



# Majolica Matters

## Philadelphia Beckons Majolica Lovers for the 2011 MIS Convention

by Laurie Wirth



The MIS Board of Directors would like to invite all majolica lovers to the next Majolica International Society Convention, **October 27 through October 30, 2011**, in Philadelphia, the beautiful city of Brotherly Love. The 2011 MIS convention hotel is the renowned Radisson Plaza Warwick Hotel, located in the heart of Philadelphia's famous Rittenhouse Square, an area known for shopping, great dining, and nightlife. Room rates during the convention at this charming, historic hotel will be a very reasonable \$150 per night.

For those of you who haven't been to Philadelphia in a while, the 2011 MIS convention will offer the perfect opportunity to succumb to the charms of this "Old City" which has a deep history in the shaping of America. It served as the capital of the United States for nine years, from 1791-1800, and the city's vibrant, historic epicenter has retained a glorious part of its colonial character. You should definitely plan your trip to include visits to the Liberty Bell, a worldwide symbol of freedom, which was rung in 1776 to announce the birth of our new nation. Also make time for a visit to Independence Hall, built in 1732, which is the building where the second Continental Congress voted to break away from England, thereby leading to the Revolutionary War. Betsy Ross's home is also a short walk from Independence Hall, as is Christ Church, the place of worship constructed in 1727 that included 15 signers of the Declaration of Independence among its parishioners. George Washington, Betsy Ross, Benjamin Franklin, and many other patriots had regular pews in this historic house of worship and plaques mark their regular pews.

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## 2011 Convention plans are taking shape!



Majolica International Society Convention, **October 27 through October 30, 2011**, in Philadelphia. We have reserved the Radisson Plaza Warwick Hotel. Room rates will be \$149 per night. Put the last weekend of **October 2011** on your calendar for **MIS Convention 2011**.

## SEASONS GREETING



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**Philadelphia Museum of Art**

But colonial history is not Philadelphia's biggest lure for majolica lovers. As an exciting part of the convention program, the MIS Board of Directors has been able to work with the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) to include a "behind the scenes" tour of this venerated museum's collection of American Etruscan majolica. In 1876 Philadelphia was host to the first international exposition ever held in the United States, appropriately timed and sited to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the country's independence. With great foresight, the building that was constructed to hold many of the world's artistic offerings and industrial endeavors was also intended to serve as the first permanent structure for the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Many of the museum's earliest acquisitions had been shown in the Centennial Exposition—for majolica aficionados, that includes the PMA's collection of American Etruscan majolica as well as the incredibly rare, 43 by 31 inch palissy exhibition platter, crafted by Achille Barbizet, attribution Maison Barbizet. **I saw this platter on a visit to the museum last October. To say that it is absolutely breathtaking would be a massive understatement!**

And that's not all. To make sure majolica lovers have the opportunity to see as much, touch as much, and purchase as much majolica in a four-day period as humanly possible, the convention will be held in conjunction with the October Strawser Majolica Auction in Hatfield, Pennsylvania. This two-day auction is a favorite with majolica collectors and the MIS will provide bus service to and from the auction as part of the registration fee to attend the convention.

Majolica Heaven Dealers will also be a huge draw for collectors to come to Philadelphia. Don't miss the opportunity to see what these magicians conjure up for majolica lovers to add to their collections. For

anyone who missed the convention in Dallas last year, just know that there were more first time and one of a kind offerings by these fantastic dealers than ever before—it's always a thrilling experience and for 2011, the Majolica Heaven Preview party will be held on Friday night instead of Saturday.

There's more to tell you, but I'm running out of room in this edition. We'll publish the 2011 convention schedule in the next issue of Majolica Matters. For now, just know that this convention will be unlike any other. We need you to be a part of it. A lot of exciting things that have happened since we last met in Dallas. Mark your calendars, save your money, and get ready to mix it up for majolica in the city of Brotherly Love next October.

