



Majolica Matters!

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

March 2006

Don't Miss - Nicholas M. Dawes



We are excited to announce that Nicholas Dawes, true friend of MIS, will be our key note speaker on Saturday evening, May 6th. Nicolas is an international antiques dealer, auction consultant, writer and renowned lecturer. He is a regular on the Antiques Roadshow, and has been affiliated with Sotheby's, and Phillips. He has been a

faculty member of the Parsons School of Design since 1983. His subject for the evening will be the various themes in majolica as a reflection of the cultural, political, scientific and other interests of the rising Victorian middle class who formed the basic market for majolica in the mid 19 century.

Nicholas grew up in the county of Shropshire, a few miles from the Staffordshire potteries and began dealing antiques as a teenager. "My father and I would make regular buying forays in the Potteries when I was about fifteen, looking to fill up a van with "bric-a-brac", Dawes reminisces. At that time (the late sixties) Majolica was within the broad range of Victorian ceramics, considered too "late" to be of interest or value by collectors or dealers, so pieces regularly traded at prices modern collectors would find envious if not laughable.

"I began to see a majolica market developing when I immigrated to the United States in 1979," comments Dawes. Between 1979 and 1983 Dawes worked in the New York City Auction industry, becoming the head of the Ceramics Department at Phillips Fine Art Auctioneers in 1980. In 1983 Dawes became an independent dealer specializing in the works of Rene Lalique, which had become an interest during his years at Phillips. He published a book on the subject for Crown in 1986, and the commercial success of this work prompted his editor at Crown to suggest that he write a second book. The editor dangled the concept

of majolica, which was becoming popular and had not been well documented in books at the time. "I liked this idea very much. It gave me an opportunity to expand a personal interest in the subject, to express my enlightened views on Victorian ceramics, and arrange an extended research trip in my old stomping ground in England", Dawes remembers. He shrewdly purchased a significant collection of majolica while writing the book, including the magnificently painted Prometheus vase, which Bonhams sold in 1989 for a then world record of 60,000 pounds. His book, *Majolica*, illustrating the vase, was published in 1989 and is now considered a standard reference book on the subject.

From 1983 Dawes organized auctions of Lalique glass in the spring and Victorian Majolica in the fall at William Doyle Galleries in New York. These proved highly successful and the majolica auctions led to Dawes' being invited to serve as an expert consultant at Sotheby's, where he handled the extraordinary collection of majolica offered as a single bonus sale in 1997. Dawes joined Sotheby's full time after the auction as vice president of special projects. His responsibilities included appraising the decorative arts (with a significant majolica collection), from the estate of Elizabeth Whitney. The estate collection was successfully sold by Sotheby's in 1999.

Dawes left Sotheby's in 1999 to concentrate on his own auctions, which he has since organized with David Rago Auctions in Lambertville, NJ. His annual Lalique sales are the biggest of their type anywhere in the world. He is also responsible for the sale of majolica, helping to establish the successful '333' Estate Auction Company.



SEE YOU IN DALLAS

Convention 2006

Dallas, a young, modern and vibrant city is the host city for the 18th Annual Meeting of the Majolica International Society. Started as a Trading Post in 1841 by John Neely Bryan, it has evolved into a contemporary 'southern belle'.

Sleek yet elegant, majestic yet understated, state-of-the-art yet old fashioned, Dallas has something to offer all of us.....the best of the Arts, dining and elegant shopping.

Thirteen Museums in all.... Hundreds of fine restaurants, the star of them all being The French Room at our very own hotel, The Adolphus.....and the most elegant of shops, namely Neiman Marcus established in Dallas in 1907, offering exclusive fashions and elegant home furnishings.

With its wonderful climate, its panache, its understated manner and elegance – Dallas and the members of the Majolica Society, await us all to rejoice in ourselves and our love for Majolica and collecting.

Make your plans as soon as you can, and do try to come for a few extra days.... We have so many plans, so much to do in such a little time.

Please join me there.....I'll be waiting in lobby to greet you all.

