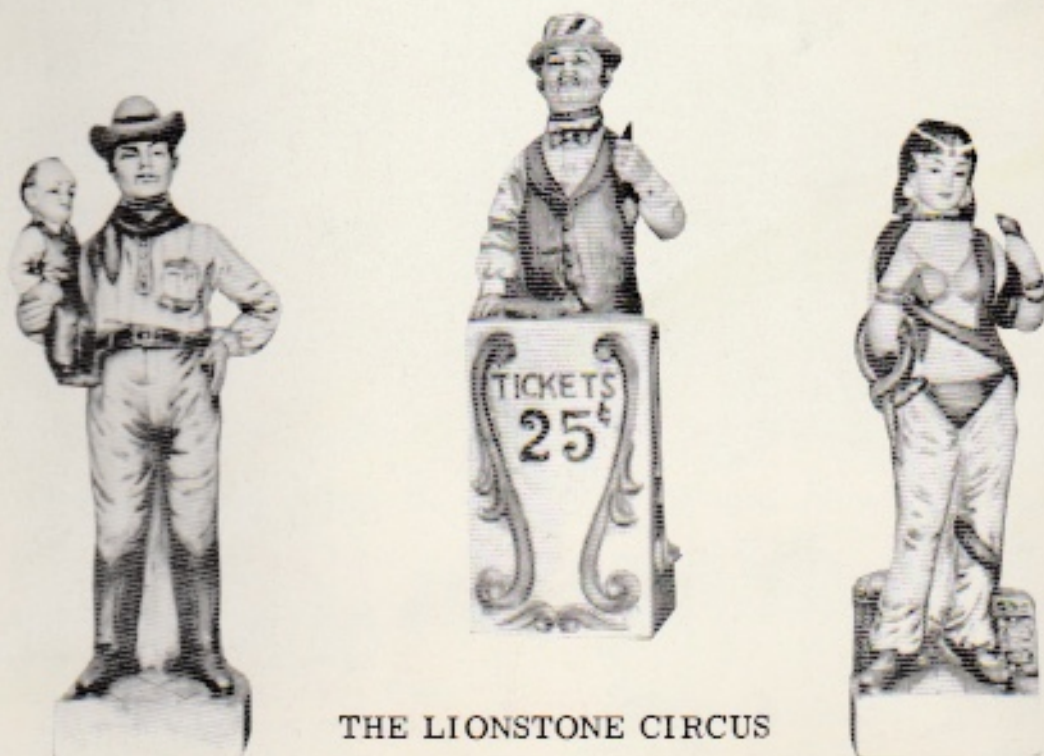


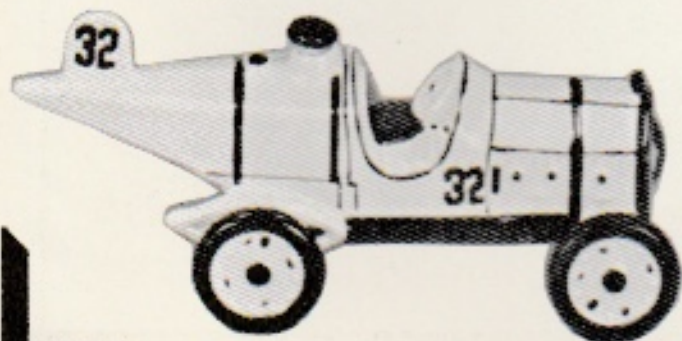
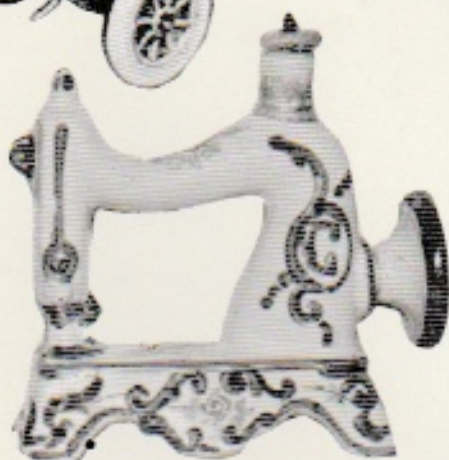
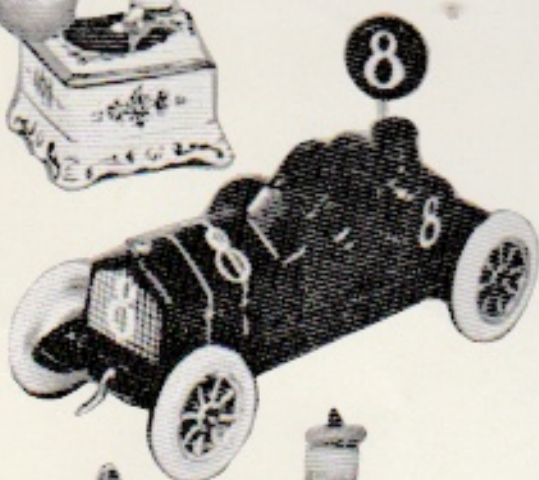
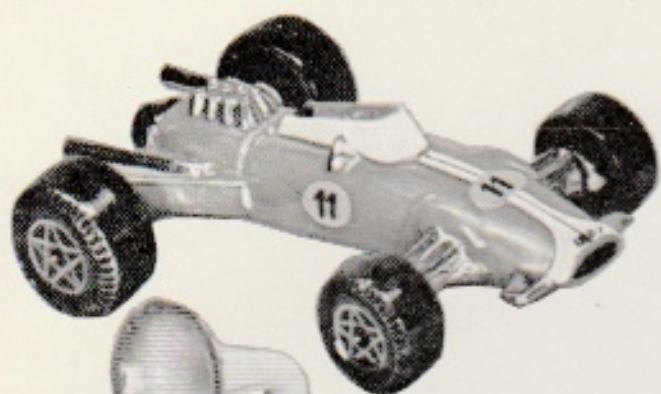
the miniature bottle collector



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The BIG Journal of LITTLE Collectibles.

March - April 1974 Vol. 1, No. 2

THE miniature bottle collector

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Alfredo Spinelli

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ART
ROBERT STAAKE

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LET'S Talk

Welcome again. As this is written, it's barely 1974 but already big things are happening for miniature collectors. So to start off, there's good news and there's bad news. Let's get the bad news out of the way first.