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## Pottery Trade Gazette -- July 1, 1880

Researched by Carmen Pattinson

### MAJOLICA GOODS

MESSRS. TAYLOR & KENT, of Longton, have forwarded to their London agent, Mr. John Brock, of 10, Thavies Inn, Holborn, E.C, sixty-seven new patterns in teas, ranging in price from 10s. To 84s. In such a display as this the decoration is extremely varied, and permits of any great diversity in style, &c., which is usually shown by the majority of buyers, being satisfied. Mr. Brock also had some new goods recently introduced in majolica by Mr. William Holdcroft, of Dairy Bank, Longton.

A five o'clock tea service for two persons, suitable for garden parties, &c., is worthy of mention. It is rustic in decoration, the background being brown, relieved with blackberry blossom and leaves. The fruit forms the knobs for the lid of the tea pot and sugar basin. We also noticed a handsome flower-pot by the same firm. The design represents a dark brown basket with wild rose ornamentation, the foot being made by the stem of the plant being twined round so as to form a base. The whole is coloured in accordance with the natural colours.



**Blackberry tea pot with creamer and sugar (missing lid)**

## The Bedö House Budapest, Hungary

By Gabrielle Ehrenthal



**The iron work doorway transit of the Hungarian Secessionist House displays "Bedö-Ház"**

Earlier in 2010, Michael and I were lucky enough to be able to explore a bit of Central and Eastern Europe. For me, being anywhere in Europe offers a sense of familiarity and comfort, as I was born there; and although I consider New York to my home, my heritage is deeply rooted in Europe.

Vienna, Prague, Bucharest, and Budapest: they all boast to be 'the most beautiful' in Europe, and except for Prague they all share the largest and most romantic river of Europe...the Danube. Their history goes back a millennium and is somewhat entwined, yet each offered a different perspective on history, culture, architecture, style, cuisine, etc. Along the way, we became acquainted with many of the locals who proudly imparted their knowledge of local customs, directed us to what they considered 'worthwhile places to visit', and recommended places to eat...and even discussed politics (totally unheard of until 1989 in Eastern Europe)! The fact that we were able to converse in their languages made them more amenable to take the time to stop and engage in answering our questions.

Busy as we were waltzing through Vienna, drinking beer in Prague, and sampling every 'dobosh torte' in Budapest, we did manage to explore the customary sites, museums and churches . . . and made new discoveries of our very own. On one of our 'day long' walks through Budapest, we came across a little known, recently restored Art Nouveau building called the 'Magyar Szecesszio Haza' (the Hungarian Secessionist House).

This popular architectural style called Art Nouveau (new art) by the French and Jugendstil (youth style) in Germany/Austria was at its peak 1890-1905. 'Secessionist' is a term frequently used to describe the general characteristics of Art Nouveau beyond Vienna, therefore Budapest.



**The full facade of the Hungarian Secessionist House**

So....this amazing 'house' was built by architect Vidor Emil in 1903, for the industrialist A. Bedo and his family, at number 3 Honved Street, in Budapest (a must see if you're in the area).



**Detail of the exterior of the "Bedö Ház"**

The Bedos made every effort to maintain the Art Nouveau ambiance throughout this impressive home - which is now open to the public. Careful attention was paid to each detail: the stained glass windows, the stair railing, the woodwork, etc., even the hand wrought door hinges and key-hole hardware - all Art Nouveau! . . . and since old houses filled with original period furnishings is a passion of ours, and so rare, we were ecstatic to have stumbled upon it .



Interior view of the stained glass windows

The house is no longer anyone's home, and is open to the public . . . so the contents are exhibited 'warehouse' style. Nevertheless the furnishings are all period originals, and much to our surprise many of the decorative house wares are Majolica!



Art Nouveau tea set and table oil lamp



Michael uses the Art Nouveau railing

OK - they are not Minton or Jones, nor are they the finest of Majolica, but they are very befitting the style of the house, namely Art Nouveau - probably made by Eichwald, Schiller, etc. Imagine our delight as room after room revealed vases, plates, jardiniere stands, and even a tea set!



