

Miniatures Marketplace - November 2001

MINIATURE COLLECTIBLES - A HOBBY FOR OUR TIME

By Barbara Schuckman

Handcrafted Miniatures BY BARB

Back to basics, home and family, rethinking our values...these are the aspects of our new reality. Since September eleventh our country and the world have a new outlook to life. We are not traveling as frequently and we are staying closer to home. We value our families and friends with added fervor and are making different decisions about leisure spending. These changes in behavior need to be taken into account when designing your future marketing plan. In other hobbies the trend in home decor and memory projects is very strong. Our industry undeniably lends itself in these directions. The December issue of Dollhouse Miniatures includes a pull out section entitled "Living with Miniatures". The well written project suggestions are innovative and creative, and illustrated with beautiful photographs. The array of projects vary in theme and technique. Projects range from sophisticated vignettes assembled in exquisite picture frames to less complex collections grouped in cubbyholes.

Now is the time to review the products available in your shop and view these with a new purpose. How can your customer incorporate your product in innovative ways. Dee's Delights wooden cutouts lend themselves to a vast array of projects. Make up a few samples demonstrating an assortment of themes and techniques to accommodate different levels of ability. Assemble all of the products needed to make the projects and display them in one place. Include a sampling of wallpaper, paint, glue, wood siding, brick and stone. The customer can then be guided to other areas of your shop to choose from the full array of product choices.

There are an abundance of themes that will appeal to the customer of today. Encourage fantasy as an escape from the concerns of reality. Incorporate full size items with miniatures and photographs in assembling scenes or collections. These assemblages can depict memories of comforting times past or of the expectation of future happy times. The anticipation of an upcoming wedding, birthday or new baby can spark the creation of a wonderful and creative collection of miniatures. Taking into account our country's enhanced patriotism, a project including our flag or miniatures decorated in a flag theme would certainly be appropriate.

I have always been an advocate of displaying miniatures in bookcases or on shelves interspersed with books, dishes and other collectibles. If you do not have a bookcase on display in your shop now is the time to introduce one. Assemble books and magazines pertaining to miniature collecting on these shelves along with groupings of miniature scenes or collections. Displaying the bookcase in your shop window may entice novice collectors to incorporate miniatures into their homes.

Our industry is rich in product, supplies and ingenuity. Marshal your creativity and reach out to the uninitiated. Help your customers find new and inventive ways to enjoy their hobby. Inaugurate those who are not yet aware of their penchant for miniatures to ways in which they can incorporate miniature collectibles into their way of life.

Reemphasize the fact that the planing, collecting and assembling of a dollhouse has always been an exceptional family project. Accentuate this aspect of our hobby with new fervor. Along with a dollhouse under construction display some of the supplies that will be needed to complete the project. Let your display demonstrate the steps that are “kid friendly” and can involve children. Also emphasize the steps that are “adult challenging” and promote the collecting of exciting and creative miniatures.

Creating miniature houses and vignettes and collecting miniatures has always been a pass-time of royalty and the average person. It is up to us to adapt our hobby to the culture in which we now live. Your customer is out there looking for a reason to collect your products. Encourage, excite and stimulate their creativity. It is up to you to encourage customers to walk into your shop and get lost in the enchantment of our miniature world.

I will be leading a seminar at the CIMTA trade show in Las Vegas in January. I am looking forward to assembling together as an industry to preview new products, learn new techniques and exchange exciting and creative new ways to enhance our industry. SEE YOU THERE!.
Barbara Schuckman, Handcrafted Miniatures By Barb, 7 Aron Court, Bethpage, NY 11714
bybarb@juno.com.....516 938 BARB