Many of you have read about the E. Delatour Company of St. Croix in the Virgin Islands and have been waiting for news of their new releases which were promised for last fall. A few weeks ago, I received a letter from Mr. Victor Nelson of Delatour who had the following (unfortunately) to say: "Due to currency uncertainty and of the ups and downs of values and the general conditions of the world of today, Spain, Japan, and Italy have gone berserk in prices and conditions. As they are our purveyors of porcelain and glass miniatures, we have decided to hold and cancel all of our commitments for next year until we can get a more established way of working as the miniature business requires some very large investments." So for the time being at least, there's no use getting all excited about Napoleon on Horseback, the Parrot, or any of the flower bottles which were to have been in release by now. As Mr. Nelson wrote, "maybe next year some time."

Now the good news. Back in October I was all excited because the sale of miniatures had been legalized in Tennessee. As was mentioned in the first issue, there's a lot more activity around. So when I heard Tennessee had

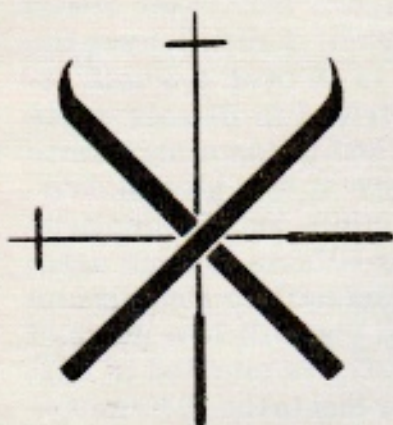
made such a marvelous decision, I crossed my fingers that other states might follow. Well, I didn't have too long to wait. A little over a month later, a retailer friend in Illinois wrote that miniatures had become legal once again there. Now it was nice of Tennessee to allow minis, but the implications of allowing Illinois to once again sell them are fantastic to even dream about. Realize if you will how much of the liquor industry is situated in Illinois. Remember that in the 1930's heyday (ah, those halcyon years... as the pundits say) of miniatures that Illinois merchants were directly responsible for many great bottles which now reside in our collections as treasures of the past. Realize also that Illinois is one of the major areas for big bottle collectors, many of whom have already made or are making the switch to miniatures. Gives you a good deal to think about, doesn't it?

Another item touched on in the first issue was the amount of bottle activity in Canada. What I didn't know at that time was that my words had only been scratching the surface. Just before we went to press with the first issue, but too late to make any changes, I received a letter from friend and subscriber, Lew Kamann of Nanaimo, British Columbia. For lack of a better title and because of all the marvelous info Lew sent down, let's call him our Canadian correspondent. Lew says:

"I have some news for you about the first Canadian Miniature Bottle Club and also some first hand information about some new ceramic Canadian miniature liquor bottles that will be released in the very near future.

"The name of our club is the B. C. Mini Bottle Club, which is short for the British Columbia Mini Bottle

Contd. on p. 27



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Fascinating Figurals

by Tony Natelli

Many collectors and authors consider the ceramic miniatures of Luxardo (Giovanni Luxardo Liqueurs of Torreglia, Italy) to be the finest in all the world.

Just about all of their 1950 and early 1960's series are beautiful, unusual, well-designed, and all of these bring the highest prices (money or trade value) the rare times they are seen.

The Luxardo Company has been a family operation continuously since 1821 and while their larger ceramics are also world famous, the bottles discussed here are all miniatures, starting in 1953. And, all of these were issued under the direction of Nicolo Luxardo, the current President.

The first Luxardo ceramic miniatures were a series of 12 amphoras, pitchers, and jugs sold in the U.S.A. from 1953 to 1956 in two boxed sets of six each. These are commonly known as "Babies" and occasionally, other "Babies" that differ from the twelve are found by fortunate collectors. But these are indeed rare, and apparently were sold in very small quantities, finding their way into some of the sets often each on very few occasions. I've seen at least three of these but there are probably more.

Luxardo also exported some to Great Britain, New Zealand, and marketed still others in Italy, including some never seen in the U.S.A. The group most common of those never exported to the U.S.A. is three sets of a pitcher and amphora with gold handles known

as the Baroque Series. They came in three different colors (green, ruby, & turquoise) and are all believed to have been sold in Italy circa 1958.

Twenty-two different "Babies" are pictured in the excellent volume by Avery & Cembura of A Guide to Miniature Bottles and Bottles in Miniature, Vols. II & III by Bob Snyder pictures three others previously unknown as well as many of those shown in the Avery & Cembura book. This, of course, is pictorial proof of at least 26 in existence (28 since two of the Baroques aren't shown), but I have seen older Luxardo advertising brochures, especially from Great Britain, and at least three more exist that nobody seems to know anything about or has in his collection. That's at least 31 and I would guess that there are more. Unfortunately, Luxardo's records are not complete regarding these and we'll have to depend upon collectors for any further documentation.

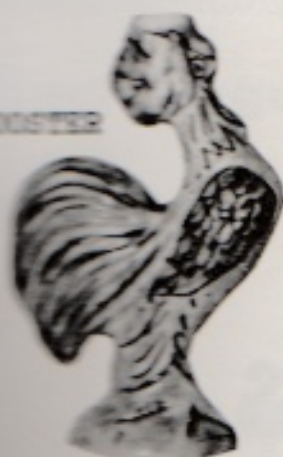
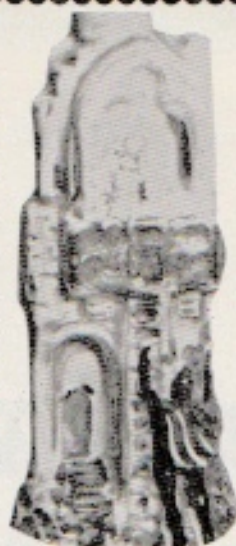
It is believed the first Luxardo figural miniature was the 1959 "Romeo & Juliet." This came in two different versions, one ivory and the other blue, orange, and black. This bottle was made for a restaurant located where the original Romeo and Juliet story took place centuries before. Due to extremely unusual circumstances (another Luxardo miniature series being produced, the restaurant changing hands, and the mold being lost or broken), only 217 (82 ivory, 135 in color) specimens were produced, making this one of the two or



Luxardo Miniatures

Top Row: Boxed Set n. 1, Boxed Set n. 2. 2nd Row: Fruit Set — Apple, Lemon, Grapes, Orange, Pear, Banana, White Topaz Majolica, Nacreous Majolica, Baroque Gold Blue Majolica, Baroque Gold Blue Pitcher, Opal Majolica, Pitcher (one of the English boxed set). 3rd Row: Gambia, Pantum, English Set of Animals — Dog, Cat, Fish, Bird on Nest, Chess Set, Venus Di Milo. 4th Row: Twist Bottle, Maraschino, Burma Ash Tray, Mosaike Ash Tray Grey, Mosaic Ash Tray Green, Turkey, Gondola 1959, Gondola 1960, Gondola 1968, Nubian, Tears of Gold.