Majolica stick stand



Art Nouveau hinges and key-hole hardware



Majolica vases on one of the high selves



Majolica Fish platter and plates alongside a tall fruit bowl



Majolica rustic berry tray

By now we are so giddy with joy we could barely refrain from doing summersaults: we're in an authentic Jugendstil house, fully furnished with original pieces and strewn with lovely, colorful Majolica.... can it get any better? Well, the answer is: the coffee shop.....they are using original period tables, chairs & settees (upholstered in original fabrics), coat racks, umbrella stands, etc., to serve the patrons. Huh????????? 2010: a fast and very

speculative era - the Bedo House: a step back in time and innocence!



Art Nouveau standing clock



Details of the above photo's two thistle wall plates



Majolica and complementary metal art



Beveled glass door cabinets full of majolica plates



Majolica



Majolica trays and vases



Gabrielle explores while patrons are using original period tables, chairs & settees (upholstered in original fabrics), coat racks, etc., for coffee service.

So much history, so many beautiful places to see and explore, such great food, friendly people . . . and here and there majolica to be found.

If you have an opportunity to visit Budapest, please include Bedo House - it will bring a smile to your lips and a warmth to your heart.



Majolica game wall hanging along side of a ceramic heater

Please send your comments and material for the newsletter to:

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**The Thorwaldsen Jardinière**

By Jim & Carol Harkess

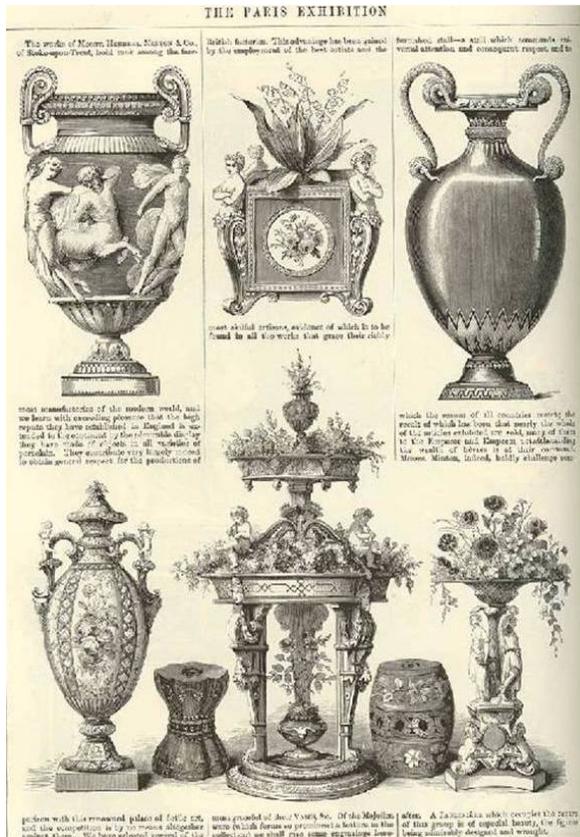


Minton majolica square jardinière, shape No. 602

Since first opening Nicholas Dawes' book on majolica, we have been enamored with the Minton jardinière shown on page seven. It is of an usual square shape with each of the corners being embellished with a caryatid half figure surmounting a scroll foot. Each side of the jardinière is decorated with a circular painted seascape, "possibly by Edward Rischgitz." The piece was exhibited in Paris in 1855 and, according to Dawes, may have been included in the Great Exhibition. For some time it has been on a list of pieces that we loved but would likely never see in our collection. Happily our fortunes changed on a recent foray to Hatfield, Pennsylvania.



