



# Majolica Matters!

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

October 2004

## Paul Comoléra and Nature

by Philippe Meunier and Jean Def



Stork, 71cm high,  
signed Paul Comoléra, for Hippolyte  
Boulenger factory at Choisy le Roi, c. 1880

Paul Comoléra was born in Paris on June 3, 1813. From his father, who worked with David, he received the basic rules of his art. He worked for the Parisian Industry. He set off on with eagerness into the survey of the statuary with François Rude. His interest led him to the observation of nature and notably the one of animals. Contemporaneous with Barye, Mène, Fremiet, Caïn and Jacquemard, the artist wanted to create, without plagiarizing, with sensitivity and fantasy. He only wished to obey the only rules of his intelligence. He had realized that

some little animals species had neither been studied nor reproduced. From this very day onwards he got to know all the secrets of the structure, all the infinite graceful details of the pose, of the gesture, of the shape and of the expression.

In 1847 for his first exhibition he showed a survey in plaster "Golden Hen Pheasant from China". Until he died on November 11, 1890 in Paris, he participated in numerous exhibitions, showing a huge quantity of volatiles (birds). These works of arts were immediately noticed and his reputation was almost instantly recognized.

In 1855 for the "Universal Exhibit" a whole set of tableware was exhibited, which he had designed especially for the Pouyat House of Limoges. The National Museum of Ceramics in Sèvres owns the master piece of this set of tableware.



Pea Hen, 26" high  
Signed Comoléra for Choisy le Roi



Comoléra Minton Pheasant Jardinière 20" wide

**Cockodoodle Dooooo.....**

By Wanda Matthes

Whether his name is rooster, la coq, hahn, gallo or any of the other names used to describe him, he is definitely one animal with "attitude"! We've all had occasions to refer to someone as "cocky", "cock sure" or "strutting like a bantam rooster". He has been a favorite subject in the field of decorative arts for centuries. Majolica has had a grand celebration with this fine bird since its inception in Victorian England.



Minton Rooster spill vase, 13", by Henk

On page 41 of Majolica Figures, Helen Cunningham pictures a grand example of the rooster which was probably made by Holdcroft.



George Jones cockerel tea pot



Minton cockerel tea pot

English examples include the George Jones cockerel tea pot, circa 1870, the Minton cockerel tea pot, circa 1876 and the cockerel spill vase (#1982) along with the hen spill vase, both modeled by John Henk and made by Minton in 1876.



Rooster attributed to Holdcroft

From the Forrester catalog, you will find the rooster, hen and hawk pitcher. It was made in varied sizes, sometimes with a pewter lid, sometimes without. Another example is the hen and rooster in a basket, recently attributed to T. C. Brown-Westhead, Moore. Overall the most examples of this fine bird can be found in Continental majolica.





Attributed to Forester



Attributed to T. C. Brown-Westhead

In France many potteries were inspired by this symbol of their country. In 1875, Choisy le Roi, (Hautin & Boulanger) made a floor vase feathering this grand la coq form in life-like size, measuring 26". The artist on these pieces was Paul Comoléra. This artist is also responsible for a life sized hen companion from the same year. These are featured on page 176 of the latest edition of Majolica by Karmason, Stake and discussed and pictured in the article by Phillippe Meunier and Jean Def , featured in the issue.



Rooster plate from the Choisy le Roi

In their series of six 8 ½ 'bird plates, they also feature the rooster.

Using Chaucer's Canterbury Tales as inspiration, O'naing modeled the Chanticleer pitcher during World War I. One side of the pitcher features the words "Vive la Russie".



O'naing Chanticleer pitcher



O'naing pitcher

After 1914 the patriotic phrase became "la Gaulois" on one side and "Chante clair pour la France". This pitcher is numbered 658. In 1929, they also introduced the coq ancien, numbered 374. In addition they made a salt seller of coq et poule. No number is listed for this item and I have not seen one bearing the O'naing mark.



