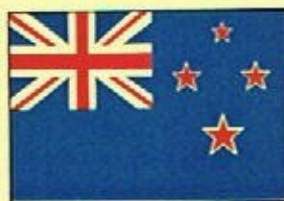


Issue 71

Winter 2005



MINIIZ

THE NEWSLETTER OF PORT NICHOLSON MINIATURE BOTTLE CLUB



Australasia's only Miniature Bottle Club

Cover and New New Zealand

Here we go again.



We start off with a bottle that has been around for close to two years but that I have been unable to get or get a picture of. Old Busman claims to be pot-stilled by Bourbon NZ Limited. I do not know whether that means it is bourbon, or whether a bourbon substitute made in NZ. We do know that it was bottled in Levin, although the company does not appear in the telephone book. Some of you may not want this as it is 100ml at 40%. The second Old Busman, on the left, is new out and we have Erica Mulder to thank for persuading them to make a 50ml version.



Opal Nera is a bottle I found in my mini bar in a hotel in Palmerston North. I have had the big bottle for a number of years and very tasty it is too. The mini is 50ml, 30% and was imported by New Zealand Wines and Spirits Ltd of Newmarket, Auckland. Coruba Rum and Chatelle Napoleon Brandy are variations I have not shown you before – again these came from my mini bar.

have turned up. My thanks to Erica for these and for the four cover bottles.

The cover bottles largely speak for themselves. The first three are from Southern Grain Distillers, the fourth a further variation of 42 Below Vodka, this time Kiwi.

Erica can get the Old Busman and Southern Grain Distiller bottles for you. Note that her email address MUST be all lower case, erica.mulder@paradise.net.nz



David Smith

AGM & WEEKEND

I reported briefly on the AGM Weekend in the last miNiZ but since then Pam Fowler has sent me some photos so I thought that I would share a few with you.



We had two barbecues, Friday night at mine and Rosie's place and Sunday lunchtime at Colin and Dianne's house. Here you see President Colin doing what he does best – when he isn't in and out of prison of course!



Many of us went for dinner Saturday night at Mungavan Homestead. The first picture shows (L to R) Malee Chin, Jeffrey Chin, Rosie Bailey, Dianne Ryder, Marj Lynch, Robin Mellish, Rex and anonymous people with bad haircuts, otherwise known as those in the next photograph, Jess Mellish, Ken Chin, Garret Chin, Colin Ryder and Doug Lynch.



On the left we have your venerable editor and her-indoors-that-must-be-obeyed. The final photo was insisted on by Pam.



MR LUCKY SERIES 4

With three successful Mr. Lucky Series behind them, Hoffman did not produce any new Mr. Lucky mini Leprechaun decanters in 1977. They were busy making plans and new designs for a fourth series.

In 1978 Hoffman Original's introduced a new fourth Mr. Lucky series with the release of the Mr. Plumber mini decanter. Again, 6 bottles were done in both the miniature and full size decanters. By now the characters were beginning to look a little less like leprechauns. As with the third series, the chipmunks were quite actively depicted in the bottle designs.

The Mr. Plumber decanter consisted of 1500 bottles, and shows a plumber looking at the little chipmunk. Next came the Mr. Electrician mini decanter. 1600 of these mini bottles were made showing the chipmunk on a stool helping the electrician with a tool.

In 1979 Hoffman Originals issued the Mr. Carpenter mini decanter as the 3rd bottle in this series. 2000 of these decanters were produced showing a carpenter working on a house and the chipmunk holding his toolbox. Next is the Mr. Mechanic mini decanter. 1500 of these mini decanters were made depicting a leprechaun working on a wagon. Inside the red wagon is our friendly chipmunk holding a wrench for the mechanic.

Later in the year, the Mr. Butcher mini decanter bottle was released. Just 1500 mini decanters were produced showing the chipmunk eating a link of sausage. Finally, Mr. Tailor was the last of the Fourth series of mini decanters. 2000 of these mini bottles were produced showing the chipmunk holding on to a scissors for the Tailor.

The next miNIZ will cover the Hoffman Original Mr. Lucky Series 5 mini leprechaun decanters.



