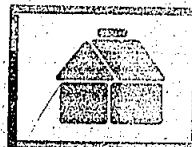


Creative Living

Corinne Abatt editor/644-1100

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Collecting artifacts:

Noah's little brown jug?
Well, why not?By Tom Panzenhagen
staff writer

"If I told you this piece was Chalcolithic, from the early to middle Bronze Age II, it wouldn't mean anything to you. But if I said it's the type of storage container Noah would have filled and put on the ark, then you're excited."

Such is the selling point and the appeal of ancient artifacts, according to Catherine Morris, gallery director for the Alan/Dohrmann Gallery in Birmingham.

The gallery, which opened in April, specializes in antiquities from the Chalcolithic period (6000 to 2550 B.C.) to the Crusades (11th century A.D.).

Its collection consists primarily of pottery, with jewelry, metals, coins and other artifacts in lesser supply.

"We're stocking the gallery now just as someone would begin a private collection," Morris said.

"We hope to get ancient glass in about a year, but it depends on what's available. It's not like wanting a beige silk blouse and ordering one from New York."

ALAN/DOHRMANN, with offices in California and another gallery in Hawaii, acquires its artifacts via licensed dealers of foreign governments and through private collectors.

The gallery's sourcing staff, as it is called, travels to Europe to make the purchases. Most of the artifacts are of Mediterranean, Biblical or Judean origin.

"The pieces are authenticated before leaving (Europe), to make sure everything is kosher," Morris said. "They then go to our lab in California to be reauthenticated before being shipped out to us."

"That way when a client asks, 'How do I know it's real?' we can show them the details of how it got here. Of course we ask them to trust our honor, too, but to back up that trust we offer a certificate of authenticity, and if anyone of professional standing ever questions the authenticity of a piece, we will buy it back from them."



The Apulian bell-crater (left) was used in the fourth century B.C. in Apulia for mixing water and wine. Priced at \$7,000, it is the most expensive item in the store.

To authenticate the artifacts, the gallery employs a staff archaeologist, Gene Baron, who holds a degree in archaeology from Penn State University, as well as a consulting archaeologist, David H. Swingle.

Morris, a Troy resident, also holds a degree in archaeology from Grand Valley State College.

"I considered going on for a graduate degree, then got sidetracked in retail," Morris said. "Now this job came along and it combines both (archaeology and retailing)."

DAVID DION, Alan/Dohrmann assistant gallery director whose background is in finance, advises prospective collectors to begin with pottery. Morris agrees.

"The majority of the artifacts found is pottery," Morris said. "A collection can be rounded out with bronze, glass, jewelry, but many of these items are extremely rare, and extremely, extremely expensive."

"Or collectors can go into busts," Dion added. "There are so many other things that are mind-blowing, that we call fine art, to get into."

One such item is a ushabti, or tomb servant, from Egypt.

"A nobleman would have one for every day of the year placed in his tomb and then, in the afterlife, when called upon to perform certain tasks, he could have the tomb servants do the tasks for him," Morris said.

She added that Egypt closed its doors on the export of antiquities in May, so the value of a ushabti and other Egyptian artifacts should soon increase.

Dion, who said recent issues of Vogue and Fortune magazines advised readers to invest in antiquities rather than gold, added, "Artifacts have appreciated no less than 20 percent per year for the last 20 years, and it's safe to assume Egyptian pieces will soon double in value."

SO FAR most customers have sought home furnishings rather than shrewd investments, Morris surmised.

"The idea of antiquities as an investment is new," she said. "The majority are here to appoint their homes. But I tell them it's a safe investment and that antiquities can't flood the market."

"We also have a wonderful reference list — the Rockefellers, Gettys and Hunts collect antiquities — so a lot of people don't come in with investments in mind, but many leave with that in mind."

Part of Morris' job is to help collectors find antiquities that will best suit them.

"If a person is into sports, I might find pottery for them from the Greek era depicting athletics," she said. "Or a builder might want to collect Roman nails."

Business has been excellent, Morris said.

"We find people coming in again and again, and you have to look at the items, to hold them. They (the antiquities) will almost mystically speak to customers, almost jump out at them."