Minton majolica square jardinière, shape No. 602



Minton ceramics from the 1855 Paris Exhibition

The underside of our acquisition is marked MINTON with shape number 602 and it carries the date code for 1864. The glaze coloration is identical to the one depicted in Dawes, but the circular painted panels are different; two being seascapes and the others countryside landscapes. Presumably these were individualized for each piece. Karmason and Stacke briefly describe the piece and note, "Because of the difficulties of producing painted majolica, few examples were made, fewer survived, and one can anticipate that this form of Minton majolica will greatly increase in value." Of course, we have no experience finding pieces of majolica *before* they increase in value!

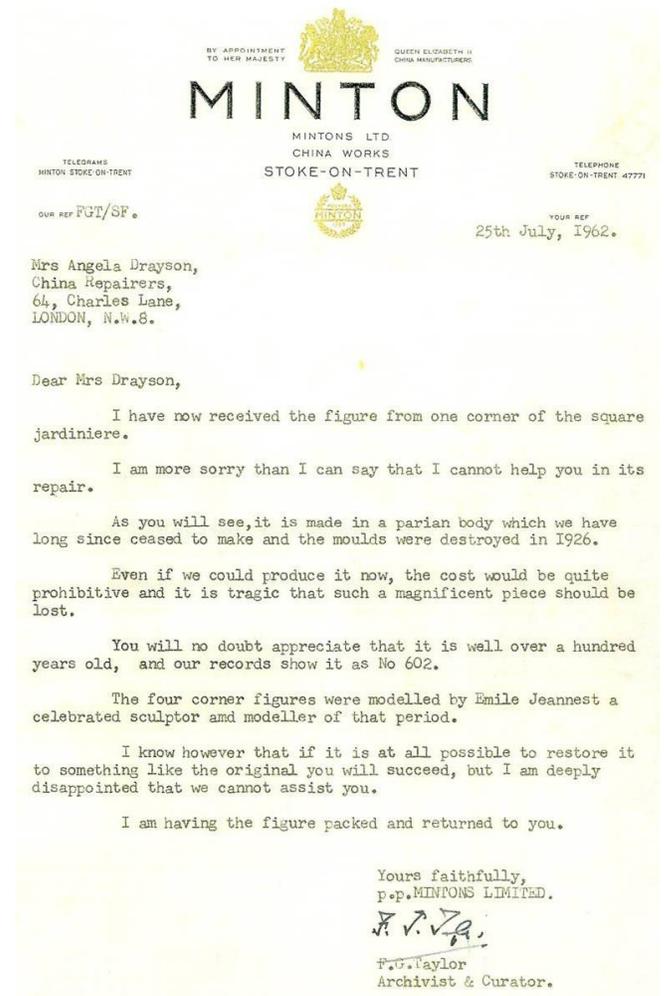
Minton also produced the piece in bone china as a jardinière on stand. The figures were separately crafted in Parian and then secured to the corners of the jardinière with metal fittings, thereby producing a composite with both glazed and unglazed textures. In The Dictionary of Minton, Atterbury and Batkin refer to this piece as "the Thorwaldsen jardinière." It receives the same appellation in Minton, The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production by Joan

Jones. We have not found any reference of the stand being produced in majolica glazes.



**The Minton Thorwaldsen jardinière on stand in bone china and Parian**

Several years ago, we developed an interest in restoring majolica. I suppose the orthopaedic surgeon in me feels the need to heal crippled pieces of majolica to add to our expanding collection. At any rate, we have accumulated a number of reference books on the topic. The Thorwaldsen jardinière is the subject of a painstaking restoration project in Practical Ceramic Conservation by Lesley Acton and Natasha Smith. Among other damage, one of the corner figures had been broken into many pieces. It was deemed beyond repair, requiring a complex molding process to form a new replacement. An earlier owner of the piece had returned it to the Minton factory inquiring if it was possible to replace the figure. In a formal letter of response, F.G. Taylor, Archivist & Curator of Mintons Ltd. apologized that he was unable to help her in its repair. Minton had ceased production of Parian wares and the molds for the corner figures had been destroyed in 1926. He went on to mention that the four corner figures were modeled by Emile Jeannest, "a celebrated sculptor and modeller of that period." This association has not been documented in other reference books on majolica or Minton ceramics.