Reprinted from Gulliver's Gazette the newsletter of the Lilliputian Mini Bottle Club

Jim Crawford

AS SEEN ON EBAY #10

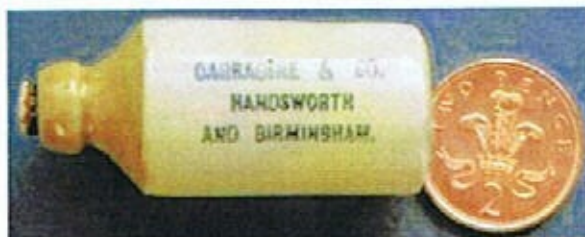


I start this time with three jugs that did not quite fit in with my American Jugs on Ebay article elsewhere in miNiZ.

Alta California Port is a pale blue jug about 95mm (3.75" high). It contains port wine made in



1935 so probably dates from 1936/7. As you can see the labels are in excellent condition. It sold for only US\$6. Next is another miniature stoneware port jug, this time from Meier's of Silverton, Ohio. It is dark green, about 95mm (3.75") tall and has the original porcelain cork intact on top and a 1934 Illinois tax stamp on the left side of the front label. It sold for US\$16.59. Finally we have Lushus California Non-alcoholic Blackberry Cordial bottled by Miniature Jugs of California. It is pale green and also about 95mm high and was made in the 1930's. It sold for US\$5.



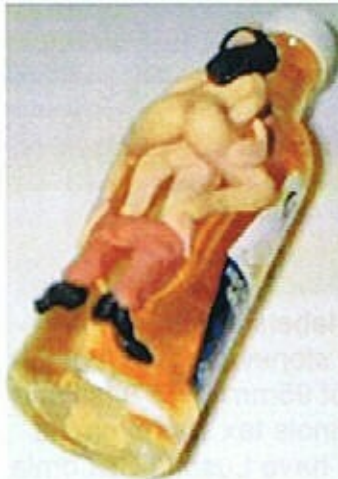
This little ginger beer bottle is a real gem. The seller has shown it with a British 2p piece to emphasise how small it really is. Not surprisingly bidding was vigorous with the final bid being £313.99 – over NZ\$800!

Whilst on the subject of bottles that fetch a high price feast your eyes on the Bols bottle on the right. This is Marianne, the figural representation of France and is part of a set of three issued in a limited edition of less than 1,000 in 1961-65. The other two in the set were John Bull for Great Britain and Uncle Sam for the USA. These bottles were only sold in the Dutch territories in the Caribbean and two tourist orientated Cities back home.

About 12 years ago I was on a business trip to Sydney and phoned up one of our members to say hello. He told me of a collection that was for sale in the western Sydney suburb of Rooty Hill, so naturally I had to go and see it. The lounge and dining rooms floors were awash with bottles, both straights and hundreds of figurals. The cost was A\$4 per straight



and A\$10 per figural. Unfortunately there is only so much you can carry on the plane and as I was flying out that evening there was no time to pack up boxes. I bought a couple of dozen figurals that I had not seen before, including Marianne and her two friends, but I could have bought at least a couple of hundred. All were full and all in perfect condition. Marianne is empty and a little crazed (aren't all the French?) but still sold for US\$111.11. A few days later a perfect specimen sold for US\$279.33



This Corona beer mini came from Cancun in Mexico. As you can see it has two moulded figures of adults fornicating on the side of the bottle. I saw a number of similar bottles to this whilst in Tiuana last year. There are also a few rude bottles from other countries, notably Germany. Rude bottles would probably make an interesting 'side' collection or even a complete collection for someone with little space to display. This one sold for £2.26



Riding a gondola along the canals of Venice is meant to be romantic, although I don't think the locals would be too happy if you got as carried away as the Corona couple. The Gondola is from Luxardo of Italy and there are at least three versions of it. It sold for US\$3.99 The Borghini penguin is also from Italy and was sold by the same seller as the gondola for the same price.



The bottle on the right is Corazon Blaco Tequila, 100% agave, 50ml. The small picture does not do this bottle justice. There was a large picture on Ebay and so I expected it to fetch far more than the US\$5.74 which it sold for (see later in article).



The VW is by Weisenbach Kappelrodeck of East Germany and contains 50ml

of German brandy. Other than that the only thing I can tell you is that I failed to buy it and it sold for US\$14.59. I'm still waiting for the paper mache Trabant mini!