ROOSTER

ROMEO
&
JULIETSPOTTED
CAT

three rarest miniatures in the world. Apparently 1972 was when this information first became known to collectors and this alone should be proof of its elusiveness.

Luxardo then exported (the majority going to England) and released a small issue in Italy of a set of animals containing a fish, dog, black cat, bird, duck, and rooster. Although over 5000 of each piece was produced, not one collector in the U. S. A. is known to have a full set. In fact, only one duck has been seen and not even one rooster. The original shipment to England contained an entirely different black pussycat and Mr. Luxardo has informed me that less than 30 of these were produced, making this, by production figures, rarest of all Luxardo miniatures. Two other outfits (both sold in Italy) were also produced with this set. These were a chestnut cat and a spotted cat which were identical to the black cat that was part of the set of six. Mr. Luxardo informed author Bob Snyder that only 744 black and white spotted cats and 130 of the chestnut cats were made. We've pictured the rare, rare pussycat and spotted cat, but the chestnut gem remains completely unknown to us at this time.

The magnificent turkey (1961) put out to honor our Thanksgiving holiday was not released with the animals but fits imperfectly with them and is often dis-

played as such. Less than 3000 were sold of this brightly colored beauty.

The 1959 Majolica Chess Set (King, Queen, Bishop, Knight, Castle, and Pawn) sold only in the San Francisco/Las Vegas markets (278 sets) and Italy (36 sets) is yet another set of highly regarded bottles of limited production. In this particular case, two sets of contrasting colors were planned but due to the high cost of production were canceled. The bottles are highly glazed, colored blue and black and range from the six inch king to the 4 3/4 inch pawn and castle. All the beauties in this set contained Cherry Ardo Wine.

The 1960-1961 Fruit Set consisting of a Banana, Lemon, Orange, Pear, Apple, and Grapes was sold in very small quantities in England, Italy, and the U. S. A. According to reliable figures (Bottles in Miniature, Vol. III), less than 1200 sets were produced of which 740 sets were exported here. These perfect miniature reproductions contained Cherry Ardo or La Crima D'Oro Liqueur and like every other bottle discussed here are extremely rare, much in demand, and next to impossible to obtain. This fruit set almost numbered nine instead of six but a strawberry, a fig, and a plum were turned down by Mr. Luxardo after mock-ups were presented to him.

PART TWO NEXT TIME

SCOTCH

COLLECTORS,



please take note!

about argentine mini's

by

alfredo spinelli

WHAT

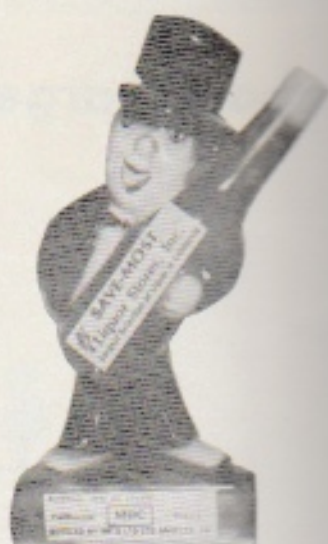
IS A

VARIETY?

Among the collectors of Argentina, the word variety is often used. It is used to designate the miniatures of the same brand and liquor which have minimal differences in the cap, label, or the bottle. Some resemblance occurs in the language when studying the corresponding seals of the same issue (edition.) These varieties are shown especially when a distillery changes its system of caps or decides to change the design of its labels. Also there are firms which, when exporting their products use the labels according to the regulations which exist in the country into which they are importing and the texts are printed in the language of the country that receives the merchandise. All this is studied and collected in Argentina and is done with all the miniatures of the world.

Among the trade-marks with more varieties are Johnnie Walker, Queen Anne, Vint 69, etc. For example, the Johnnie Walker red label comes in at least 32 different varieties. . . be it the cap or the label, all contain a difference among themselves. Some collectors think that this is crazy, but the majority want to be crazy and continue studying and looking for new varieties for their collection.

--A. S.--



M B C



MBG

by

Mary Aiken

If you'll take a good look at our new MBG Guide at the end of our article, you'll see exactly what we've got to talk about this time. The Guide has some new additions which I know you'll be interested in. But it's what the Guide doesn't tell you that we're going to talk about first.

In my first article, I mentioned that these marvelous MBG bottles were selling briskly to the general public and their appeal was by no means limited to just collectors. And, I went on to say that "you'll also know who to praise when some of your bottles start climbing in value due to their quick disappearances off the liquor store shelves." I don't think I could have been any clearer than that; however, there were still some who probably pooh-pooed the idea that a modern bottle which had been in release only a few short months could be selling out.

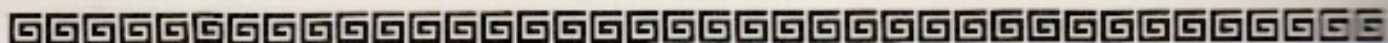
The following bottles though are to be considered extremely scarce. That means there are no more available except for those few which might be found in a rare liquor store. No more of these bottles are warehoused and no more will be made. Here's the list:

Cumrell and Hardy in the car, both Cumrell and Hardy, the 1st National Bank Banker, the P.B.R. Peddler, the set of six Western Characters, the Japanese set of four Isaias,

(and now the surprises) the Blue Stein, and the Save-Most Man. Most of these bottles could have been listed in the first issue as sell-outs but frankly I wasn't too certain and wanted to get my facts straight first before I passed on any information. I said the last two bottles were surprises because they only went into release last August. Now that's what I call a fast seller.

Now I want to turn to those new additions I mentioned at the beginning of the article. The new Slot Machine for Las Vegas which has the WOW after it is a special bottle...I was not making an editorial comment. The WOW stands for WonderWorld, a chain of discount stores in Las Vegas. This is probably the most well known of the three new bottles because the other Slot Machine bottles have been such hits with collectors. The only basic difference between this Slot and the others is the addition of the WOW decal on the top label and the color of the bottle. As on now there is only one color for the WonderWorld bottle; however, a second color may also be used. In any case, only 600 of the WonderWorld bottles are being issued.

The Hollywood Star is another new bottle for our list...but only for our list as it's not exactly a new bottle. The Hollywood Star was originally made for the sec-



ond anniversary of the Ezra Brooks Hollywood Bottle Club. A few hundred of the bottles were sold to members of this club as a memento of the anniversary; however, a large number were left unsold. For some months these empty bottles just sat gathering dust. Then Joe Kaufenberg, MBC's founder and owner, bought the remaining bottles so that they could be filled, distributed, and sold. However, there turned out to be considerably fewer bottles than had been anticipated. So the Hollywood Star has the distinction so far as being the bottle with the lowest number available. The figures I've seen show that the number of Hollywood Stars with MBC labels is well under three hundred. And that, friends, is what makes a rare bottle.

