

Tole painters host regional convention

Thursday, September 20, 1979

(F11C)

"Tole Masters of Michigan," a society of decorative artists, will host Michigan's first Great Lakes Decorative Art convention, Sept. 28-30 at the Sheraton Southfield Hotel.

The organization's objective is to promote quality tole and decorative painting in Michigan.

An exhibit of tole, decorative and canvas paintings will be open to the public. Free demonstrations will be going on continually.

A trade show consisting of booths will feature art supplies, books, frames, wood and tinware to decorate, and a variety of ideas to inspire the decorative artist. Admission is \$1.50 to the trade show.

For the members, classes and audits will be taught by 35 of the leading teachers from Michigan, Canada and across the United States. Members are also invited to a banquet Saturday evening, Sept. 29. The Western Michigan Decorative Artists will be decorating for the banquet.

Tole and decorative painting is defined as "the method of painting designs on any object to decorate or make a picture."

Tole painting today is dedicated to preserving and renewing interest in the various styles of folk art that came originally from Europe.

Pennsylvania Dutch and early American decorative and tole painters were

influenced by the styles of the English, French, Norwegian Rosemalers and country painters.

Tole painting actually means "painting on tin" in French.

During the era of the French Revolution, much of the splendor and opulence of France was disappearing. Silver pieces were sold for survival money. In place of silver tin was substituted.

In an effort to retain some of the graciousness of the past, craftsmen painted designs on the utilitarian tin pieces.

Many of these tole pieces made their way to America where tole was called "poor man's silver." The hand-painted tinware became very popular.

About 200 years ago, Edward J. Fattison, an Irish immigrant, started a business as a tinsmith in Berlin, Conn. He soon discovered the painted tinware was the hit of the day. He hired local ladies to paint his wares and had the

country peddlers selling them throughout the east. The ladies were paid \$2 a week for their labors. Varnish cost \$12 a quart and a brush could cost \$2 . . . a weeks salary.

Another interesting group of people, the Pennsylvania Dutch, were developing their own style of folk art during this time.

The Germans who settled in Pennsylvania decorated everything: furniture, cookware, barns and buggies.

Religion played a big part in their decorating. The tulip, the peacock, the distelfink, the pineapple seen on barns, and the hex signs all had a mixed Christian/pagan derivative. They painted family history on their dowry chests, birth announcements, cabinets and armoires.

The Norwegians arrived a little later and settled in Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa. When they became established, they began to decorate in the motifs reminiscent of their homeland, reflecting the different styles of the provinces from which they came.

Religion also was prominent in their baroque and rococo styles.

Some symbols date back to early Mesopotamia. Vikings brought back articles from as far away as Africa, the Orient and Europe.

Sometimes styles from many lands are reflected in Rosemaling.

Folk Art lasted from 1700 to 1850, but it died with industrialization. Although today's decorative artist maintains a respect for the old traditional way, new and creative approaches are being developed. But, tole is still the painting of the people.

For more information about the convention or for membership applications, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Great Lakes Decorative Art Convention, Post Office Box 36035, Grosse Pointe, 48236.



Flowers of silk

Two 2-session workshops are offered in Farmington Community Center this fall by Mary Foran who teaches participants how to turn summer's blooms into silk. Morning and evening classes are offered beginning Oct. 16 and Oct. 23 for creating iris, tulips, poppies, lilies and roses. Registrations are now being accepted by calling the center, 477-8404.

From the Wine Press



by Richard Watson

French wines vary, according to region

About an hour's drive to the east from Paris there begins a nearly continuous line of wine regions. They extend south for 250 miles to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

Some of the world's greatest wines are grown in this vast column of regions: Champagne, Chablis, Burgundy, Beaujolais and, finally, the Cotes du Rhone.

Interestingly, the costs of these wines when they reach our shelves essentially follow this north/south line, although a statement that places Burgundies in third place to anything seems a bit incredible.

All of these regions have attained justifiable renown, with perhaps only the last being less than very highly esteemed by the world. And that is a shame, for the three sub-regions of the Cotes du Rhone offer some very notable wines. And they constitute one of the best value regions for the buyer. Many selections are available locally at prices that encourage experimentation.

THE NORTHERNMOST section is the Cote Rotie (Roasted Slopes), a heavily terraced region of huge, tangle vines of great complexity. These should never be drunk young. In maturity they are still forceful and assertive and complement only the heartiest of foods.

Only two grapes are grown here — the beefy Syrah and the complex, white Viognier. Cote Rotie wines are a blend of these two, the white

contributing as much as 20 percent of the total to take the rough edges off the Syrah. This white is used exclusively to make the regional Cendrieu, well worth seeking out.

The mid-Rhone region is dominated by the name Hermitage (pronounced with a silent H). Crozes-Hermitage and Saint-Joseph.

The first of these is best known, producing both a big, hearty, slow-maturing red (again, from Syrah grapes) and a bold, if not especially complex, white (chiefly from Marsanne grapes).

Both require considerable bottle age before they attain a state of gustatory grace. Crozes-Hermitage is distinctly a lesser wine but there are many who swear by Saint-Joseph's softer and more subtle Syrah-based grapes from across the valley. Certainly, the Hermitage is more like the stereotype of a Rhone wine — big and chewy.

A DIFFERENT RED grape enters the scene when the third Rhone area is reached, the Grenache. It and the Syrah and as many as 11 more go into the chief wine of this region, the Chateaufort-du-Pape.

Generally faster maturing and lighter than its northern neighbors, this well-known wine is usually drunk much too young. Give it six to eight years to mature into a complex wine. White Chateaufort-du-Pape is worth seeking out as well. It's a hard, dry accompaniment to shell fish or oysters.

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