

DOLLSHOUSE WORLD

World's best selling miniatures magazine

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contents

small details

● Issue 346

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welcome

This issue comes to you full of sparkling ideas and inspiration for the festive season.

Caroline Dupuis had to eschew her favourite shabby chic pastel shades in favour of the traditional greens and reds when she made her Christmas cottage, but the result still has a romantic feel.

Jane Crosland, working in a smaller scale, has transformed a model railway kit into a winter wonderland Christmas eve church scene. Denise Morales found she could overcome the common roombox problem of "so many ideas and such little space" by creating a shabby chic shop packed full of gorgeous pieces. You can imagine wandering around inside trying to carefully negotiate the narrow aisles.

We talk to artists who work with Christmas ideas all year round, whether they're creating wonderfully adorned trees or herds of reindeer.

We've got some lovely seasonal projects too, and if you're short on time Sandra's been thinking of you. She's come up with some quick and easy festive ideas that anyone can fit into a busy schedule.

But whether you choose to sit back and wallow in the warm glow of other people's achievements or create your own mini festive sparkle, we just want you to, in the words of the song, 'have yourself a merry little Christmas'.

Richard.

email: richard@ashdown.co.uk



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Karen shows how to create a quick wreath and garland for your tree

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"What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future."

Agnes M. Pahren

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Caring for the environment: Here at Dolls House World we're as concerned about the environment as you are. We're doing everything we can to ensure the magazine is produced in the most eco friendly way possible. Our magazine is printed using vegetable-based inks on an environmentally responsible paper, which is certified by the prestigious FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council), the not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the promotion of responsible forest management worldwide. Our paper also carries the internationally recognised EU Eco-label. Our local printers, Gemini Print, are just a few miles from the DHW offices. They are one of the leading eco friendly printers in the UK, with both FSC® and ISO 14001 certification. They are backed by a series of environmental credentials that allow them to work under the "Green Printing Label". Our printers are also a sponsor of the Woodland Trust – the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

HOUSE HUNT



Find the little house hidden inside.

■ Last issue it appeared on page 40.



Caroline's holly jolly Christmas cottage

This maker had to give up on her usual shabby chic pastel shades to create a house full of colour for the festive season

BY DEB WEISSLER

A departure from her quintessential white-on-white cottage palette, Caroline Dupuis has created a red and green colour palette swathed in snowy white for one excited client. It was quite the task for this talented artist, who confesses she loves all white interiors and exteriors, allowing her clients to add their own pops of colour to her vintage-inspired shabby chic cottages.

"Using these traditional Christmas colours was a task for me," she confesses, "but since it was a request from a customer, I knew I had to create the perfect cosy Christmas theme." Caroline understands cottage styles well, capturing all the charm and delight of tiny vintage dwellings that invite you to step inside to explore every nook and cranny. It's the stuff that dreams are made of and is a passion born from decades of love for interior design.

Born in France, and later living in Germany and then the US, she saw the very best of local and regional architecture. Her mother was very much into interior design and Caroline remembers a home always filled with dozens of design magazines she and mum devoured cover to cover. She became obsessed with houses! These obsessions eventually lead her to construct and sell miniature architectural models of real homes made entirely of

cardboard. Occasionally, a prospective customer would ask if she could leave off the back so they could place doll's house furniture inside. Fearing her cardboard structures would never hold the weight of furnishings, she declined. But after several requests she decided to give it a try, transforming an out-of-the-box kit into something quite unique that became a Cinderella moment.

She kit bashed the tiny structure and sold it on Etsy in twelve hours. To prove her success wasn't just a one-off, she

tried another and that sold in less than a day. More kits followed, each one affording Caroline the chance to experiment and learn. Before long she was ready to build a cottage from scratch.

Caroline's style is vintage-inspired European and American cottage, weathered to a soft patina that includes cracked plaster, worn floorboards, torn and faded wallpaper, shabby chic furnishings, and a profusion of flowering vines that enfold the cottage from foundation to eaves. Her windows and doors are all handmade and mismatched, invoking an era when cottages were put together by hand and not with pre-made components. The exteriors are finished with diluted paint that allows the wood grain to show through. The results are positively charming.

Regardless of its architectural style, Caroline's cottages imbue a similar theme: a romantic, girly, dreamy hideaway. Her furnishings are mostly handmade as she dislikes the overly formal and brand new look of store bought doll's house furniture.

In fact she loves strolling the aisles of big box home stores and large hobby outlets, searching for wood,



Left: A front view of the twelfth scale Christmas cottage lovingly made by Caroline Dupuis.



Above: The Christmas cottage shown from the back.





veneers, craft sticks, premix concrete, paints, and plaster. Cottage wallpapers are often fashioned from papers found in the scrapbooking section, where 3D papers provide textured ceilings and wainscoting. Then it's off to the floral department for vines and flowers. Last stop is the jewellery making aisle where it's always a thrill to find the perfect embellishment. What she can't find retail she makes herself or orders on-line. A self taught artist,

Caroline loves figuring things out in her head and then translating it onto paper like a complex puzzle. "I went from doing all the things I do in real life—painting rooms, furniture, re upholstery, and decorating to doing it in miniature." While doing a commission, Caroline often gets to know her client well, from design concept and during the construction process, discussing wants and needs. By the time the cottage is complete, both artist and client are emotionally attached to the finished product. Such was the case with Holly Jolly Christmas Cottage.