The third new bottle on our list is one which was especially made for The Wee Bottle Club International of Las Vegas. Back toward the end of last October, I saw a sketch which had been sent in by Mr. George Andon, President of the Wee Bottle Club. I'm not certain if George did the sketch or not, but it's a very cute bottle. From the sketch an initial mold was made which was then sent to Las Vegas for approval. After the approval was given, a few mold pieces were turned out to see exactly how the bottle would look. The bottle pictured for you is one of these three mold pieces.

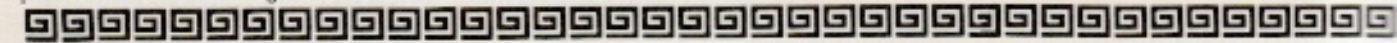
Before I tell you more about the history of the bottle and where it now stands, let me describe this mold piece for you. For those who have been wanting smaller bottles, this is right up your alley. The bottle stands a mere four inches from its round silver base to the tip of the little silver bottle which acts as the stopper. The continents are in brown with the water naturally in blue. Then on a little scroll the city of Las Vegas is pointed out by a small silver as-

terisk and the city name is also in silver. It's one I think which will definitely catch your fancy.

Back to our bottle history now. The Wee Bottle Club Globe was to be ready for the banquet which the Club gives every year in conjunction with the bottle show put on by the Southern Nevada Antique Bottle Club. This banquet is held the middle of each January but this year the energy crisis reared its ugly head and thus the banquet was canceled. As of this writing, it isn't yet known whether the Club will be selling the Globe bottle or if it will be released as a general issue through normal retail outlets. We'll just have to wait and see. One thing is certain though, you can count on this bottle being released and legitimately marketed.

For those of you who are pretty sharp, you'll have noticed that one bottle which is pictured is definitely not on our list and so far hasn't even been hinted at. This cute little lady does have a name, but you're just going to have to wait until next time to find out what. She's just in the planning stage now and no contracts have been signed. I'll be able to tell you all about her in our next issue. Until then, happy collecting!

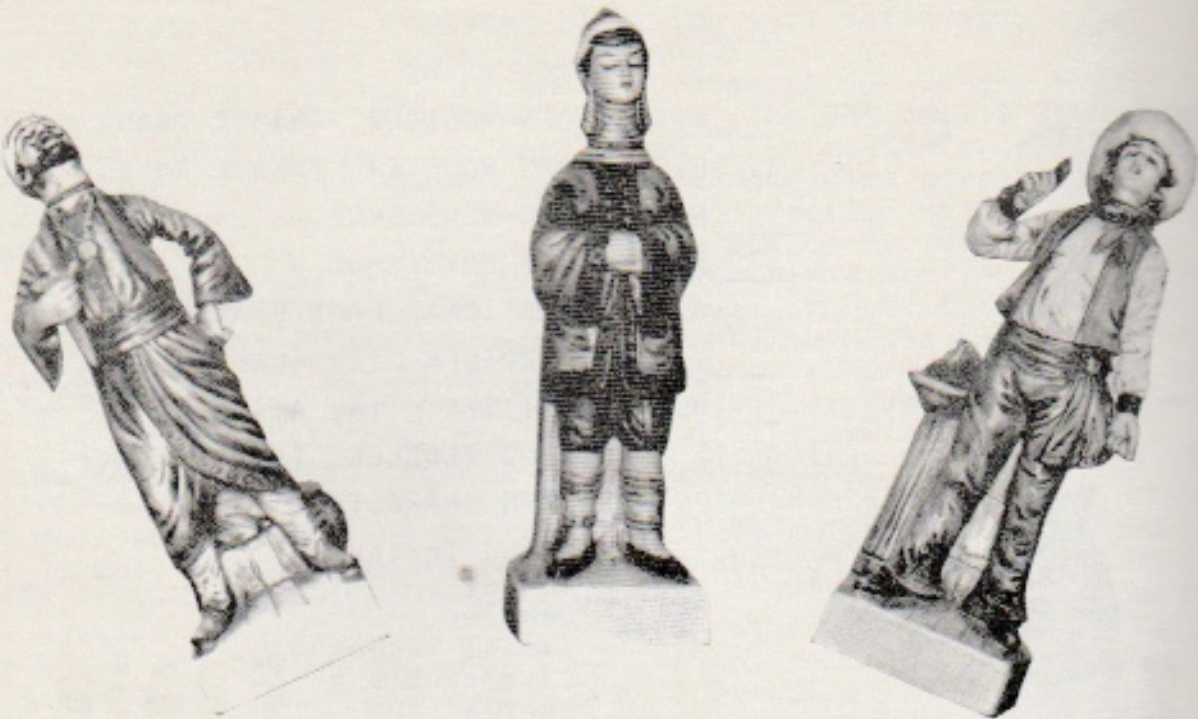
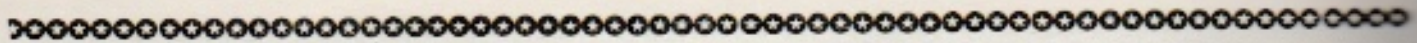
--mary a.--



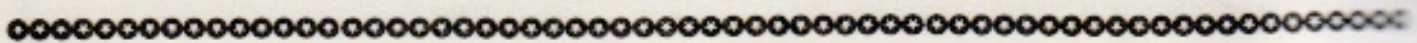
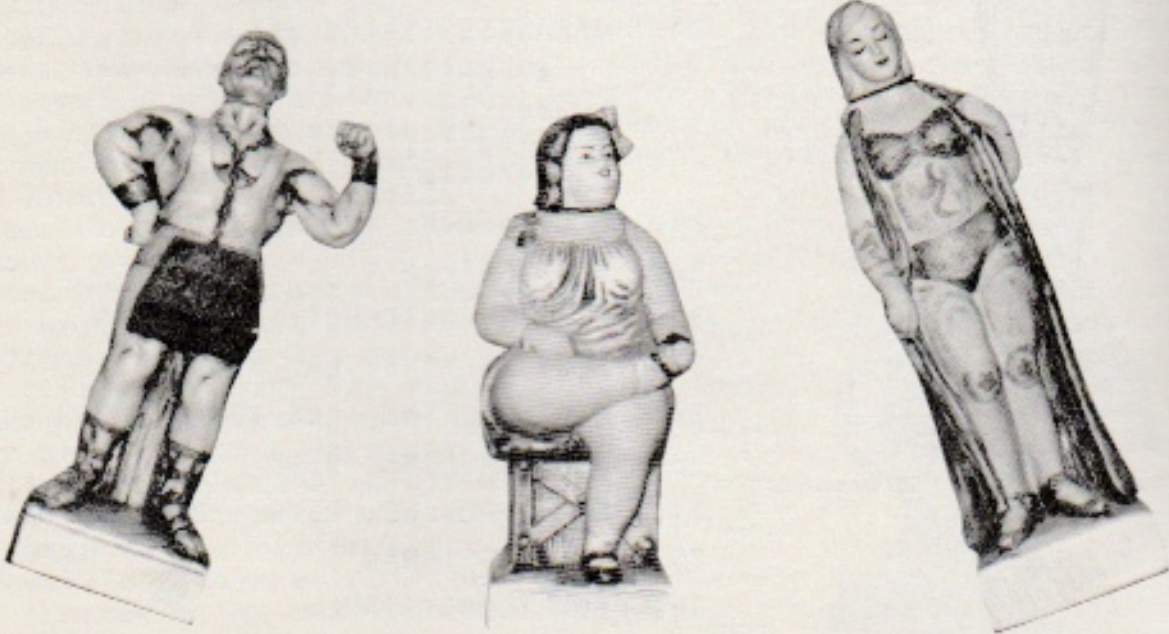
M. B. C.
guide