Salt Attributed to O'naing

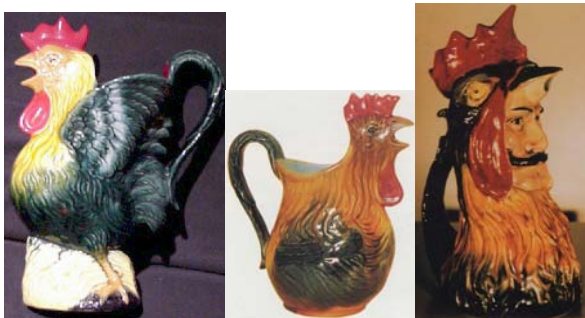
St. Clement also made a wonderful rooster. He comes in varied sizes. I have seen him in sizes from 10 ¼ "to 15". He should bear the KG and printed St. Clement mark. His colors should be soft as this example appears. New models are being made in France today. They usually are about 12" and will have St. Clement scripted in the mold. Their colors will be very bright and garish.

Orchies also made at least two different roosters. The larger one, I have seen in 11 ½ "and 12". The shorter one is usually 9". Each should bear the Orchies mark. The "rooster man" is featured in both Majolica Figures by Cunningham and Pichets en barbotine by Bottero.



**Sarreguemines fighting roosters**

Note this fine Monsieur Coq in his coat and tails, holding a sword.



**Orchies pitcher varieties**



**St Clement pitcher (left)**

**Sarreguemines Monsieur Coq pitcher (right)**

Some of the grandest examples of this proud bird were made by the Massier family. Both Jerome and Delphin are responsible for fabulous examples.



**George Dreyfus Chicken salt cellar, 2 ¾" high**

George Dreyfus also was inspired. His wares are usually marked with his initials GD. This rooster is featured on p. 139, Pichets en barbotine. He is also noted for this hen, salt cellar, pictured on p. 127 of Majolica Figures.

Sarreguemines also paid homage to le coq. Note these gorgeous matching vases. They stand 9" high and bear the mark Sarreguemines Majolica.



**Left and center roosters are by Choisy le Roi, and the right rooster is by Jerome Massier**





**Massier Roosters, 17 3/4" tall, 9 7/8" tall**

The following items are classified as Continental, unattributed. Maybe you will know who made some of them.



**An unattributed rooster striker, 3 1/2" tall**



**Massier Rooster**



**An unattributed 5" plate with fighting cocks**

Barbotines de la Cote d' Azur, by Maryse Bottero, page 64, you will find a piece featuring a large egg, flaked by two children, dressed as roosters. On page 83, you will find an egg cup, featuring a rooster and hen. What appears to be a rooster wall pocket by Jean Massier appears on page 87.



**Rooster costumes in this piece represent the theater, by Edmond Rostand**



**An unattributed rooster spill vase**

As you can see, he has been the inspiration for wonderful pieces of majolica during the Victorian Era as well as the early 20th century.



**Unattributed French pitcher, "Viva la France"**

This unattributed French pitcher is inscribed "Viva la France" and bears the number 298 on its base.



**Unattributed French pitcher #29**

This unattributed French pitcher bears the number 29 on its base. Both pitchers can be found in Maryse Bottero's, *Pichets en barbotine*, page 165.

### **Auction News**

**Majolica Auctions**, Hatfield PA, October 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and then again April 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005

<http://www.strawserauctions.com>

### **Bonhams Continues Minton Museum Sale**

On October the 5<sup>th</sup>. Bonhams (London) held a sale of "Masterpieces from the Minton Museum". Below are just a few of the item that were at auction.



**Minton Japanese Boat**



**Minton Scalloped Shell vase**



**Minton Monkey and Cockerel tea pot**



## The Bird Issue

We love to make informal designations for installments of Majolica Matters. "The Holiday Photo Issue", for example. Or, the "Convention Issue". This is the "Bird Issue". The happy meeting of a Comolera Heron and Barnyard Chickens in the same edition seemed like a clear signal to celebrate the great variety of birds in majolica. Not much text. You've got enough reading to do already.



