

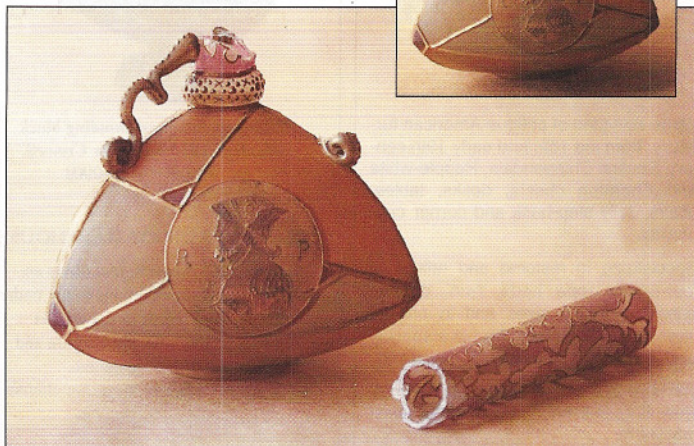
By Allison Eckardt Ledes

New life for breakables

Some of the most beautiful antiques are also the most fragile, and even collectors with the steadiest hands have had their share of accidents. Not all that long ago when a porcelain platter broke into three or four pieces it could only be salvaged by using unsightly staples on the reverse. The damage done to the painted decoration was difficult to repair so that it was invisible to the naked eye. Not so any more. Nelson Dale and his colleagues at Restoration Services in Arlington, Massachusetts, can repair porcelains and glass so that the breaks are imperceptible and the repair is reversible. For example, to repair the French plate illustrated at bottom right, the restorer airbrushed the hand-

painted scene, particularly where the break crossed the clouds and the green border. The border decoration was then regilded.

Repairs were at one time visible under ultraviolet light, but the epoxies used today do not fluoresce. However, a pin or needle can penetrate the surface of the repair so that it is evident that it is not the original material.



Restoration Services also specializes in glass and crystal restoration. The firm grinds and polishes chips and scratches using felt wheels and powdered lava as well as modern diamond technology. Broken and cracked glass is reconstructed with epoxies that are translucent, strong, and so thin that they will seep into and heal a crack before it has caused a break. The firm also reproduces missing parts. Working with a glassblower, a missing piece, such as a chandelier arm, is created, after which a member of the staff of Restoration Services executes any cutting or other decoration so that the new piece matches the rest of the object.

Restoration Services, a member of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, also restores lacquer, marble, alabaster, and other stones as well as frames, enamels, and metal sculptures. A complete list of objects the firm mends and restores is available on its Web site (www.restorationservices.com) or in a brochure that can be ordered by telephoning 781-648-3322.

An American glass vase before and after restoration, a German stone-ware plate before and after restoration, and a French porcelain plate before and after restoration.