Gabrielle



The Workshop of Luca Della Robbia, Contributions to Victorian Majolica

By Deborah English



**Detail, Adam and Eve.
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore**

“Della Robbia” is the generic name given to works produced in the late 15th and early 16th Centuries in Florence by two manufacturers: the Della Robbia and Buglioni workshops. We know a little about Victorian Majolica’s debt to Della Robbia, but I thought it would be fun to pursue the question a little further. Here are some examples of Renaissance Della Robbia, along with a few majolica pieces. You draw your own conclusions.

Unlike Victorian Majolica, Della Robbia maiolica is made from terra cotta, which tends to be stronger than the buff colored earthenware we usually see in 19th Century pieces. This is important because Della Robbia ceramics were primarily used for architectural embellishment. As a rule, they were commissioned by the grand households in Florence, to demonstrate their great status and wealth.

These large compositions are made up of smaller handmade tiles, which are fitted together after firing. Some of these “smaller” tiles are actually 2 feet across! Their precise fitting into the compositions demonstrates a remarkable facility with clay and control over kiln temperatures.

They were attached to walls in courtyards, as well as in chapels and other interior spaces.

Frequently, the family’s coat of arms and other insignia were incorporated into the predella of the object.

In keeping with the artistic fashion, Della Robbia subject matter is almost universally religious. Typical subjects include Madonnas and illustrations from Bible stories. Figures symbolizing virtue were also

produced. Human figures were at least life-size, as the spaces of Florentine palaces demanded large-scale sculpture.



Adam and Eve, c. 1515
The Workshop of Luca Della Robbia (detail)
Glazed terra cotta 10'x8' approx.
Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

This mammoth tile panel hanging at the Walters Art Museum depicts Adam and Eve with the serpent. You'll notice several things of interest. First of all, glorious color arises from the tin glazes that adorn maiolica. (In fact, several references refer to Della Robbia as a maiolica product.) Next, one sees the play of light and shadow emanating from the deep relief. While you're looking at Adam and Eve, notice that the serpent's face mirrors Eve's, a comment on society's lingering distrust of women. Then, see the squirrel in the tree above Eve's head; it seems familiar to majolica collectors. Also, see the white dove behind Adam. Lastly, in all the examples, look at the smaller tiles surrounding the compositions. This treatment of fruits and flowers was used regularly, and referred either to the seasons or to prosperity, usually both. Their structure is very like much of 19th Century majolica, notably Minton tiles and the fruits of the French company, Menton.

Bas-relief molding was the technique employed to make these sculptures. Like paintings, they can be installed on walls to be viewed at eye level, but, because they're made of fired ceramics, they are less fragile than painting, which in Renaissance Florence, still tended to be fresco (pigment directly applied into wet plaster... expensive and tricky to apply). Additionally, there is a three-dimensional aspect to bas-relief, which facilitates the play of light and shadow as the sun moves around the exhibition space.

Marble bas-relief had been used since the days of the Roman Empire for decoration of royal palaces. But marble has its drawbacks. It's very expensive to produce a marble sculpture. Good material is rare. Marble can have flaws that can ruin a piece in mid-production. It is also porous and is susceptible to staining, particularly when left outdoors. Bas-relief requires a flat back, an extra demand that can be hard to meet in temperamental stone.



Luca Della Robbia and Donatello. Il Cantori.
Marble Panel from the Choir gallery in the
Cathedral Santa Maria del Fiori in Florence.
Marble Bas-Relief Detail of one of ten panels
depicting musicianship, singing and dancing.

So, terra cotta became a practical substitute. Good clay was easy to find and molding it was far simpler than carving stone. When glazed, it could be used out of doors in courtyards as well as in the interior spaces. The fact that there were strong, proven maiolica glazes available for decoration made it additionally attractive. With a long history of maiolica tiles, it was, intellectually, a simple step to meld the two art forms. Eventually, Della Robbia products were widely used

in church interiors, as architectural decorations, and for private objects of devotion.

