



Majolica Matters!

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE MAJOLICA INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
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Animal Bottles: Who Made Them...??

By Gaston Stiel.



Courting Rabbit and Serenading Puss N' Boots

I have a lot of fun collecting those bottles, but – on the contrary to all other collections I have, had or know about – nobody could ever explain to me their origin...That's why, when Duane asked me to write some lines about those, I was interested to do it with a clear hope to learn something from you, dear fellow members.

What are those bottles?

These bottles are made in majolica and are definitely part of it, even if it's a small specialized category compared to plates, humidors or cheese domes...

They catch the fun and whimsical spirit of most majolica items. They are extremely colourful, fine and detailed. They contain a social criticism and irony in the way the animals are represented, and are part of

the humor of dressed animals, so popular in many forms around the turn of the century.

Functionally, they are liquor bottles, all measure from 30 to 38 cms. (12 to 15 inches). The hat (in some cases the whole head) contains a stopper and a hidden hole to allow pouring out the content of the bottle. (It's the mouth, a cigar, a button-hole, etc..).



A Rooster pours through his Button, while the Frog pours through his cigar

Proportions are not respected. For example: the frog, dressed with a turn-of-the-century pink bathing suit and wearing a fisher hat is....bigger than the elephant..! From their spirit, I would guess they have been made from the turn-of-the-century to the mid twenties.

I focus here on the B&L/H.B. bottles or very similar ones, and separate them from non-bottle/decanter items (humidors, candle-holders, mugs or pink-pigs items even if sometimes aesthetically similar)

Which animals?

The essence and probably the departure point were familiar animals found in the farms: dogs, cat, rooster, duck, pig, etc...The dog dressed as hunter is a very popular item in those days (see Arthur Thiele postcards), there is a bulldog dressed like a kind of "Sherlock Holmes" with his long coat, and there is even a "naked" dog dressing up elegantly with a kind of Mexican hat...

The prey of the hunter is very present, of course: rabbit, boar or fox.



Dogs always make a lovable subject



Jungle "wildlife": Monkey, Parrott, and Giraffe



Pigs in Jackets and Hats

Another classic anthropomorphic item is the pig: one plays bowling (actually "kegel") wearing its straw-hat, another drinks champagne...Yes, the idea of drinking is rarely forgotten: the fox is a classic German student with his scarf and his beer mug sitting on a barrel. The boar is a strong "beerhaus" waiter, etc...



Fox, Elephant and Boar at the "Beerhaus"

But there is also a small exotic touch to such animals (it's the time of the modern explorers). A parrot dressed with a safari hat, carrying binoculars and a "Baedeker guide" (first travel guide ever published) or an elegantly dressed elephant sitting on a barrel with a beer mug in his hand, and a well dressed monkey or a giraffe with an elegant half-belt jacket and a top hat. They all have common points. They are fat and elegant and represent a satire of the bourgeoisie of those days. They usually smoke (this is

functional: to allow pouring the liquid out of the bottle)



Duck with Ducking shot glasses

An extremely rare feature: My first duck I bought in Germany a long time ago was green, and sold to me as a set: the duck bottle and.... six small chicken (with melon hat and bow-ties and same marks on the bottom), each carrying a small glass on his back...!! I never found another of those sets.....I was told this duck was wearing the uniform of guards in the Orphan House in Vienna (Austria). Therefore you figure out easily that the six duck orphans still follow their guard on my shelf...But since I have seen so many color variations of that cape/coat (green, pink, red and yellow), I have doubts about this explanation. And I am not sure those orphans are ducks, they could well be chickens...!!

But....who made them is the question....

What do the marks on bottom say (see table). They bear a signature B&L or H.B. They bear a serial number and the mention “gesetzlich gestützt” (means: copyright).

What do people say (experts, dealers)? Either they say “no clue!”, or they directly ask me (after the sale) if I know what are those bottles. And this happens, regardless of which side of the ocean... They call them “Austrian” bottles. They probably were made in what was the Austrian Empire, in what is to-day Czechia. Maybe in the town of Tepplitz where the Bernardt Bloch factory was established, but nothing is certain. (Note that B.B. had a commercial office in Paris, and the designers were far from the factories, so many options are possible...).