**Letter from Minton regarding the Thorwaldsen jardinière figures (From Practical Ceramic Conservation by Lesley Acton and Natasha Smith)**

Pierre-Emile Jeannest (1813-1857) was the son of the French bronzier Louis-Francois Jeannest and a pupil of the French painter Paul Delaroche. He left Paris in 1845 and by 1848 had established himself as an independent designer in London. Jeannest was recruited by Leon Arnoux and became active at Minton in 1848, replacing Samuel Bourne. During his tenure at Minton, he produced designs for multiple ceramics including majolica, terracotta, porcelain and Parian wares. His combinations of glazed and unglazed textures were highly innovative at the time. Jeannest also worked as a modeling instructor at the Potteries School of Design in Stoke. In 1852, he took a position as a modeler of silver for Elkingtons of Birmingham, but continued his association with Minton until his death in 1857.

Other pieces of Minton majolica attributed to Emile Jeannest include:  
 Victoria wine cooler, ca. 1851, shape No 631. On display at the V&A museum and Karmason auction, lot 454.

Ewer and stand depicting Hercules, ca. 1862. V&A museum.

Figural wine cooler with bacchanalian scenes painted by Thomas Kirkby, ca.1876, Atterbury and Batkin, p.59 and also featured on the MIS Facebook page  
Cistern on stand, ca 1860, shape No. 615. Christie's sale 2210, lot 256.

Anglo-French style vase, ca. 1870. Dawes, p.21  
Cherub candelabra, Strawser auction Oct. 2010, lot 884  
Renaissance ewer and stand, shape No. 472

Additional information and photographs of Jeannest designs are available online at:

V&A Museum: [collections.vam.ac.uk](http://collections.vam.ac.uk)

The Royal Collection: [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk)

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## **Bard College Lecture Series Project**

A continuing goal of the Society has been for majolica to be recognized in academic circles as worthy of scholarly study.

Past-President, Phil English, reported to the MIS board on his efforts on behalf of the Society to establish a relationship with a Decorative Arts School. One goal of such a relationship is to increase the appreciation of Majolica in academic circles. Of the three possibilities (Winterthur, Cooper Hewitt, and Bard), Bard seemed the most likely candidate. Phil contacted Susan G. Wall, Director of Development at Bard. After discussions on various options, Bard decided that they would be interested in having the Society sponsor a lecture series. These lectures would be held at Bard and then published in their journal. A member of the Bard faculty would deliver the lecture and the Society's input would be minimal. The MIS board directed Phil to continue to pursue the lecture series with Bard.

Phil then announced that he and Deb would like to see the Society use these lectures to honor Joan Stacke Graham. He motioned that the lecture series would be appropriate honor to Joan for all she has contributed. He further announced to the MIS board that he and Deb would make a \$5,000 challenge grant and would match any board contribution to the lecture series up to that amount.

A motion was made to accept the challenge. It was seconded and approved unanimously. The Board members then each made a personal pledges of \$1,000 each to the lecture series funding.

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## **Majolica Auctions Spring 2011**

by Michael Strawser

Majolica Auctions Spring 2011 auction date is April 1 & 2. We are pleased to offer the Connie Crossett Collection from Pittsburgh. Mrs. Crossett was a long time member of the Majolica International Society. Her collection consists of many nice pieces of George Jones, Minton and other majolica.

We will also have a great selection of oyster plates in the auction. Included in the auction is the collection of oyster plates from the Sansom Street House in downtown Philadelphia.

You can contact Michael either by email to [michael@strawserauctions.com](mailto:michael@strawserauctions.com) or by his cell phone 260-336-2204.

**Strawser Auction Group**  
200 North Main Street PO Box 332  
Wolcottville, IN 46795-0332

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## **MIS 2011 Annual Dues Increase**

During the meeting in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, in October 28-30, 2010, members of the MIS Board voted unanimously, to raise the Society's yearly dues by an additional \$10 per year.

