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little details

Issue 79

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Advertising Sales:
Email: adsales@ashdownmagazines.com

Customer Service:
Email: usoffice@ashdown.co.uk

Design: Auralea Krieger

Ad Design: Wendy Crosthwaite

Cover Photo: Patrick Duclou

Subscriptions:

US: usoffice@ashdown.co.uk

UK: support@ashdown.co.uk

Subscription prices:

1 year (6 issues): \$59.99

Canada \$91.99 CAD; UK £69.99;

Europe €98.99; Rest of World \$109.99 USD

Dollhouse Miniatures (ISSN 1094-1916 [USPS 957-440]) is published bi-monthly at PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. Subscription price \$59.99. Periodicals postage paid at Kasson MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address corrections to Dollhouse Miniatures, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944.

All material submitted to the magazine is accepted on the basis that the author grants the Publisher a non-exclusive worldwide license to distribute and sell the article in print and/or digital form. Copyright remains with the author.



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Cut out your own Valentine's Day cards and art to frame



welcome

One of my favorite places to sit is beside a babbling brook. We have

many of them in Maryland. One of my favorite is one that runs along the NCR trail (The Northern Central Railroad Trail). The trail is about 20 miles and is a great place to bike ride. If you go far enough you will see a giant hill filled with ceramic gnomes. Even the property owner looks like a gnome!

The brooks always seems to take away any worries I have and refuels me with inspiration and positivity. Nature is such a giving gift. I can even remember a gorgeous brook I visited in the woods while in Switzerland. There was moss on the rocks and birds chirping all around. My mother's side of the family lives in England so I have visited a few peaceful streams there as well.

Whatever it takes to find calm and peace this year, I hope you can seize it. Making miniatures is definitely a way to unwind and refocus. I have been contemplating making an HO scale world in my basement on a large table. I have so many ideas from so many past issues of *DHM*! I would love to know what you are dreaming of creating. Email me!

Auralea Krieger, Editor
auralea@ashdown.co.uk

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Stoneybrook Farms Produce Patch

Connie Sauve continues to share her “On the Road Again” vehicle series. Let’s enjoy this diorama she created full of down on the farm goodness.

BY CONNIE SAUVE

The second truck I made is a flower truck which is finished, but the landscaped base it will be featured on, is not finished. So, I will continue this issue with the third vehicle project I made.

I had so much fun with the first two trucks, that I kept coming up with ideas for new scenes. I found another truck at a gift shop in a California tourist town. Once you start looking, it's amazing how many vehicles are out there. This truck had square shaped fenders which were perfect for an additional display area.

For this scene, I once again wanted to use minis that I had in my stash. This was going to be a farm truck for selling vegetables. I had been collecting vegetables and crates of vegetables for years. This was the perfect time to use them.

Most old farm trucks I have seen are usually very rusty, so I used a bit more rust than I did on the other two trucks. This truck also had stakes in the back, but these were metal and looked clunky and out of scale. It took a bit of work to pull the metal stakes out with pliers since they had been tack welded into the inside of the truck bed, but they finally popped out. To give the scene a farm feeling, I added bales of hay to the back of the truck. They were perfect for displaying all the fruits and vegetables for sale.

I was a graphic designer in a previous life, and always enjoyed designing lettering, which for me, equates to also enjoying making signs. I had decided to call this project “Stoneybrook Farms Produce Patch”. I wanted to paint

the name of the farmer's produce business onto the doors of the truck. I first tried several designs on paper, playing with the letters and design elements. Once I decided on a design, I played with fonts and the lettering on my computer, really stretching some letters and squishing others.

Once the design was finished, I transferred the lettering onto the doors and hand-painted the letters onto each door. For the picture in the middle, I cheated a bit and found a painting of a farm on my computer and cut the area I liked into an oval and glued it to the middle of the design. The doors turned out just as I envisioned!

Early on, I knew I wanted to put this truck on a landscaped base. So, my next step was to figure out

FEATURE



- 1 The crates are stacked up on hay bales in the back of the truck.
- 2 Fresh cut sunflowers.
- 3 A little mouse sleeps in the radishes.
- 4 The pigs give the feeling of farm life.
- 5 A bird's eye view of the produce and flowers that are being sold by the farmer.





A front view of the diorama. The old wood base adds a beautiful rustic touch to this piece.

the size of the base and what else I was going to add to the scene. I had some really cute long-eared Swabian-Hall pigs from Schleich, so I picked out a momma pig and two little piglets. They would be the perfect addition to help convey that farm concept. One hilarious incident happened with the momma pig when I had posted pictures on-line of the project, and had included a very close-up picture of the back end of the momma pig. One sharp-eyed viewer pointing out that she had a couple extra things that momma pigs don't have! I took a look and sure enough, my momma was a daddy!

So poor little daddy met with my X-Acto knife. He squealed a bit during the procedure and ended up drawing blood from my finger, his payback I guess, but he is now a proud momma of the piglets.





The front of the truck was distressed to fit the farm life scene.

I also wanted to put an apple tree and a split-rail wood fence in the scene. I set the truck on an angle in the scene. This always gives nice oddly shaped areas to work within, and adds more interest than if everything is squared-up to the base. I figured out the size of the base I needed and once again my friend came to the rescue and made the base for me out of old barn wood.

Since the truck takes up most of the base, it wasn't hard to figure out where to put everything else. I used a combination of sawdust and Elmer's glue and spread it over the base, then while the mixture

was still wet, I sprinkled real dirt over the mixture. There is nothing better to replicate the look of dirt than using what else? Real dirt! I learned this sawdust/dirt technique in a class with the renowned Pat and Noel Thomas. For the grass, I use faux moss pot toppers and added some to each of the corners in irregular shapes. The faux moss makes the best realistic grass. Love that stuff!

In my stash, I had a wonderful little accessory of a wood wagon wheel with some flowers, a fence post and barbed wire twisting around the wheel. I had bought it

about 15 years earlier, just because I really liked it. I decided to incorporate this into the fence and used it as one of the posts, then I made the rest of the split-rail fence from scrap wood. I decided to plant the apple tree right next to the fence. This let me add the little detail of one of the rails had broken off because the tree had grown too close and broken it. The fence also created a nice corner pen to hold the pigs.

‘For the apple tree, I started with a branch of sagebrush.’

For the apple tree, I started with a branch of sagebrush. I really like using sagebrush to make my trees. It has lots of big and little branches and is actually made from wood. For the leaves, I spray painted Sesame Bloom with a couple shades of green. Next, I cut off smaller branches of the Sesame Bloom and painted the main branch of each of these, to match the color of the sagebrush. Then comes the tedious part of gluing those small branches onto the branches of the sagebrush. This takes lots of time, but it makes an incredible tree. For the apples, I knew I was going to need at least 100 apples to fill the tree. I don't particularly like working with Fimo, so I resorted to buying them on eBay. I couldn't beat the price and it made the tree project go much faster.

Now came the fun part of gathering all my fruits and vegetables that I wanted to include in the scene. I pulled everything I had in my stash and started playing. I wanted a va-



1 Produce is stacked all over the truck. 2 The apples were purchased and added to the tree. 3 Another view of the diorama. 4 A close-up of the wonderful sign Connie created for the truck door.





A side view of the truck and momma pig. Connie was finally able to put her collection of mini produce to good use.

riety of containers to hold the fruits and vegetables, so I chose many styles of baskets and crates. Some containers were already finished and others I finished by adding loose fruits or vegetables. I wanted to show prices for everything to help dictate the era the scene is set in. I chose the 1930's, so I looked up some of the prices back then. I made tiny price tags for each item and glued them onto a little post to stick into each container. A little mouse can be found sleeping on his back in the radishes.

Everything was coming together nicely. My last step was to add the farmer and a customer. I used resin

dolls parts from Marcia Backstrom, which I painted and costumed. Using the right figures adds so much to a miniature scene.

‘Every part of this project tells a little story.’

Every part of this project tells a little story, from the farmer selling his goods to the picky customer, the apple tree and broken fence, the basket of broken eggs on the ground, down to the little piglet

seeing a butterfly for the first time, which is perched on the old wagon wheel.

This truck scene turned out so well sitting on a landscaped base, that I decided to add landscaped bases to the first two trucks I had made. So, after finishing this scene, I returned to my two previous finished trucks and added fully landscaped bases to each of them.

Be sure to check out my tutorial in this issue of *Dollhouse Miniatures* magazine. In the next issue I will share another one of my vehicle dioramas!

Making a Realistic Miniature Tree

Finding realistic trees in miniature is difficult. This is why Connie Sauve has developed her own way of making perfect miniature trees.

BY CONNIE SAUVE

Finding realistic trees in miniature has always been difficult. Trees from the model trains hobby are usually too small.

They work great for the smaller scales, but not 1" scale scenes. So, over the years, I have developed my own way of making trees.

Sagebrush branches are perfect for making a miniature tree. They have a nice trunk, good color, and lots of little branches. They take a bit of trimming to get all the leaves and longer branches cut off, but when that's done, they look great! You can even leave them without leaves and use them in a winter scene. Or spray paint them black for a spooky looking tree.

Sagebrush is an emblem of the mountain West. They are native to semiarid plains and mountain slopes of western North America. The common sagebrush is a many-

You will need

- Sagebrush branches
- Saw/knife
- Small drill and bit
- Dowel
- White glue
- Scrap wood
- Seeded variety of Candy Tuft
- Foliage spray
- Mini fruit



branched shrub, usually about 3 to 6.5 feet high, with silvery gray, bitter-aromatic foliage.