Luca Della Robbia (Florentine, 1399-1482) was probably trained as a textile craftsman, but his friendships with artists such as Donatello and Brunelleschi, led him to pursue interests in sculpture and architecture. It is thought that he worked with Lorenzo Ghiberti on the bronze doors of the Baptistery in Florence.

His first terra cotta was probably for Santa Maria Nuovo in Florence in 1441. He used the glazed terra cotta as a background for the marble reliefs and as a mosaic in combination with marble. Soon, he was working consistently in terra cotta.

Maiolica glaze had come from North Africa, through Majorca, to Islamic Spain in the 11th Century. Then, it found its way to Italy. With new materials coming in from the various trade routes, Italian glaziers were able to perfect the formulae and extend the range of colors. Luca's experience with work on the Cathedral no doubt enabled him to translate the maiolica principles to the monumental scale he needed for his projects.



**Tondo, 64.5" Andrea Della Robbia
Metropolitan Museum, New York**

Enjoying great commercial success, Luca hired Benedetto Buglioni to train in his workshop. After a while, Benedetto left, setting up his own shop in competition with Della Robbia. Luca had in the meantime brought in his nephew Andrea, and son Giovanni to work with him. Benedetto's son, Sitti, joined his father. There seemed to be enough business to go around, because together, the two workshops produced Della Robbia type wares until the mid-1500's.

Victorian Majolica Check: Minton Jardinière: Note the treatment of the flowers, and the use of bas-relief in applied decoration.



Pieta, 16th Century, Benedetto Buglioni



Minton, Leaves & Trellis Jardinière

The subject matter could hardly be less like the devotional attitude of the original, but many of the techniques have been adapted to modern use.



**“Star of Bethlehem” Minton,
designed by John Bell**

This is an obvious nod to Della Robbia. Perhaps the religious nature of this piece (unusual in 19th Century Majolica) inspired Bell to use the same colors and floral treatments as his Italian forerunners.

Also page back and notice the row of Minton tiles down the center of page #2.



**Buglioni Workshop, The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane C. 1525-35, 10'x8' glazed terra cotta.
Walters Art Museum**

Buglioni used the same method of applying maiolica glazes to molded terra cotta tiles to assemble his compositions. Using different recipes than Della Robbia, his colors are a little grayer.

Buglioni's work tends to be more naturalistic than Della Robbia's, and greater attention is paid to distant space. Yet, the borders of fruits and flowers remained constant with both workshops.

Della Robbia figures are more stylized. The space behind them remains flat. And then there is that blue, that unique blue that the words 'Della Robbia' conjure.

Detail at the right, Andrea Della Robbia, Virgin Adoring the Christ Child 1483, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore



**Santa Maria Novello Lavabo 1498
Giovanni della Robbia (1469-1529)**

The size of this must be impressive, given the scale of the basin relative to the rest of the piece.



Kneeling Angel, 17", Benedetto Buglioni

The success of 'Della Robbia' wares led to the production of smaller devotional plaques, which were made in multiples and sold to middle class homes. They are simple molded tiles with maiolica glazes applied.

Della Robbia inspired other ventures as well. The English company, Della Robbia Pottery, is not well known here in the U.S. Established in 1893 by Harold Rathbone in Birkenhead, Liverpool, it was one of the utopian Arts and Crafts potteries. Like most of these, it didn't last long, closing in 1910. Most of the production seems to have had an Arts and Crafts feel to it and does not remind one of Della Robbia wares.

One can buy Della Robbia today, on eBay, as well as other places. It's often advertised as "Authentic Nineteenth Century Della Robbia".

As with the confusion over the word 'majolica', "Della Robbia" has come to mean "anything that looks like this and probably has a Madonna in it." Not so bad, I guess, but it's not authentic and it lacks the richness and honesty of the original. It's hard to imagine that majolica could have come into being without the Della Robbia tradition. As they so often did, the Victorians absorbed what they needed from an earlier time, and made it their own.