- US dues: \$65 per year
- International dues: \$75

The additional \$10.00 can be considered a charitable tax deductible.

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## **Here's a Pig Who Doesn't NEED Lipstick**

by Deborah English



**Collecting, a Transforming Act:  
Promises are made to be broken...**

by Wanda Matthes

Upon discovering a large collection of American, Shell and Seaweed majolica for sale at an antique show, this collector, Heidi said to her new husband, Alen . . . "If you let me buy these, I won't need to buy any more majolica". . . As you can see, this was a promise that was soon broken, but this request also was the beginning of a passion for collecting. Together, Heidi and Alen prized the best of those things passed down from their families and added the best of American furniture, art, early American pressed glass, Staffordshire, majolica and other fine decorative arts.



The "majolica seed" was planted with Etruscan Shell and Seaweed



The Shell Nappy, 8 1/2", described in Etruscan Majolica by Dimitrios Bastas, page 41, Vol. 2, as "very very scarce"



The Shell Nappy "M 6" pattern code

Duane and I got a "peek at" this wonderful collection recently and we both marveled at the depth of this now extensive collection, held in a historic home that is so warm, so comfortable and so inviting that our over-night stay seemed far too short. I am not sure how many pieces were in that first purchase of American shell and seaweed but, as you can see from this photo, there is no piece missing from this extensive and perfectly balanced group. If you look closely, you will see two coffee pots and two tea pots, two fruit stand and two cake stands; three bread platters; two humidors, one with a rare blue background.



White server with pine shelf above

We had never seen the shell and seaweed bowl in the third row center. If you have a copy of Dimetrios Bastas's recently published books, Etruscan Majolica,

Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, you will find a print of this piece in a reprint of the Etruscan Majolica: The Majolica of Griffen, Smith and Company, Vol. 1, on page 57, marked M 6 as shown in the mark's close up. In Vol. 2 of this pair of books, you will find a close up of Heidi's humidior on p. 37. In addition to Shell and Seaweed, on the bottom shelf, we find two oyster stands, a pair of Worchester shell sweet meat holders, the Minton double bunny and more...



**Focus on a part of shelf number two**

The "wicker room" (furnished with wicker furniture) is the room one enters after passing through a very large foyer. The room invites one to come in and "sit for a while" and enjoy the one's surrounding. The view from this room, like most rooms in the house, looks out onto the water.



**The wicker room houses the bulk of Heidi's collection, but one can find majolica pieces throughout this warm and comfortable home**

In this room, which feels like the heart of the house, you will notice a white server, which displays mostly cobalt pieces. It holds six cheese domes, plus the George Jones empty nest game dish, the complete George Jones apple blossom tea set with tray and ... on the very bottom, you find the George Jones underwater pitcher and the matching underwater cache pot. Here Heidi also inserts a bit of Palissy. First with the Minton crab platter, again on the bottom shelf . . . while the Portuguese tea pot with snake spout and handle sits snugly nestled between the traditional English pieces and just below two cobalt Minton oyster plates.

A Portuguese Palissy plaque with turtle holds reign on the space above the pine shelf, and a very large Portuguese fish with open mouth hangs on the adjacent wall. Also, note the cobalt swallow and dragonfly garden seat peeking from the left side of the white server. In the detail photo of the shelf number two, we see the George Jones tankard, a cobalt oyster plate by George Jones and his iris pitcher, also in cobalt. What a beautiful combination!

Heidi spoke about the "watermen". Those who made their livelihood on the water. The theme of water and fish is seen throughout the house. Above the sofa, is this breathtaking display of the Wedgwood fish platter with eight matching plates, mounted above and around a life-like painting of a storm at sea, painted by Otis Cook (1900-1980), an American artist from the Rockport School of Impressionism.

Since this is a historic home, the door jams are deep and Heidi and Alen took full advantage of this by building in insets for additional space where they were able to display the seven graduated fish pitchers and still had room to hang these fantastic Holdcroft oyster plates above the doorway which leads into the dining room.