Detail of Minton Mushroom game pie dish



Kissing Pigeons



Minton Stork and Heron



Choisy le Roi Parrot on Stumps



Brown-Westhead Moore Eagle Jardinière



George Jones Cockerel tea pot



Detail of Jones cheese keeper



Paperweight by Griffen, Smith and Hill



Tobacco Jars with bird themes

Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to:

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Urn by Manuel Mafra, 13" tall

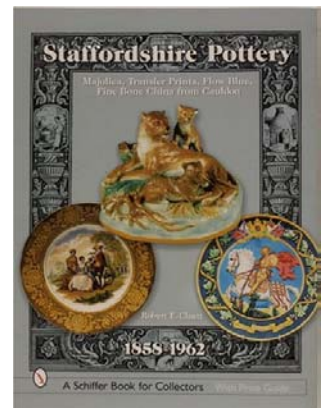


Massier Parrot (left), Morley & Co. Owl (right)

### Robert Cluett Introduces New Book

With the recent publication of his long-awaited book, *Staffordshire Pottery 1858-1962, Majolica, Transfer Prints, Flow Blue, Fine Bone China from Cauldon* (Schiffer Books), MIS member, author Robert Cluett

has now turned his attention to another British potter, Samuel Alcock. Those who attended the Convention in Orlando will remember that Nic Boston specifically mentioned that Alcock is a pottery that needs more documentation, and so, it is fortuitous that Bob has





taken on this project. Bob requests that MIS members who have known pieces of Alcock in their collections consider sending him images and information, so that he may gather the information to publish his next book.

The Cauldon book has just been published, so we don't have it in our libraries yet, but it covers Brown-Westhead, Moore, and is sure to be a welcome addition to the cannon of Majolica research.

### **Limericks from Orlando '04**

**By Linda Ketterling and Peter Rollitt**

There once was a potter from Stoke:  
Herb Minton, an entrepreneurial bloke.  
He set off for Disney with green ceramics in tow,  
His creative juices, you see, needed a poke.

Imagineers running wild  
With the joy of a child,  
The concepts they had were fantastical.

Herb asked, "If you please, may I borrow some of these  
For my pots which have lacked in the magical?"

So, the pots they did glaze  
In myriad colors and shades  
That shone through the fire and smoke.

So, all creatures from forest to sea and from butterfly to bee  
And all birds that flit in their Wingdom,  
Herb placed them all on the pots on his knee,  
And Walt called them "The Magical Majolica Kingdom"!

### **A Sleuth Takes on a Thief**

**By Roberta McDonnell & Deborah English**

*In the last issue, we talked about developing confidence as collectors, learning to trust our instincts and honing our visions according to personal taste and needs. Well, the gods have ganged up on us for hubris. No sooner had we dotted the last 'i' than things began happening. Though we still stand by the assertions of that article, we didn't pay enough attention to safety, particularly Internet safety. And we have learned our lesson.*

*Herewith, a cautionary tale:  
This is a story about eBay and its Second Chance program, which is being used as a vehicle by scammers to con bidders out of their funds. Roberta McDonnell has done the research on the story, beginning with her own unfortunate experience. Roberta's name is the only one revealed. The other victims are members of the MIS, whose names we have changed. Fortunately, Roberta's timely investigation saved one or two collectors from losing any money.*

*eBay's Second Chance program works like this: If you are the under bidder on an item and the winning bidder fails to pay the seller, then the seller may approach you and offer you the item for the price you committed to as your maximum bid. The benefits are clear: it eliminates the need for the seller to re-list the item and you get your piece for what you were willing to spend in the first place. Everyone's happy.*

*But read Roberta's account of how she discovered a nasty wrinkle. (Many of the scammers' communications are very difficult to follow. We left them in tact, so that you could see for yourselves how they appear. We left out the email addresses and other identifying marks.)*

#### **Roberta:**

This summer, "Sam" outbid me on a little George Jones pin tray (located in France) on eBay for \$3250.00. Shortly thereafter, I got this email:

**My "BEAUTIFUL DISH MAJOLICA (MINTON-JONES...??) (Item #XXXXX)**

**Due to some personal reasons, the winner of my auction gave up on buying it.**

**Dear rmm-1, You have shown, If you are still interested in buying it don't hesitate to contact me.**

**Your final offer was \$3,200 and I am ready to accept it. I kindly ask you to reply ASAP because I will leave the country tomorrow.**

The seller had 48 positive feedbacks, so I had no reason to suspect this guy, who said he was purchasing a rare piano. Since he was leaving for England the next day, he needed the money sent by Western Union. I wired the money and the emails stopped. The plate never arrived. I contacted a French friend who reported that the seller has a good reputation and gave me his phone number. I called and was startled by this man's poor command of English. Clearly, someone else was doing the emails, which had resumed, in fluent English. I decided that the emailer and the lister were the same person, and that the emailer was not the seller.