"This doll's house was all made from scratch. The only things I did not

make by hand was the wooden side chair, Christmas tree, snow-man and the sleigh out front and I purchased the pine garland and wreaths. Everything else was made from scratch." The mantel above the fireplace Caroline finds particularly cosy and the theme allowed her to play with snow, something she doesn't incorporate often.

Shipping her structures creates the biggest headache. "I always worry about the houses getting to their new owner in perfect condition. Everything else I can control or find solutions. But shipping is out of my hands."

It's all worth it in the end however when the cottage arrives at its new home and its owner embraces its simplicity of form, casual elegance, and vintage-style décor. It's truly a fantasy come to life.

As an interior designer, Caroline believes miniatures are a forever thing. Even if you're not into dolls and furnishings, you can always decorate your home with a mini house, adding a touch of whimsy to almost any room.

Above: *It is all the finishing touches that make Caroline's creations one-of-a-kind.*

"Making doll's houses has been the perfect way to try out all my design dreams," Caroline says. "Not only do I have a dream job, but I've met the nicest people in the world who are truly magical – miniaturists."



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Christmas church set up after a cruel eviction

We take a look at another of Jane Crosland's lovely little creations, with a detailed model railway kit forming the basis of an inspired Christmas Eve scene

BY SANDRA HARDING

I was trying to remember when my love of miniatures first raised its head and I think it was sparked by jealousy of my cousin's little train set when I was about five years of age.

This lovely cardboard church kit by Metcalfe, the model railway suppliers, reminded me of that early memory, along with the wonderful, detailed layouts I see at model railway shows. I wasn't surprised, therefore, to find out from owner Jane Crosland that this is 1/160th scale — about N gauge in railway terms.

We have featured Jane's little creations before so forgive me this bit of self indulgence showing you even more, but I know a lot of you also rather secretly (or not) like model railways too.

Jane always modifies her kits to suit her need and this one was no exception. The box the church is in was an old display box which had held a Christmas family scene and measures 14" long x 10.5" high x 8" deep. The

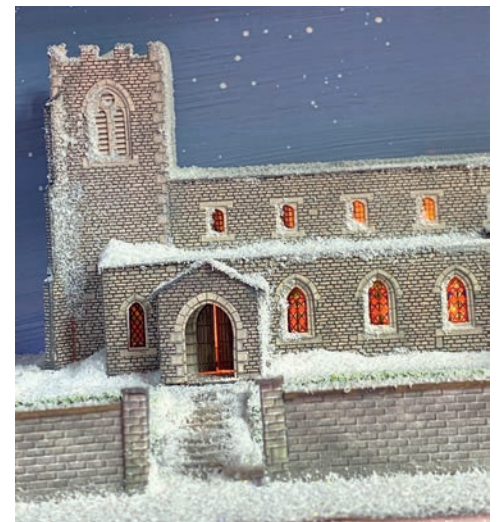
family were cruelly evicted by Jane, even though it was Christmas and, to add insult to injury, she gutted the entire box.

Jane painted the night sky pale blue, added a layer of glue and blew glitter on it. A picture of the moon was printed and stuck on, adding a bit more glitter as she went. A girl can't have too much glitter after all. Little holes were drilled in the top to take the battery-run lights and then more lights were added to the church itself, to great effect.

The back wing of the church was not used, but Jane did add all the windows on display. The trees were made from sea foam and she made all the trunks from air dry clay, which were then painted.

Woodland Scenics soft snow was added with Jane making sure that the direction and angle of the snow was all the same — a good point! The church's stained glass windows took many hours to do using permanent marker pens (clever) and Jane added a tiny cemetery of course.

The people in the scene are mainly model railway figures by Noch, and some needed repainting. It is Christmas Eve and the service is to start shortly. The choir is warming up as the stragglers arrive but, as it's the season of goodwill, they merely tut-tut at the boys throwing snowballs and making snowmen, instead of getting cross. They will soon be taken in to the service by their parents anyway.



By the way, for those of you worried about the evicted family, Jane assures me they have a nice new home, which even has bedrooms!





“Jane always modifies her kits to suit her need and this one was no exception.”



LITTLE LINKS:

Metcalfe Models

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See the Metcalf advert on P7

WHERE I WORK

WE TALK TO ANNA RYASNOVA ABOUT WHERE SHE CREATES HER WONDERFUL NEEDLE FELTED ANIMALS

Hi Anna, we know you make copies of people's pets that owners love.

But you didn't start with miniatures? No, my first works were much bigger until a client commissioned me to portray her puppy in twelfth scale about eight years ago. I accepted the challenge and to this day I have not stopped accepting challenges in miniature.. I love working to order and making my clients' ideas and dreams come true.

Where do you work? I work in my apartment; I turned one of my bedrooms into my little workshop.

Do you always make your minis in the same place? Yes, that is how it is. Here I can allow myself to leave chaos and half-finished work: a total mess! I'm laughing right now, saying this, in addition to feeling ashamed, but it's true.

