeds could be directed to MIS and the Literary Fund!

Literary Prize Fund

You've seen mention of the Barter & Buy which will be held at the Convention, and of the Silent Auction which accompanies it. We've said that one may donate part or all of his or her proceeds to benefit the MIS.

Many of you may remember that at last year's meeting, we announced an intention to establish a literary fund whose purpose it is to stimulate the discussion of Majolica in academic circles. We hoped that this would lead to a greater acceptance of our beloved pottery in the academic world, thereby elevating its status.

The strategy is to hold an annual contest wherein graduate students and curators are encouraged to submit scholarly articles to the MIS. A committee made up of a cross-section of the Society (i.e. authors, collectors and dealers) will decide upon two winners. Tentatively, the first place winner will be awarded \$2,000 and the second place \$1,000. We have had preliminary discussions with a major magazine to publish the winner's article. Majolica Matters will publish both articles. The contest is open to the entire art-history community and it is hoped that people

outside of the MIS community will take notice. There may, in fact, be a number of entries as contests of this sort are quite popular because of the opportunity to publish and because the money will be attractive.

Initially, we will be using the Silent Auction funds to support this project. Members may make donations directly to the Fund, if they prefer.

Mike Foley Joins our Executive Committee as Treasurer.

Mike and his wife, Linda, live in Barrington, Rhode Island. They are the owners of the Foley Fish Company, which sells top quality fish to the best restaurants and grocery stores in the United States. They are Society members of two years' standing and have been utterly seduced by the charms of majolica. Not surprisingly, they were first attracted to fish-related majolica but now we suspect that their collection has since taken on a life of its own and has broken that boundary. Mike and Linda have three children, Laura, who with her husband Peter is taking over the family business, Michael, a television screen writer, and Mark, an art student in San Francisco.

Paul Comolera Examples:

It's interesting to see how various companies had their unique looks. Here we see two pieces designed by Paul Comolera. The deer is the well-known Minton piece. The hen, however, was made by Choisy-Le-Roi, in France.



Choisy-le-Roi, Hen



Minton, Deer

Notice how much softer the French piece looks, with its subtler colors and gentle modeling. The English piece is much crisper, with great attention to detail, especially in the foliage and its color is more naturalistically applied.

Majolica Songbook Additions

These Majolica-songs were created for and sung at the 2002 Annual convention to celebrate our passion for Victorian Majolica. Now it is your turn to surprise us with your composition at our 2003 meeting!

My Favorite Things, (Lyrics by **Wanda Matthes** and sang it to the tune of "My Favorite Things".)

Bread plates and platters and plates of all sizes,
Teapots with lids on and waste bowls and spooners,
Cake stands and fruit bowls and cups by the score.
I love them all. Where can I find some more?

Refrain

When it's marked with Jones or Wedgwood,
When the mold is grand,
I take out my checkbook and say a small prayer,
Then it goes home with me.

Refrain

Oysters and scallops and cute snails and conches
Splashes of seaweed and kelp in small touches.
Overall beauty, a feast for my eyes.
This one is special. It's really a prize!

Repeat refrain

Lilies, begonias and oak leaves with acorns
Fern, fronds and chestnuts and grape leaves and branches
Colors of nature, a feast for my eyes!
This one is special. It's really a prize!

Repeat refrain.



The Age of Majolica, (Lyrics by **Jerry Leberfeld** and sang to tune of "The Age of Aquarius".)

When the moon is in the Seventh House
And Jupiter aligns with Mars
Then peace will guide the planets
And love will steer the stars.

This is the dawning of the age of majolica - age of
majolica - majolica

Potter marks for understanding
Color and shapes astounding
So many choices and decisions
Dreams of discovery effect our vision
Reference books a revelation
Leading us to our destination
Majolica, Majolica

As our hearts go beating at the sight

As a rare piece comes our way
You break out in a cold sweat
When you discover the price you have to pay
We are the victims of the age of
Majolica, Majolica

Garden seats still standing
Game dishes so amazing
Colors with illumination
Could your home be its destination
Guided by our sources
Must sell your mistake and cut your losses
Please share with us
Majolica, Majolica



Maryland Regional Meeting

Charles and Lucy Samarodin would like to know those interested in joining us for a Sunday brunch August 3rd, 12:00 noon at 1011 West Wind Court, Ruxton, Maryland 21204 for fun, MAJOLICA MATTERS, and a mystery guest. Bring your appetite, yourself, your stories and your MAJOLICA. **RSVP by July 14th at 410-321-6656**

The Samarodins have a lovely collection. Ruxton is just north of Baltimore and is very easily reached off of the 695 Beltway. Sounds like an exciting Sunday afternoon!

Private MIS Website

by **Duane Matthes**

As the society tries to increase the value of our membership, we've sustained for the last year a private web space just for members. It's a place we put our society data and reference valuables, for members only! We store our history there for every members reuse. There is an archive of past Newsletters and MajolicaMAILs. We've captured full articles and pottery catalogs. Of course the most current membership directory can always be reference, printed and/or downloaded. If you haven't signed up to enter this private area please email me at:
duane@emajolica.com





Shard Turtle?

So, you've been saving a plastic bag full of majolica shards and wondering what to do with them. Take a look at what we found in the

Gump's by Mail catalog. It's a cute little mortar turtle with a hide and shell of blue and white shards. Imagine him in Copeland greens or Wedgwood browns! What's in your plastic bag and what fantastic little critter could it be?

Member's Shop in St Louis

Member Carla Benhardt wants all members to know she'll be offering a 15% discount to all Annual Convention attendees. She invites you to her shop in the Warson Woods Antique Gallery in Warson Woods, MO.

Annual meeting chairman, LeRoy Davis, made sure this mall of 200 dealers is one of the exciting stops on Saturday's optional bus tour. The store also has a nice variety of items other than majolica that I'm sure will catch member's interest and Carla is gathering a list of fellow dealers that would be willing to give a discount to society members. .

Meet Me in St. Louie!



Massier Jardinière For Sale

Society member, Geraldine Cramer of Helotes, Texas has a monumental Delphin Massier jardinière and pedestal for sale. Its overall height is 63 1/4 inches tall, with 8 1/2" butterflies and a 36" crane. The crane base is marked "1899, by Delphin Massier". In 1996 French majolica expert Robert Lehr appraised the item at 29,000 USD. If you're interested in this piece please contact Geraldine at 210-695-2344 with offers.



Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to MIS Editor :
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