**Wedgwood majolica fish service, combined with an American, Otis Cook, painting**



Looking from the wicker room into the dining room, note the use of the shelf in the transom which holds the large display of fish pitchers with Holdcroft oyster plates above. Also, to the right, one sees the candle holder with the plate attached.



This portion of a larger cabinet, in the family room, displays George Jones oyster plates with George Jones strawberry set with birds atop. Shelf two displays two Minton oysters, with a George Jones oyster peeking from behind, plus the George Jones continents fruit stand with deer, flanked by sardine dishes. The lower shelf displays Wedgwood mottled shell plates and behind the George Jones fish server, we see a Wedgwood grape and grape vine shallow bowl with more pieces sitting on the top of shelf number one!



This eye-catching display, consist of a very large, cobalt urn with cover, decorated with oak leaves and acorns with goat handles. The urn is flanked by two master oyster plates. The detail in the Black Forest shelf is superb, having a kneeling hunter on the left and a squirrel on the right, munching on a nut. There are three birds...one in the center, and a pair near the bottom, with grape clusters, in several places.



One of the many creative ideas I took away from Heidi's displays were these wall candle holders with a plate stand attached.



Two nearly perfectly matched shelf arrangements, one at each end of a very large and inviting dining room. Notice the majolica pieces on the lower shelf of the grouping on the left.



The elephant room displays this very large majolica elephant by Wilhelm Schiller



A fantastic mix of objects..the elephant lamps with a very rare black Staffordshire elephant in the center and, as always, there is a fish. This time it is Japanese Imari porcelain.



This wonderful corner cabinet in the kitchen contains Heidi's collection of plates, platters, cake stands, tea pots, jugs and other servers in English corn, American cauliflower, Wedgwood grape leaf, English pineapple and a large grouping of French asparagus pieces enjoyed by this gourmet cook.



A few of the ancient tall ships as they sailed about the river



Heidi treated us with a boat ride on the river, giving us a great view of the town and a close-up view of the tall ships. The experience was simply breathtaking on this mild October day.



Till we sail with the tall ships and "waterman" again!

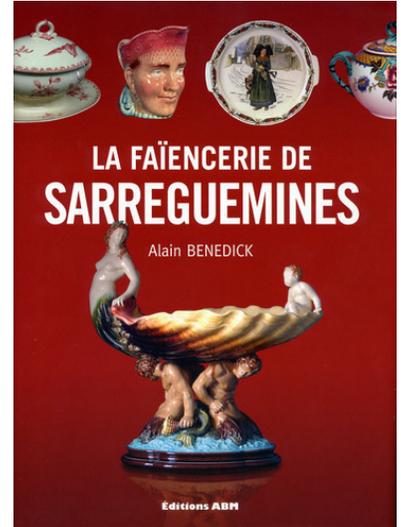
Our visit was short. We arrived for a late dinner on Saturday evening and departed late afternoon on Sunday. Heidi displayed her culinary skills with each meal. Her love for cooking has been honed by frequent visits to the La Combe Cooking School in Périgord, France. No restaurant could compare! We slept well, ate well and reveled in each moment of this event filled and extraordinary visit. We only touched the surface of this collection.

Hopefully one day, Heidi will offer us and encore!