Do you work at set times? Hardly ever. It depends



on my inspiration and sometimes, unfortunately, I have it at night when everyone is already asleep. Usually, only my two cats accompany me during those hours.

What makes your space for mini making so special? This is where time ceases to exist. I forget everything and my work absorbs me completely. It's like a door to Narnia — I just disappear.

Do you keep your workspace private or do you let other people/pets in? My sons and my pets are always welcome. To you and my friends, on the other hand, the doors are only open on occasions like today when my workshop is in acceptable condition. At other times, I am ashamed of my disorder.

Do you listen to music or the radio while you work? I always have some background music on or a movie or audiobooks.





Photography by @tatizoom and style by Elena Esteban.

Name one thing that is banned from your workspace. Organisation of space like in IKEA. I need my mess.

Describe your workspace in five words. Wool, needle, wire, photography, inspiration.

What is the one thing that your workspace can't be missing? Inspiration and dark chocolate.

What would be your dream workspace? Having

more space to be able to work with more people. A house with a garden overlooking the mountains would be perfect!

Thanks for chatting with DHW Anna. We'll let you get back to creating disorder.

● Needle Felted Miniature Animals by Anna Ryasnova
Email: artesianianry@gmail.com
www.etsy.com/shop/annaryasnova

"I FORGET EVERYTHING, AND MY WORK ABSORBS ME COMPLETELY. IT'S LIKE A DOOR TO NARNIA—I JUST DISAPPEAR."

Manor reflects Cheryl's love of festive season

Twelve-roomed Farrar Manor is home to seven Christmas trees, but that's not a lot when you consider she has nine in her full-size house

BY SANDRA HARDING

I waited most of my life for a beautiful Tudor house and my dream eventually came true. For Cheryl Farrar, though, this dream came true at the tender age of nine, when her father built her one.

It gave her many, many years of happiness but life moves on and eventually Cheryl graduated from college and decided to give her Tudor house an update which she did, giving her even more years of pleasure. Now grown up (I challenge any dollshouser to ever be grown up!) Cheryl really yearned for a big, beautiful colonial mansion and decided to have one made to her own design and vision.

With her best friend, Lenny Morio, in tow she visited her local diy store and came home with enough wood to start construction. I should just mention here that it was actually Lenny who built the house (nice friend) so I am sure that she had something to say in the choice of wood. Building on the six foot by three foot house started (wow) and Cheryl had already decided that the theme would be Christmas.

Her real house has nine (yes nine) Christmas trees in it at this time of year and her doll's house she decided would have at least seven, all lit up. Cripes! Originally there were to be fifteen (yes 15) rooms in the house but once construction started Cheryl decided to make the living room and master suite double size, ending up with twelve rooms, as that's about all



the cleaning staff can manage.

Having written about hundreds of doll's houses over the years I was trying to remember if I have ever used the word 'magnificent' before (please tell me if I have). Whether I have or not, I am glad that I can use it on this house, as it is truly magnificent. Just look at the wonderful Christmas trees, each one a work of art by artisans, including Jo Bevilacqua. The one in the study Cheryl made herself.

There are pieces by Mzia and Bespaq, while the lighting is all by Getzan, and the curtains are all custom made to Cheryl's design by Russian maker Tan-ya Shevtsova. There are couture bags and shoes, made by Valerie Bonomi, as the lady of the house is very fussy and loves to keep up with fashion.

Cheryl cares passionately about animals and she has carried that passion over into her mini world. There are little creatures here from Deb Anderson, Ewelina and others, and lots of the beautiful pieces of furniture and







accessories bought from The Philadelphia Miniature Show.

I am told that a very prominent dentist lives here with his wife and she is happy to tolerate the occasional dentures and x-rays in the house. After all, they are in his study and she hardly ever ventures in there anyway. They have a delightful little daughter, Annabella, who loves her new, pretty draped cot but we won't disturb her as she is sleeping.

I have also noticed a very well equipped gym in the house, so obviously they are a fit family. The lady in the wheelchair is the matriarch and does not approve of all this fitness stuff. She happily reads or knits claiming that's all the exercise she needs.

It really is an amazing, magnificent creation and I so want to live in this house, in full size of course.





First
 prize in our
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 competition,
 see page
 74.



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Shabby chic challenge in a festive roombox

Denise takes us through all the stages of how she created and filled this wonderfully decorated twelfth scale roombox in pink and green tones



BY DENISE MORELS

I had already completed two 1/24th scale room boxes in the traditional red and green Christmas colours a few years previous to this box.

I had always wanted to do a Christmas themed box with pinks and sage greens, so when a fellow club member brought in a shabby Christmas table that I admired so much, I knew that I wanted to bump this themed room box up on my long list of miniature projects. I hope you enjoy this miniature Christmas shop that's full of imagined shabby chic items!

The large bookcase/fireplace unit was initially a challenge to decorate. I was able to unify the unit by first placing old books on the shelves and then adding all of the Christmas Santas, snowmen, angels, nutcrackers, and ornaments. It was further unified with the placement of the evergreens and the icicle trim, made by True2Scale.