- ___ 1. LAUREL & HARDY IN CAR
- ___ 2. STAN LAUREL
- ___ 3. OLIVER HARDY
- ___ 4. GOLDEN ROOSTER (black base)
- ___ 5. GOLDEN ROOSTER (white base)
- ___ 6. GOLDEN HORSESHOE
- ___ 7. SILVER HORSESHOE
- ___ 8. 1ST NATIONAL BANK BANKER
- ___ 9. THE BROTHER (by Amana)
- ___ 10. THE SISTER (by Amana)
- ___ 11. ANTIQUE PEDDLER (for P.B.R.)
- ___ 12. WESTERN CHARACTERS
 - ___ Proud Indian
 - ___ Cowboy
 - ___ Gambler
 - ___ Casual Indian
 - ___ Cavalry Scout
 - ___ Sheriff
- ___ 18. BATTLE OF CONCORD SET
 - ___ Soldier #1
 - ___ Soldier #2
 - ___ Soldier #3
 - ___ Soldier #4
 - ___ Soldier #5
 - ___ Cannon
- ___ 24. JAPANESE ISAIAH SET
 - ___ Accordionist
 - ___ Beetles
 - ___ King Tut
 - ___ Mermaid
- ___ 28. BLUE STEIN
- ___ 29. BROWN STEIN
- ___ 30. SILVER HORSESHOE, LAS VEGAS
- ___ 31. SLOT MACHINE, LAS VEGAS
- ___ 32. SLOT MACHINE, LAS VEGAS - WOW
- ___ 33. SLOT MACHINE, RENO
- ___ 34. SLOT MACHINE, RENO - PAUL'S PAYLESS
- ___ 35. SAVE-MOST MAN
- ___ 36. HOLLYWOOD STAR
- ___ 37. ELMER THE CAMEL (for P.B.R.)
- ___ 38. WEE BOTTLE CLUB GLOBE



உருவச் சிற்பம்





by

David M. Spaid

Here we are with our newest column for the miniature bottle collector. That's not only our magazine, but you too. It's with a great deal of enjoyment that I sit down to write this column on what I feel are some of the most desirable ceramic figural miniatures in some time. You've naturally studied the pictures (maybe even with magnifying glass) and I'm certain that you're as enthused about these as I was when I first saw them. However, I've got one big advantage over you, I've seen the actual bottles and they are much better than my black and white photography could possibly show you. But before we get to that set of common bottles which I'm willing to bet you first saw (or maybe even heard of) in our cover, let's put them in their proper perspective by going back to show you a little history of Lionstone items and work our way up to this newest set.

Miniature Lionstones first made their appearance toward the end of 1965 and then were really launched at the Las Vegas Bottle Show in January of 1970. I'm talking of course, about

the set of six western characters that were exact miniatures of the first group of six large Lionstone bottles. At that time, the bottles themselves were not being sold, they were being given away. That's right, you read me correctly...they were being given away. The individual who was giving them away was actually selling a \$12.00 hardbound book entitled Western Figures and Decanter Masterpieces. The only gimmick was that the book hadn't been published. To get the complete set of six minis you had to order six books so that the set of Lionstone minis ended up costing you \$72.00. Many who purchased the set that way didn't really mind as they felt the book would be worth a good deal and the extra copies could either be sold to other collectors or given away as gifts. The rub was that the book was never published!

At that time a few people grumbled that Lionstone was involved with some pretty unfortunate dealings. However, nothing could be much farther from the truth. The only way Lionstone was involved was in selling these bottles to

the individual who marketed them back in the early '70's. In fact, the powers that be at Lionstone were very upset about how the bottles were marketed and didn't like the way things were handled one bit.

In any case, the sets of Lionstone miniature western characters languished because of the controversy that surrounded them. Of course, the point that bothered many collectors was that the bottles had never been filled and thus to some, the western characters weren't really legitimate. Well, no matter what you personally feel about them, I think they are a great set of minis and my set stands proudly on my shelves. I did, however, breathe a sigh of happiness when the remaining sets were filled with Bourbon and sold in Nevada this past year.

Well, 'nuf said about the western characters. Lionstone didn't release another miniature until quite some time had passed. In the early fall or late summer of last year, the straight glass bottle was issued and then at almost the same time, the first miniature Lion was released. In case you're not certain chronologically which was the first of the three mini Lions, he's the one on the far left in our picture. Those other two cute little fellers have just recently made their appearances and if initial indications are any guideline, they too will be extremely fast sellers. Incidentally, if you'd like to find out more about these clever Lions or learn more in depth about Lionstone collecting, I'd suggest that you write to: The Lionstone Bottle Collectors of America, P.O. Box 75924, Los Angeles, Ca. 90005. The Club issues a very interesting bi-monthly bulletin which is edited by Al Halpern.

Before we go on, here's a little more information about our little Lions. They arrived here in the U.S., after their sea journey from Japan, in January, were promptly filled and as I stated above are now selling quite rapidly in the states that can handle them. They, like all other ceramic Lionstone minis (so far), sell for \$8.95 retail plus tax and naturally

are filled with Lionstone Straight Bourbon Whisky. With rare exception (which we'll talk about next time), all Lionstones will sell for \$8.95.