The set of 5 ceramic books shown above contain pisco (as is obvious by the second picture) and were made by Sotelo of Peru. Each book measures 9.0 x 6.0 x 2.5cm (3.5" x 2.4" x 1.0") and is white with real gold trim. The designs depict original tapestries created by the ancient (pre-Inca) "Paracas" civilization. The set includes the wood stand. It sold for US\$127.57 – more minis I failed to buy!



The J H Cutter Old Whiskies bottle on the right unscrews to reveal a corkscrew and dates from around 1900. There are dozens of these with different names on. Some are relatively common, such as Dewar's and Anhauser Busch and sell for US\$40 to US\$60. This is evidently a rarer one as it sold for US\$190.



There are probably several thousand 'personalised' Jim Beam minis and at left is one of the ones bottled especially for one of the clubs. It sold for US\$5.99

I don't think that I have ever seen a bottle get 21 bids before but that is how the bidding went for the Coon Hollow bottle shown on the right. There are a number of versions of this bottle and evidently this must be one of the more uncommon ones as it sold for US\$26.09



One Special Scotch, Souvenir of Vancouver, Canada is a porcelain bottle which shows the arms of Vancouver. It failed to sell for a minimum bid of US\$9.99. The seller failed to say that this is Aynsley China and, as such, is very collectable by Aynsley souvenir collectors. There are a number of different designs, quite how many I don't know but I have bottles from Canada, Fort William, Windsor, Gretna Green and, of course, Vancouver, which is why I did not

bid on this one. I saw one of these (Windsor) for sale in a UK antique shop in 1999 priced (over priced) at £120!



On the right we have an example of another one of the bottles that I bought for A\$10 in Rooty Hill. It is an Egyptian Priestess that was made by Marmaca pottery and filled with Lacrima Christi by Casa Vinicola Boccaccio (mine is filled with wine). It sold for US\$41



From a pagan priestess we go, somewhat appropriately, to the Devil. This German bottle represents the Fire Devil. It is unlabeled but was made by Michael Treusch Spezialitäten of Germany and contained 50ml of liqueur. It sold for US\$7.51

I wrote an article about the next bottle in Issue 60. It was made by Famous Firsts in 1972 and contains 1/10th pint of brandy sauce. I liked Winnie Mae (the aircraft not the person



whom, of course, I never met) from the first time I set eyes on it in Robin Mellish's collection. There are only two things I don't like about it. Firstly the size. At 190mm (7.5") long by 254mm (10") wide it is one of the largest minis ever made. Secondly it is a difficult mini to display as it is best seen from the top. Notwithstanding my objections I was a keen bidder. It sold for US\$32.09

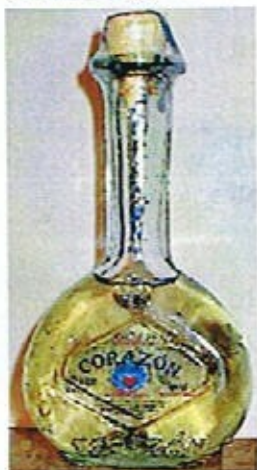


It is probably almost a waste of a photo to show you the miniature black glass Roses cordial bottle but this is an extremely rare mini so I hope you can make something out. It is embossed with leaves and the maker's name, L. Rose & Co. It dates from the 1800's and is about 125mm (just short of 5") tall. I saw a bottle like this for sale in Sanson about 8 or 10 years ago. At that time they wanted \$120, which seemed high but the main buyers would be antique bottle collectors and they pay some crazy prices. The bottle pictured could be the same one as the seller came from Auckland. It went for US\$123 after spirited bidding.

The Kronen bier is a lighter from the 1950 (not the 1930/40's as the seller stated). I have quite a collection



of these lighter bottles now and was happy to buy this at £13.



The 2oz ceramic bottle on the right is from Montagues, the same Montagues that brought us the 'Modern Bottle Identification and Price Guide'. A publication that is sadly missed. Old copies still fetch good money, which is more than you can say for the bottle. This went for a minimum bid of US\$5

Earlier on I showed you Corazon Blaco Tequila. For some reason which escapes me that sold for less than a quarter of the same bottle shown here with Corazon Reposado Tequila in it. This fetched US\$22.50



The two Gilbey's Jamaica Rums on the right have lead covered cork tops and bright colourful labels. I would have expected them to sell for more than £3.35. By the way, the one on the left is Demerara and the one on the right is Governor General.