**Plaque, Della Robbia, England. 1900
Harriman Judd Collection, Sotheby's 2001**

New Book: Artichauts et asperges en barbotine

One of our favorite authors and an MIS member, Maryse Bottero, published another beautiful book that is bursting with asparagus and majolica facts. The French book "**Artichauts et asperges en barbotine**"



contains 163 pages, with more than 400 color illustrations of Longwy, Luneville, Saint-Clement, Niderviller, Pexonne, Digoin, Sarreguemines, Longchamp, Gien, Clairefontaine, Salins-les-Bains, Bavent, Quimper, Desvres, Fives-Lille, Onnaing, Saint-Amand-Les-Eaux, Hammage, Orchies, Nimy-les-Mons, Wasmuel, La Louviere, Choisy-le-Roi, Moret-sur-Loing, Georges Dreyfus, Creil et Montereau, Saint-Uze, Vallauris, Angouleme, Malicorne, Radonvilliers, Limoges, as well as, pieces manufactured in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and England. The book also includes a section on pottery marks. It's not currently on the US or French versions of Amazon, but you can find copies at auction on eBay.

Evolution of Choisy-le-Roi Manufactory with Hippolyte Boulenger

**By Philippe Meunier and
Jean Alonso Defrocourt**



Choisy-le-Roi castle in 18th century

The company was created in 1804 by the brothers Paillard. At this time they began to produce bone china according to English techniques. In 1820, the brothers Paillard were joined with Hippolyte Hautin. In 1836, after the death of the last Paillard brother, Hippolyte Hautin joined with his son-in-law, Louis Boulenger, to become "Hautin & Boulenger Manufacture de porcelaine opaque". In 1866, supervised by his son Hippolyte Boulenger, this company produced majolica of very high quality, covered with brilliant colored glazes.



**Location of Hippolyte Boulenger manufactory in
Choisy-le-Roi's castle**



Two of the Marks used by Choisy-le-Roi



**Exposition universelle of Paris in 1878, palace of
Champ de Mars**

The factory created the left gate of the palace of Fine Art of the Exposition universelle of Paris in 1878. That same year, the business name became Hippolyte Boulenger & Cie faïence de Choisy-le-Roi.

Hippolyte Boulenger commissioned great sculptors to conceive the forms: Louis-Robert Carrier-Belleuse (1848-1913), who became the manufacture artistic director and the famous Paul Comolera (1813-1890), sculptor of animals and birds.



**Choisy-le-Roi's Tiger
signed Louis-Robert Carrier-Belleuse**



**Hen of Houdan, Stork, and Cockatoo
signed Paul Comolera**

excellent testimony of the know-how of this factory and the quality of its realizations.



Hall View 18 rue de Paradis

The architectural mural tile compositions are signed Arnoux and Guidetti.



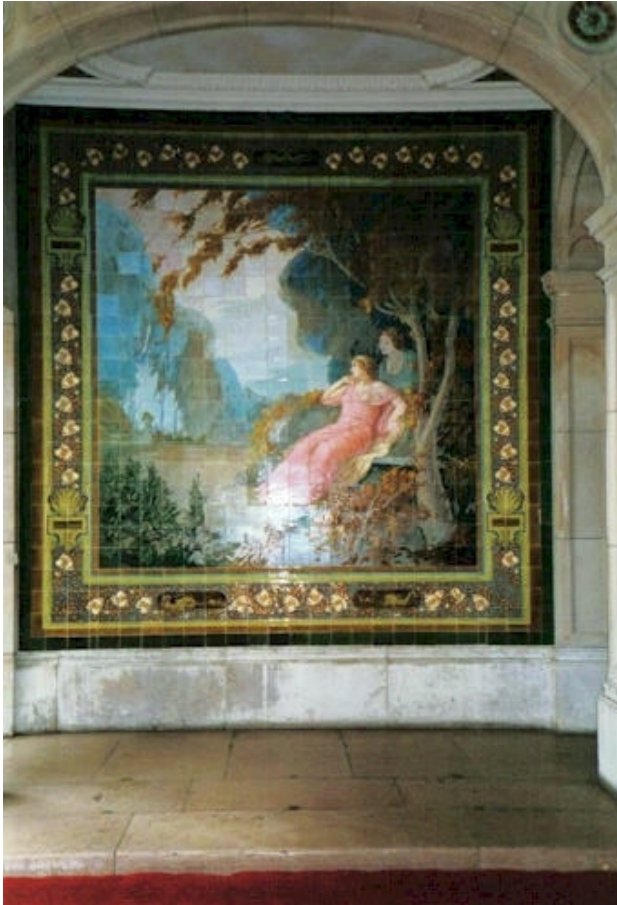
**Façade view with majolica decoration
18 rue de Paradis**