Spectacled Storks with Hats and Umbrellas

| Animal | Signature | Serial Number |
|---------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Stork (small) | none | 2918 graved (IV ink) |
| Stork (large) | none | 2610 (12 ink) |
| Duck | B&L | 2224 |
| Boar | HB | 4406 |
| Rooster | B&L | 3626 |
| Bulldog | HB | 1651 |
| Pig (bowling) | HB | 7614 |
| Elephant | HB | 4225 |
| Monkey | B&L | 2545 |
| Giraffe | none | 2609 |
| Dog (naked) | HB | 4485 |
| Rabbit | B&L | 3724 |
| Frog | B&L | 3463 |
| Parrot | B&L | none |
| Dog (hunter) | B&L | 2373 |
| 6 Ducklings | B&L | 2512 |
| Pig (small) | none | none |
| Fox | B&L | none (14 ink) |
| Cat | B&L | 3625 |

One of the bottles comes from another source: the stork with its umbrella. It exists in two sizes. The big one measures 36.5 cm (14.6 in.). The small one measures 29 cm (11.6 in.).

I got rather sure verbal information that it was made by Max Lause in Schweinidtz, Silesia (today Poland). Somebody hypothesized the H.B. could be a brother of Bernhardt Bloch (who signs B.B. in the same manner, but there is no evidence of this). Somebody suggested if we find nothing in the literature, copyrights, etc... it's because the bottles were sold...full of liquor under the name of the liquor manufacturer (like the recent Garnier bottles in France)...Who knows..??

A knowledgeable American thinks that B&L means Berthold Löffler. But I tend to question this interpretation for the following reasons: (a) because the mark says B **and** L, i.e. 2 names, not one name and a surname, (b) Berthold Löffler did a lot of graphical work in many forms (mostly printed) at the Wiener Werkstatt in Vienna, but I have never seen anything figural from him, nor any pottery or ceramic item even coming close to our famous animal bottles, (c) I never saw any evidence of any kind proving that it was Berthold Löffler.

Conclusion

That's about what I know about those bottles. I would appreciate so much if somebody could answer the question by writing to me gastielfr@yahoo.fr or by publishing something here to contribute to our common knowledge.

I want to thank here the three persons who helped me gathering this collection: George, Jerome and Roland. It's a lot of fun..!!

"Majolica Matters" ----- HELP!

By Duane Matthes

It has been a quest of mine over the past five or more years to put ALL of the issues of "Majolica Matters" on the web site since we created our "Member Area" of the Majolica International Society web site. First we had to find them all and then there was the work of putting them in some format that would be reusable for you the membership. Jim Trout and Joan Stacke were key resources for the document gathering. Over the years Jim supplied me a copy of every "Matters" he had in his possession and Joan salvaged many copies for me as she planned and executed her move to her new apartment.

So now my bluff was called. I had the raw materials and it just came down to the doing. One day in my Texas office I had to get twenty-five pages of paper documents to New Jersey. I asked my administrative assistant to "FAX" them. She then informed me that we rarely fax volumes like this anymore and that now, we scan them and then emailed the results to as many

people as we need to. She then taught me how to use the scanner to read each page and create a multi page PDF document, which could be emailed to anyone who needed the documents. The finished image product was great, electronically very light weight and very reusable. In fact, it was the same format we were currently using to archive Majolica Matters.

With my new found knowledge, I now had a method to deal with the years of paper Majolica Matters which I wanted to make reusable on the web for our members. One minor issue remained. My office scanner only produced black and white and I wanted to preserve the color in our Majolica Matters. Well, I've had a small single sheet color scanner at home for years and I wondered if its software would also work like the high speed scanner at my office. After reading for a while, I figured it out and "Voila"; I could scan multiple color pages and create a color PDF document, right on my home computer. It was slow, and I had to feed the pages one at a time, but it worked.