If you think the Guinness bottle looks fairly much like any other mini Guinness bottle you would be right – except for one thing. The neck label reads Kate Kearney's Cottage, Killarney. Some of these 'special' Guinness are like hens teeth to find. This one sold for £13.50



The Haller's County Fair Bourbon was made in the USA, sold in Asia and on-sold on Ebay from Australia. Truly we have an international hobby. The bottle is only 30ml, which is unusual but the covered wagon makes this a real gem. These figural display stands are popular in many parts of East Asia so this could have originally been bought in any of a dozen countries. It sold for A\$20.50

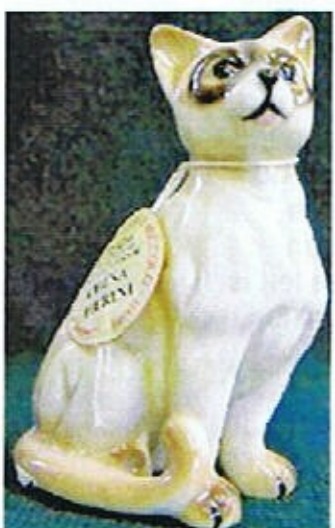
I must apologise for the picture quality of the 150mm (6") tall bronze J R Ewing bottle from McCormick (on next page). I had to show you

this as it is a sample bottle and only two were made in this colour. They had a



base for a music box but this was not fitted, neither were they filled. I expected this to go sky high and yet it failed to attract a minimum bid of US\$189.99

Unfortunately we have, on the left, yet another example of an unusual mini that failed to sell. This dog holding a blue vase is from Luxado and failed to even get a minimum bid of £4.99 – twice! Have you noticed that I am increasingly showing you bottles being sold in pounds sterling? Obviously Ebay has taken off in the UK in the last few months.



From a dog we go to a cat, and finally we have a bottle that did sell, for US\$9.95 in fact. It was filled in Italy with 20cc of 30 proof China Pierni by a company with the long winded name of Toscoliquoristica Il Niccolo.

The Give-away on the right is a Japanese, probably from the 1930's. It was given away in Canada. How do I know that? You can't read it on the photo but on the front it says "I'm Full of

Canadian Spirit." It would probably be politically incorrect to feature a fat lady (can I even say that?) on a bottle now. Price was US\$13.51



We finish with another real gem. The bottle of the boy riding a turtle (probably also politically incorrect now – it would get the greenies up in arms) and carrying a pineapple on his back was bought in Hawaii in the 1970's. The maker is unknown as the label is all in Asian characters (which means it may have been an import into Hawaii, although Hawaii does have a large population of Asian origin). It sold for US\$18.05

I was going to end this article here but there have been so many good bottles for sale on Ebay lately that I have decided to show you more of them on the next couple of pages.



In 1977 Lionstone made a series of Mother & Baby Safari mini Decanters, three of which are shown here. Hippos, Rhinos and Ostriches need no introduction. I'm sure that the seller was disappointed that each of them sold, to the same buyer, for the minimum asking bid of US\$15.99. By coincidence another seller was selling Lionstone's Elephant & baby mini Decanter at the same time. This failed to elicit a minimum asking bid of US\$9.99



The three bottles on the right are glass but are meant to look like tree trunks. They have been covered in plaster and have little pieces of wood attached to look like sawn off branches. The seller wanted at least US\$11.99 but nobody was prepared to pay that.

The pisco bottle on the right is such an unusual bottle that I felt sure that it would sell, despite the US\$15.99 minimum asking bid. Unfortunately it didn't. The bottle is ceramic and has been hand painted. It represents an old polychrome ceramic of the ancient Paracas



culture in Peru and contains 50ml of Macchu Pichu pisco, a Peruvian brandy. According to the seller it was sold only in Peru.

A number of companies have made sets of birds and dogs and these two are from sets by Collectors Art. For reasons that escape me Collectors Art bottles tend not to be well sort after.



The Goldfinch was issued in 1972 and is #0511 of a limited edition of 1200. It went for the minimum asking bid of US\$5. The Schnauzer dates from 1976 and was also a limited edition but I do not know of how many. There was a little interest in this. There were four bids and it sold for US\$8.39

I seem to have been neglecting the Scotch collectors in this article so on the right are two for you and below are two more. Dawson's Old Curio Brand, 12 year old sold for a single bid of US\$9.99. I wonder if the red wax is original? I certainly does not look it and this may have put some bidders off. The much newer Black Bottle (probably 1970's) was blended and bottled by Gordon Graham (Aberdeen) Ltd. It attracted more interest but still only sold for £5.50. Below to the left we have Very Fine Old Craig Athol in very fine condition, although substantially evaporated. It sold for US\$9.99 with only one bid.