*Certainly the seller should have been suspicious about a call from America and, assuming the seller is not the thief, the real thief wouldn't have expected me to have a contact in France to get to the bottom of this. The emailer mentioned a son David, who would mail me the piece. I really suspected something was "rotten over there." Then, another French friend vouched for the seller, who is apparently a picker of sorts and the dealers all buy from him. It's lot of*

*money to lose but I have put it behind me like a broken piece of majolica, and refuse to let it eat away at me. Still, the Sherlock Holmes in me makes me need to set to the bottom of this. I've done over 600 eBay transactions and this is the first to go bad.*

**Later, Roberta reported:**

At the end of the trail gone cold is a sorry explanation. The seller appears to be a victim also. It seems the swindle came out of England. The return address is the same as the seller's site name, but there is a small difference between the two. So I was swindled and "Sam" DID get the piece. Someone used the seller's email and identity to swindle me. The culprit is in England and how I could begin to trace it is beyond me!

*So you see, what's happened is that the authentic seller has had his ID stolen by the scammer. We don't know if the scammer actually broke into eBay's security system or if he's simply masquerading as the seller. The son "David" shows up and the mystery of who swindled Roberta is never solved. Roberta began fishing around her numerous contacts to find some answers and discovered that she wasn't alone. This came to collector "John" within weeks of Roberta's experience.*

**You expressed interest in an item titled George Jones & Sons Majolica Punch bowl. Circa 1870s Item number: (XXXXXXXXXX) by bidding, however the auction has ended with another member as the high bidder. In compliance with eBay policy, the (XXXXXXXXX dealer) is making this Second Chance Offer to you at your bid price of US \$7,850.00. The seller has issued this Second Chance Offer because either the winning bidder was unable to complete the transaction or the seller has duplicate items for sale. If you accept this offer, you will be able to exchange Feedback with the seller and will be eligible for eBay services associated with a transaction, such as fraud protection. This offer expires Jul, 30, 2004, 19:01:36 PST.**

**To purchase this item, don't reply to this mail, just contact the seller at XXXXXXXX.com**

**To see this item, click on the following page:**

**[http://offer.ebay.com/ws3/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewBid&item=\(XXXXXXXXXX\)](http://offer.ebay.com/ws3/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewBid&item=(XXXXXXXXXX))**

*It looks legitimate, doesn't it? Roberta happened to know who had won the George Jones Punch Bowl as she'd been watching the auction knew the winner's "handle" and doubted that he had failed to pay. So, she contacted the winner and sure enough, his Punch Bowl was already safely in his collection. Read on:*

**Hello again,**

**Please pardon my delay, I had an emergency trip and had to leave town abruptly. I didn't read my email until now. Right now I am in London, UK. Anyway, we still can close that deal. David, my son will make the shipping. He is used with that. Usually I am closing my eBay deals through paypal but now, as I am in London I will need some extra cash because I want to buy a rare piano from here. As you know, it takes 6-7 business days to withdraw funds from paypal to my bank account, and I will be glad if you will be able to make a wire transfer through Western Union, directly here in UK. It shouldn't take more than 5 minutes.**

**Please email me ASAP**

*Putting on her sleuth hat, Roberta answered, pretending to be interested, and insulting the winner to give herself more credibility:*

**I am interested!!!!**

**Please the other person (XXXX) who won it is an extremely difficult person to deal with ....let me know what is going on I am here**

*This is the answer she got back:*

**Hello again,**

**Please pardon my delay, I had an emergency trip and had to leave town abruptly. I didn't read my email until now. Right now I am in Athens, Greece.**

**Anyway, we still can close that deal for \$11,000. Sarah, my daughter will take care of the shipping. She is used with that.**

**I will need some extra cash for this trip and I will be glad if I could get it ASAP. I usually accept cashier's check or paypal for my eBay deals. As you know, it takes some days if we'll use one of those payment methods.**

**A wire transfer through Western Union directly here, in Greece, is the right solution for this problem. It shouldn't take more than 5 minutes. I'll cover the transfer fee, so you can deduct it from the total amount. I am amazed at how difficult is to find internet connections even in Athens, let alone the provincial centers.**

**The situation is worse than in some third world countries. The best part is that it's almost impossible to get a bad meal, and almost every little neighborhood church has works of art that would make some museum curators drool.**

*Slick, huh? Just who is this guy? The letters begin almost identically, but one is written by a person with weak English skills. The other is more polished, though there are some errors, such as "used with that". Notice how he throws in the "Greek provinces" phrase and the drooling*



curators. Very cute.