Step 1: If you are able to cut your own sagebrush, try and find trees with a long trunk. Decide on the size and shape of the tree you want. I have a whole stash of trees, small, medium and large. You can always trim away branches and I have even added branches.

Step 2: Use your craft or utility knife to Trim the base of the tree so it sits at the correct angle for your scene.

Step 3: Drill a hole in the bottom



of the tree trunk about 1/2" deep. Cut a piece of dowel about 1" long and the same size as the hole. Glue the dowel tightly into the hole so it sticks out about 1/2".



Step 4: Next, you will need to figure out exactly where you want your tree to sit in your project. Remember, your tree will get bigger once you add leaves, so allow extra room in your scene. Drill a hole in the base of the project for the dowel. It helps stabilize the tree when putting it in place. This way I can either leave the tree loose so it can be taken out, or glue the dowel and tree in place permanently. Depending on the thickness of your wood base, you may need to add a small block of wood under your base for added thickness for the dowel to sit in.

Step 5: While working on trees, I like to drill a hole in a small block of

PROJECT



scrap wood to hold the tree upright and it also enables me to turn the whole tree easily while working on it. For the leaves, I use the seeded variety of Candy Tuft also called Sesame Bloom or Peppergrass, which provides additional smaller branches along with the leaves. I used to be able to find this at craft stores already green, but now I feel lucky if I find the seeded variety at all, and it's usually in the natural color, which can be found on the Internet along with other colors.

I spray the whole bunch with foliage spray, first a dark green, then a bit of light green to give the tree some color variety. Cut small sprigs of the green painted candy tuft, and then paint only the branch parts a brownish grey so they match the color of the sagebrush tree trunk.



Step 6: Now the tedious part begins. Carefully glue each small branch onto the tree, first by putting a dab of thick white glue, then a drop of super glue so it grabs fast. You may have to use small clips to hold the branches in place until the glue sets up. Starting in the middle and working my way out, I keep adding the smaller branches until the tree is full looking. I make sure the branches are added so they look naturally part of the tree. It's a time-consuming process, but well worth the effort. I have made many trees this way, and love how realistic they look when finished. You can



even add apples to make an apple tree, or other types of fruit.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me, Connie Sauve at cmsauve2@gmail.com, or visit my website at www.thechinadoll.com. You can also call me at 209-329-8978, or check out my Shutterfly site that shows of all my miniature projects <http://ConnieSauveAmericanaInMiniature.Shutterfly.com>.



A New Miniatures Museum Is Opening

The Midwest Miniatures Museum is moving to Grand Haven, Michigan. Renovations are underway and it is due to open in spring 2021.



If you don't know Grand Haven, it is a lovely community on the shores of Lake Michigan, and home to about 2.5 million tourist visitors in the summer months.

A good place to introduce miniatures to the uninitiated?

Wait till you see the beautiful new building for the new location for Midwest Miniatures Museum, formerly located in Hickory Corners, Michigan. Space there did not permit the display of many fine miniature exhibits, and it took years to locate a suitable venue for the quality of the collection.

The building in Grand Haven was built in 1899 by prominent local

businessman Nathaniel Robbins and has important local significance in the community. It is essentially a three story mansion and future plans are designed to preserve the fine architecture and accommodate it to a beautiful miniatures museum. It will likely be necessary to open up parts of the building at a time.

Like all museums, exhibits will be rotated. New space will be available for new exhibits. Current favorites are back, like "The Yellow House at Arles", the home in the south of France where Vincent VanGogh lived and painted. Also a German house, replicating one still standing today in the northern part of Germany.

Smaller groupings like Noah's Arks, textiles, silver and 1:144 scale creations will be featured as specific collections. A grouping of work by the late Jim Ison is also planned.

All in all, miniaturists should be excited by the quality of the exhibitry, and the beautiful presentation in a beautiful space.



contact details

Midwest Miniatures Museum

Website: <https://www.midwestminiaturesmuseum.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/midwestminiatures>

Location: 20 S. 5th Street, Grand Haven, MI 49417

Phone: (616)414-5809

Opening date to be announced.



FEATURE



1 Handicap accessible ramp now installed on the side of the building. **2** A grand fireplace. **3** A view from the porch; columns have been restored. **4** The gorgeous staircase. **5** The former dining room will feature TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTION.



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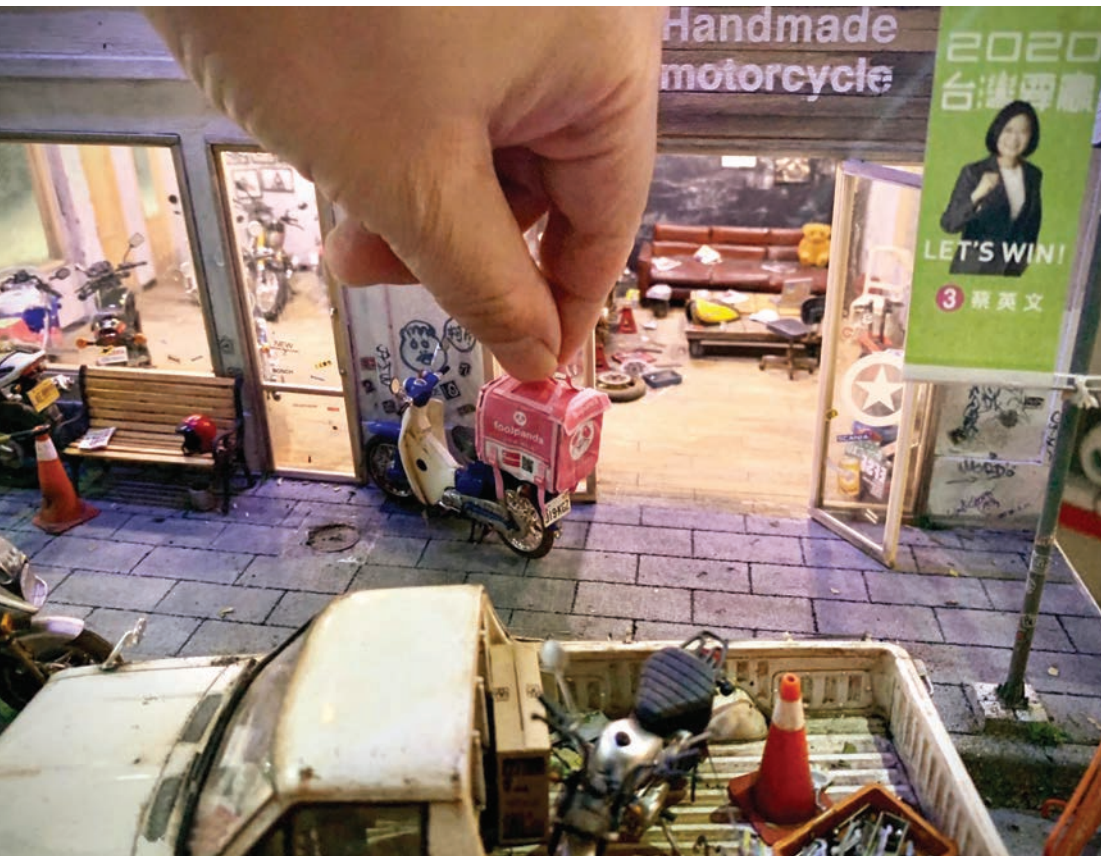
BY JOAN MCKENZIE

Looking at the prolific works of Hank Cheng it is somewhat difficult to believe that he has only been creating art in miniature form since 2015. His art captures both exquisite beauty as well as the unkempt underbelly of societal graffiti and garbage.

While most miniaturists work as a singular being, having to pay attention to purchase orders, new ideas and multiple details, Hank has given himself the gift of an

assistant, who helps to filter out all of the 'noise' so that he may use his creative time without interruption.

Some of his miniatures are sold online. Occasionally he will make something and decide that it will not be sold – ever! There are frequent opportunities where he is asked for miniature art to display on loan in a protected format for a department store window. This is when those pieces are displayed and enjoyed by the public.





This way there is no time taken away from his custom orders. This also helps save time by not having to spontaneously invent something that would be well suited for the display event.

“In Taiwan there are sporadic exhibitions held each year in local department store windows.”

Hank has no formal training in art or miniatures. However, his work suggests all of the makings of someone who has been in close apprenticeship with a master

miniaturist. Just thinking about the level of detail he employs in every piece he has made, which has all been self-taught, is a mystery injected with magic.

He has so many obligations in his busy life that to date he has been prevented from participating in any workshops. He is simply too busy for most of the activities that other artists have enjoyed, such as the IGMA classes held in Castine, Maine and Windsor, Connecticut.

In Taiwan there are sporadic exhibitions held each year in local department store windows. Hank is an accomplished favorite artist who is invited to make miniature models for commercial advertisements. Some of the people who have hired Hank are the dairy farmers



A 1:24 scale motorcycle shop is a great way to display a mini vehicle collection. Below is a diorama of Taiwan at dusk.





A miniature apartment filled with all the necessities. Below shows the apartment before it was inhabited.

and also the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan. You can enjoy one display by visiting [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woWmXXY-vt8). Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woWmXXY-vt8>

Hank describes his passion for miniature exhibitions as something that lifts his soul and heals him virtually. This is what he loves most about what he does.