Now we finally come to the set of Lionstone circus sideshow bottles. These should be arriving here shortly after you receive this issue of the magazine and will be available this spring. As of this writing, I'm not certain as to how the bottles will be released. Different ideas have been kicked around, the most prevalent being that the bottles would be issued in sets of three each with approximately ninety days between the release of each set. As you can imagine, with all nine bottles available at once, many collectors would be ecstatic to get the set all together; however, many others would be strapped to put out that much money all at one time. But no matter how the bottles are released, I'm certain you'll want the entire set.

Let's start first with the Barker. He's the fellow that could make the most skeptical fork over their coins. Once your money had been paid, you entered the land where seeing was believing but you still had to keep your tongue in your cheek a good deal of the time. But the Barker simply begins our cast of characters. The others that played out their little dramas on the inside of the tent and who are now captured for you in ceramic are: the Sword Swallower (note the sword in his hand and the intricate workmanship), the Snake Charmer with her python or boa wrapped about herself, our study in contrasts - the Giant with the Midget, the Fat Lady (go on, count those double chins), the Ring-Necked Oriental Woman in all her solemnity, the Fire Eater in his gaucho costume, the beautiful Tattooed Lady, and finally, the Strong Man. I think they're quite a group, how about you?

Until next time, when you'll see new intricate works even you skeptics will rave over...think Lionstone.

--DMS--



by

jeanne

fugina

Ale, Beer, Porter, Stout, Lager, Pilsener, and Bock. These are words you'll see on your miniature beer bottles. Ever wonder what they mean? Let's see if we can help. About 8000 years ago, when our ancestors first began to enjoy fermented beverages made from malt, it wasn't really beer. This ale didn't become a form of beer until someone decided to add hops (another plant) for flavor. Ale is a heavy bodied, high alcoholic content malt beverage. Porter and stout are also heavy type malt liquors resembling ale; however, porter is darker than ale and stout is darker than the porter. Porter appears to have gotten its unusual name because of its early popularity with the English porters. When someone first decided to store beer in a cool place until it was lighter, mellow and clearer, it became known as lager beer. Another difference is that ale is fermented from the top while lager is fermented by bottom fermenting yeast.

About 800 or 900 years ago some fellow in Pilsener, Czechoslovakia, came up with the recipe for a really fine lager beer and it's been known ever since as pilsener. Bock beer is just a heavier, darker type lager beer. Got that all straight? Beer genealogy is fairly complex; however, making it, we are told, is pretty simple. We might try it ourselves but can't seem to find anything but little bottles about the house. Oh, yes, just an after thought that might interest you. Lager beer wasn't introduced into our country until about 1840 (our early forefathers drank ale, porter, and stout), but now accounts for over 90% of all malt beverage sales.

Now for some bottle talk. By the way, please let us know if this is the kind of information that interests you. We aim to please.

Pictured are 8 different Rupperts, a Lang's and just because we like

them, a couple of little fellows we hope you'll enjoy. The first three Rupperts (Picture 1) and the stubby in Picture 3 are considered more common than any of the other Rupperts pictured. All four have tan and maroon labels. The one in the middle of Picture 1, if you look closely (we'll try to do better on the pictures in the future - Bob said to tell everyone he's still learning) is etched "New York 1946." These Rupperts sell for around \$3-4.

Picture 2 shows the harder to find - or at least they were for us - Rupperts. The right and left beers in Picture 2 have gold, red, blue, and white foil labels. The middle one has a gold, brown and white foil label. All are medium size and have been sold for \$6-8. The Ruppert beer shown in the middle of Picture 3 has a red, white and blue paper label and may just be a fake. We'll say something about fakes in a later article - even show you some we know are fakes. The Ruppert Brewing Company of New York was probably one of the most famous in its day possibly because Fritz Ruppert's (the founder) grandson, Jacob Jr., better known as Colonel Ruppert, was owner of the Yankees baseball team during Babe Ruth's and Baseball's heyday. Old Fritz, a native of Bavaria, bought a brewery (no one seems to remember which) in 1850. The brewery operated by his family throughout the years was sold to Rheingold Brewing Company in 1965. Rheingold, however, continued to use Ruppert and Knickerbocker labels after the sale.

Picture 3 also shows a Lang's Bohemian beer. This tall size bottle has a colorful black, red, and yellow decal label. We think it is fairly rare and would price it at \$9-10 plus. The Gerhard Lang Brewing Company of Buffalo, New York, was first opened in 1840 by Phillip Born. In 1848,

young Mr. Lang married Mr. Born's daughter and apparently got the Brewery in the bargain. The company closed in 1949.

What about our bears - like them? They are both ceramic and about five inches tall. The first, a miniature of the Hamm's bear decanter released around Christmas of 1972, is one part of a salt & pepper shaker set that has recently started to appear for sale. Prices for the set have ranged from \$4 to \$10. The second Hamm's bear is a figural piece that has not been seen too often. In fact, we haven't heard anyone else say they have one (which probably doesn't mean a thing). He's brown and tan and his sign is red and green. I've never heard of one for sale so I can't suggest a price. I know ours will never leave our collection. See you next time.

JMF



1



2

some old

some new 3



4

some rare



BOTTLEMANIA*

by AL HAAS

With the possible exception of alcoholics, no one acquires booze bottles with as much zeal as that small, intense band of otherwise rational people who collect miniature liquor bottles, principally the tenth-of-a-pints like the airlines serve.

This coterie of hobbyists (there are perhaps 1000 in a nation of 212-million) look for additions to their collections with the kind of commitment and expertise that Elliott Ness once applied to the pursuit of Al Capone and Frank Nitti. And they are probably a lot more wide-ranging.

Consider the gathering of fellow enthusiasts recently staged by industrialist William Johnston in the wilds of Montgomery County. That session, originally conceived as a modest meeting of local hobbyists, attracted a certified public accountant from Hamden, Conn. (the very womb of the Bic pen), and a real estate developer from Scarsdale, N. Y., not to mention Bob and Lynda Koby, who drove all night from Detroit, Mich., just to look at the little bottles the others brought and maybe buy a couple.

Host Johnston, a lean, graying man with high cheekbones who manufactures flints for Zippo lighters and could pass for Roy Rogers' brother by another marriage, had called the meeting of collectors in the Philadelphia vicinity to sound them out on forming a metropolitan area "bottle club." What he had in mind was a small, quiet organizational meeting.

Well. The news of the meeting traveled along the miniature bottle grapevine and pretty soon collectors from a half dozen states were homing in on Johnston's country place near Skippack in cars equipped with "I Collect Miniature Bottles" bumper stickers. Johnston found himself greeting nearly a score of collectors, many of whom had brought along portions of their collections for display, trade or sale. They proceeded to set up shop on makeshift tables -- and convert the wagon run of Johnston's barn into something resembling Saturday morning at a farmer's market. Their stands were complete with price tags and proprietors willing to part with a bottle "for what I have in it."