Hello Madam/Mr.

I have a business opportunity I hope you will consider. My user ID is " (SAME DEALER NAME XXXX)"

My email address is: "nicedeal5@aol.com", please respond me to this e-mail address. I noticed that you were bidding on my auction item # (XXXXX). I've had some problems with the high bidder because he couldn't pay the auction. I want to offer you a second chance to buy my unit. The price for it is US \$11500 .As a courtesy to you and every other customer, all shipping and customs charges will be included in the full purchase price and we notice you are bidding for this product and we would like to make you an offer. Due to the fact that these are sold at auction, I purchase large amounts and pay literally pennies on the dollar for what they are truly worth in a retail store. We will use a shipping company for shipping, Money Order, an escrow services or an wire transfer in my bank account for payment. Shipping will take usually 48 hours after we receive the payment confirmation. Shipping is absolutely free. Not only is shipping free but you will also receive 100% protection from loss or damage with our "on the house" full insurance coverage. Your shipment will be professionally secured with heavy-duty packaging designed to protect the contents of your shipment cross country. . . If you are interested please feel free to tell me and send the shipping details so I could make you an offer. I am looking forward to hear from you. You can review the auction (Item #XXXXX)

If you have any other questions, please reply and let me know. If you wish to proceed with this great deal, please reply to me and give me your shipping information and I will reply promptly to let you know the status of your order.

Thank you for your time!! Kindly advice.

*It looks as though Roberta's got a bunch of competitors, all trying to sell her the same punch bowl. We never did figure out if they were working in collusion or in competition with each other. We suspect that because she got stung once, her name showed up on some sort of list, though how that would work is beyond us. A federation of scammers, I suppose.*

*We went to eBay for answers and help. Roberta tried to get one-on-one assistance for help with her fraud case while I looked for general information on the subject. Roberta found that she's out of luck. Since the transaction was "off eBay", she has no protection. Since she used Western Union, she can't get any of her money back.*

*Here's what I found. Go to **HELP** on the home page and type in "fraud". That will get you to several links but my favorite was a live-help page that listed "Twelve Red Flags to warn of a Fraudulent Transaction". They recommend looking for three flags to be warned off, but I'd run away for one or two.*

**Briefly these are the things to watch out for:**

1. The item will be expensive. Sometimes a **discount** will be offered.
2. The sellers will **only accept Western Union or money transfers**. Don't use e-gold. Ever.
3. Bidder is required to be pre-approved.
4. The **under bidder scam** is described in #4.
5. **Don't do private auctions after the site auction**. That's "off eBay" and can't be monitored.
6. **Hijacked seller's account**: signs to look for: a) excellent feedback resulting from the sale of items dissimilar to the one being listed. b) Long dormant account suddenly listing expensive items. c) US or UK registered seller but with transaction in other venue, often a "bizarre" one, such as Lithuania. d) Payment method is listed as PayPal or other legitimate method but the seller claims to be far away and asks for a wire transfer.
7. Seller offers **free shipping from far away** or expensive shipping cheaply.
8. No photo of the item.
9. **Poor or unusual grammar**, indicating English isn't the user's primary language (inconclusive in the absence of other flags)
10. **Seller recommends escrow service** other than those recommended by eBay (fraudulent ones are daily created by thieves)
11. The item is listed in a three-day auction, often ending on a weekend. (Inconclusive on its own).
12. Bidder/buyer who seems hesitant gets an email from "eBay" (typically containing poor grammar, vouching for the seller) "The email may assert that the seller has placed a...**security deposit** with eBay. Some claim that the item will be shipped from the eBay warehouse." eBay has no warehouse or money depository.