“Hank describes his passion for miniature exhibitions as something that lifts his soul and heals him virtually.”





When asked what tool he could never live without, the answer said with a twinkle in his eye is "My box cutter!" When asked about the future of miniatures he thought for a moment and then proceeded to advise us of his thoughts. "With the advancement of artificial intelligence technology, human hand-making ability may likely become dramatically weaker. Miniature models will surely be even more popular in the future."

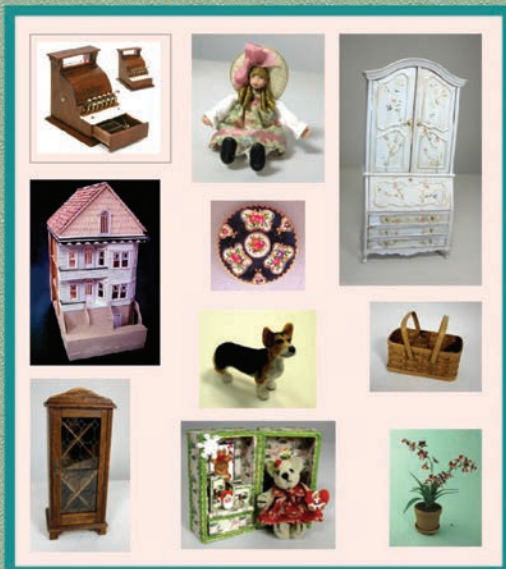
With this foresight it becomes even more important to preserve miniaturists and continually spread the word about the joys of this art form, to ensure that these skills do not become one of the ever mounting 'lost' arts.



Miniaturist artist Hank Cheng

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A Joint Venture in Miniatures

Phil and Mary Hall have created a stunning collection of dollhouses and miniature furniture over the past forty-nine years.

BY MARY HALL

The envelope for Doll Domiciles had arrived and we were eager to build a dollhouse larger and finer than the first one made of particle board in 1972 for our young daughter. Having anticipated a set of patterns, it was a bit sobering to realize that what had arrived was six pages of blueprints for their Second Empire Victorian. The copyright date on the plans is 1975. We folded up the pages and returned them to the envelope, but meanwhile I continued making

furniture mostly from the Scientific Miniatures kits and any other kits I could find.

After three years of opening the blueprints and staring at them briefly, one Saturday morning, my husband proclaimed we were about to take on the challenge. Soon, words like "scale" and "components" were in our vocabulary. We were purchasing saws with fine teeth, a miter box, very small drill bits and files, sharper blades, more accurate rulers, gluing jigs and







1 The pub shown with the roof open. **2** The front door of the pub. **3** Small section in the side of the Eastman house opens to show the pantry. **4** The outside of the Eastman house showing the back porch: old photos were used to design the construction. Original house built in 1900.





1 The actual table and dish cupboard were used to construct the miniatures and remain in the family. **2** Furniture made from Scale Cabinetmaker plans. **3** The hall serves as a small study.

clamps of all kinds. We began experimenting with adhesives, paints and finishes. We bought resource books, subscribed to magazines about miniatures, and discovered shows for miniatures.

Early in this point of our foray into miniatures we purchased substantial set of high-end cupboards and counters from the floor display of a kitchen design center. We installed the whole collection in a spare room, and thus we have enjoyed a designated workspace from the very beginning. We installed one inch painted plywood sections over the spaces cut out for appliances, providing space for doing certain things that might damage the counters. There are two shelved areas for magazines and many books with plans for furniture and accessories.

There is a jeweler's lathe, drill press, 4" table saw, a disk/ belt sander, several variable speed power tools, rows of paints and wood stains, and many, many brushes! A young granddaughter once called it the "best room in the house." That construction of the Second Empire Victorian taught us so much about putting things together in the right sequence and about choosing quality materials, like buying cabinet grade plywood instead of "one side good."

As time and projects moved on, our roles became more defined. Except for the 1940's "Clover Farm" grocery store with the period doctor's office upstairs, Phil





Top two floors of the cabinet house; central Inglenook room made from plans from Scale Cabinet Maker.





1 The kitchen is one of the rooms in the Art and Crafts cabinet house. **2** Art and Crafts side chairs and tile topped table from Scale Cabinetmaker plans. **3** Brewster high chair Scale Cabinetmaker; pilgrim era cradle, Harry Smith plans. **4** Shaker rocker made from the same plans he used to make a full sized rocker in woodworking school.

constructs buildings or boxes from plans we draw ourselves or adapt from the ideas of others. He has a full sized workshop, too. All his furniture is made from miniature specific plans, such as found in "The Scale Cabinetmaker," or from full sized plans. I do the interior design, soft furnishings and have expanded my source of kits to the Netherlands, Australia, and the UK. Articles written by Pat and Noel Thomas and the books by Brian Nickolls have proven so useful.

Having a shared hobby has been a very special aspect of miniatures for us. Beyond that are the dealers and artisans who sold or made just the right piece of silver, ceiling fixture, bag of potatoes, or woven rug. We have kept most of what we make, nothing is packed away, it is either in its 'home' or in a display case. About every three years





Princess Dresser - 1914 Butler Brothers catalog, Scale Cabinetmaker and the 1:12 scale colonial press cupboard, Harry Smith plans.

we hold an invitation-only open house. The last one was in 2019 and featured 18 projects for display. We make an updated illustrated brochure to be used on this self-guided tour. We are available for questions and conversation.

My husband is a physician, retired from the Cleveland Clinic, still teaching in their medical school. I taught junior high but then raised four children. I am a relentless gardener. We have been married 59 years.

Eagle and Child English Pub

This piece is a paraphrase of the Eagle and Child Pub visited weekly by Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. This is a representation of an early 20th century English pub (publick house). It is an adaptation of the one presented by Brian Nickolls in the book "Making Character Dolls' Houses." The living quarters for the owner are above the pub, with stairs for access through a door to the right of the bar.

The 'miner's' couch, mirrored hall stand, and several incidental pieces are from kits sent from Small Treasures in Australia. Phil made the



remaining furniture. Most accessory pieces are from Sussex Crafts in the UK, as were the three coal heaters and kitchen stove located in the chimney recess, Phoenix Models. The wagon wheel lights were built for us by Lighting Bug, the cash register is from Nantasy Fantasy, and much of the food is from "The English Kitchen." The stone floor and the herringbone brick kitchen floor were made using 1/32" basswood that was cut and shaped, glued to airplane plywood, coated with a slurry of plumber's putty and paint, then painted, enhanced with washes, and sealed. The various exterior chimney pots and half-timber designs represent styles common in that period.

The Eastman House

The Eastman House still exists in Ashtabula, Ohio. Mary's Swedish-born grandparents moved there in the early 1900's. It was occupied by family members most of the 20th century. Mary remembers standing at the ironing board in the kitchen being taught how to properly iron napkins and handkerchiefs.

A niece remembers falling down the treacherous basement stairs. This structure represents the back third of the house as it looked in the late 30's and 40's. The kitchen floor was a very special project. Mary copied the pattern for the shapes from old photos and then had a rubber stamp made. The pattern was then stamped on parchment-type paper, hand colored, and sealed with clear acrylic. The bathroom was heated by warm air drifting up through the register in the kitchen ceiling. Phil made most of the furniture, being able to duplicate what was actually there because some of the pieces are still in the family. The refrigerator was gas! The light wood furniture that looks like old quarter-sawn oak is miniature scale English beech sent to us from S.H. Goode.

Cabinet House

In the Cabinet style house there are seven rooms in the Art and Crafts style. They are protected by clear plastic. The pieces were made by Phil (most from Scale Cabinetmaker plans) and Mary (from Fernwood Miniatures kits). Mary made the central inglenook from plans in two 1996 issues of the Scale Cabinetmaker. The other six rooms were based on details found in the "American Bungalow" magazine. The gramophone and cigar box came from Taller Targioni, the upright piano from Ralph Partelow, most of the pottery is Jane Graber's, and all linens and rugs are from the late Bonni Backe.

The plain walls in this unit were made by sealing the plywood, then covering them with plain wall liner made for full sized houses, and then painted. The floors were laid with individual strips, stained, and finished. Phil made the parquet floor in the dining room.

FEATURE



1 The dining room in the cabinet house. **2-4** A beautiful side table displaying delicate figurines, an old trunk with a perfect display table and a corner basin.





Visiting Anna's House

Aaron and Sarah Friedman created a very special dollhouse for their granddaughter, Anna. After 8 months it was completed in 1988 and is now displayed in a museum.

BY JERE FRIEDMAN

Every handmade dollhouse has its limitations, whether it be budget, skill sets or size. When Aaron Friedman spotted a modern French manor-style house in Atlanta, he knew it would be the perfect dollhouse for his Atlanta-born granddaughter, Anna, but it was huge! The full size house was a sprawling 110 foot wide mansion that would have resulted in an enormous dollhouse. He compressed the layout to 68 inches, or the equivalent of 68 feet; a palatial manor house by any standard.

It was an immense undertaking, considering that Friedman worked with only a table saw, jig and saber saws, a few Dremel tools and an assortment of hand tools. Like all his dollhouses, this house is held together with 200 or more wood

screws, which enabled Friedman to assemble and disassemble the various elements of the house during construction. He estimated that he took apart and put back together every house he made between 15 and 25 times!

“It was a labor of love for them both.”