**Tiles decoration signed A.J. Arnoux
18, rue de Paradis**

In 1889 Hippolyte Boulenger opened his store at 18 rue de Paradis in Paris. The building, built by the architect Jacottin, was completely decorated with panels of earthenware stone floors which form a sort of catalogue of their production and constitute an

Arnoux, who directed the workshop of decoration of the earthenware factory of Choisy-le-Roi, distinguished himself by his research on the creating of enamels.



**Tile decoration signed A.J. Arnoux
18, rue de Paradis**



**Tile decoration signed A.J. Arnoux
18, rue de Paradis**

From the street, the façade, which is inlaid with elements of ceramics, appears like the façade of a grand theatre. Inside of number 18, rue de Paradis, the hallway, the court, the reception hall of the first floor and the large canopy, all exhibit ceramic tile compositions by these famous artists.



**Detail of the façade
18 rue de Paradis**

The manufacture also produced the tiles which decorate all the subway stations in Paris.

From 1978 till 1991 this building became the museum of the poster and the advertisement. Dependent on the Central union of the decorative Arts it was intended to present temporary exhibitions of old or contemporary posters. Today the collections have been returned to the Pavillon de Marsan in the Louvre palace.

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2006 Society Dues Process

Please check your address label on our mailing envelope. The red date such as “**2006-Feb**” indicates when you owe 2006 annual dues. Some members have paid ahead and won't receive any 2006 dues invoice. **Please use the enclosed “2006 Dues Invoice” to send in your 2006 dues.**

The treasures of Majolica Heaven await you in Dallas, Texas - MIS Convention May 4-7, 2006

To Restore or Not to Restore....

By Randi Schwartz

That is the question that people have asked me for the last thirty two years. I repair and restore broken, damaged antique and contemporary objects d'art. I work with porcelain, pottery, ivory and jade most often.

Thirty three years ago, I was living in California, working as dental assistant. I had taken a course at the University of Illinois in dental assisting and lab work. I learned a lot about taking impressions, casting molds and other wonderful stuff that I never used while working in the dental office. After two years, I was ready to switch careers, and was offered a job at Hanna Barbera hand coloring cartoon cells.

My parents made me a better offer. They said if I returned home to Chicago, they would send me to the Art Institute to study my first love and desire...Art. While studying etching, silkscreen printing, painting, photography, and ceramics, I picked up a part-time job at Marshall Fields...restoring porcelain and ceramic objects. I didn't know such a job existed, but it turned out to be a challenging and life changing position. I could finally use my skills learned in the dental lab.

I worked there for a few years where my teachers were a Finnish sculptor, and a Hungarian artist who had worked many years in the Herend factory. They taught me about gluing, filling and restoring an object to its original look without over painting the whole thing as some restorers were doing in those days. I taught them how to take impressions of hands and fingers that could replace missing parts on figurines. So after a few years of restoring objects for friends, my Mom's friends, and friends of my Mom's friends, I decided to hang up a shingle and go professional.

I named my business The Porcelain Doctor. Through the years I have restored many beautiful items for museums as well as corporate and private collectors. It is very gratifying to have an item brought in which is smashed...and return it a few....o.k., several months later restored to its original condition.

I have repaired many chips on majolica, and put together damaged figurines. I can replace missing fingers and other parts. It can get very costly when parts are missing. It can take several hours to build up and match missing parts to the original. I do give free estimates before starting any restoration work.