My archive project is almost complete. Today, eighteen years of Majolica Matters, dating back to 1989, are password protected, and located for member use at the MIS Member Area web site. That means that members from all around the globe can assess our archives of Majolica Matters any time they want and reuse the wonderful information our dutiful MIS editors have been publishing over the years.

Now, on to your part, and the real reason I wrote this article. I need your help. I seem to be missing six issues -- if they really ever existed. So, look at the list below and then check your personal stash of Majolica Matters and see if you have any of the missing issues. They may never have been published since our all volunteer editorial board periodically runs into situations beyond their control. That may be the reason we have the gaps I found. For now, I'll assume they were published and continue to look for a paper copy to archive. If you have one of the missing editions, please consider postal mailing the original to me so it can be scanned and archived. Then we'll return your original back to you.

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1998 Winter edition | 1991 Fall edition |
| 1997 Spring edition | 1990 Summer edition |
| 1992 Spring edition | 1990 Spring edition |

In summary, please use the Member Area of the MIS web site for your enjoyment and if you could also try to help locate the missing issues, if they ever really existed. I had loads of fun reading all the old issues as I worked on this project and I'm sure you'll enjoy reading them also.

La Fête de la Bastille

By Wanda Matthes

Duane and I have been planning a trip to Paris for several years. Now, finally, we are going to do it! On our 27th anniversary in April, we decided to make the plane reservations. Together, we searched for the best rates and booked the flight. Ah....September in Paris.....That is the plan!

To set the mood, we decided to plan our premier la fête de la Bastille. Happily, we discovered that July 14, Bastille Day, fell on Friday in 2006. Duane and I decided that we would plan an intimate dinner party for eight. We would invite three couples, all dear friends of more than twenty years. They have all vacationed in Paris and would enjoy whatever we did. Voila! A party theme!

First I checked the schedules of our friends. Much to my amazement, everyone was available on July 14th!

Planning is everything so my first plan was to go to eBay and purchase a French flag. Oh well, three French flags (odd numbers always work best and one is never enough!). When the flags arrived, I was quite surprised that they were 3'x 5', not inches as I had expected. Another prime example of not reading the *fine print*! These flags were so large...how could I use them? After much "stewing about", I came up with ideas which worked! I hung one flag at the top of the stairs and the other two were used as a sort of drapery treatment at the entrance of the dining room. Hopefully our French members will not be appalled by their use in such a manner!

Next came the planning of the menu. I wanted the menu to represent dishes served in France but all recipes must be simple enough that I could cook them and still have fun with our guest. I like to cook but I certainly did not feel like a real French cuisinière. After much struggling and many consultations with my Flavors of France cookbook, and much reflection on the menus of our favorite French restaurants, the menu was in place. I discovered that some of our favorites; pork tenderloin, green peas, scalloped potatoes, sautéed mushrooms and salad niçoise as well as our favorite flourless chocolate cake could take on French names.

Duane and I thought it would be fun to print invitations and menu cards. My French language skills are still in their infancy stage so there were many emails between my dear friend and French teacher, Jane; to be sure that everything was written correctly. Then there was that problem of those darn accent

marks! I could get the accents to work for emails but not from Word which I was using to print the menu. I persevered, and at last, was ready to pass the project along to Duane who would print everything on card stock and make it look professional.



Now the drink menu needed to be French as well. Some friends would like a kir or an apple martini but most would enjoy a glass of French wine. Again, we went to the wine list of our favorite French restaurant. We were able to locate our favorite wine at a local market. I must admit that the water was Italian simply because it is my favorite (surely this can be forgiven!). Le café was purchased for after dinner and the drink menu was complete.

On Thursday, there were several trips in the near 100 degree Texas heat to purchase flowers and food. I placed a large cooler with ice in the trunk of my car to be sure that cold things stayed cold and that the flowers did not wilt.