For this self-taught carpenter and miniature artist, his exacting work was reflected in everything he made, from a full size card table that included inlays of the four suits in a deck of cards to a miniature grandfather clock that fully functioned. Little did Aaron know that these small projects would plant the seeds and establish skill sets he would

need later to create 8 magnificent dollhouses. With the help of his wife, Sarah, who took on the task of decorating each room in exacting detail, the couple would spend months on each one. It was a labor of love for them both.

Anna's House was completed in 1988 and sports a facade of stucco made from a mixture of plaster of paris and sand and painted a light pink color with off-white trim. The roof is covered with gray hand-cut asphalt shingles. The double front doors feature etched glass panels with brass coach lights mounted on each side. The exterior is bordered by planters filled with evergreen shrubs and flowers. Two brass bird-baths adorn the grassy front lawn.

The entryway features a landing with semi-circular steps made of



Opposite page: A front view of Anna's house, built and decorated by Aaron and Sarah Friedman.

1-2 A look into the 1:12 scale formal dining room.

alternating walnut and birch veneer that lead down to the main living area. A pedestal table rests on a round needlepoint rug, made by Sarah and is illuminated by a crystal chandelier. Black wrought iron railings flank the steps leading down into the living room and match the spiral staircase leading up to the second floor.

‘A silver tea service is placed atop the sideboard and a silver candelabra adorns a side table.’

Built-in shelves on either side of the front doors hold a number of decorative treasures, and the Friedmans created miniature family photographs to hang on the upstairs landing walls. The living area is arranged on one side of the first floor entry with the dining room and kitchen on the other. The floors are made of walnut veneer strips glued down one at a time, then sanded, sealed and finished.

The living area is decorated with salmon-pink wallpaper and another of Sarah's handmade needlepoint rugs. Two sofas and an easy chair are covered with tan upholstery.



FEATURE

1 A gorgeous view of the entryway with a spiral staircase. **2** The sunny Florida room. **3** A large window in this room lets in lots of light. **4** The entryway in this dollhouse has large shelves on each side of the door to display treasures.



Magazines and books grace an end table and a framed portrait of Anna hangs over the mantle of the floor-to-ceiling fireplace.

French doors on either side of the fireplace provide access to the Florida room filled with white

wicker furniture. The seat cushions are covered in pale pink and green upholstery that blends perfectly with the light oak flooring and beige wallpaper. Even the blades of the ceiling fan have delicate floral designs that match the upholstery, wall



Above is the formal living room with a grand fireplace as a focal point. To the right is the kitchen.

hangings and the lush houseplants in pots that fill the space.

Dark mahogany furniture, off-white wallpaper and matching upholstery and another Sarah Friedman rug create a formal environment in the dining room. A silver tea service is placed atop the sideboard and a silver candelabra adorns a side table.

In the kitchen, bright white cabinets are set against walls covered in a whimsical duck and flower fabric, which was also used to create the skirt on the breakfast table, the cushions on the black ladder back chairs and the trim on the café curtains. The table is set for two, with a Tiffany-style stained glass light fixture hanging above and an orange and brown tile floor beneath. The kitchen is equipped with a Cuisinart





- 1** This bathroom sports a bold black and white decor.
- 2** The bedroom is decorated in the French manor style.
- 3** Hand-painted furniture adds a custom touch to the bed and wardrobe and makes the room feel delicate and inviting.

and coffee maker, and a bag of groceries is set on the kitchen counter beside a coffee mug imprinted with Anna's name.

The second floor contains two bedrooms, each with adjoining baths, situated on either side of the upstairs landing. In one, the off-white bed, armoire, dressing table and bench are decorated with a painted floral pattern in keeping with the French manor style. Peach-toned carpeting and wallpaper create a warm feeling, while delicate



lace serves as the bedspread and bolster cover. One of Sarah Friedman's cross-stitched pillows completes the decor.

The Friedmans chose a striking black-and-white color pattern for the adjoining bathroom. Deep-pile

black carpeting and white wallpaper with black polka dots set off the white cabinets that are trimmed in black. Mirrored tiles add depth and dimension to the space. Sarah made the thick white towels monogrammed with Anna's initials.



Above is the second bedroom. Below is the upstairs landing with family photos.

The second bedroom and bath are finished in blue and white. The Friedmans used white fabric with

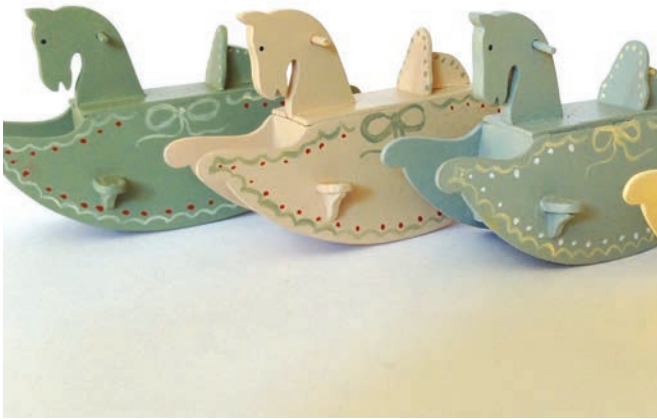
pastel hearts for the bedspreads, chair upholstery and as the coverings on the dressing table and

bench. Sarah's cross-stitched pillows are arranged on the beds. Translucent stained glass panels with blue and purple swirls, inserted on either side and above the doorway between the bedroom and bathroom, follow the complicated angles of the roof. The author, a former cabinetmaker, helped Aaron to redesign the original house to scale and to solve problems in laying out the roof lines.

The bathroom fixtures are pink marble with gold fixtures and were made in England. The base of the sink is fashioned in a fish-and-sea-shell design. A family friend, Pearl Brook, made many of the curtains, drapes, bedspreads, flower arrangements, and other accessories that can be seen throughout the house.

Anna's House took 8 months to complete and is currently on display at the History Museum of Mobile.





Big Dreams for a Small Scale Hobby

Scott loves challenging himself to create things that seem impossible to make. His amazing 1:12 scale Hammond organ has been his favorite creation so far!

Let's get to know Scott Walters. He works as a courier for FedEx, but in his free time he makes miniatures and looks forward to retirement when he can invest more time in his hobby.

What specifically do you make?

I create miniature replicas from full-sized objects in 1:12 scale. These replicas include children's rocking horses, an organ, sleds, and various pieces of furniture.

When did you first become interested in miniatures?

My mother worked at a craft shop when I was young, and she painted miniatures for the owner; I also enjoyed putting together plastic model car kits. I began creating miniatures approximately 8 years ago.

What do you do for your career?

I am an Air Force Veteran (6 years), and my career is a FedEx courier.

What does your family think of your interest? They are very supportive, and love everything I create. My biggest fan's are my mother and my sister.

‘I love challenging myself to create things that seem impossible. ’

Is it easy combining home life and miniature life? It's very difficult to do this! I'm usually worn out after working, and have very little



Scott Walters unwinding while making miniature furniture.

time to work on my miniatures. It's a part time hobby, and I feel I won't have time to work on it until I can retire from my job in several years.



Opposite page: The rocking horses and teddy bear chairs were scaled down from full-sized objects, then hand painted by Scott. **1** Scott's favorite piece is this 1:12 scale Hammond organ. **2** A 1:12 upholstered foot stool. **3** A collection of beautifully hand-painted sleds for the winter months.

Where do you sell your product?

I have only sold my artwork on one occasion, which was a miniature show in Atlanta.

What is the price range of your miniatures?

My items sold for \$15 (footstool), to

Where do you find inspiration?

I am inspired from full-sized objects that I see around me, or from museums, or photos.

Please describe your workplace.

I have an extra bedroom with two work tables, and shelves for all of my supplies. My table is set up directly

in front of my window for natural light. I do not work on my miniatures at night, without this natural light coming in. I also have a basement where I have several saws.

Have you made anything that you can't bear to part with?

Yes, my Hammond organ.





1 A beautifully made winter sled and kitchen appliances. **2** Some of the tools in Scott's basement. **3** A few more pieces that Scott enjoys making.



time. I am currently working on a baby grand piano, and am making an extra (for my sister).

What is your most valuable tool?
My mini drill press, by Microlux.

What is the biggest challenge in making miniatures for you?
Making things as accurately as possible.

What have you had the most fun making in miniature?
Creating the keyboard for my Hammond organ.

\$25 (rocking horses).

What do you love the most about making miniatures?

I love challenging myself to create things that seem impossible.

Do you have any formal training?

I have not had any formal training, other than my hobby of building

plastic model cars as a teenager.

What is your creating process?

Whenever I create an object, I draw the plans first, scale it down (using a mathematical formula), then create a prototype. I very rarely re-create my bigger objects (for example, the organ), but am told (by my family), that I need to create multiples at a





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Fine Hand-made Miniature Quilts

Miniaturist Wendy France has the ability to hand-stitched patchwork quilts in miniature that are stunningly beautiful to behold.

BY JOAN MCKENZIE

As a young child, Wendy France had a friend who had a dollhouse which sat on top of her wardrobe, so Wendy never had the opportunity to play with it, but she dreamed to be able to look inside of it. Perhaps when friends came over the parents protected it by moving it out of reach? We sometimes learn through misfortune that not all children are gentle.

The desire to peek inside her friend's dollhouse inspired Wendy to create her own miniature world by making rooms for her 1:6 scale "Sindy and Pippa" dolls.