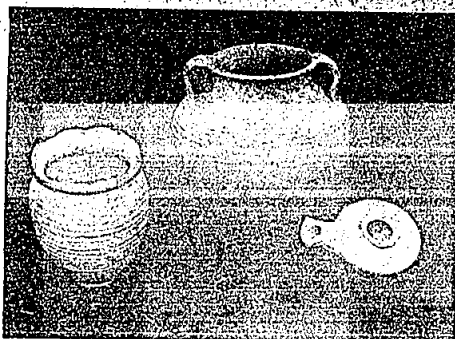
Morris said the gallery invites groups to tour its collection. Morris and Dion also will take the gallery to larger groups, on certain occasions, providing representative samples from the collection and a prepared talk.

PRICES BEGIN at under \$100, with the most expensive piece in the gallery, an Apulian Bell-

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Apulian Dourian were played and sung mugs, 500-300 B.C. (above), were used for pouring and serving wine and water. The Daunians inhabited Apulia, a Greek colony in south Italy, before the Greeks arrived. At left, the goblet, cooking pot and Hordian oil lamp are from the time of Jesus. The oil lamp was found at Masada.



Staff photos by Mindy Saunders

Festival Chorale tours Europe

This is the first of a three-part series on the European tour of the 30-voice Michigan Festival Chorale. The group, under the direction of Dr. John Doyars, gave 12 concerts during the 23 days they toured Austria, Italy, Switzerland and Southern Germany. Seventeen adults accompanied the singers, ages 16-26, who came from many metropolitan area communities. Photographer/writer Mary Jane Doerr joined them for a week in Austria and Italy.

By Mary Jane Doerr
staff writer

The Alps were coming into view, each row of mountains successively fainter in the morning haze. The acapella harmony of Bach's chorale "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright," sung by the 29 members of the Michigan Festival Chorale, belonged in the scenic atmosphere.

The blend of voices was remarkably good on the crowded German tour bus. We were on our way to Salzburg, the first stop on the group's 21-day concert tour of Europe. The sides of the highway were lined with the tall trees of the Black Forest and Schweppes trucks, full of carbonated beverages, passed us.

The sound of the chorale, rehearsing for their concert at the Franziskanerkirche in Salzburg, became more and more spirited as the Alps became more visible.

"What do you want for your birthday," said someone from the back of the bus. "One of these castles," answered 16-year-old Melodie Hansen, a graduate of Birmingham Southeast High

School. The rehearsal came to an end with the sighting of the Chiem See (famous lake where so many musicians vacationed).

"MY FATHER wanted to come on this trip but I wouldn't let him," said Jennifer Whorf, another 18-year-old graduate of Seaholm High School and daughter of Mike Whorf. "He was so nervous about my going that he couldn't stay at the airport. He let me come though because he knew this was too good a deal to pass up."

This is the first year for the Michigan Festival Chorale, a new alliance between Eugene Branstrom, choral director for Birmingham Seaholm High School, and Dr. John Doyars, music professor at Oakland University and music director at Kirk in the Hills.

Both have led choir tours in Europe. Branstrom in Eastern Europe, and Doyars in Europe for the past 18 summers, but this is the first time they have worked together.

The company is called Festivals Abroad and a tour for next summer in the British Isles is already scheduled.

Last fall Branstrom and Doyars auditioned prospective singers. From January to June, they rehearsed the high school and college students, who range in age from 16 to 24.

Most of them have solos but their voices all blend with each other in the evenly balanced chorale. Doyars selected the music for the church concerts and the more casual park concerts.

Like Whorf, many of the choir members had never been out of the country, or even on an airplane before the trip. It is like taking a New Mexico pie," said Whorf. "It is just so different. It



Walking, watching and photographing were important aspects of the tour. Here Christopher Foster, Tim Forster and Samantha McBride, chorale members from Birmingham, pause to see some of the sights near Salzburg.

doesn't feel different but then it does."

Jill Dingeldey, a senior at Waldo Lake Western, wanted to join the tour so much she went to Chicago to get her passport in time to leave.

"Others had to overcome different kinds of obstacles."

PHIL PETERA, another 18-year-old graduate of Seaholm got a job for six weeks at Café Patis to earn money for the trip.

"It has made the trip more

Photos by Mary Jane Doerr

worthwhile knowing how much work I did to get here. It is not what I thought it would be! It is so much like Alaska."

Michigan State University student, Dave Roth, another Seaholm graduate,

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Eugene Branstrom has the Austrian Alps for a backdrop as he conducts an outdoor rehearsal just before the concert in Salzburg.