Minton Vintages

made sure we had grapes and wine while dining

O.k. now the really focus of the party was to be able to enjoy our majolica. We purchased the Minton double vintagers at Majolica Heaven during the 2006 MIS

Convention.. I had seen them marching across the dining table of Thea and Richard Benenson when we visited their apartment in Manhattan last year during the MIS Convention. That piece had been on my “want list” since that time. Two muscular and handsome men in close fitting clothing carrying a large basket of grapes.....That would be the table center for our la fête! Now the struggle for the right plates and platters for serving....After visiting the local Sur la Table, I decided that my Spode Evesham pattern which is decorated with fruit would be my choice (save money for shopping in Paris....no spending on extra sets of china). The plates looked stunning on the new red placemats and felt right with our red, white and blue theme of la Bastille celebration. In digging through my “stash” of napkin rings, I discovered that I had a set of braided bread rings which had been tucked away for many years. They seemed to fit our country French theme.

With the table theme planned, it was now time to move on to other parts of the house. I had been “eyeing” an antique print of “Napoléon and Son Fils” at Snider Plaza Antiques. Now that would add French flair to the house! I arranged with Allan Woodcook, new MIS member and owner of Snider Plaza Antiques, to allow me to use the print for our party.

Sarreguemines shell vase with the coral base. All of the guest oohed and aahed over that one!



Forester’s Robin pitcher supplied music and tended to floral arrangements



Kitchen help included the skills and colors of the Onnaing Pig Chef Pitcher

The Onnaing pig pitcher came home for the party as well. He seemed to enjoy the visit and holding his bouquet of sunflowers.

The Forester bird pitcher with the bamboo handle came out of the guest bath to hold another bouquet of flowers. His spot in the bath was assumed by the



Sarreguemines shell vase tended a daisy bouquet
The evening was wonderful! Who could ask for more? An intimate party with dear friends, delicious food and wine and an opportunity to feature our expanding majolica collection

Rörstrand Majolica

By Wanda Matthes



In the past several years, we have found several pieces of well-crafted majolica, bearing the mark of the Swedish company, Rörstrand. Very little is written about this company or Swedish majolica in general, therefore, I felt we might open a dialogue about Swedish majolica and the Rörstrand company in particular.

Majolica, A Complete History and Illustrated Survey, by Karmason and Stacke contains this paragraph on Swedish majolica.

“Majolica tablewares and ornamental pieces were made at the potteries of Rörstrand, near Stockholm, and Gustavsberg, on the island of Varmdo, near Stockholm beginning in the 1860’s. Rörstrand, founded in 1725, made tin-glazed faience until about 1773, when the factory started to use lead glaze on its earthen wares which were similar to English examples. A majolica jardinière pedestal in the Renaissance style made at Rörstrand is reminiscent of a Minton design. In Sweden majolica was known as flintporslin. “



Rörstrand Monkey Tray

The only other significant reference I located is a book published in 1996 which is now out of print: Rörstrand Porcelain Art Nouveau Masterpieces by Bengt Nystrom. There are few references to majolica in the book. It does tell us that, “in 1868 majolica ware decorated with colored glazes was introduced.” The book also states that “Many Swedish artists toured factories in England and on the Continent.” One of Rörstrand’s most noted artists, Robert Almstrom,

visited England several times, visiting Stoke-on-Trent and studying at the Brownfield and Wedgwood factories. This probably accounts for the Wedgwood-like platter as well as other Rörstrand majolica pieces being mistaken for English.

In Victoria Bergesen’s book, Majolica, she pictures a large urn on a stand on page 120 and states, “The Rörstrand Porslins Fabriker concentrated on large exhibition type pieces such as vases with modeled decoration in the Minton style.”

Here are some pieces which I have found.

First is a monkey tray (probably for ashes) with extended arms which is perfect for a soap dish in a guest bath.

The next example is a rectangular planter with daisies on wicker. It measures 9 ¼” L by 4” H. I spotted a larger planter of this exact design in a local antique shop, marked English by the dealer but upon inspection of the base, the piece did indeed bear the Rörstrand mark.