There was nothing much for the mildly perplexed Johnston to do but smile a lot and lead an occasional enthusiast to the little room (whose location cannot be revealed) where he keeps his collection.

Johnston began collecting the miniatures because he thought the ones he encountered on airlines were "cute."

"I thought I was starting to collect something no one else was," Johnston explains, reciting the almost universal assumption of new miniature collectors.

He began by "raiding the galleys of airlines for empties, "only to give that up when he learned from more experienced collectors that the true aficionado does not acquire an empty when a full bottle with an unbroken seal is available.

His collection, five years in the making and valued at several thousand dollars, contains 1000 conventional glass and specialty china liquor containers. It is being catalogued and is displayed in rows of narrow, glass-encased shelves that remind you of the back room of a store.

The collection and mode of display elicits a cornucopia of oohs and ahhs from Johnston's colleagues, particularly Mike Rosen, the real estate man from Scarsdale. Although he majors in vodka bottles himself, Rosen's appreciation for true art is hardly parochial.

"Your scotches are gorgeous," he bubbles.

Rosen's face darkens then, as he changes the subject to the bane of all miniature liquor bottle collectors.

"What do you do about evaporation?" he asks Johnston.

"Nothing," says Johnston, who explains he doesn't dip the bottle caps in wax, as some collectors do, because he doesn't like the appearance.

"I feel the same way," Rosen concludes.

Rosen, incidentally, is typical of many of the miniature hobbyists: he is a businessman who uses bottle collecting as a satisfying therapy after a demanding day at the office.

"I use it as an escape from the pressure of my work. I'm in the real estate and development business and this has nothing to do with the pressurized atmosphere I work in. And it's a nice way to meet people."

The thirtyish real estate man began collecting the bottles four-and-a-half years ago, when he bought 20 of them in a liquor store to decorate the shelves he had built behind a bar in his apartment. ("When I started," he smiles, "I had no idea there were other people crazy like I am.")

Today, he has a \$3000 collection of 1500 bottles, all of which are catalogued and on display.

"I specialize in vodkas," he adds. "I have over 500 vodkas. The other 1000 are things I just liked. My vodkas are from over 30 different countries. They range from 1932 -- the oldest one I've been able to date -- up to today."

Rosen, who likens his hobby to "when I was a kid collecting baseball cards," considers

himself a "purist" because he collects only glass containers. Most collectors are like Morton Dorfman, the big Hamden, Conn., CPA who likes the china miniatures as well as the glass ones.

The china miniatures, or "figurals," can be anything from depictions of birds and animals to Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis or a highly-prized Romeo and Juliet balcony scene.

Dorfman, who alternately empties cans of Budweiser beer and Yoo-Hoo chocolate drink while tending his stand, is quite proud of his balcony scene. It was made by an Italian bottle manufacturer named Luxardo, who interrupted production after only a few were made in order to fill another bottle order.

"When they came back to do the rest, they found the molds were broken," Dorfman explains, "so no more were made. There were only 82 made and I have what is believed to be the only one in the U. S. I was offered \$150 for it and turned it down."

Dorfman readily agrees with the people who call his proud possession of the balcony scene an ego trip. "Isn't that part of collecting -- to obtain a piece no one else has?"

Dorfman and his wife have a 4400-piece collection that fills a 22-by-14 room and will spill over into their son's bedroom now that he's at college. Mr. and Mrs. Koby are right behind with 3500 pieces, which they value in excess of \$10,000.

The Kobys, needless to say, are quite avid collectors.

"We came 600 miles and we'd go 1600 if we had to," declares Koby, who made the trip from Detroit for what turned out to be a three-bottle purchase.

"We drove all night to be here," his wife adds.

"He's laughing," Koby notes then, motioning at the smile of disbelief on my face. "He thinks we're crazy."

Not crazy, Mr. Koby. Just committed.

* This article is reprinted with permission of The Philadelphia Inquirer.



CHIRP!

it's me again.

by JOHN SOLSRUD

The WISCONSIN WILD-LIFE SERIES of miniatures was not dreamed up over night. We, at the Edward P. Fitzgerald Co., of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, had our first experience with "fancy bottles" with Kord importations from Czechoslovakia after World War II. Remember the fancy bottles in the shape of the horse's head (fifth, tenth and mini sizes), containing WHITE Creme de Cacao - an item until then unheard of! Then there was the Raspberry Liqueur in a bottle in the shape of a flattened out Raspberry, and the many others.

Next there were the beautiful Bischoff items - bottles from Austria, Italy, and Czechoslovakia - gorgeous bottles, many sold in sets with matching liqueur glasses. And then the Luxardo bottles with the silver overlays in the blues, purples, greens, and rubys!

Our first experience with American bottles was with the "Jupiter 60 Train" by McCormick, which

we think is a classic. (Wouldn't that be cute in miniature size.) So, as you see, we have come by our liking for beauty naturally.

In our WISCONSIN WILD-LIFE SERIES, we naturally demand that each bottle be: pretty, cute, appealing, simple, desirable, etc. - even to those who are not collectors. Someone has called that the supreme test, that is, if non-collectors like an item it has a good chance of becoming a successful collector's item. To date, everyone who has seen our Baby Robin has loved it.

Yes, this Baby Robin is the 1st in our series. We think that this is most appropriate as the Robin is the State Bird of Wisconsin and the State Flower is the Violet (and that's there too).

We plan at least 12 in the 1st series, which will include birds commonly seen in Wisconsin. It will not be entirely "baby" birds but will have some mixed in here and there. Our choice of birds will be made from the many that we used to see years ago when we were kids in Wisconsin. This series will be followed by another

Contd. on p. 28

Dennis Kowalski

Welcome, once again, to Ski Country. As most of you readers are aware by now, this column is devoted to the mini figurals designed and distributed through Foss Drug Company here in Golden, Colorado. In this issue we will be looking at some of these upcoming beauties, soon to be released.

Our first entry this month comes to us as a representative from our northern border neighbor, Canada. The Canadian Goose, also known as the Honker or Long-Necked Goose, is from the migratory class, breeding during the summer months from Mackenzie, northern Quebec; central British Columbia south to the more northern regions of the United States. As winter approaches, these geese will migrate south and can be found wintering from the southern portion of British Columbia to as far south as Mexico or Florida. The geese have been received, filled with Ski Country Bourbon, and are presently available.

Next on the program is a figural that once again is a side step from the bird series that Foss has released over this past year. The Burro, since the 1800's, has always been related with the mining trade and the old west. Our little mini friend has a special meaning in that he is the symbolic mascot for the Colorado School of Mines located in Golden, Colorado, and his release, scheduled for right about now, is in honor of the School's 100 year centennial celebration. As you will note, there is draped over the Burro's back a cloth with the letter "M" on it, which is the School's emblem.