Lastly, eBay implores users to **report suspected frauds** at the HELP page:

[www.ebay.com/help/policies/rfe-spam-non-ebay-sale.html](http://www.ebay.com/help/policies/rfe-spam-non-ebay-sale.html)

The more information we give them, the more effective they can be at maintaining security.

*My guess is that eBay is working hard to fix the problem. The HELP/FRAUD page has undergone lots of changes since I first looked at it two months ago. Still, the company is under no legal obligation to protect us from our own carelessness.*

If we look at the scammers' communications in the light of the 12 red flags, we begin to see a pattern that reflects the warnings on the eBay HELP page. They are all Second Chance offers (#4). In all cases, the "sellers" needed to be paid with wire transfers (#2), and they had varying explanations for the buyer's inconvenience. That explanation involved the transaction taking place in a country other than where the seller is registered (#6). Poor grammar was seen in most of them (#10). "John" was offered free shipping for the Jones Punch Bowl (#7). Nicedeal offered a discount! (#1)

We would say:

1. Give up on Second Chance until this gets straightened out. A legitimate seller can re-list the item and the bidder has the assurance of a normal transaction.

2. If you can't resist, DO NOT HIT 'REPLY' when you answer the seller. Go through the original listing on eBay. Hit the "ask the seller a question" button and ask him to verify the offer. You can also email the winner and ask him if he has relinquished the sale. You should also take advantage of eBay's "Verify Seller's ID" function.

3. Use PayPal whenever possible. Don't ever use Western Union or other wire services unless you are certain you know the dealer. It's just cash in the mail with no retrieval possible. And consider this, if you know the seller that well, you probably won't need a wire transfer anyway.

4. Communicate with other bidders, particularly if you've been bidding alongside them for a while. Roberta has collected good information that way.

5. In all cases, look at the return addresses from sellers. Make sure they match any others you might have on hand.

*Post Script*

*We're still mystified how that nice man in France got his name stolen, but he did. Doubtless, other seller ID's have been hijacked as well. We have no way of knowing whether the scammer is a registered eBay user. It really doesn't matter. If it happened in our little Majolica world, it's probably everywhere.*

*It's an advantage that many of the major majolica collectors are listed in our own MIS directories. Duane Matthes has agreed that we can set up a voluntary registry of eBay users in the members' area of the website, so that we might contact each other for information when our suspicions are aroused. I stress, the registry would be*

*voluntary; we understand that some folks like to protect their privacy in bidding. If you'd like to participate, please let us know. The members' chat room could also be a venue for this discussion.*

*Please, if you're aware of an Internet scam, let us know about it, so that we can warn the other members. (We'll keep identities private.) We'd like to help protect our members' interests, if we can.*

### Majolica Magazine Articles

**House & Garden** - August 2004,  
**Setting the Table**, page 32

This article features our MIS web site and several members

**Better Homes & Gardens, Decorating**, Sep/Oct 2004,  
**MAJOLICA**, page 54

This article features comments from member Charles Washburne and references our MIS web site.

**"O" at Home**, Fall 2004,

**Dishing for Compliments**, page 92

This article features the collection and home of member Joan Stacke Graham.

### 2004 Society Dues Process

**Please check your address label on our mailing envelope.** The red date such as "2004-Oct" indicates when you owe 2004 annual dues. Some members have paid ahead and won't receive any 2004 dues notice. If your label has a date that includes a **"2003" then you are seriously behind on your dues and your membership is in jeopardy.** Please use the enclosed Dues Notice to send in your dues and thanks for your support and your help. **The society voted to raise dues in 2005. Bring your dues current to avoid the higher dues amount.**

### MajolicaMAIL Communications

by Duane Matthes

We sent a "**MajolicaMAIL**" eMail out on **Oct 1st** to all members that have eMail addresses. If you didn't get that email, then MIS doesn't have your email address recorded correctly or the mail got trapped in your SPAM filter.

The message enters your mail process with the name of **Duane@majolicasociety.com** so please open that email address in your SPAM filter.

Please eMail **Duane@emajolica.com** with issues or your corrected email so we can correct our records and communicate with you. Thanks for your help!

Visit **www.majolicasociety.com/majolicamail.htm** to catch up on past majolica mails.