

News Update

Some of you already had a chance to see and buy pieces from our new shipment in our booth at the Metrolina and at the Scott show in April, but for all of you who haven't, it is now on our website! Again, it is a fabulous shipment with a lot of great pieces.

We have some escargot (snail) plates that were made in Vallauris, France (item number M4431). You can admire them in our oyster plate catalog (since we don't have a snail plate catalog... yes they are quite rare!).

While you are in this catalog, please check out the gorgeous shell platter, also made in Vallauris, by Guillot (item number M4390).

Did we mention the spoonwarmer, the dog matchholder, the rabbit teapot, the spillvase with bird and the many new pitchers? You can find these items in their respective catalogs.

We also received some classics! The very romantic, blue strawberry plates by Sarreguemines and the always pretty grape leaf plates, also by Sarreguemines. Don't miss the holly pattern plate by Boch Keramis and several plates with pierced border, made by Villeroy & Boch. To see those items, please click on the Plates & Platters catalog.

The big oval planter with lizard handles or the elephant centerpiece will look great on any table. Finally, we also have two Palissy pieces, which we are offering at very reasonable prices due to some repairs.

We do have a lot more, so be sure to check it all out. It's easy, because as before, all new items are placed at the very beginning of the respective catalogs.

The launch of our new website has been very exciting for Out of Brussels. We are very proud of the result and we hope you have enjoyed your visits so far. Of course, you should keep coming back as we are expanding the site with more exciting materials all the time!

Finally, we are thrilled to present our newly formatted newsletter for the first time this month. We are committed to issue one of these every month.

What better opportunity then this to go back to the roots of majolica and answer questions such as: What does the term majolica means? And: What are its origins? The answers take us back to the 15th Century and they will make for an even greater appreciation of majolica. This brings us to the very topic of this month's feature article.

Dear MajolicAddict,

We hope you enjoy the new and improved look of our newsletter.

We'll be bringing you news updates, which will give you the first exclusive notice of our new shipments and a short description of the new items, as well as of any sales.



Liesbeth Depoorter
President of Out of Brussels

We'll have interesting and informative feature articles (this month it's a "definition of majolica and a short history"). We'll also give you a website update, with an explanation of how things work and a preview of what you'll find in the next newsletter.

*Enjoy your visit
and come back often!*

Feature Article

A Definition of Majolica and a Short History

Where does the name "Majolica" come from?

The term "majolica" was developed in 1849, by its creator, the English potter, Herbert Minton (1793-1858).

Unlike majolica itself, the term was not entirely original. It was derived from maiolica, which is the Italian name for tin-glazed earthenware. Initially, Italian maiolica was an imitation of Spanish Moorish-inspired pottery, which was imported from North Africa and the East into Italy through the island of Majorca, during the 15th Century.

The Italians refined and developed the Spanish pottery into the most well-known ceramic art of the Italian Renaissance, with the works of Luca Della Robbia and Piccolpasso to prove for it. So, the term majolica refers to the 15th Century Spanish tin-glazed earthenware, but the connection between the two is merely etymological, since maiolica stands for a particular earthenware, whereas the 19th Century majolica refers to a specific type of glaze onto any ceramic body.

Some history... We can't talk about the history of majolica without mentioning the two great French potters, Bernard Palissy and Leon Arnoux.

Although majolica has many antecedents, we are concentrating on the French influence only, because Out of Brussels specializes in French and other Continental majolica.

Bernard Palissy (circa 1510-1590) dominated French ceramic history during the 16th Century and his work was without any doubt an inspiration for Minton's majolica. Nowadays, Palissy's fabulous work can be admired in museums around the world. Palissy mastered the chemistry of brilliant lead glazes, in particular green and cobalt blue. His oval platters, urns and pitchers are decorated with very realistic looking snakes, lizards, frogs, fish, snails, insects and leaves, molded in high relief.

In the 19th Century, Charles Jean Avisseau resurrected Palissy's work. Avisseau potted his

first pieces in 1829, which is about 20 years before Minton introduced his majolica. His work featured the detailed animals that were so typical Palissy. Avisseau's work later influenced many potters in France and Portugal when they were producing their "Palissy-style majolica". We will definitely talk more about this fascinating topic in one of our upcoming newsletters. Leon Arnoux (1816-1902), unlike Palissy, was directly involved in the production of majolica at the Minton Pottery in Staffordshire, England. Arnoux was born into a family of potters from Toulouse, France. He studied engineering and pottery and he managed a family factory in France before he started working as chemist and art director at Minton in 1848. Arnoux designed the special kilns that were needed to fire some of the enormous majolica pieces. It was also his knowledge of the chemistry of clay that resulted in what we now know as the typical, fabulous majolica glaze. Arnoux also designed the Minton stand at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

There were 2 other French artists that made a great contribution to the production of English majolica. Minton hired some of France's best sculptors and ceramists, such as Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse and Paul Collomera. They did not take part in the later development of French majolica, which was not a bad thing, since it allowed the younger potters to create the typical French majolica or "Barbotines".

Finally, a definition of majolica - Majolica is the name for a certain kind of earthenware that was made during the second half of the 19th Century by various manufacturers in England, France, Belgium, USA, etc.

For a piece to be considered majolica it must have the following characteristics: It must be a soft, porous earthenware fired to the biscuit stage and then covered with an opaque glaze. After the opaque coat has dried (not fired), it is painted with vibrant metallic-oxide glazes after which the piece is fired a second time. Before the bisque firing, majolica is often molded in low or high relief designs.

Web Update

We have completely revamped our website over the last year or so. The results of the new website to date have been amazing and your feedback, response and reaction very positive. Thank you so much for sharing your enthusiasm with us! As a recap, let's summarize the most important benefits of the new Out of Brussels Website:

- Clearly organized online catalogs showcase a large part of our majolica inventory.
- An integrated shopping cart has given us the opportunity to offer you our exciting majolica inventory for direct online purchase.
- The online payment processing center accepting checks, money orders, PayPal and all major credit cards using payment gateway from trusted sources has given you maximum payment flexibility.
- The possibility of purchasing online Gift Certificates for a friend or loved one seems to have caught people's fancy quite well.
- The Out of Brussels website also features a wealth of information and materials on Majolica in general and on Out of Brussels more specifically. Review our FAQs section, as well as our web pages on Majolica Manufacturers and any present and past Newsletters.

We are committed to continuing to educate both ourselves and our customer base on the exciting world of Majolica. Our monthly Newsletter will primarily serve that purpose and we also invite you to send us any questions or suggestions you may have.

Coming Up

From the News Update at the beginning of this Newsletter, you can tell that we've received a lot of new goodies, so please make sure to check out all our catalogs to find anything to your liking. In our May newsletter, we will have a feature article on oyster plates and we'll take a closer look at our own oyster plate selection. We're already working on it and it promises to be a must for every oyster lover and oyster plate collector!

Our upcoming shows:

Scott Antique Market (May 12 - May 15)

Please make a note of it that we will NOT be at the next Metrolina Show in Charlotte (May 5-May 8).

We hope that you've enjoyed this newsletter. We invite you to take a look at our catalogs now, and we are looking forward to seeing you soon!

Take care!
Liesbeth