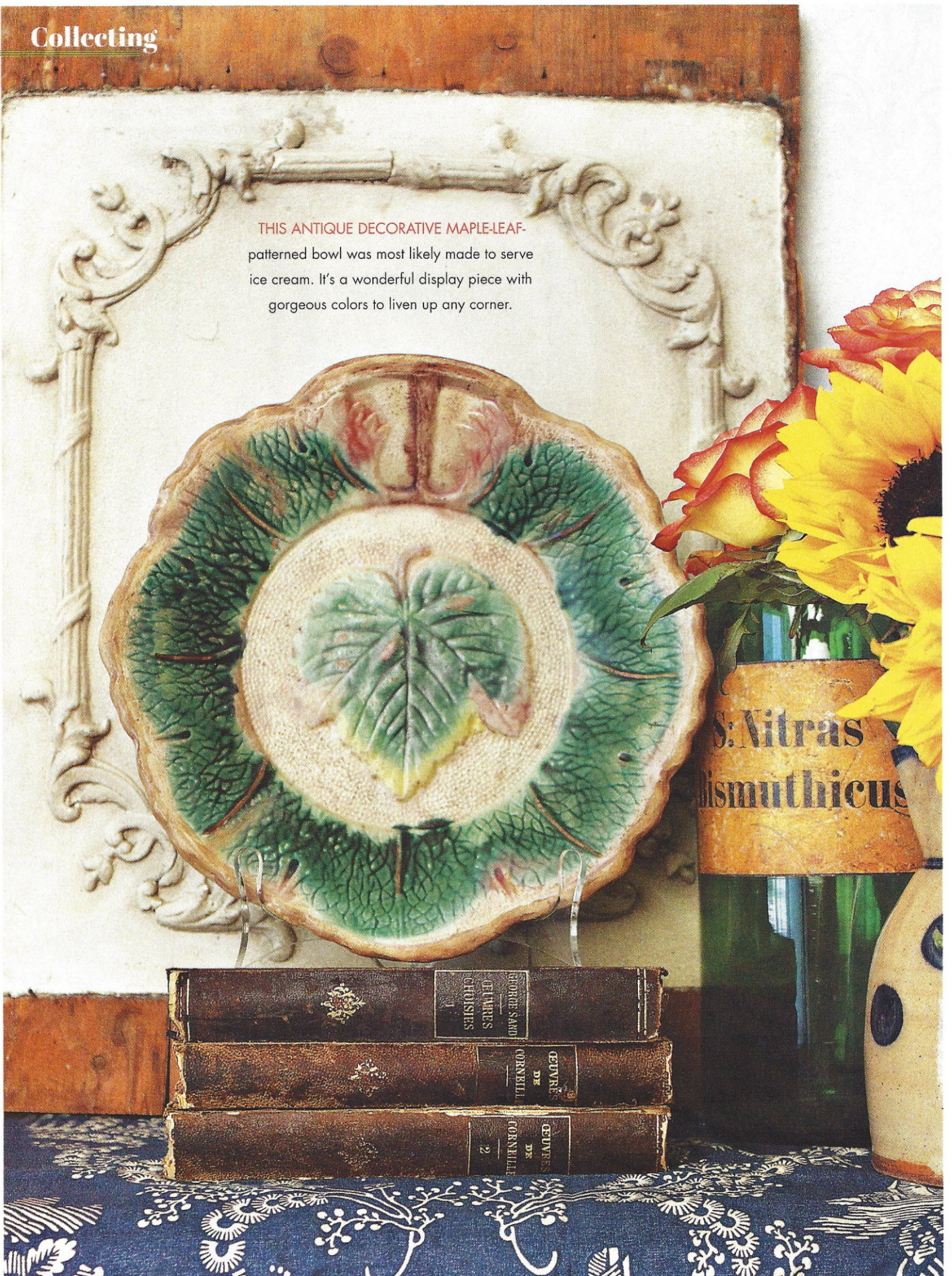


THIS ANTIQUE DECORATIVE MAPLE-LEAF-patterned bowl was most likely made to serve ice cream. It's a wonderful display piece with gorgeous colors to liven up any corner.



the Magic of MAJOLICA

With a seemingly endless variety of colors, styles and shapes, these functional pieces of the past make stunning décor today.

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Photography by FrenchGardenHouse Antiques

IN RARE TO FIND BROWN, this antique majolica cake plate has crisp mold detailing. It was made by Villeroy & Boch.

Whimsical, fearlessly inspired by nature and glistening in bold jewel-like colors,

antique majolica excites collectors and designers alike. Easily combined with both traditional as well as modern environments, majolica enhances any interior when displayed as decorative art.

HISTORY OF MAJOLICA

Herbert Minton, the English ceramist, is credited with initiating the majolica craze in 1851 by exhibiting his brilliantly glazed majolica pieces at The Great Exhibition in London. Minton's collection of ceramics resembled the tin-glazed 16th-century Spanish and Italian earthenware called majolica. His factory's sculpted work, featuring naturalistic shapes, colorful glazes and humorous themes quickly became known as majolica.

A soft paste earthenware, fired to biscuit stage, majolica was coated with opaque lead or tin glaze, which was allowed to dry. Pieces were then hand painted with colorful metal oxide glazes and fired again, creating the glossy lustrous glazed finish for which majolica is most admired.

Majolica was mass-produced for the middle class in countries like England, France, Sweden, the United States and Germany. Large urns, covered serving dishes, plates, platters and even garden seats were much in favor. During the Industrial Revolution, majolica, with its figural designs and charming rural themes of flowers,



Collecting

fruits and animals, brought the countryside back to people living in the polluted cities.