We all have life experiences that prompt us to take charge of our lives. Wendy eventually found that the hollow in her heart from not being allowed to see or touch the interior of that faraway dollhouse could be repaired with her own entrance into the miniature world, but she kept that desire tamped down quietly until 10 years ago. It was at that time when her youngest son left home to go to University, she knew it was time to indulge her life-long dream of owning a dollhouse. Wendy was not certain where the urgent desire came from, but it was like an awakening and once begun, there was to be no stopping her.

She very much wanted to recreate the wonderful memories of her

Grandmother's home, where she had spent many happy childhood summer holidays. From the very start she wanted everything to be as realistic as possible and that is what she continues to strive for with the miniatures that she creates. Her recreation of her Granny's house in Scotland remains a work in progress.

In addition, Wendy was always fascinated by her Grandfather's workshop where he painstakingly recreated the sailing ship "Cutty Sark" in miniature, using everyday things that took on a new and enchanting miniature life.

She very much wanted to recreate the wonderful memories of her Grandmother's home, where she had spent many happy childhood summer holidays.

Wendy is best known for her hand stitched miniature patchwork quilts with complimentary cushions, as well



as her hand stitched miniature 'hook style' and braided rugs. For this kind of fine hand needle work she requires her magnifying eyeglasses and an exceptionally fine needle.

She and her younger brother used to spend several weeks each summer with their grandparents who lived in a large house in a small Scottish mining village which was about a 200 miles drive from their home. The house itself was fascinating to her as a child as it was quite grand and full of interesting things that had been accumulated over generations.

She especially loved sitting in front of the open fire with her Granny pottering about in the kitchen. Granny was a great cook. Everything was homemade and delicious. The children spent their days exploring the local county



side or investigating the inside of the house if it was raining. They also amused themselves in the large garden where Granny would grow her own vegetables. In addition, they loved watching their Grandpa create things in his workshop. Grandfather was a painter of local renown and an interior decorator before he retired. He was known far and wide as an accomplished and gifted artist. Wendy owns a large oil painting that he gifted to her as a child.

Her favorite activity was helping Granny on baking day. She would spend an entire day baking and the results were always divine!

Granny and Grandpa were heavily active in their local church and community. Most of the village people knew them, so Wendy felt quite important when she ran errands to the local shops for them.





- 1 A green and purple 1:12 quilt.
2 A fun and colorful double size quilt. 3 A miniature 'hook style' rug.
4 A twin size quilt turned down and ready for a good nights sleep.
5 A closer look at the amazing details in Wendy's quilts.





The miniature kitchen that brings back so many wonderful memories for Wendy.

The children would accompany their grandparents to various events. Church festivals were their favorite. They usually came away with at least one treat of some sort.

There were also visits to relatives in Scotland, as both her Granny and Grandpa came from large families. They had one elderly Great Aunt who came to visit each week. She was a fascinating but formidable woman, having formerly been a hospital Matron back in the days when the Matron ruled the wards with an iron fist. They also loved visiting their Great Uncle who was a Scottish gamekeeper who always had an interesting tale to tell.

Wendy has very fond memories of her summer times spent with Granny and Grandpa for which she will be forever grateful. As a newly minted Grandmother herself, it makes those memories even more poignant

than in the past. Wendy worked as a mental health nurse for many years. After that career she decided to move into social care before taking a break to pursue other more creative projects. Recently she has strongly considered making miniatures her full-time career.

While working on the quilt and counterpane for the recreation of her Granny's dollhouse bed, she was quite pleased to find the exact fabric she wanted. She knew immediately that she could never part with this particular quilt, as it takes Wendy right back to her Grandmother's bedroom whenever she looks at it.

Wendy currently sells her handmade items at select dollhouse/miniature fairs in the UK, also online, and she also takes commissions via social media. She does plan to eventually become an IGMA artisan.

She is primarily self-taught. Her

own mother taught her how to thread a needle, after that the ideas for handmade creations came to her whenever she saw the perfect pieces of fabric. She has always been interested in sewing and crafting, from full sized soft furnishings, rugs, and upholstery, for which she did take evening classes, to making detailed historical costumes for her re-enactment hobby. She chooses to hand sew her miniature quilts, as that is what gives her the greatest pleasure. I do believe this may be the secret to the perfect drape she achieves with her quilts.

When I purchased my first two patchwork quilts from Wendy, I was struck by the color combinations as well as the precision of her tiny stitches. I was not prepared for the silky drape that she achieves as well her tiny squares of cotton fabrics. It is not easy to find print fabrics with



A pretty pink and yellow spring inspired quilt made with care and skill.



tiny 1:12 scale flowers but Wendy manages this seemingly effortlessly. Her coordinating skills rival that of any interior decorator that I have ever known. This is not something one can learn. It has to be intrinsic and intuitive.

Wendy believes that there is a strong future for miniatures as this art form is constantly evolving, capturing wider audiences, and embracing new trends. In addition, there is so much new technology, new and younger people who are captivated, and most importantly, it can be enjoyed on a variety of budgets.

She intensely admires the skill of other artisans, particularly those that make miniature food, flowers, ceramics, and other forms of needlework, such as knitting and crochet. Initially Wendy made her miniatures just for her own pleasure. It was during a visit to Miniatura in the UK where she received positive feedback, that gave her the encouragement to sell her own work.

She strives to make her miniatures as authentic as possible. She is constantly learning and refining her skills and still gets excited when she has ideas about her upcoming project.

A visit to a miniatures fair or even hunting for fabrics for her quilts is all part of the joy of this art form. She has many ideas for new miniatures to explore making and, like the rest of us, never enough time!

She loves collecting vintage fabrics, haberdashery, and other needlework items. And of course, Wendy loves collecting miniatures!



artist details

The Faded Geranium

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Instagram: [fadedgeranium](https://www.instagram.com/fadedgeranium)

big buzz

CONTESTS, PRODUCTS, NEWS, & VIEWS FOR MINIATURISTS

Highlights contest

We would love to know what your favorite highlights were in this issue of *DHM*. You could win a CastleCrafts kit by Belinda McWilliams from www.castlecrafts.co.za

All it takes is a small paragraph for our random drawing! Send your entry to **DHM79 Highlights contest**, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include *DHM* issue, your name and address as well.

The deadline for this contest is **Thursday, Feb 18, 2021**.



Recent winners

Highlights contest

Joyce from Kettering, OH

Study set giveaway

Kim from New Haven, MO

Tree giveaway

Jane from Sun City Ctr, FL

Magazine kit giveaway

Dixie from Boise, ID

A little reminder. Please remember to add ALL of the required info in your contest entries so you can be considered for the drawings!

Frame giveaway

We are donating this 1:12 scale frame (4" x 3.4") to give away. Send your entry to **Frame giveaway DHM79**, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include *DHM* issue, your name and address. The deadline for this contest is **Thursday, Feb 18, 2021**.



Scheduled Shows for 2021

Feb 6 & 7

San Diego, CA

47th Annual San Diego Miniatures Show & Sale will be held February 6 & 7, 2021 on Saturday from 10am-5pm and Sunday 11am-4pm. The show will be held at San Diego Marriott Del Mar, 11966 El Camino Real, San Diego CA 92130. For more information, please visit www.sdminiatureshow.com plus be sure to check updates and new details that will be posted on our social media pages! <https://www.facebook.com/sdminiatures/> and <https://www.instagram.com/sd.minishow/>

Updates and new details will be posted on our social media pages!

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Giveaway contributions

If you would like to be considered to have your products featured for our giveaways please email the editor at auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Your item and business link will be shown in contest listing.

American Miniaturist

Be sure to see Kristin Castenschield's amazing 1:12 scale reindeer in *American Miniaturist* Issue 211!



Be sure to like and follow Dollhouse Miniatures magazine on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Historic Horse Drawn Carriages

Miniaturist artist Patrick Duclou shares his scratch built 1:12 stable dating from the early 20th century. He has also made horse drawn carriages to add to the scene.

BY PATRICK DUCLOU

In my spare time, I have been building scale models of French houses in 1/12 scale. Building French shops and houses probably reminds me of my roots, allowing me to stay connected with the French culture and art de vivre. Only a few small stables still exist in French towns. Most of them have been converted into garages for automobiles.

After driving real horse for many years, I left France in 2006 for the sun of Thailand where I live now. And it is therefore with regret that I stopped driving horses. In this issue of *Dollhouse*

Miniatures magazine I present to you my stables as well as some horse-drawn carriages that I built. I suppose they were made to be modest stables for a townhouse.

For the structure, I started with an old prints of an exterior house view and the different rooms I was fortunate enough to find at a flea market while I was in France. After drawing the 1:12 scale plans based on the print, the building begins to take shape. It is made with Forex (white PVC foam board), a kind of white plastic that architects use for their models. It is lighter than MDF.

Then when the building and the

roof is assembled, I move on to the airbrush painting and the aging process, which is obtained by







1



2

1 The horse stable which is now sold to a lucky collector. 2 The dolls were created by artist Julie Campbell from the UK. 3 One could easily imagine that larger stables would also have housed a park-drag pulled by a team of four flamboyant horses. 4 The car shed and the hall in the stable building.



3



4



On of Patrick's horse drawn carriages with some luggage on the roof.

successive passes of very diluted paint. I love painting and aging my houses and shops that I build. Building miniature houses is my way to meditate and get away from the stressful lives we have. It can be a therapy. It teaches patience and stimulates our sense of creativity.