Finally we have a real gem, one to make local members Ken and Gary drool. Crystal Teachers Scotch Whisky was bottled by M B (UK) Ltd. The bottle is Pasabahce crystal from Turkey. I would have expected it to sell for considerably more than US\$12.50 and I would certainly have expected more than 2 bids.

Once again, I hope you enjoyed seeing some lesser known minis.

David Smith



SNOWSHOE THOMPSON



Cyrus Noble made a miniature of Snowshoe Thompson in 1975 and I have often wondered who he was. I found his story on the internet.

Nothing could stop Snowshoe Thompson. No blizzard was severe enough, no amount of cold frigid enough to make him call it quits. He was the only man to regularly carry the mail between the eastern flank of the Sierra Nevada and the foothill mining communities of California from 1856 to 1876, the year he died.

Until he applied for the job, the mining towns had been cut off from the rest of the world during the winter. This was hard on men who had been separated from their families for many months, even years. Urgent messages, important business correspondence and news could not reach them until the snow-clogged mountain passes thawed in late spring. By then it was often too late.

John Thompson was born in the town of Tinn in Norway in 1827. He immigrated to the United States in 1837. He tried his luck in the gold fields of California and then as a rancher in the Sacramento Valley, but he couldn't stop gazing up at the

mountains from his homestead in the flatlands. He had to find a way to live up in the mountains for which he yearned.

In January of 1856, Thompson noticed an ad in the Sacramento Union, which read: "People lost to the world. Uncle Sam needs mail carrier." Struck by a bolt of inspiration, Thompson carved a pair of primitive but cumbersome oak skis, each weighing over 12 pounds. His first test took place in Placerville, witnessed by a group of puzzled, disbelieving miners. One warned, "You'll wind up knocking your brains out against a tree." Unfazed, he glided through the forest and slid down the hill, becoming California's pioneer skier.

Impressing the miners was one thing, overcoming the postmaster's scepticism would be something else. His enthusiasm and confidence were lost on his prospective employer, who took one look at Thompson's equipment and shook his head. "Even men with mule teams fail to make the trip over the Sierra in the dead of winter. We found some frozen to death." But the postmaster had a problem in that no one else wanted the job. He had little choice but to hire the grinning Thompson.

The new mail carrier was quickly nicknamed Snowshoe. He had to cover 25 to 40 miles a day to keep his delivery on schedule. This meant skiing through any weather and all conditions, day and night, when the bitter cold kept the snow firmer and easier to negotiate. Because his mail sack was so heavy, he travelled with only a few crackers, some bread and dried meat. For water he ate snow and drank from icy streams. His timetable was so tight he ate while skiing.

The only concession he made to the winter was a heavy Mackinaw. Blankets and coats were simply too bulky. He depended, instead, on his exertion to keep him warm. When exhaustion overcame him in the night, he would hastily pitch camp, using a pine stump for a stove. He would make a bed out of fir boughs, plant his feet toward the fire, prop his head against the mailbag and go to sleep with the stars overhead and the lullaby of the wind in the trees.

It's something of a minor miracle that Snowshoe found his way across a constantly changing, snowy landscape. Landmarks were often obliterated by the heavy winter weather, and he carried no maps or compass. Nevertheless, at the end of his long career, Thompson claimed, "I was never lost. I can't be lost."



MANCHESTER UNITED

This set of 12 ceramic whisky miniature decanters were issued to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of Manchester United's 1968 European Cup Win. The first English club ever to win the European Cup. They are 3.5 inches tall. On the front of each is a picture of one of the 12 players (including the substitute), many of whom were a legend in their own time. On the back is the Manchester United Crest with the words 'Twenty Fifth Anniversary European Champions Cup Winners 1968'.