Many of these colorful antiques were designed for the Victorian dining table, each piece beautifully illustrating what it was used for. Many majolica serving pieces were so realistic they rivaled nature, making it a challenge for cooks to make the food as beautiful as the serving piece.

1. DISTINCTIVE. The most desirable majolica is that produced in the last half of the 19th century. Many countries made this colorful, fanciful and imaginative earthenware. Most, but not all, are marked on the bottom with the factory's backstamp.

ENGLISH MAJOLICA: The most valuable and collectable pieces were made by Minton, George Jones and Wedgwood. Other British manufacturers of majolica include Joseph Holdcroft, S. Fielding & Co., Brownhills Pottery Co., W.T. Copeland & Sons and John Adams & Co.

AMERICAN MAJOLICA: The best known American manufacturer is Griffen, Smith and Hill. Their Etruscan majolica designs depict plant and marine life, and the most beloved pattern is called "Shell & Seaweed." George Morley & Co. produced gurgling fish and owl pitchers, usually unmarked.

FRENCH MAJOLICA: Sarreguemines, Luneville and St. Clement all produced delicate, well made majolica wares or *barbotine*, as it is called in French.

GERMAN MAJOLICA: Villeroy & Boch produced vividly colored majolica tableware that is avidly collected today for its shape and colors.

THIS 19TH-CENTURY MAJOLICA PLATTER or bowl in the decorative pineapple design is attributed to Adams Bromley.

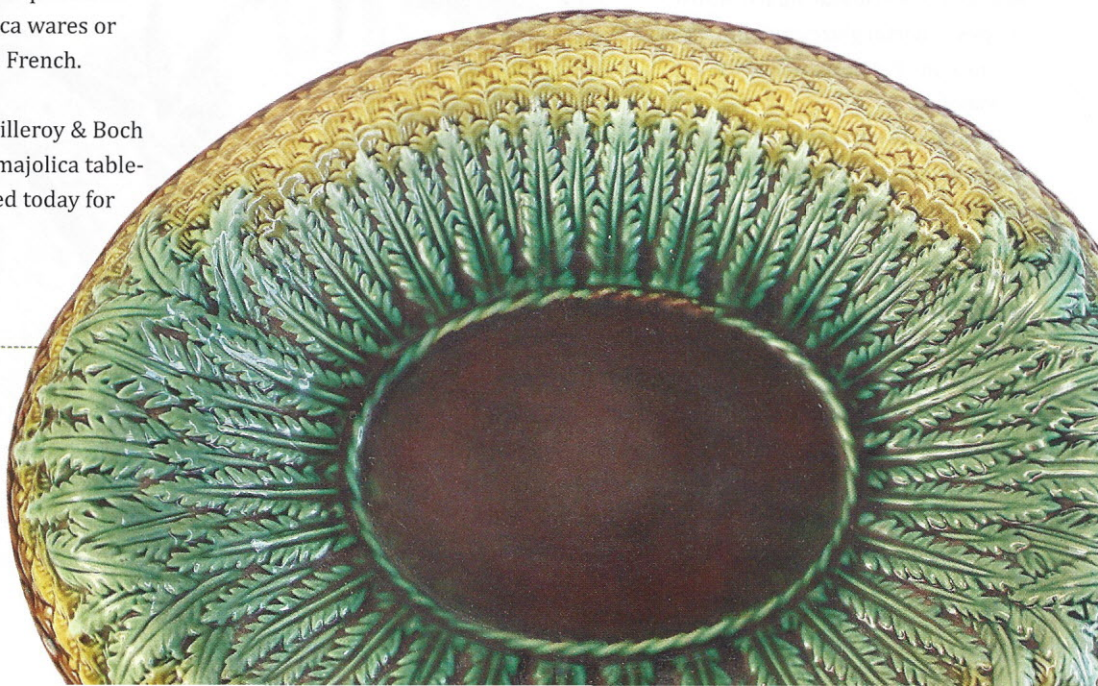


THIS CHARMING VICTORIAN English ewer with bark effect has a tiny snail on the top of the handle for added decorative interest.

THIS 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN MAJOLICA PLATE with a gorgeous design of basketweave, ferns and delicate flowers is in an extremely rare cream coloration.



THIS EARLY GRIFFEN, SMITH AND HILL plate features maple branches showcasing all the beauty of leaves turning colors.





THIS LARGE ENGLISH BREAD PLATTER with blue center has the motto "Eat thy Bread with Thankfulness" around the rim.



2. SHINY. True antique majolica should have a glossy, almost "wet" look to the glaze. The final beautiful translucent glaze, a metal oxide glaze in the second firing that enhances the clear jewel-like colors of the pottery, is what collectors seek out.

3. WHIMSICAL. Antique majolica is imaginative, humorous and whimsical. Majolica aficionados cherish its artistic molding and robust, bright colors. Majolica wares were created with a sense of humor—they were meant to bring texture and fun to the table during the serious Victorian era.

4. PRICEY. Signed 19th-century majolica can be expensive: Expect to pay \$200 to over \$3,000 for the rarest pieces. If your budget is substantial, you can focus your

collection on desirable signed pieces; if it's small, seek out an unmarked piece you like with a small amount of damage, and build from there.

TIPS FOR USE AND DISPLAY

Since these pieces are tin- or lead-glazed, it is not advisable to use them for actual food service, but the decorative options for displaying your collection are endless.

Plates can be wall mounted with plate hangers or displayed on stands made especially for that purpose. A single piece can highlight a shelf; a large collection will be spectacular in a cabinet or hutch. No matter how you display it, majolica, with its breathtaking designs and colors, is aesthetically pleasing. Every collection has its own personality. Acquiring majolica that expresses you is a beautiful way to share your own personal style at home.

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