

by Chris Hassan
photography by Lucki Schotz

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ounded in 1639, Newport, Rhode Island, is famous for its elaborate Gilded Age mansions. Surprisingly, this city steeped in history only recently began to have its very own antiques show, but it is making up for lost time. From August 13-15, 2010, the fourth Annual Newport Antiques Show will lure lovers of antiques, art, and history to this treasured seaside resort town.

Held at Newport’s St. George’s School, a work of art in its own right that offers breathtaking views of Second Beach, this year’s Antiques Show will feature 41 of the country’s leading antiques dealers. In addition, the 2010 Loan Exhibit will showcase American scrimshaw and ivory pieces from the collections of the Newport Historical Society, one of the show’s beneficiaries; the other is the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County.

According to Jessica Hagen, dealer liaison for the Antiques Show, she and her peers recognized a high interest level in antiques among Newport residents and tourists who flock to the area, but until four years ago only a small show with an auction was held each year. “We always knew if we could do this on a larger scale, we would have great attendance and do very well with it,” Hagen says.

Hagen and her peers reached out to Anne F. Hamilton, a Newport native who had become chairman of the Philadelphia Antiques Show. Hamilton now serves as chairman of the Newport Antiques Show and Diana H. Bittel is the show manager. Hagen credits the two women’s guidance and professionalism for making this show a destination in a short amount of time.

Everything on display is an antique from

between the 17th and early 20th centuries. Being Newport, there are quite a few nautically themed collections, but landlubbers will find everything from paintings and garden objects to furniture and oriental rugs.

This year’s Loan Exhibit features miniature portraits on ivory and American scrimshaw from the Newport Historical Society’s extensive collection. “They are exquisitely painted, super detailed portraits, maybe no more than three inches tall by two inches wide,” Hagen says of the exhibit’s ivory pieces. “Anybody who has never seen these before will be wowed.”

William Vareika Fine Arts, Ltd., specialists in the purchase and sale of important 18th, 19th and early 20th century American paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints will be the show’s Presenting Sponsor.

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“We depend on the Newport Antiques Show, and the outpouring of support from people has been tremendous,” says Joanne M. Hoops, executive director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Newport County. “It has enabled us to do a lot of things that we’ve wanted to do in terms of family support programs, so we are very grateful.”

An elegant Preview Party will be held on Friday, August 13, from 6 to 9 p.m., with the show itself open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, August 14, and Sunday, August 15, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. General admission is \$12.

“It’s a great thing to do for a couple of hours,” Hagen says. “It’s like going to a museum where you can touch things.” ★