The club sold recently for about £2 Billion to an American billionaire. You don't need quite so much to buy this set. They were for sale individually on Ebay and sold for between £8.90 and £21.50 each



Top Row:
Middle Row:
Bottom Row:

John Aston, George Best, Shay Brennan, Bobby Charlton
Pat Crerand, Tony Dunne, Bill Faulkes, Brian Kidd
Dennis Law, David Sadler, Alex Stepney, Nobby Styles

David Smith



Mini's On The Net

An occasional series by Errol Brassett looking at miniature bottle related sites on the World Wide Web

As a few of you may know, I collect three things, miniature bottles, decanters and owls. Occasionally, the three collide, e.g. the various Ski Country owls available in both miniature and 'full sized' decanters. It seems that I am not the only one to have fallen prey (a little raptor humour there) to this particular combination of collecting interests.

The site I have chosen for this issue concentrates on two (or at least a major subsection of one and the whole of another) of the three areas given above but due to the nature of the items in question is not stinting on the third either. Ski Country, Droz, Forcoll, MAB, blown glass . . . so many crossovers.

The Site

<http://www.figuralminibottles.com/> is a MASSIVE site operated and kept well up to date by Carlos Lopez, a Spanish collector whose picture (together with a small part of his collection) appears on the homepage.

Ever the one to help out his fellow collectors, 'Carlopetto' is currently working on "Search by Type" a section of his site intended to enable the identification of those 'mystery' bottles without labels that we all get from time to time by searching on shape and characteristics. This section will of course be dependant on the information in the database behind the scenes but based on the content of his site, I feel sure that Carlos will be able to solve at least some of these mysteries.

For the most part, Carlos's collection and therefore the content of his site consists of figurals or ceramic minis, hence its masthead as shown below;



Clearly a labour of love, the site is kept consistently up to date and has regularly changing features to maintain visitor interest.

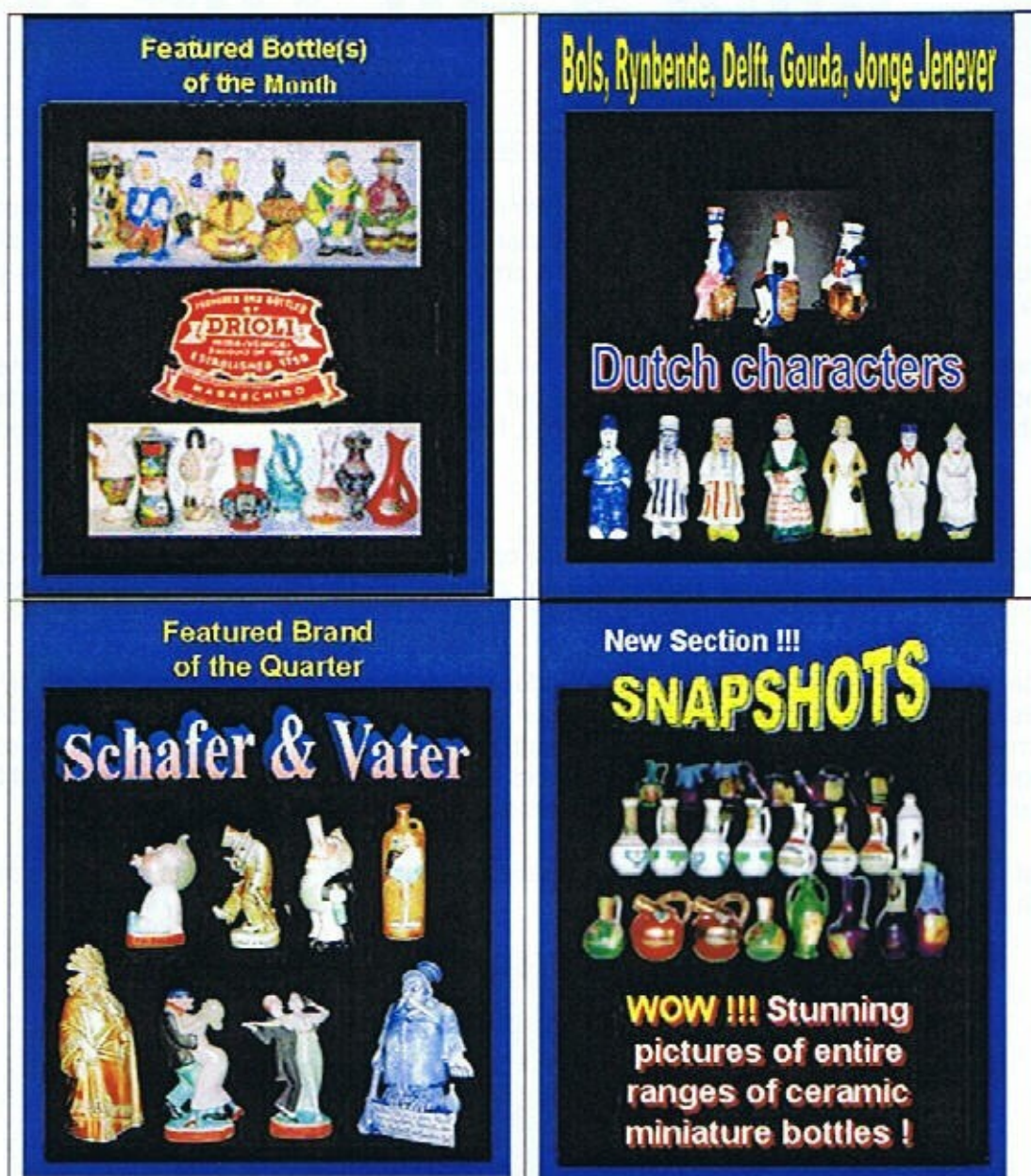
A sub site deals with Carlos's collection of Owls, but we will come to that later!