The Christmas trees, nutcrackers, nativity and angels are all metal miniatures and the Santa is an inexpensive plastic piece. The following technique is what I use to paint almost all plastic, resin and metal mini pieces. First, I spray them with white primer, then wash with Folk Art antique medium, then paint with acrylics, then wash again with the antique medium, then coat with Mod Podge.

The "NOEL" decoration is a kit from Robin Betterly. I made the wreath in the picture frame by shaping a heart with cloth covered wire, then layering

with leaves cut with a leaf punch, then glued no-hole glitter beads on top.

To make the star/snowman garland, I covered star confetti with no-hole beads, glued no-hole beads around Santa and snowman millefiori, then glued these on a string. The snowflakes are punched from scrapbook paper and the glittered star and flower confetti are glued in the centre.

Christmas trees are made from cut, shaped and painted bump chenille pipe cleaners with glittered stars and no-hole beads glued inside the branches. Poinsettias are made from a Bonnie Lavish kit and I used the leaves to make the paler flower. Hand mirrors were a club project that were inspired by ones made by Lori Potts. The flowers on the metal mirrors are nail decals.

The perfect stocking was made by Paulette Svec. The laser cut Santas were a kit from Cynthia Howe. I then glittered the Merry Christmas confetti sign.

All of the Santas, snowmen, and churches are metal minis, plastic, or porcelain blanks painted in the same way that I described earlier. The angel on top of the books is by Valerie Casson. Swag garland is made from green floral wire, different coloured landscaping foam, no-hole beads and glittered pearl beads with glued on gold seed beads.

Some inexpensive plastic skates were painted with a pearlescent white, embellished with bunka, lace, paper

punched flowers, and gold beads to make them fancy.

Well, I guess I have a little bit of everything on the Chrysnbon mannequin. I had so many ideas and such little space that I had to combine fancy Christmas jewellery with a workday Christmas apron. I even threw in some ornaments and a vase for the mannequin's head. The gift wrapping station is probably my favourite part of this room box. The silk ribbon ornaments hanging on string were another wonderful group project that took about four weekly meetings to complete.

The bulletin board that displays gift wrapping embellishments was a lot of fun to make because I got to use bits and pieces from my stash.

The Christmas bulbs and tree topper are from the craft store and were clear plastic before I painted them with some Pearl Ex powdered pigments and water.

I used metallic sewing thread to make the curled ribbon around the cards. Ric Rac trim is glued around a paper cone and a toothpick was glued into a round wooden flat bead to make the base. The pink crochet wreath is from Paulette Svec and I furthered embellished it with beads, bunka, and a bow. Rhinestones and glitter embellish a plain pink bead. The three centre snowmen are metal minis and the two end ones are made from Shrinky Dinks paper.

Shoes for St. Nicholas Day are



“The gift wrapping station is probably my favourite part of this room box.”



painted and flocked metal clogs filled with purchased sliced millefiori canes (candy sticks made with twisted embroidery floss that is hardened with liquid super glue). Suitcase-stacked wooden discs glued together, sanded on bottom and covered with 1/2" scale paper from Robin Betterley.

Paulette Svec taught a snow people class and she also crocheted the pillow. I printed the black and white pillows onto ink jet fabric paper. I bought the

crocheted Santa at a show. The angels are made from plastic bottles and embellished with lace, trims and beads. I got the idea for these from life size ones when I was looking at a blog site.

The three centre Santas are porcelain blanks that I painted with acrylics and the two other Santas are made with Shrinky Dinks ink jet paper. The pinecones are from a tutorial from Lesley Shepherd's. The stationery was inspired by something I saw in a Span-

ish magazine.

The metal mini shoes on the table were painted then flocked with pink glitter flocking. The jewellery on the green flocked display is made with millefiori, string and no-hole beads. When I was cleaning up my workroom, after I completed this project, I found lots of odds and ends. So, I decided to make a needlepoint canvas basket and filled it with the miscellany. I am very happy with this piece!

Make a Santa mug for festive tea party

Whether or not you want to fill it with tea or hot chocolate in a Christmas scene this cheerful little mug is fun to create

BY RINA VELLICHOR



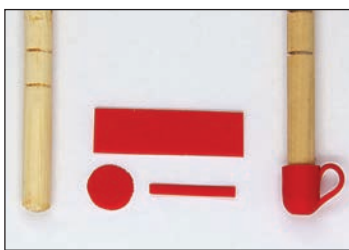
Making this mini Santa mug will certainly get you in the holiday spirit!

the details of the mug to the chopstick and smooth the joints with a rubber shaper and wet wipe.

brush, apply some red soft pastels to Santa's cheeks, nose and mouth as shown in the photo.

Step 6. Bake the mug in the oven at the temperature recommended by the clay manufacturer. If you plan to use cold enamel, apply it to the surface with a brush before baking.

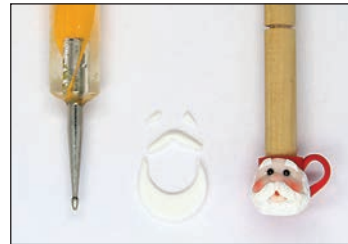
Step 7. Sand the inside of the baked mug if you plan to leave it empty. If you are going to fill it with a drink, then you can skip this step.