On the left of the house are the storage rooms for two carriages and the tack room, on the right are three horse stalls, the accommodations for the coachman is above the storage room. Then the hay shed is located above the stables. There is a staircase between the carriage shed and the stable to access the coachman's room.

The carriages that could have been found there are also made in Forex, painted with an airbrush. I also make the leather harnesses with metal buckles.



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The modest accommodations for the coachman are above the storage room.



Another carriage that Patrick has made. The right shows a close up of the house and a place to hitch a horse.





Above is a photo of the old print Patrick found that inspired this build. To the left, Patrick has added a watering station for the horses.

Below is a close up of the beautifully detailed roof on the building that Patrick made from scratch.





A Pet Boutique Diorama

Dioramas are fun to make, as Mary shows us with her 1:12 scale pet boutique. You can make them in any theme to highlight anyone's interests.

BY PAM NORTH

Florida housewife and miniaturist, Mary Ciccolella, focuses on creating charming room boxes and small scenes, saying she makes “whatever tickles my fancy, and all kinds of other stuff in 1:12 and sometimes 1:24 scales.” She had an arts background in college, then worked as a graphic designer, but she had no specific training in the miniature field until later classes with artisans such as Bill Langford and Rik Pierce.

Her interest in miniatures had simply begun in the 1980s with some buying/collecting, becoming more serious about a decade later. “My husband had bought me a dollhouse about 40 years ago, but I did not really get deeply into it until after that,” she explained. Now she makes dollhouse miniatures,

an interest that her husband finds ‘cute’ and encourages. He is her biggest fan.

One of her recent pieces is called *Woof Woof*, a 1:12 scale piece which she sees as a small animal boutique, with a storefront exterior on one side, and the inside front of the store on the other. “I always wanted to make something with an animal theme, as I had saved up enough stuff to make five room boxes! I’m glad I got a chance to use some of them.”

She belongs to two miniature clubs in Florida, Small Wonders and Merry Makers, each of which meets about once a month, and her shop idea was seeded there. “It is based on a piece that was designed by June Feurstenhaser in the 1990s,” Mary explained, “and it

was featured in a miniature magazine at that time. With my inclination to do a pet-oriented piece, this worked out nicely to incorporate all the things I had saved in my stash.”

The structure was made from scratch, with some pieces inside made by Mary, and others purchased. Materials used to make the piece included: foam board, wood, paper, wire for the flowers, and spackle for the exterior walls. “Making the stucco finish was kind of like icing a cake,” she remarked.

Creating the piece involved some innovation on her part. “I kind of fly by the seat of my pants in unknown territory, taking my time. If I run into a problem, I do nothing until the right idea or solution surfaces, and then I proceed. Fortunately, I did not run into any real



difficulties with this project, and the final piece turned out exactly as I had envisioned it. It evolved smoothly, and I'm thrilled with the result. I never give up on a piece. I may put it aside, and possibly rethink it altogether. When something isn't working out, one knows instinctively that to go forward is a waste of time. Part of the joy is the challenge and accomplishment, and, of course, the result!"

She had her own favorite parts about her piece, citing, "The cat on the shelf (where else would the cat be?), and the dog leash that came out well from scraps I had lying around. I often try to use paper or fabric from some other object I have made."

There was fun for her in its creation. "I loved designing where everything goes. As I may sell it in the future, I have left some open shelves so that whoever buys it can add some of his/her own things. I find it difficult to part with pieces, but unless I do, I cannot continue to make more, and I definitely

want to make more! I love making these things, but I'm running out of room!"

The project inspired other ideas for her to implement in future projects. "While I was rummaging through my stash, I came across a mini cup of cocoa, and I decided to add a piece of chocolate in the scene. I then thought it would be fun to add a piece of chocolate or candy to every other piece I work on, too. It's my own private joke tying one piece to another. Oops, not so private now! The candy idea all started with *Woof Woof*."

Inspiration for Mary has no end. "It's anywhere, in everyday things, and, of course, in Pinterest. I just let something catch my eye and let it incubate."

She finds that her biggest difficulties involved with working in miniatures is "finding the room for them all, and also having to stop working on them. Miniatures satisfy my artistic inclinations, and I love making items out of throw-away things. I have my husband fully

trained to let me see everything before he throws it out or recycles it. Some of my best work!"

When Mary, previously a New Jersey resident, made the move to Florida, she had to downsize to a much smaller, and necessarily neater, living space. "I now have a room that doubles as a workroom and office, but it changes the nature of my work area. I have less table space than I had before, but a prettier room.

"Before, I was in the basement alongside the furnace. Having daylight coming through the windows now is a better environment. There are periods of mess, followed by periods of clean, as I complete my commitment to finishing projects. I have lots of tools and a huge stash of objects." Of her tools, she cites her X-Acto knife and sharp scissors as her most valuable. "All the better for cutting, scraping, and poking!" she joked.

The downsizing before her move also entailed having to part with some of her things. "I get pretty

FEATURE



1 Lots of little details make the scene special. **2** Kitty food in the waiting. **3** Shelves are filled but with enough room for others to add items. **4** This cat found a cozy place to sleep up on the shelf.





Many of the items in this scene were in Mary's stash for a while.

emotionally attached, and don't always know how to be objective about pricing." She sells her products on Ebay currently, but is exploring other venues as well. "I just joined a Facebook group and may try selling through them." She occasionally has made some pieces to give to her friends, who felt they were special gifts, making those pieces special to Mary as well. She loves making miniatures. "It's so much fun to create pieces from scratch."

Striking a balance between home life and miniature life isn't always easy for her, as Mary joked, "Somehow real life always gets in the way! While real life has priority, I want to spend more time on miniatures, but unfortunately, I also must sleep!"

She has concerns about the future of miniatures, saying, "I feel pretty negative about it because it is a declining activity, but I see so many fabulous artisans throughout the world, making such spectacular things, I don't understand why people don't appreciate it more. It's heartbreaking that during this

pandemic so many shows have been canceled, and I don't believe this will help."

As for what's next for her, she looks forward to selling more of her work. "I love it when others like the objects I make. I also would like to try things I haven't done before. It's a big world with lots of ideas. Now



I'm working on a scratch-build of a Paris dollhouse, based on a design by Christine Lea Fresoni. The dollhouse is coming along slowly, as the book was in French!

Also on Mary's horizon is completing a beach cottage, one she says is "a little bigger than the *Woof Woof* piece, and with some different challenges, but still a subject that I have been wanting to do for a long time."





The Bungalow

Auralea Krieger used some down time to make a 1:12 bungalow with lots of textures. Here she shares materials and some of her techniques.

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

As we all know, 2020 was a tough year for so many. Honestly it was miniatures that kept me focused and positive. I had some down time and decided to make a special room box that I could sell to raise money. I wanted this project to showcase a lot of my favorite texture techniques. In this feature I will share my methods and hopefully inspire others to get creative!

I purchased some 1/2" thick gator board online to make the structure. Be sure to search through Google Shopping to get the best prices. While I waited for it to arrive I started making the floor. I have a full tutorial for this style of floor in *American Miniaturist* issue 192. Basically, I use wood filler on cereal box cardboard. Once it's dry I sand

it and cut my squares. Then each square is glued onto a large piece of cereal cardboard or another type of thin board with grout gaps in-between. Then, after painting, the gaps are filled with spackle.

When the gator board arrived I cut my shapes and assembled the structure. Wood glue along with nails pushed through to bond the pieces work great! Once the wall joints were dry, I applied the interior 'stucco'. Regular spackle applied in a similar texture to real stucco and then sanded is how I love to do this. Then I painted it in the color I preferred.

For the exterior texture, I used a Golden product that is basically a varnish with sand mixed in. It has a nice texture and worked perfectly for this project. It is expensive, but I

wanted to experiment with it. I think in the future I will just make my own mix with fine sand and varnish. Then it can be painted the color of your choice.

Once the exterior was finished, I started on the pavers. Rik Pierce has taught me so much over the years. He has many tutorials in past issues of *DHM* and *AM*. I have been a subscriber much longer than I have been the editor and saved all of his tutorials/features. He also has a great tutorial book at his Etsy store (Frogmorton Studios). I feel it would not be right to share his technique here, so please purchase his paperback tutorial book. It has such great content!

I will however share that I made a stamp with mat board and wood glue so I would be sure to have

FEATURE



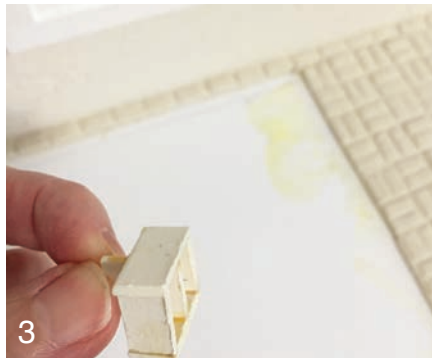
1 A close up of the stone floor.
2 The gate leads to the brick patio.
3 A pet door makes this retreat perfect for the residents best friend. 4 Making the most of a crack in the clay. 5 The ceiling is natural basswood planks that were sealed with clear varnish.



FEATURE



1 The spackle used for the interior wall texture. **2** Making window accents with paper and a punch. **3** The homemade stamp for the brick work was made with mat-board. **4** The Paperclay shown while still wet. **5** The crack that was filled with miniature 'grass'.



