

North Park News April 2007

Hazard Decorative Arts Offers Early 20th Century Delights To 21st Century Shoppers

Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea's online business is a resource for furniture and decorative items

By JULIE KOLB

The graceful curves and rich glazes of a piece of Rookwood pottery, the patina of quarter-sawn oak on a Stickley table enhanced by age and use, the deepening shadows and wind-ruffled clouds of a plein aire painting. These are the details and objects that enliven a room's décor. They help make a house feel like a home. Finding such distinctive pieces can fill some with the thrill of the chase. For others, the effort and time spent searching are a chore. Making that search easier and more enjoyable is the new online store Hazard Decorative Arts at hazarts.com.

Hazard Decorative Arts offers a full range of decorative items produced in the United States and Europe during the early 20th century including furniture, textiles, lighting, pottery, artwork and ephemera. Whether the search is for something as large as a Gustav Stickley dresser or something as small as a pewter art nouveau vase, this online store allows customers looking for items of the last century to find them through the thoroughly 21st century mode of the Internet.

Based in San Diego and launched in November 2006 by husband and wife Allen Hazard and Janet O'Dea, the Web site is in many ways the next step for this couple who shares a love of the art and architecture of the Arts & Crafts era.



One story Hazard tells to illustrate this passion: The couple was living in a Scripps Ranch tract house with an interior nearly entirely decorated with furnishings perfectly suited to a bungalow. They realized it was time to find their own Craftsman bungalow.

After buying a Mission Hills bungalow, joining Save Our Heritage Organisation, a local historic preservation group, and spending countless vacations taking historic tours of preserved Craftsman neighborhoods in cities like Chicago and Pasadena, the couple's knowledge of and interest in the Craftsman movement has continued to grow.

They developed friendships with noted Arts & Crafts experts, authors, and designers Paul Duchscherer and Jane Powell. Most recently, Hazard and O'Dea have helped create Mission Hills Heritage, a community preservation group. Launching Hazard Decorative Arts was the couple's next endeavor.

The idea for creating an online resource for the furniture and decorative items of the Arts & Crafts era had been an ongoing conversation between Hazard and O'Dea as they discovered first-hand how hard it was to find such items online. The business was officially launched in November 2006. "It had become a real focus of our lives," says O'Dea.

While Hazard and O'Dea have a particular interest in the American Arts & Crafts movement, they also are interested in the various European interpretations of the movement. As the business is growing, the range of offerings is expanding to include Arts & Crafts, Art Deco, Art Nouveau, Spanish, Rancho and Native American styles. Someone looking for a piece of metalware produced by Jugendstil, the German Arts & Crafts movement, will find as much success as someone searching for a piece of American art pottery like Roseville Pottery.

Hazard and O'Dea have also chosen to offer both antiques and quality reproductions created by today's artisans. Contemporary artists featured on their site include Janet Ontko and C & C Brown, producers of art pottery. Craftswoman Val Johnson specializes in building reproduction Craftsman furniture and clocks using reclaimed wood. "We want to be a site where you can get both quality antiques as well as reproductions from some of the top people in the country," says Hazard. "You can go to the Web site and, say, choose an antique table and a reproduction art pot."

O'Dea points out that homeowners who purchase Arts & Crafts décor often have a mix of vintage and reproduction pieces.

If a customer can't find a specific item on the Web site, O'Dea encourages the customer to contact them at info@hazarts.com. "We might not have an item in-house, but we'll know who does, and we'll source it for them," says O'Dea.

While the couple is interested in making the most of being an international online resource, they point out that because Hazard Decorative Arts is based in San Diego, they are able to offer a greater range of services to local customers. "We're a global marketplace because we're online, but

we're a San Diego company," says O'Dea. "We can bring a piece to a customer's house, and we're happy to consult with them."

Hazard and O'Dea are adamant about creating an online store that customers can trust for selling quality items. They acknowledge that some people still have concerns about buying online. These concerns prompted them to institute a seven-day return policy. "Call us, return it, and we'll give you your money back," says O'Dea.

Hazard Decorative Arts was designed to appeal to several types of customers including professional interior designers. "A designer might have all of the bones already figured out, but to really make a room feel warm and to give it something interesting, he or she might just need to add a painting or just need some pottery pieces," says O'Dea. Hazard and O'Dea are also available to work with Realtors who are staging a house for sale.

The Web site also was designed to appeal to collectors and homeowners. O'Dea emphasizes the large variety and wide price range of early 20th century items available. "If you're just starting out, maybe you want to start with a smaller piece. Maybe that's all you need," says O'Dea. "On the low end, we have a small Rookwood piece of pottery, and on the high end we have a more expensive Rookwood piece. It's still Rookwood, but there's such a vast range."

With its wide range of furniture and decorative items, Hazard Decorative Arts seeks to connect early 20th century décor with 21st century shoppers.

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