Home Page

The opening page of the site is well constructed, if a little busy, with considerable graphic content and use of eye-catching effects. The page loads reasonably quickly and gross site navigation is clearly set out on a consistent button bar. Direct access to features and the like is provided through 'hot linked' graphics.

At the time of final editing of this piece, the homepage was current as at June 2nd and amongst other things had features on Drioli and its look-alike 'cousins'. A new 'snapshot' section was also highlighted.

The structure of the site did not allow me to take a usable 'snapshot' of the opening page in its entirety but the excerpts shown below give some indication of the content and presentation.



Other links off the home page lead to sections dedicated to British Ceramic Mini's (McLech & Moorland) and to "Cool" brands (Rynebende, Luxardo, Cucci and Lancome). A featured area at the time of editing was the "Drioli Cousins", ceramics that have the appearance of Drioli and share its origins but which are not Drioli.

The Navigation Bar

The "Nav Bar" is in itself a goldmine of information going beyond the usual links through to graphics of Carlos's own collection, bottles he has for trade and those he wants.

For those who wonder if they are alone in the world as miniature bottle collectors there is a section of the site filled with photographs of fellow collectors and their collections organized by location and specialty and which includes one or two who will be reading this piece. New Zealand is not represented specifically and I'm sure Carlos would appreciate relevant pictures to 'correct' this oversight.

Another 'dangerous' hidden goldmine is the Links page, which provides a brief description of each linked site together with in many cases a picture of the owner of the site and of part of their collection. This

page shows just how much the Internet has become used by collectors to showcase their hobby and is a very easy to while away a wet afternoon.

Light relief is provided by a collection of caricatures of Carlos and by cartoons gleaned from and on the subject of e-Bay (including a few regarding mini collectors activities on it – No David you are not featured).

A contact invitation, a guest book and a link to pages containing previous feature items round out the Nav bar.

Features

There is so much to this site that it was difficult to pick one area to highlight so I was guided by Carlos himself and delved into his feature on pretenders to the Drioli crown.

The lead in goes like this **"The Drioli "cousins" These nice Italian miniature ceramic liqueur bottles look like Drioli. Sometimes they used the same containers, sometimes they commissioned their bottles from the same ceramic factory (e.g. Marmaca in San Marino), but in general the colorful, glazed ceramic finish is the same. A good addition to your Drioli collection, as long as you recognize the different brand."**

The scene having been set, a series of thumbnail pictures (shown below) take you through to graphics of each set. The photography is extremely well done and the presentation allows detailed examination of the individual pieces.

CASA VINICOLA BOCCACCIO (Barsottini)



Flicker



Snow White & 7 Dwarves



Original set of 12



Egyptian



Miscellaneous

BRAMS



GAGLIANO



LUXARDO



BORGHINI



With the Lions currently touring New Zealand it seems appropriate to sneak a peek at Carlos's new section on British ceramics as well. The same general structure is used.

