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**ANTIQUES**

## **Newport Antiques (and Nantucket's) in Summer Fair**

**By WENDY MOONAN**

A new antiques fair opens tonight in Newport, R.I., and it all began with one person who had a big idea.

Anne Hamilton, a past chairwoman of the Philadelphia Antiques Show, has summered in Newport for 29 years with her husband, S. Matthews Hamilton. For a long time, she said, she had thought that “with Newport’s furniture history, it was crazy not to have a summer antiques show.”

Newport was home to two of America’s finest 18th-century cabinetmaking clans, the Goddards and the Townsends (who often intermarried). Their furniture, coveted by collectors and owned by major museums across the United States, is on view in Newport at the Museum of Newport History and the Whitehorne House museum.

Last year Mrs. Hamilton shared her idea with Diana H. Bittel, a Pennsylvania dealer who is currently the manager for the Nantucket Antiques Show. Ms. Bittel agreed to help with the new show, and Mrs. Hamilton immediately persuaded 28 new “co-founders” to promise \$5,000 apiece. Then she raised \$200,000 in a letter-writing campaign.

“Anne’s a dynamo,” said Jessica Hagen, a trustee of the Newport Historical Society. The show is a benefit for the society and for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newport County.

Ms. Bittel has invited 41 dealers to participate in the fair, which opens tonight with a preview party sponsored by Sotheby’s and closes on Sunday. It is being staged in the air-conditioned hockey rink of St. George’s School, a private school in Middletown, R.I., the town next door. More than 500 people have purchased the \$150 preview tickets; admission over the weekend is \$12.

About 25 dealers from the Nantucket show, which took place last weekend, are participating. They tend to specialize in things with a nautical, beach or whaling theme;

Chinese export porcelain; English pottery; folk art; and 18th-century English and American furniture — just what you might have seen 200 years ago in a New England port as prosperous as Newport.

In Nantucket, the New York dealer Earle D. Vandekar of Knightsbridge showed Chinese export porcelain, Chelsea pottery and “woolies,” the pictures that British sailors embroidered in wool while at sea in the 1800s. “Most examples feature the portrait of a single ship,” Mr. Vandekar said, “but in Newport I will have one with five Royal Navy ships under full sail, heading out to sea.” He is asking \$24,000 for it.

Judy King Watson and Ben Watson of King-Thomasson, North Carolina dealers for 28 years, specialize in 18th-century English country furniture and accessories. In Nantucket, they sold most of their stock: vernacular Windsor chairs, an Orkney Islands chair from Scotland with a woven sea-grass back, English lusterware, an oak wall cupboard and a decorated leather sea trunk made in China.

A Michigan dealer, Taylor B. Williams, specializes in yellow transfer-printed pottery from the Creil factory in France — “There isn’t a lot of Creil around,” he said — and English “canary” wares from the 1820s. Transfer printing was often used to decorate snuffboxes and wall plaques, but in Nantucket he showed a large Creil breakfast cup for \$950. In Newport he is offering a white enamel Battersea plaque from the 1750s with a mythological theme: Paris giving the Apple of Peace to Hibernia. Its price is \$5,500.

In Nantucket, Mongenas Antiques of Ohio failed to find a buyer for a tall, handsome 17th-century English walnut Baroque cabinet with ball feet. The dealer is hoping it will fare better in Newport.

The Vermont folk art dealers Phyllis Carlson and Timothy Stevenson had a set of signed Pennsylvania painted chairs and hooked rugs and paintings in Nantucket. In Newport they will show an unusual piece of folk art: a wood finial, from a church in Ohio, with a carved and gilded pineapple on top and gilded acanthus leaves on the sides.

“It symbolizes welcome and generosity,” Ms. Carlson said. “It was made with square nails, so we date it to about 1865.” The price is \$4,500.

They will also offer a hooked rug depicting a jaunty baby leopard for \$4,900. “This rug has never been walked on; it is clean and has colors that are distinct and bright,” Ms. Carlson said. “It came from a Maine collection where it was extremely well cared for.”

In Bryn Mawr, Pa., Ms. Bittel sells 18th-century American furniture, marine pictures and sailors’ valentines (elaborate tokens of love fashioned with tiny seashells). In Newport she is showing outdoor sculptures: matching his-and-her English salt-glaze lions from about 1820, priced at \$45,000.

“It’s rare to have a pair, and both are great,” she said. “If they don’t sell, they will go in my garden.”

James M. Labaugh of Pound Ridge, N.Y., sells German, French and English porcelain; Chinese Export wares; and Staffordshire pottery. He’s hoping that his nearly life-size Bolognese terrier, made about 1880 in Meissen, Germany, will delight Newporters at \$8,500.

“If it were 18th century, it would be twice the price,” Mr. Labaugh said.

He will also show two matching Chinese Export famille rose saucers with the Fisher family coat of arms displayed on the underside, not the front, from about 1755. “There are only two known services with the coat of arms on the back,” he said.

Last weekend was the 30th anniversary of the Nantucket Antiques Show, which benefits the Nantucket Historical Society’s restoration projects and educational programs. While not every dealer was happy — the number of attendees was down because the weather was so good — the show was expected to raise nearly \$600,000 for the society, according to Judith Wodynski, who is in charge of special events.

“The antiques in the show may have gotten more serious over the years, but there are also a lot more items with whimsy and charm,” said Nancee Erickson, who has headed the dealers dinner committee for 21 years.

This weekend, the focus is on Newport, where the dealers hope what they show in Newport stays in Newport.