Rörstrand rectangular footed planter



Wedgwood-like Rörstrand Footed Platter

This example is a large footed platter with a cornucopia design in its pattern. It measures 13 ¾” x

10 1/2". Wedgwood made one which is almost identical in design.

I was able to locate a few examples of Rörstrand majolica by searching the web.



Rörstrand Boat Centerpiece



Rörstrand Dragon Pitcher



Rörstrand Candlesticks

If you have Rörstrand majolica pieces in your collection, please send a digital photo to me and we will publish the photos in an upcoming issue. Hopefully we will expand our knowledge about this wonderful producer of high quality earthenware in the future.



Rörstrand Vase

Dining with Roberta

By Roberta McDonnell



Here are some photos of my "newly decorated" dining room. As with everything, (so my family reminds me), when I update anything in the house...sometimes outside too, my majolica collection has to be taken into account. So, as I picked out a decorating scheme and color, I decided to go with pink The pink is not George Jones pink but has a bit more coral in it. I found it looked great with my oil paintings and afforded a wonderful back drop for cobalts.

In my pre-majolica days, I collected Staffordshire figurals, (mostly animals and came to love sheep), so why not a country French/English toile loaded with grazing sheep! I was a bit frightened by its clarity and brightness and overall print so I decided not to use the coordinating paper beneath the chair rail but instead had my carpenter put in some wainscoting, new chair rails and baseboard moldings, ceiling moldings and a ceiling medallion in stark white. Then, I found the paper so charming that I could not get enough of it so I purchased the matching fabric and had a very simple curtain made for over my twelve small Cape Cod windows.



As things started taking shape, of course, it started a chain reaction . . . Now the dining chair seats were finally going to be changed! This could have started a family war since the seats were currently done in dark blue needlepoint which my 99 year old mother-in-law had needle pointed in the 40's or 50's....but I was willing to take the chance, having had them for 34 years myself . . . I chose a soft pinstripe, repeating the same pink tones. Then I used the same fabric to make small chandelier shades. All that was staring at me

now was my very pastel blue oriental area rug . . . hand made, and very expensive. Unfortunately, it had been used as a scratching post for my cat. The rug now screamed to leave the newly decorated room . . . I decided it had to go! I found a very inexpensive pink, but NO BRAINER, rug which gave the look and the color. Now everything looked just great . . . On to the next test.... I brought my china cabinets back into the room. Two are filled with a Victorian art glass collection, (my pre-majolica obsession). One cabinet is filled with all pink and the other all blue. They looked great in the room!!! Now for my two china cabinets of majolica . . . The pinks clashed as I knew they would but the cobalts looked fantastic as I suspected. Now let the arranging begin!



I found this a little challenging as I picked pieces from room to room. I am still not totally pleased with the final arrangement and may come to change it all again! See what you think!



Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to:

Wanda Matthes
3801 Indigo Drive
Plano, Texas

Phone: 972 - 596 - 2964

eMail: Wanda@eMajolica.com

2006 Society Dues Process

Please check your address label on our mailing envelope. The red date such as "**2006-May**" 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 Fake and Reproduction Market
By Wanda Matthes



Fake Griffen Smith & Hill Mug - with Frog



Fake devil or Bacchus mug

In the past year of so, I have spotted a number of majolica pieces bearing the 1884 Etruscan (Griffen, Smith and Hill), mark. One, a small bamboo and floral creamer, discussed in a past issue of Majolica Matters in an article on Arsenal pottery. Last spring, we found the piece in an antique shop in Adamstown, Pa. It was definitely not Etruscan and definitely not old. We did not have our camera with us and did not choose to spend the \$50 price for a fake. We did discuss this matter with Mary Harris, long-time Adamstown

dealer and specialist in majolica. She told us that pieces were turning up in shops throughout the area.

Recently this mug appeared on an on-line auction site. I have an authentic mug with this design, sans the frog. This piece has the same new look as did the bamboo creamer.

Some time ago a devil or Bacchus mug appeared on eBay and there were member discussions, at least in email, about the authenticity of this piece, since it clearly bears the 1884 Etruscan majolica mark. Well, it is on the site again so you are getting a picture!