Most repairs can range between \$85 and \$200. When you bring your broken treasure to a restorer, have in

mind what the piece is worth. That theory usually goes out the window when the item has a sentimental attachment.

In my studio, I like the '*less is more*' concept. I do not paint any portion of an item that is not damaged. I keep the over painting to a minimum. When the repair cost is more than my customer wants to spend, I am more than happy to give them tips on how to put things together and which glue to use for their project. Restoration can bring the beauty and value back to a damaged item. Prices for restored items can come very close to those of perfect items, as seen in recent shows and auctions.

If you have any questions you can call me at the shop. Thanks, Randi Schwartz,

The Porcelain Doctor at Raven and Dove

If These Plates Could Talk

By Wanda Matthes

Finally after years of rising at 5:00 a.m. and rushing off to teach children, I have taken to a slower pace. I have my family, my friends, my antique business and, oh yes, the Majolica Society to keep me busy, but things have finally settled down enough so that I have time to wonder... Does this sound a bit like Andy Rooney? I wonder about who will email me today. I wonder if I will be able to answer their questions. And I wonder about majolica.... Now that I can be home in the day light hours, I look at my collection and wonder. Often my question is, "What must the artist have been thinking of to create such a piece."



Two of my most precious plates are by George Jones. One plate contains a scene of a man holding a lady in his arms. He seems to be wading out of the ocean, as if he may have rescued her. They are both fully clothed so it does not appear that

they had been swimming. Even in Victorian times, surely swimwear would have been less cumbersome. She wears a scarf and he a *beret*, definitely not English! She is rather small in proportion to him. Could this be his daughter? Was she frightened of the water or perhaps she was ill.....

The plate is surrounded by a glorious border of shells and seaweed. At the very bottom of the scene is the word Biarritz. Actually the plate is often referred to a “the Biarritz” plate. The word meant nothing to me until one day, in my continuing education French class, which I now have the luxury of taking, the teacher mentioned the French city of Biarritz. After “Googling” it on the internet, I really began to wonder.... From the “www.WordTravels.com” web site, I clipped this information:

Situated in the very southwest of France, Biarritz became famous in the 19th century (the actual date stated in other sources is 1854) when Empress Eugenie, wife of Napoleon III, fell in love with this part of the Basque country and built a Palace on the beach and a centre with natural spring at Eugenie les Bains.”



It is said that once the Empress Eugenie and Napoleon III set up there, that the royalty of Europe began to flock there as well. Biarritz became “the queen of beaches and the beach of kings”.

Queen Victoria came to Biarritz regularly over a period of thirty years.



Queen Victoria on an outing in Biarritz

Another web site, France-Hotel.org.uk, states that:

“The English aristocrats whose ancestors had discovered the place at the beginning of the century during the Napoleonic wars, came here in the wake of the Prince Of Wales, future Edward VII, who sent five seasons in the former imperial residence, which was transformed into Hotel du Palais in 1893.

Now to the companion plate, which is often referred to as the “clam digging plate, or the scrimping plate”. The scene of this plate is very peaceful. It is that of a young woman nearly knee deep in the water. She is

using her net to catch the shrimp or the crabs. On her back is a basket to store her harvest. In the distance is a sailboat.

I wonder....could these very desirable and “plus cher” plates have been designed as souvenir plates which vacationers might have brought back to England to remember “le beau jours a la Grande Plage” long after there return to Angleterre?



Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to:

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MajolicaMAIL Communications

By Duane Matthes

We sent a “MajolicaMAIL” eMail out on **Feb 27th** 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.

Majolica's Holy Grail

By Gabrielle Ehrenthal

We know that when we speak of the '**Holy Grail**', we are referring to the chalice used by Jesus at the last super. For centuries the goblet has come to symbolize the longing for that which is most illusive.

The British Guiana One Cent Magenta is the '**Holy Grail**' of the philatelists.

The numismatists consider the 1933 Double Eagle gold coin their '**Holy Grail**'.