Step 1. Cut out the details from the red polymer clay as shown in the photo. Attach



Step 2. Using the cutter, cut a circle out of Flesh clay and fold its bottom edge towards the middle as shown in the photo. Attach it to the mug and make a vertical indentation in the middle of the folded edge. Insert two balls of clay into the indentation: nose and chin. Smooth the edges with a rubber shaper and wet wipe. Make holes for the eyes.



Step 4. Cut out the beard, moustache and eyebrows as shown. Attach the details to the mug and add some texture with the stylus tool.



Step 5. Cut out details for fur from white or glitter white clay. Attach the details to the mug and add texture with the stylus tool. Cut green clay holly leaves with a craft knife and cutter. Attach the leaves to the cap. You can add some hot melt glue or liquid clay for a stronger bond. Roll up three small balls of red clay and attach them to the leaves.



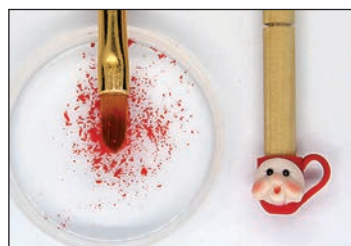
Step 8. Cover the finished mug with a clear UV top nail coat or gloss varnish. If you used cold enamel, skip this step or cover only the inside of the mug.

Congratulations! Santa's Christmas mug is ready to be added to your festive scene!



You will need

- Polymer clay - red, white, green and Flesh - optional: glitter white clay
- Black micro beads
- Wooden chopsticks without varnish
- Red soft pastels
- Round cutters of different diameters
- Craft knife
- Polymer clay tools: rubber shaper, dotting tool, etc.
- UV top coat, gloss varnish or translucent cold enamel
- Wet wipes



Step 3. Insert the black microbeads into the eye sockets. Add wrinkles with a needle at the corners of the eyes if you like. Using a

Mable's Christmas trees are always so personal

Mable teaches line dancing and works as a hair stylist, but she still finds time to create beautiful trees that are filled with loving touches

BY JOAN MCKENZIE

Mable Malley became interested in miniatures nearly 20 years ago when she found a Victorian style doll's house kit at a store local to her in Fredericton, Canada. She always wanted a doll's house when she was a small child but was not able to have one as the family income could not justify the perceived extravagance. Twenty years ago, her eyes seized on a beautiful Victorian. She immediately had a flashback to her childhood and impulsively made the purchase. Obsession set in as it does sometimes for all of us in the miniature loving world. Luckily, she is also quite creative.

Mable's current specialty is decorating beautiful miniature Christmas trees in twelfth scale, using ornaments that she creates and personalises if her customer requests this feature. She also makes twelfth scale Christmas wreaths. For custom orders she creates other scale items like 1/6th or 1/24th but primarily she works in twelfth scale.

Mable teaches line dancing at the local YMCA and she also works as a hair stylist. She finds the time she spends working on miniatures leaves her feeling serene and satisfied. Most of her customer orders are so uniquely personalised that she has to try things she has never done before.

Christmas season 2018 for Mable's trees was going along smoothly with multiple orders all delivered in time, with one exception. Five days before

the deadline for special orders, she received an urgent request from a former customer whose dear friend had just lost her brother and her mother to cancer, both within the same month. As a child, the customer always admired her parents' Christmas tree, which was white. Each of the varied ornaments on her parents' tree were brilliant red male cardinals, gathered from all parts of the world during their parents' travels in the 70 years they were married. Children in this family were never allowed to touch the tree, because the parents enjoyed reliving each vacation over 70 years together as they

trimmed their special tree each year. There was another tree in a different room of their home that the children were allowed to trim in any way they wanted.

The children grew up admiring that cardinal laden tree that was always so brilliant.

The day before the brother passed away, Mable's customer was looking out of her kitchen window, praying for answers about why her brother and her mother had been made to suffer for so long. She found herself saying out loud during her prayer "I need a sign that this suffering will end soon". A few moments later a snow laden red cardinal appeared in her window. Perched on a branch covered in snow, it stayed perfectly still for a few moments.

A strange sense of calm came over the customer. She suddenly had the sense that she must see her brother immediately. She drove to the hospital as quickly as she could, while obeying the speed limit. When she arrived at hospital, the attending nurse told her that her brother had passed away quietly about 20 minutes previously.

All she could think was that this was when the brilliant cardinal had made his appearance at her window. She saw it as a gift and a sign from above. Her mother died the same day.

The woman recounted the entire



Right: A gorgeous example of a Christmas tree made by Mable.





story on the phone to her closest friend who had been a repeat customer of Mable's for several years. Immediately the customer contacted Mable asking for a special order giving her three days to complete. She asked for a 5' tall white Christmas tree with ornaments consisting of only red cardinals.

When the moment came that Mable's customer presented the little perfect trees to her friend, she burst into tears as soon as she unwrapped the miraculous gift. She marvelled at the all of the perfect red cardinals, slowly and carefully turning the tree in her hand. She wondered aloud, "How did Mable know that the parent's tree had red berries on their branches?"