**FYI:**

**La Faïencerie de Sarreguemines by Alain Benedick**

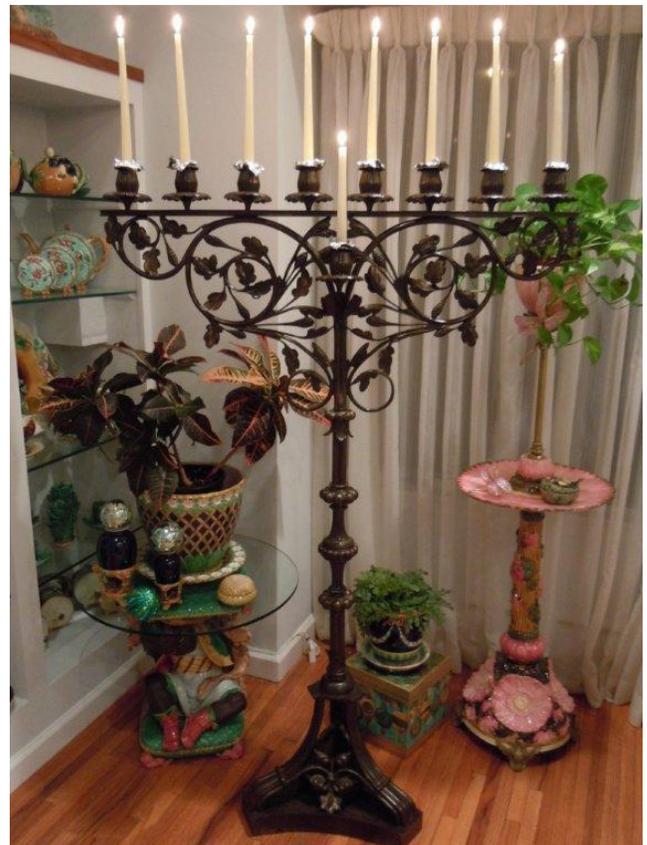
I recently received a copy of this new book (2009) Sarreguemines ceramics reference book, available at Amazon.fr for 45.00 €. On pages 113-127, you will find a section on majolica only, with other pieces of majolica sprinkled throughout the book. On pages 207-220, you will find a list of the numbers, listing also the object and the artist. There are also six pages of dated marks. The language of the book is French but this is still a valuable reference for collectors of majolica.



Wanda Matthes

**Sharing a Holiday Memory**

By Gabrielle Ehrenthal



Ehrenthal's 2010 Chanukah Menorah

## **Northeast Regional Majolica & Coffee**

by Donna Reis

We had the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Majolica International Society, Northeast, regional gathering on Saturday, November 20<sup>th</sup> in Rye, NY. Sixteen people came to the Majolica & Coffee and enjoyed listening to a wonderful talk by Melissa Bennie from Christies, New York, who eloquently spoke about a computer management system for art collectors from Foleo Software. It is a system whereby a collector can catalog an existing collection easily, quickly and with ongoing support. Melissa discussed the many benefits to using ARTfoleo for organizing information about individual pieces which could also be used for keeping track of data for insurance coverage. The information was enthusiastically received by all who attended. Everyone enjoyed delicious carrot cake and coffee as members shared some of their favorite pieces of Majolica and photographs of their pieces to share with the group.

The group enjoyed viewing a Power Point presentation of several majolica pieces manufactured by a number well known artists. One and all thoroughly appreciated this part of our event. We missed our original speaker Joan Stacke-Graham who was unable to come because she was home resting and recuperating with her daughters after her brief hospitalization. Our time spent together gave everyone the opportunity to share their passion for collecting in an air of conviviality. We look forward to getting together again in future.



**Melissa Bennie, from Christies', spoke to the group about Art Foleo. A fabulous way to organize and keep track of your collection.**



**Members sharing their passion for majolica**



**MIS members bond and share their collections, while enjoying the Reis's hospitality and the opportunity to view the outstanding collection of majolica which Donna and David have assembled.**

Melissa Bennie from Christies' spoke to the group about Art Foleo. A fabulous way to organize and keep track of your collection.



**Donna Reis with her eye on the tiger**



What a fabulous teapot! A wonderful example of how form and function are incorporated in a beautiful way.



### Northeast Region Majolica & Coffee Fall 2010

The first Northeast Region Majolica & Cake and Coffee



Jerry and Aviva Leberfeld at the first Northeast Region Majolica & Cake and Coffee



Members shared their passion through photographs of their favorite pieces.

Donna Reis  
Majolica International Society  
Northeast Regional Representative

## Happy New Year 2011