The '**Holy Grail**' of the silver enthusiasts is the Cellini Salt Cellar which lay buried for the past few years, but has now resurfaced. Fear not temptation! it has already been returned by the thief to the Kunsthistorische Museum of Vienna (its proper owner).

To the seasoned Majolica collector, the Minton Peacock easily qualifies as their '**Holy Grail**'. This life sized bird, perched on a rock with floral vines and a large mushroom at its base was designed by the noted naturalist sculptor: Paul Comolera. Rich in colors and magnificent glazes the Peacock was fired in specially constructed ovens, all in one piece- a significant feat in 1873. Despite their current rarity and value (perhaps only 8-10 Peacocks exist today), at the time Minton produced the sculpture records indicate that they were sold for 25 to 35 Guineas. Although the use of Guineas ceased in the late 1700s, many upscale retailers, doctors and lawyers still quoted their prices in Guineas.

Having said all this you can just imagine the excitement and 'rush' we felt when we were included in the small group invited to the unveiling of the **Reis' Holy Grail**.

Our charming and gracious hosts, Donna and David Reis were waiting at the front door when our group arrived. What made our arrival even more special was the fact that their children Annie (14) and Alexander (11), together with puppy Sophie were there too, offering welcomes. When was the last time your kids wanted to participate in hosting your guests?

Their spacious and beautiful 19th Century Colonial home is decorated throughout with unbelievable, rare pieces of Majolica and other antiques. We were ushered into the large, formal dinning room (which is the size of my living and dinning rooms plus the kitchen!). This elegant room with its original carved marble fireplace is host to many 'small' pieces of Majolica one more beautiful than the other, and a few large pieces such as a fabulous Minton Fountain, placed demurely in a corner.



After being dined and wined, we were invited to visit the kitchen and breakfast area....more magnificent, rare pieces..... but no Peacock!

We all oohed and aahed at the rare fish platters, servers, cheese bells and the great tiles over the stove - but still no Peacock!



When we reached their conservatory, my heart literally skipped a beat and my throat contracted that I could not breathe.....this spectacular room was host to all birds proudly displaying their feathered finery: Minton, Holdcroft, Jones...in all sizes and colors, amidst enormous plants all housed in fantastic jardinières. What a sight! For now the conservatory is also the temporary home of the Minton Dolphin Fountain that once belonged to Marilyn.

By now I am feverish with excitement and absolutely mesmerized with all that I am seeing that I almost forgotthere still is no Peacock!

After touching, turning and discussing many of the pieces, David invited us back into the dining room where Donna was already busy at pouring champagne into graceful flutes....so I knew the moment is approaching.

Once everyone was in possession of his/her champagne glass, David ceremoniously opened the double hung doors that lead into the living room and we were ushered into this elegant space centered by a roaring fire which emanated a wonderful soft, romantic glow onto the entire room.

To the side of the room, David and Donna were flanking the **veiled** Peacock, all the while David holding the Peacock's crown (which is removable). All of a sudden, they pulled off the covers and there **IT** was in all its magnificent glory - this proud, magnificent life sized Peacock.

You could literally hear a collective gasp from us all, then came the toasts and welcomes to the newest member of the Reis Family and all the accolades.



With its jeweled tail and splendid plumage there it stood: Regal in all its grandeur, beguiling us all. Never have I seen such brilliant colors and details, from the smallest of the flowers on the rock to the bird's crown, each millimeter adorned and sculpted to perfection. The contrast between the Peacock and the rock (in texture, color and glaze), made the bird all the more vivid. It was intoxicating.....so realistic in details

and scale! We all kept touching it as if to reassure ourselves that we were not having a communal dream. Here we all were, within reach of the ever illusive Peacock - the **Majolica Holy Grail** ... and the crowning glory of Minton and the **Reis' Collection**.



What a treat for us all to be allowed into the fold of this wonderful, gracious and generous family.

Thank you David and Donna: for allowing us into your beautiful home, and for sharing your excitement with us at the arrival of this extraordinary piece of Majolica.