Some kind of immediate healing happened that day that never could have happened without the willingness and generosity of Mable's time. Events like this inspire customer loyalty and repeat business. It's a reminder of what we all know. People in the miniature



world are all so lovely. All that Mable would say was, "Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this project." And yet, without her, none of it could have happened.

Mable notes that her family are her strongest enthusiasts who support her passion and also smile about all of the times that the dining room turns into a Christmas village with so many custom trees in many stages of drying.

This artist's workspace is technically in her craft-room in their modest home. When she has a busy time, she has to move out to the dining room because there is more light there. When she is decorating miniature Christmas trees, she needs many different items including special glittering twistable ribbons, thousands of beads, different shapes of branches, paint, glue, fabric, foam, and the list goes on.

Mable belongs to a small local miniature enthusiast group in Canada called F.A.M.E (Fredericton Area Miniature Enthusiasts). She has not been able to get together with the group as much as she would like, but states that they are a wonderful group of people who are passionate about miniatures.

Mable used to love making room boxes. She also made four doll's houses. Three of these were from kits, and one her husband made with her using actual full-size house plans. It was enormous. It was the satisfaction of decorating these that kept her pursuing one after another. Every decision could be hers from paint or wallpaper, to changing furniture.

These days she has become focused on making tiny ornaments. Her favourite time of each year is the Christmas season.

Roaming around a gift store packed with ideas at that time of year makes her happiness soar and her imagina-

tion takes flight.

No one truly knows if the newer technologies that are geared toward volume instead of the handcrafted items made one at a time will ever take over. The invention of the silicone moulds and 3D printers are fascinating, but does this mean it will make it harder for an artisan who might take hours or even days to create an original item? I don't think that will ever appeal to those of us who love the unique as opposed to the mass produced, but it is something to ponder.

The desire for what is unique and special is engrained in the true miniature lover's psyche. I don't believe I have ever heard a miniature worshiper standing in a queue hoping to get a bargain. We have an entirely different way of viewing the world.

So, come along mass production, you may be fine for some things, but you really have very little value in the world of the true miniature enthusiast.

Since the start of the internet, Mable has been both thrilled and in awe at finding so many creative miniaturists out there and how their businesses and reputations allow them to survive completely by making something they love to create.

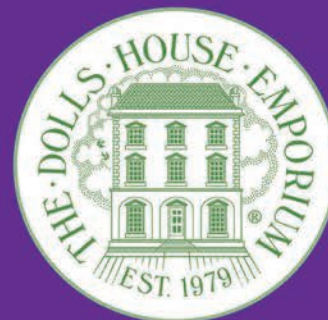
The artisans and their commitment to doing their absolute best work are so fortunate and admirable. It's my opinion that Mable is at the very top of her peers creating ornaments, trees and wreaths. Hopefully the photos in this feature show you what a feast for the eyes her artistry truly is.



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Mum leaves a legacy of wonderful houses

Valerie Thompson sadly passed away this year leaving behind a collection of around 40 stunning houses that she made and decorated. Here her son and daughter pay tribute

BY RICHARD STAPLETON AND TRACY GOLDSTRAW

Val's love of British social history, antiques and a propensity for living in the past found a new creative outlet in the early 1990s when she was bought her first doll's house, a battered, secondhand car boot find, by her daughter Tracy.

Val transformed this first project into a blacksmith's forge, a typically nostalgic choice, as her father had apprenticed as a blacksmith when he was a boy.

This proved to be a catalyst for a love affair with doll's houses and Val progressed rapidly to become an extremely competent and prolific maker with an obsession for period correct details. Within the first six years of her new hobby, she had created around 12 different dolls houses, primarily 1920's shops such as a post office, butchers,



antiques shop, and a chemist, copied from the BBC programme, *The Dandelion Dead*, featuring the Armstrong poisoning case from Hay-on-Wye.

These initial, and subsequent, projects were reflective of Val's approach to dollshousing. She was inspired by literature, period television dramatisations and real life locations of notable historical events. Her research archives evidence extensive photography of particular locations so she was able to replicate properties and scenes as accurately as possible. She was a great admirer of Robert Stubbs and, typically modest, compared herself most unfavourably to him.

In 1997 Val rose to prominence when her husband, Derek, persuaded her to respond to request by the *Radio Times* for fans' expressions of devotion to the BBC dramatisation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Val had spent an entire year creating a huge, four foot, version of the Bennet's house, Longbourn, from Jane Austen's novel which, for the television programme, was filmed at Luckington Court in Wiltshire.



Her unwavering drive to replicate Longbourn, to the best of her ability, even necessitated that she commissioned the making of a bespoke, copper,

roll-top bath for the perfect look.

From the seeds of this initial, national article, Val went on to gain further, unsought publicity, featuring on the front cover of *DHW* issue 62, in the *Cotswold Journal* and on the *Central News* television programme.

Val delighted in creating extensively lit houses and was proud of teaching herself the intricacies of doll's house electrics. She passionately created fine details, crafting period correct miniature books, periodicals and items such as fruit and vegetables. Her eye for detail even went as far as decorating fire places with real ash, for maximum authenticity. She took immense pride in creating rows of houses, including gardens, roads, motor vehicles / horse and carts and other accompanying accoutrements such as post boxes, telephone kiosks and notices, to produce





complete scenes rather than houses in isolation.