McLech and Kindness

The Signature




A few labels



Real West Country



Bullfighter



Orlando Cherry Brandy



Clan Tartan



Cries of London



Scotch Whisky

McLech, Orlando Cherry Brandy, Bullfighter, Cries of London, British Sherry, Real West Country, Clan Tartan, Kindness

Click on either one below to see several minis in that category



Mini flasks



mini flasks-maps



Mini round flasks



mini flat urns



Mini "teardrop" flasks



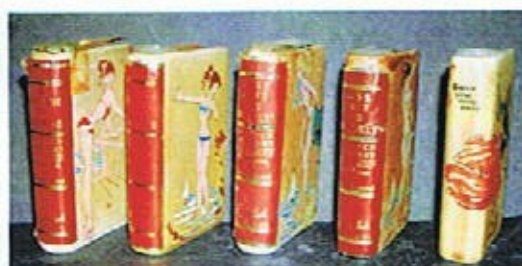
mini "leave" flasks



Mini "bowling pin" flasks



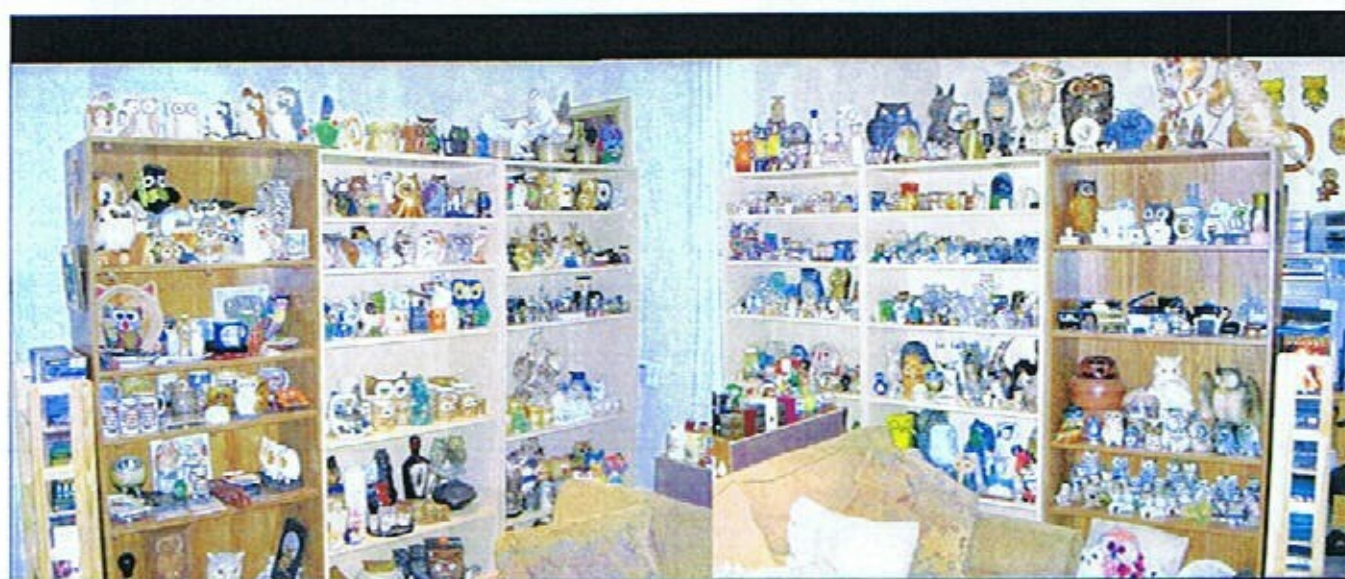
"Ye Olde Pub Handle"



Mini books

The Owls

I said I would get back to them, so here is a picture from the Owl section of the site – spot the minis. Carlos has over 1,800 owls of various descriptions in addition to his bottle collection.



Overall Impression

Impressive, very impressive. Well worth a regular visit.

Next time round, Jim Beam sites

Enjoy

Enrol

August 14 th	SI	2.00pm	David Fretwell's, 61 Port Hills Road, Heathcote, Christchurch
August 21 st		12.30pm	Pot Luck Lunch, Colin Ryder's, 20 Prospect Terrace, Johnsonville
October 16 th	SI	2.00pm	Robin Mellish's, 66 Rudds Road, Christchurch
October 16 th		12.30pm	Pot Luck Lunch, Ian Butcher's, 5 Sunburst Court, Paraparaumu Beach
January 15 th		12.30pm	Barbecue, David Smith's, 11 Trevor Terrace, Paremata
February 24/26 th			AGM and Weekend Away in Christchurch