FEATURE



Above is a view of the bungalow's roof. Made with strips of precut shingles.

even brick work. First I apply wood glue to the gator board (regular foam board will warp) then I rolled out my Paperclay sheets and laid them on the glue. When the stamp is applied it gently presses the clay into the glue. It does shrink as it dries, so in the areas where it cracked I just added small bits of 'grass'. If you want no cracks you will have to keep checking on it and touching it up as it dries. Personally I feel that the small unplanned things that happen while we create are opportunities to add to the story.

I also used Paperclay for the stone walls. I glued the clay onto gator board and then carved out the stone. Once dry, I gave it a wash of colors.

The craft store has a selection of small gravel. To get the finest pieces I sifted it through a piece of tulle. Then glued it down with white



FEATURE

glue. The gate was made from scratch and hinged. The large window was made from basswood and Plexiglas. I added some fun accents to the window frame with a paper punch and hand-cut paper. The pet door was the perfect entrance to this little retreat.

The ceiling is natural basswood that was only varnished. I love the clean look of natural wood with the light stone floor and white walls.

I imagined this space could be so many things; a boutique, studio at the beach, a sweet shop or small coffee shop. I sold it on eBay and wonder what it has become. Hopefully I will see it one day, but the best part is knowing that it is bringing joy to someone else!

Be sure to follow me on Instagram @auraleakrieger because I never know what I will make next!



A close up of the facade texture. A tiny visitor stopped by while building.





1 The stone wall carving shown in progress. **2** Part of the finished wall. **3** My engraved maker plaque. **4** The window frame accent adds more interest to the frame. **5** Tulle is used to sift out the finest of the stone material. **6** Light coming through the finished window.



Sometimes You're Born with the Mini Bug

Dedicated miniaturist Francesca Pacciani takes us below ground to tour a traditional Italian Cantinetta. This room box was a joy to make and to share.

BY DEB WEISSLER

For many talented miniaturists, creating beautiful items to sell is their passion and often their bread and butter. For miniature collectors, like Italian miniaturist Francesca Pacciani, the passion is in the collecting. With a career in fine fashion and media planning, Francesca already has an eye for spotting the very best, and this has become her quest ever since a colleague introduced her to the world of fine miniatures.

Actually it was her friend's mother who was the collector, and she introduced Francesca to the world of properly scaled fine miniatures, shows, artisans and magazines. Up till then, Francesca's earliest experience with miniatures was a plastic ring in the shape of a clock, a prize found inside a bag of chips when she was a child. In her mind, the ring became a miniature watch and it sparked a love for tiny things. But by the time she was an adult, the memory of that ring had faded into the past.

It was the early 90's and London was Europe's gateway for miniature festivals and specialty shops. Francesca was told no visit would be complete without a stop at "The Singing Tree" on the outskirts of town. Francesca still laughs, recalling that fateful trip.

"I left for London on a very cold March day and I walked an endless stretch of Fulham Rd. before I realized it was impossible to reach it on foot, but necessitated a trip via tube. In the end, I arrived in what appeared to me as Paradise--a store with glass and wooden shelves filled with treasures, many produced by artists who, unfortunately, are no longer with us. Sadly, neither is the shop. But from that moment on, everything in my life changed."

Francesca bought her first dollhouse and fell unconditionally in love with 1:12 scale. She describes it as a religious experience, a realization that this was the one thing in life that would give her the most joy. Over time she looked for explanations for her obsession – she read about a need for controlling one's life or a form of artistic expression, but Francesca was convinced that she was simply born with the miniature bug!

Over the years she has done





everything to acquire beautiful miniature objects, which meant having to find a job that would sustain her economically and that, paradoxically, steals her time devoted to miniatures. Many of us can relate! "I have three unfinished houses and a myriad of boxes filled with wonderful objects waiting to be displayed," Francesca laughingly shakes her head.

While admiring an ironwork cellar door crafted by gifted iron artist Alan Hamer, Francesca had a vision – an Italian Cantinetta. More of a visionary than a DIYer, she turned to little-known Italian artist, Silvia Cucchi, who started her own miniature career reproducing authentic Italian cuisine. Shy and unassuming, Silvia possessed a multitude of

1 The room box features an eating area and a raised area for storage. **2** The niches have light inside showing more bottles of wine. **3** The storage area has lots of crates waiting to be organized.

skills, so Francesca commissioned her to create a typical Italian cellar with barrel vaults and spaces to sample the wine products, cold cuts and cheeses for which Italy is so well known.

“The walls and barreled ceilings are clad in brick.”

Silvia divided the room box in two, creating a raised stone floor with an arched brick entryway to showcase Alan's iron gate, and a lighted niche with shelving. A short flight of steps takes us to the larger lower level with stonework floor, and features an intimate dining area set before a large niche. The walls and



barreled ceilings are clad in brick.

Once the wine cellar was complete, Francesca set about filling the space with items she had been collecting for years and also pieces commissioned just for the Cantinetta. "I furnished the room with many of Silvia's creations and with the works of many other artists including Genziana Bellè, who covered the wine bottles in the niches with wicker. My dear and unforgettable late friend, James Watt, brilliantly reproduced the French-style wrought iron bottle rack and the wrought iron hook for hanging salamis. Alan Hamer, who unfortunately is now retired, made the time to produce the ironwork door decorated with grape clusters that had inspired the whole project."

Francesca is thrilled with how well the project turned out and is

already collaborating with Silvia on another project – a garage workshop. Meanwhile, her various dollhouses await completion, and that requires time and money. "In order to collect expensive pieces, I have to work really hard. So for the moment I am just stockpiling stuff and hope I will have time to decorate a lot of dollhouses and room boxes when I finally retire."

She also yearns for a work space. Right now she makes do with a bookshelf filled with boxes of treasures. "They are my life I could not live without," Francesca confesses. In the meantime, she continues collecting from the very best of international artists. So many of the world's great miniature artists have either passed, retired or are limiting their work to special commissions only. Her greatest

fear is that the high level of craftsmanship will disappear once the older artists are gone.

In the mean time, Francesca continues working and shopping and is looking forward to sharing her next project with all of us.



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Valentine Tutorials

Here are some past tutorials and cut-outs that pertain to this special day. Have fun making some mini magic!

DHM

Issue 13 - page 80 Hearts
flowers and gifts

Issue 13 - cutouts page

Issue 25 - cutouts page

Issue 73 - page 81 Valentine
goodies

Issue 81 - cutouts page

If you happen to have a subscription to our sister magazine, *American Miniaturist*, here are some more fun tutorials.

Issue 10 - page 36 Box of
chocolates

Issue 10 - page 62 Trinkets

Issue 34 - page 80 Chocolate
cherry cake

Issue 37 - page 85 Roses

Issue 46 - page 44 Valentine
cookies

Issue 46 - page 72 Candy box

Issue 82 - page 70 Treats

Issue 84 - page 26 Jewelry box

Happy Valentine's Day!



Gina's Instagram Favorites

Hello! I'm Gina Theesfield, a proud part of the Social Media team for *Dollhouse Miniatures* magazine. Like all of you, I am a miniature lover, so I'm thrilled to be highlighting some of the spectacular Instagram pages that catch my eye. You will be sure to be inspired by their miniature art.

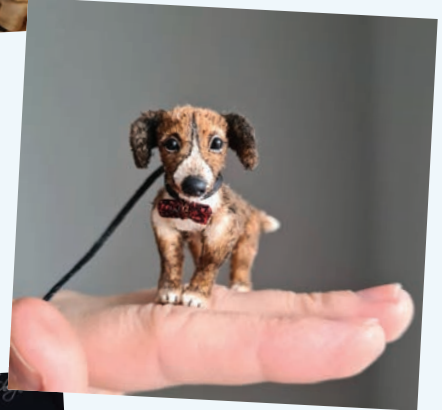


Aidapramar

Amazingly detailed hand-painted miniature furniture.

Tutsiminiworld

Expertly crafted adorable little animals.



Miniature.clay.flowers

Exquisite and realistic tiny hand-sculpted clay flowers.

Visit Gina on Instagram at [calico_garden](#)

little letters

FEEDBACK AND STORIES FROM OUR DEVOTED READERS

★ Star letter winner

In issue 77/78 of *Dollhouse Miniatures* magazine I fell in love with Julia Stewart's magical miniatures! We all need lots of cheer this year and seeing Christmas early made me so very happy. The attention to detail is stunning and each one of her pieces were made beautifully. There were lots of articles in this issue I loved including Kelly Kuehnert's amazing dollhouse! Keep the fun articles coming and Happy New Year!

Carol from Indianapolis, IN

Sharing minis

Here are a few wee pics of last year's bauble. I really hope you like it! Thankfully back in form now and in a more productive mode, and well on the way for this year's bauble too and I will send you a few wee pics of work in progress! Hope all is going well with you! It is hard to think that another year has flown in!

Conal from UK



Cream Filled Heart Shaped Sponge Cake

Make an individual miniature Valentine dessert along with miniaturist Mary L. Martin.

BY MARY L. MARTIN

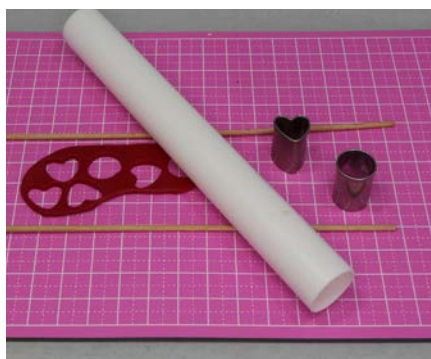
Valentine's day is special. Whether you are spending it with your spouse, partner, close friend, new friend, or other favorite person. It is a day or evening to splurge. My miniature Valentine's day setting is ready for sharing a luscious dessert.