Val packed her houses full of contents for a real, lived-in look. Val was never interested in attempting to make a living from this; they were made purely for her own pleasure and enjoyment and to facilitate her desire

to immerse herself in the past.

Val went on to make in excess of 40 exquisite and extraordinary doll's houses in her lifetime, including townhouses, pubs, solicitors' practices, grocery stores, a toy shop (including miniature Steiff bears), a music shop, a travel agents, a book shop, cafes and

many others.

She created a Miss Marple collection, inspired by the Agatha Christie novels and its dramatisation, featuring Joan Hickson. Her unique and captivating Harry Potter collection features notable properties from Diagon Alley, many of which contain owl droppings





(fake of course) for added authenticity. Val also produced a collection of Victorian London townhouses, incorporating Dickens inspired properties such as the Old Curiosity Shop and Pickwick Club, and Baker Street houses inspired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, plus a bawdy "Dirty Dick Inn", featuring a resident lady of the night.

Val's family adore her creations and are hugely proud of her achievements and craftsmanship. If space permitted, they would love to keep the collection but unfortunately this is not possible, so they welcome approaches from interested parties, including museums.



● Please see collection via:
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Julie develops a French style that people love

When Julie Gill built her first French house it became known as Chateau Prosecco because it drove her to drink. But she persevered and now has a signature look

BY SANDRA HARDING

Some time ago we featured a gorgeous French chateau which had been made to order for a customer by Julie Gill, and I was captivated by it and wanted to know more.

It's an old but true story of a child being given a doll's house as a little girl, and never quite forgetting it. The house in question was a Lundby and Julie spent many happy hours playing with it. Over the years, Julie was given different floors and doll's house gifts for birthdays and Christmas, and eventually she got another doll's house too.

When Julie got married the houses were stored in a barn, much to the mice's delight, and when they were eventually rescued they were sadly beyond repair. By now Julie had daughters and, of course, they had a doll's house which Julie enjoyed painting and decorating.

This was done inbetween looking after the family and her clients at her beauty salon. At a visit to a local doll's house fair they bought a shop room box, which Julie decided was in dire need of a bedroom above – as you do! After measuring, getting wood cut to size and gluing, the shop had a bedroom.

Julie's daughters Chloe and Olivia decided that it should become like mummy's shop, so a beauty couch was made, and hairdressing furniture was bought from another doll's house fair. As the girls got older the shop was

stored away, but in a loft this time, away from the mice.

Julie's interest was rekindled by a casual walk past a coffee shop, where she saw the most beautiful doll's house in the window, built by the owner and not for sale. This was an eureka moment as Julie realised that she wanted one of her own, and it had to be just as lovely, and created in her favourite French style.

Searching online Julie found an American Greenleaf Beacon Hill kit, which was on sale and only an hour's drive away from her. With great excitement it was picked up in the morning and was being worked on in the afternoon.



It took a lot of time and patience, with many tantrums, and obviously bits ending up the other side of the room (or is that just me), as the instructions weren't clear, and the pieces didn't fit.

Progress pictures were put on Facebook where Julie became known as Chateau Prosecco, which was very apt, as it had driven her to drink. Very soon Julie ignored the instructions, omitted a lot of parts and added her own.

It took over a year to finish, during which time she had learned new skills and had become an accomplished maker. It was soon filled with furniture and she had such enjoyment making it, that she decided that she wanted to build another French chateau, much to her husband's chagrin.

A Barbara's Mouldings kit was bought and it went together like a dream. Julie added embellishments to the exterior and windows, creating the French look she so loves. Her husband Tim suggested that they had no room for two, so she should sell it. Reluctantly, it was put on eBay, and quickly sold. In the meantime daughter Chloe asked if she could have it as her inheritance, and Julie realised how much she loved creating something lovely.

When her husband and son were away for a week Julie visited a timber yard and the next seven days (and nights) were spent building a French doll's house ladies couture shop with false doors and steps. The interior and exterior of the shop was painted



Julie's interest was rekindled by a casual walk past a coffee shop, where she saw the most beautiful doll's house in the window,





cream, and a bold turquoise colour was also added to the inside. The wall panels were made from wood and mouldings and painted gold, and this one was sold in a blink of an eye.

By now Julie's husband had accepted that this was something she loved doing, so a deal was struck. Make two and sell one, so that really gave Julie the impetus to carry on. The next build was even bigger, and she created a French brocante style second hand shop. The wall panelling was bought

and Julie made the fireplace and added another door in the shop area.

With increasing confidence Julie made her own parquet flooring, cutting each piece by hand. More houses followed and, sticking to the bargain made earlier, it was generally one in and one out.

All went well until Julie had two that she was particularly fond of and simply could not decide which sell. So she put them both up and decided to keep whichever one didn't sell.

However, they both sold in a heartbeat this time.

By now Julie had a signature style, which is the lovely pale blues and colours seen in the photographs. Her experience has been gained by simply practice and striving for perfection, which she seems to have achieved. Her work is lovely and her customers simply love the individual touches that each of her creations has.

I am sure there will be more to look at from this lady.