My third figural this month is the Dove, more commonly known over the years as the Peace or Turtle



SKI
COUNTRY

Dove. Being of the migratory class, the Dove breeds during the summer months throughout the midwest, eastern and southern regions of the United States; wintering in the southern areas and as far south as Panama. Also scheduled for release by now, this peaceful winged creature has a special meaning around the Foss Company in that it was designed by Mrs. Foss herself and will surely be a welcomed addition to the continuing bird series collection.

From the beginning of literature, the Fox (my fourth subject) has been considered the craftiest of all the inhabitants of the animal kingdom. Having no more weight nor strength that a big house cat, the Fox makes up in cleverness. The legendary Fox that tolled the pack of hounds onto the railroad trestle and under the wheels of a speeding train may have been real; but he did it by a lucky chance and not by studied observation of the railroad's schedule. Fifty percent of the common Fox's diet consists of cottontails or snowshoe hares, more worldly known as rabbits. I bring up the Rabbit at this time because he will also be a featured species captured in porcelain along with the Fox. Foss really went all out on the design of this figural in that the Fox will be sitting on a hollow log and in the log will be our little Peter Rabbit hiding from the Fox. We can look forward to a release date on this creative mini sometime in March.

Getting back to the wonderful world of birds, I will now present you with a real rarity. This odd fellow is known as the Harpy Eagle (more formerly called "Harpyia Harpyia") and is found only in the jungled forests of South A-

merica. Why I say "rare" is because of Harpies habitat being the jungles of South America, Ornithologists and Naturalists, alike, have had great difficulty in the study of his solitary life styles. Being from the predatory class, he is considered one of the largest in his species, and although he sports broad wings and a long tail, it is believed he is capable of uncanny twists in and out of branches. As one can tell, my research into Harpy has brought me practically zilch in the way of information. The Harpy Eagle currently has a release date around the end of March or early April of this year.

My final subject this month is the American Osprey, also known as the Fish Hawk. Being related to the Eagle/Hawk family, he is unique in that he hunts strictly small aquatic animals, primarily surface fish, with an occasional frog or water snake. The Osprey will be found during the summer months along the west coast, as far north as Alaska and along the east coast. The winter grounds are generally the Florida Keys, Gulf States to the West Indies, and Central America. Once again, Foss has done an outstanding job in designing the Osprey, showing the bird in flight above the waterline with a fish in his claws. The Osprey is slated for an April release date.

I have presented these six minis in scheduled order of release, but due to the way manufacturing production and import red tape is these days, you should not be surprised if one mini is available earlier than another or that release is later than stated.

In upcoming issues: The Horned Owl, Kangaroo, Bonnie and Clyde, Indians, Flapper Girl, Circus Animals, and some inside info as to how a mini gets from the idea stage to the real thing. In the meantime, happy hunting.

--Dennis Kowalski--



S K I C O U N T R Y

Collector's Guide

- 1. MAJESTIC EAGLE
- 2. SNOWY OWL
- 3. PEACOCK
- 4. GILA WOODPECKER
- 5. RED SHOULDERED HAWK
- 6. RAM
- 7. BABY DOE TABOR
- 8. MOLLY BROWN
- 9. CALIFORNIA CONDOR
- 10. GOLDEN EAGLE
- 11. MALLARD DUCK
- 12. PEACE DOVE
- 13. CANADIAN GOOSE
- 14. MOUNTAIN LION
- 15. FOX ON A LOG
- 16. HARPY EAGLE
- 17. ELEPHANT ON A DRUM
- 18. COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES
BURRO
- 19. AUSTRALIAN BLACK SWAN
- 20. OSPREY
- 21. CIGAR STORE INDIAN
- 22. OREGON CAVE MAN
- 23. TOM THUMB(?)



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CHIP'S TALK: Contd.

Club, and we are the only mini bottle club in all of Canada. The yearly dues are \$2.00 for membership and a newsletter is sent to each member each month. The Club President is Miss Jean Twigger; Secretary-Treasurer is Mrs. Norma McLennan; and publicity chairman is Mrs. Dora Sievenright. All are of North Vancouver. At each meeting there is an all membership raffle draw for minis which gives all out of town members a chance of winning.

We have as a new member, Mr. Frank Terry, owner and director of Potter's Distillery. At our last meeting, the members were well rewarded for their time and effort. Mr. Terry brought along the latest bottle to be released by Potter's in the large size. The new Potter's bottles are of superior craftsmanship and are very eye-appealing. Both the regular size and the miniatures to accompany them will be a must for every bottle collector. Yes, there is going to be a miniature release by Potter's of every one of their regular size bottles. The mini Totem Poles have not been released as of yet, but will be very shortly. The club executives have convinced Mr. Terry that these minis should be released filled with liquor and he has accepted the idea.

The new ceramic figural regular size and miniatures that are to be released early in 1974 are the Coyote and the Canadian Goose. These two are in addition to Potter's Pioneer bottle which is being sold in the province of Alberta at the present time.

So as you can easily see, the situation in Canada is well in hand and collectors up there (and down here) have a great deal to look forward to. I don't know about you, but I'm getting ready to do a little International swapping. Until next time... --DMS--

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CHIRP! WATCH THE BIRDIE: Contd.

which will include other forms of Wisconsin wild-life. Announcement of it will be made at a later date. But for now, we are proud to present a little fellow, very dear to our hearts, our Baby Robin.

His overall height is 4 3/8" and by his expression he seems to want to tell us something. Could he be saying, "If you think I'm kinda nice, wait 'til you see the rest of us Wisconsin Wild-Lifers." We invite you to begin collecting this series and watch it grow in beauty with each successive item. Each one is a limited edition of 2400 pieces and each bottle is numbered from 0001 of 2400 through 2400 of 2400. Bottles are now being filled with McCormick Straight Whiskey and of the 2400, 1000 will be offered for sale in Wisconsin. That leaves 1400 for sale to collectors everywhere. This seems to be truly a very limited edition.

Please see the ads elsewhere in the magazine for price and delivery information.

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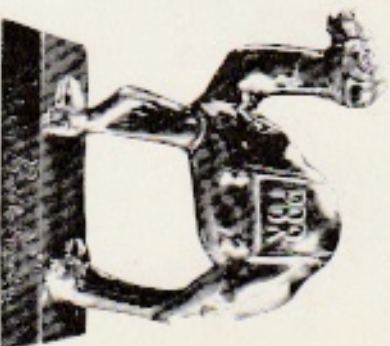
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