

# Loan Exhibit

## A PRIVATE COLLECTION OF MAJOLICA

by Penny Anderson



*“My collection is very personal; acquired piece by piece in antique shops, shows and while traveling.”*

I started collecting majolica as a young bride. Whenever I went into an antiques store, I would choose a piece for its color, shape, or unique design. The collection of oyster plates is my favorite. I bought the first oyster plate on the East Coast while traveling with friends many years ago. My husband and I like oysters so we use our oyster plates often. To this day, I'm tempted to buy a plate if it is different from the ones that I have.

When we moved to Florida some years ago, I combined my collection from Minnesota but still have many nice pieces at our summer home in Niswau, Minnesota.

Some of my majolica pieces are quite precious, and some are not so expensive. To me, a mint collection is not so important as the actual fun of looking and comparing my collection with others that I see or that I find advertised at auction.

Our family room and kitchen are where I have displayed and showcased my collection. I love and enjoy living with all my different pieces and the beautiful memories that they have given me. The collection is a work in progress, so I add to it only when a piece is very special.



Minton & Co. five tiered oyster stand c. 1856. This beautiful 14" Lazy Susan has a crossed fish finial resting on top.



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*Each oyster plate has a central well, usually glazed in a color that contrasts with the body of the plate.*

In response to growing interest in the culinary arts, Minton and Co. produced magnificent majolica destined for the Victorian dining table, each piece foretelling its use. Picture wonderful oyster plates, fish platters and individual fish dishes, crab servers, lobster boxes and platters, and sardine boxes – all reflective of the English enjoyment of seafood from nearby waters. Game dishes held rabbit, partridge and venison that matched the designs on the piece. In season, strawberries were placed in large dishes complete with serving spoons decorated with strawberry leaves. Chestnuts were presented in a bowl heated by a warming stone and served with spoons decorated with chestnut leaves. Every precise detail was included. Most unusual of all have been teapots modeled as a Chinese actor behind a mask, or a cat on the teapot handle stalking a mouse finial or a monkey sitting astride a pomegranate.

There was almost no limit to majolica designs. It is the unexpected, the surprise of majolica that greets the collector in a world-renowned antiques show or a tiny flea market that keeps the collector seeking, searching, and finding!

For further information visit your library. Books recommended by Penny Anderson are: Majolica, a Complete History and Illustrated Survey, Marilyn Karmason with Joan Stacke, Harry N. Abrams, NY 1989 and Majolica, Nicholas Dawes, Crown, 1990.

*Photography by Penny Taylor.*



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## WHAT IS MAJOLICA? – A BRIEF HISTORY

The colorful earthenware known as majolica is once again a popular part of the nostalgic revival of Victorian taste in interior design. Made of earthenware and covered with tin and lead glazes, majolica's antecedents were *albarelli* and the platters made by ninth to thirteenth century Hispano-Moresque artisans. These pieces were then shipped in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from the port of Majorca, Spain, to Italy, where, as products of the Italian Renaissance, the chargers, pitchers, and goblets were renamed *maiolica*.



Multicolored English fish stand.



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The "Ceramic Caravan" brought these techniques to Northern Europe, where tin-glazed pottery was produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Holland (the well-known Delft), Germany, Sweden, and Russia. During the sixteenth century, the French scientist and ceramic artist, Bernard Palissy reformulated the Renaissance glaze and created outstanding examples of platters decorated with marine life; these Palissyware designs were revived in the late 1800's by artists in France and Portugal.

In the nineteenth century, the technique of tin and lead glazing was further developed in London and Brighton and reached the Ceramic Caravan's final destination at Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. There, in 1849, Herbert Minton and Co. had the serendipitous fortune to meet Leon Arnaux. Arnaux was a great French ceramic chemist who joined Minton to regenerate the production of lead-glazed pottery based on Renaissance designs. Early pieces, called "majolica," were destined for English gardens; the lead glaze protected cachepots, urns, fountains, garden seats, and life-sized stork-and-heron-shaped flower holders from inclement weather.



*Thomas Forester English style garden piece selected for its affinity with Florida. This versatile piece has been used to hold fresh flowers, especially orchids.*