The setting is comfortable, pleasant, intimate and warm and even though there are many desserts to choose from on the buffet I chose to have individual cream filled heart shape sponge cakes presented on our table for my guest and myself. The heart cake choices were mocha milk chocolate filled with vanilla cream, straw-

berry filled with fresh cream or the softest red velvet cake filled with sweet butter cream.

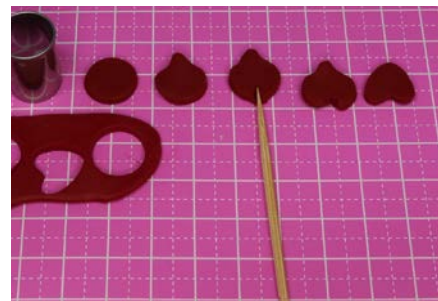
We will spend time over cake and coffee, maybe more cake and coffee or another beverage. Time will pass quickly as we celebrate together enjoying each others company. Valentines enjoy these times.

Step 1: Prepare the clay by cutting a 1/2" x 1" section of each color. Knead the clay to assure smooth consistency and texture. Form an elongated oval from each color segment. Set aside.



Step 2: Roll one of the clay shapes between the dowel rods, as shown, on non-stick surface. Cut the desired shape using two cut shapes for one sponge cake. Repeat cutting shapes from each color. Set the individual cut shapes aside. Use the bristle brush to lightly roll over

each heart to create the sponge texture. Set shapes aside.



If you do not have a heart shape cutter you may cut a circle using a circle cutter or found object such as a straw section. You will see the circle cut sections are shaped into a heart shape by first pinching a section of the circle with your fingers to create the bottom point and then cutting down just a small bit into the top edge of the circle with a toothpick. The circle top edge should be cut enough to shape two heart top curves. You will be please how uniform the hearts are.

Step 3: Place all of the cut heart shapes onto a tray or ceramic tile. Bake the tray of heart shapes according to the package directions. Allow to cool.

Step 4: Use the clay tool to spread the caulk frosting on one smooth heart shape placing another heart



You will need

- Polymer clay – 083 Red, Ballerina Pink, 5392 Sienna
- Two 1/16" x 6" dowel rods
- Toothpick
- Clay tools – bristle brush, flat curved edge
- Rolling tube or rod
- Shape cutters – 1/2" cutters, heart shape or circle
- Non stick baking sheet or ceramic tile
- Fast Dry Acrylic latex Caulk Plus Silicone
- Thin spatula (optional)

onto the caulk to form an individual cake, squeeze lightly. Set the cakes aside to dry. They dry, set up, quickly. The caulk should extend a bit around the edges of the joined cake layers. If the caulk has smeared lightly on a cake top or bottom it may be removed when dry by light scraping, even with a fingernail.

You will have up to 18+ individual miniature Valentine cakes to place on a platter, stack on a glass dome covered cake stand, place on individual serving dishes or to share with friends. They would also be fun to gift in a miniature bakery box. Visit www.martinsminiature-marketplace.com to see more.



Become a *Dollhouse Miniatures* contributor



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Tell us your story

Do you love making miniatures and/or miniature scenes? Do you have an collection of miniatures? If so, then we want to hear from you! Send in your story (no more than 750 words, please!) and some photos to be considered for publication.

Keep us in the loop

Are you a member of a miniature group, charity, or show? Or do you know of an upcoming event or mini-terrific news story? Keep us in the loop by sharing it with us!

Teach us

If you have a passion for teaching miniatures, or dollhouse tips, tricks, and techniques, then we'd love to hear from you.

How to submit

We want to hear from all miniaturists, and those who have a passion for this wonderful art form. Do you want to be a part of our next fun, fresh, and fabulous issue? Email your ideas, contributions, and questions to auralea@ashdown.co.uk.

We look forward to you joining the *Dollhouse Miniatures* team!



A Little Place to Quench Your Thirst

Miniaturist Paul Block made a retired sailor's refuge in 1:12 scale. Come on in and have a drink while you share old seafaring stories in this work of art.

BY PAUL BLOCK

At the end of a long pier, Wetrock is a quiet refuge for old sailors who have not yet given up their sea legs. She was inspired by a long kayak trip I took years ago when I ran out of drinking water. While paddling my kayak, I searched the shoreline for any sign of potential watering holes. Wetrock reflects what I envisioned as a probable quest. My thirst deepened in the lengthy time before finding water. The details of a potential refuge continually ran through my head. Perhaps even a quiet little place with a water hydrant would suffice. Wetrock is an attempt to recreate and, in a way, relive that adventure.

Wetrock is my first serious attempt at making my work more believable. I used many of the vari-

ous techniques I have gained over the years. I selected the exterior paint mainly to contrast the dried salt residue that shows all around the outer walls.

“Wetrock is an attempt to recreate and, in a way, relive that adventure.”

The coarse and weathered look of each board was achieved by using a wire wheel in a drill. A lengthy step but well worth the time. Using this technique, I could select certain areas to show a heavier state of decay. I concentrated most of the



A side view of 1:12 scale Wetrock.

decay on the bottom of the building where the saltwater spray would more frequently reach.

The interior paneling color took a lot of trial and error. If you compare the inner walls you will notice

subtle variances in the aged appearance in each room. I am most pleased with the paneling in the kitchen just above the cabinets. The most authentic of the looks involved four different colors of paint. I used a paint brush, wet rag, toothbrush, and some soft steel wool.

The weathered pier posts were the most consuming time wise. I never took the time to count the steps because my process needs more work. I think at this point there may be seven steps but who is counting.

The colors to employ on a furniture piece is always a tough call to make. Some pieces represent a more permanent fixture like the



The dining area has a big glass double door.

FEATURE



1 The kitchen cabinets were worn to reflect that they were built long ago at the same time the structure was. 2 The hall is where you hang your coat. 3 The glass doors let in light. 4 Working light in the dining area. 5 This room feels cozy and fresh, a great place to have lunch.





kitchen counters. They require a lot of thought when achieving a believable match to the buildings age. The more somewhat temporary props chairs, dinner tables, stools, curtains are more forgiving. They can be mixed and matched or changed easily. If you think about it, a building when it was first built was new. There was extraordinarily little wear on anything. So, the thing to do is to show the buildings modernization over the passing of time.

A modern phone can subtly help sell a buildings age oddly making it look older. The interior furniture needs to show wear as well. Ever see a well-used chair? The armrest and seat are always worn. After painting and other prep work, I use a little sandpaper or steel wool on the high wear points and make an area or favorite chair look used.

The lighting techniques are new

“If you think about it, a building when it was first built was new.”



The perfect vintage pieces add nostalgia to this project.

as well. Nothing is more frustrating than working to set the ambience of a room just to have it all wiped out by the bright light you just installed. When this happened to Wetrock I decided to do something about it. After a lot of consideration, I lifted the lampshade of



1 The row boat is full of boating gear. **2** An outdoor view showing all the marvelous details that Paul added. **3** Pier posts show age in a delicate way.

the light and used a black sharpie on the bulb. I replaced everything in the room and when I turned the light back on it was utter success. Inspired by this success I purchased multicolored sharpies and lightly colored the lights in each

room. It has been wonderful. I now can control the lighting in each room individually. I can even introduce color to the walls and floors by using the colored pens.

Wetrock took about a year to complete. I learned many new techniques in the build. In that time, I have walked the docks and smelled the salty air. I sat at the bar and ordered a sandwich. Played a game of pool. She has been a lot of fun. And now to top it all off, I get to share her with all of you. Be well and stay safe!

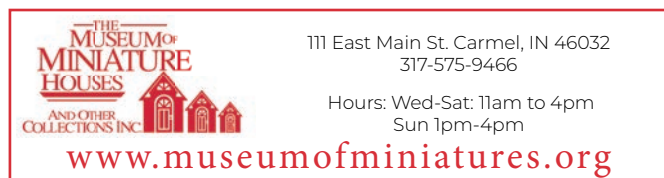
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1. Publication title: Dollhouse Miniatures 2. Publication number 1094-1916. 3. Filing Date: 10/2/2020. 4. Issue Frequency: Bi-monthly. 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 6. 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$59.99. 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known office of Publication: PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: Kelly Johnson, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. Editor: Aurala Krieger, 606 Light Rd, Abingdon, MD 21009 Managing Editor: None. 10. Owner: Kelly Johnson, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. Ashdown.co.uk Ltd, PO Box 2258 Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 9BA, UK 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. None. 12. Tax Status: Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months. 13. Publication Title: Dollhouse Miniatures. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Nov/Dec 2019. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: Subscription & Single Issue Sales a. Total Number of Copies. Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: 2831. No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 2800. b(1). Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies). Average No. Copies Each issue During Preceding 12 Months: 2312. No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 2303. (2) Mailed In-county Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies). Average No. Copies Each issue During Preceding 12 Months: 34. No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: 23. 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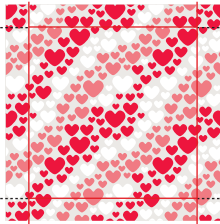
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