The fact that this is happening in the market is extremely troubling since the inexperienced collectors are likely to trust the mark and may not yet be able to distinguish these as new pieces.



Bird and bird's nest pitcher
Fake on the left, authentic on the right

This past week, I discovered that one of my favorite pieces, the bird and bird's nest pitcher, attributed to Arsenal pottery is also being reproduced!

French Fakes



Fake French Onnaing Pig

Here is another example of a fake with a seemingly authentic mark. The Onnaing pig waiter pitcher (real version featured in the La Bastille article which bears the Onnaing mark) bearing a mark with looks vaguely like the Five Lille mark.

The dealer is from France. I do not believe any of us would be fooled by this but it is sad that pieces are being marked with seemingly familiar marks in order to deceive the novice collector.



So many of these figures are being reproduced and sold as authentic, it is incredible!

Here is the new version of two of our favorite figural pitchers.



Fake Onnaing bulldog and Orchies rooster pitchers

St Clement pieces as well as many Sarreguemines pieces are being reproduced and bear an inscribed, scripted St Clement mark.



Fake St. Clement marabou, cat, and monkey

The cat. The monkey. The rooster. The marabou, etc., etc., etc.....

English Fakes

For a number of years pieces have appeared on the market bearing the MINTON mark. Again, all of the savvy collectors recognize these but it is surprising how many I spot for sale in prestigious local antique shops. One example is the George Jones jardinière which we use as our MIS logo.



Fake George Jones jardinières

The dealer was changing \$850 for the fake when the “real thing” is estimated at \$4000-\$5000 in the George Jones Ceramics book.



Fake George Jones strawberry dish

I recently spotted this George Jones strawberry dish with birds at auction. The estimate for the “real thing” in the George Jones Ceramics book is \$2900-\$3300.



Fake George Jones mackerel server

The George Jones covered mackerel server has been “knocked off” for years. Usually this one bears a phony MINTON mark.



Here is another

example of a fake recently on-line. This was listed as “old majolica pond lily leaf flower pitcher” no reserve. The pitcher does look used but not old and certainly not antique. I believe it is a copy of the Minton lily and floral pitcher shown on page 36 of Dawes book. This fake got fifteen bids and went for \$87.99 without shipping. Many authentic pitchers without a markers mark hardly reach that price! Granted, the real Minton lily floral pitcher usually goes for \$2,000 and up.



Fake Minton Pond Lily Pitcher

Here is another piece marked Minton. This is a nine inch vase marketed as “Large Minton Majolica Vase, Blue With Storks”. It went for only \$145.41 but the amazing thing is that twenty people bid on it! Hopefully these people did not think they were getting the real thing.



Fake Minton Stork Vase

Reproductions

Seymour Mann pieces appear from time to time in antique shops represented as “real” majolica. This recent example of the Wedgwood Bird and Fan platter appeared on-line. I see no problem with these if they are priced for the new market which this one was. It stated the date as 1992 and had a “Buy it Now” for \$45. Obviously not an antique but gives “the look” for the market of shoppers who are just looking for that. Previous books and articles have mentioned Mottahedeh, Bordallo Pinheiro and the Haldon Group. Most of these pieces, with the exception of

Mottahedeh are sold at inexpensive prices. They are not made to deceive.



Bird & Fan Seymour Mann Reproduction Platter

Here is a photo from a recent Neiman Marcus catalog with a reproduction of the Fielding Shell on Waves pitcher on the left and a shell pitcher on the right which I would say is Wedgwood like.



Neiman Marcus catalog

Many MIS members have sets of reproduction Shell and Seaweed plates. I purchase mine years ago at Neiman Marcus for about \$15 each. My plates were made in Portugal and marked Bordallo Pinheiro. One which looked almost identical appeared on-line. The seller stated that it was a Jay Willfred Art Pottery Majolica Plate, a division of Adrea Sadek. This company makes a large number of new collectible items.



Mottahedeh Pear Platter