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Make a little box and fill it with crackers

This festive mini-make was inspired by a box of crackers made a while ago by members of the Chester Dolls House and Miniatures Club



FROM THE CHESTER CLUB

Box

- Cut out base and lid as per templates.
- Cut aperture in lid.
- Mark pencil lines and pen lines on the back of the shiny paper.
- Cut along the pen lines.
- Lightly score on the pencil lines and bend into shape.
- Attach thin acetate to underside of lid using small pieces of double-sided tape.
- Apply Christmas sticker for decoration

- Bend into a box shape and glue tabs (T) on inside of ends.
- If preferred you can glue a piece of coloured card into the bottom of the box to contrast against the colour of your crackers.

Crackers

- Cut about 1in x 1in of crepe paper and roll it around the cocktail stick. Make sure the grain runs from left to right as you roll. Glue the edge down.
- Take your fancy sellotape, or pretty paper on double sided tape and wrap

- it around the middle of the crepe paper while it is still on the cocktail stick.
- Slide the cracker half way off the cocktail stick and tie the end off with cotton the same colour as cracker.
- Take the cracker off the cocktail stick and tie off the other end.
- Gently open up the ends of the cracker to make the right shape.
- You can also use a piece of drinking straw to form the centre of the cracker.



You will need

Box:

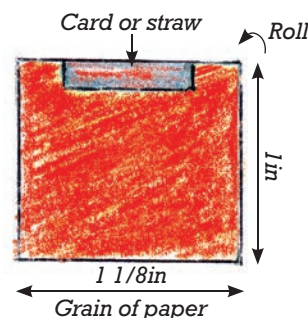
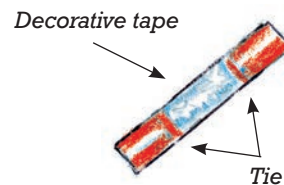
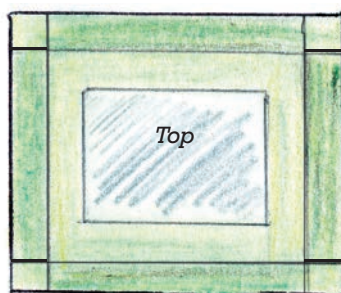
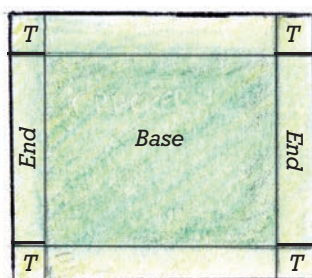
- Thick shiny paper (wine gift bags)
- Thin acetate
- Thin double-sided tape
- Christmas sticker
- Glue
- Sharp blade
- Metal ruler



Crackers:

- Assorted colours of crepe paper
- Fine knitting needle or cocktail stick
- 34mm knitting needle
- Fancy sellotape
- Card
- Glue
- Scissors

Cut pen lines (—) Score pencil lines. Glue tabs (T).



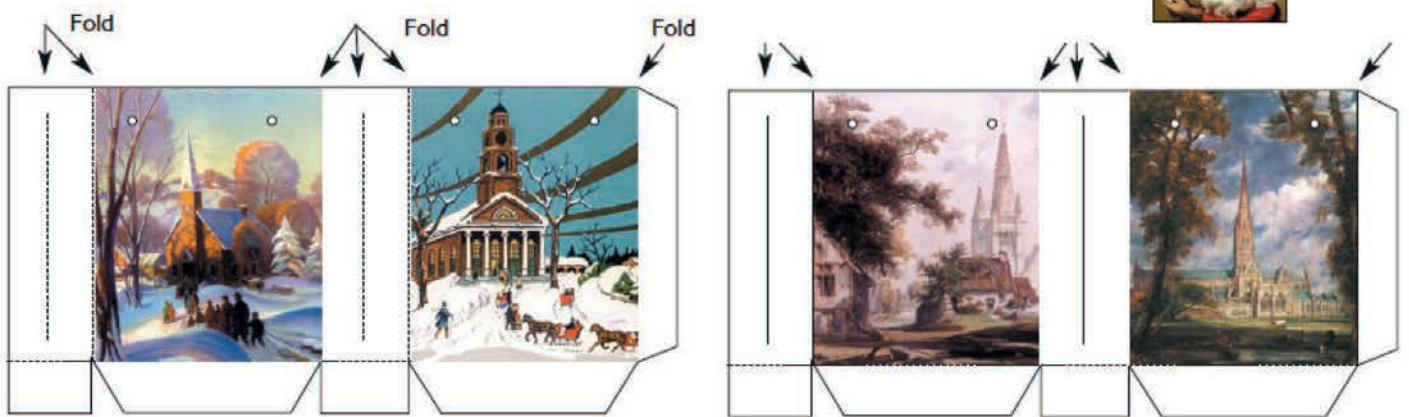
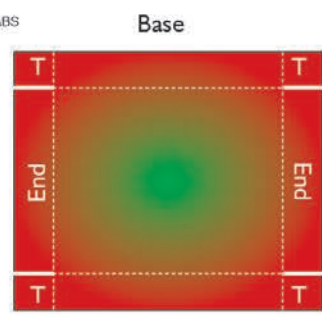
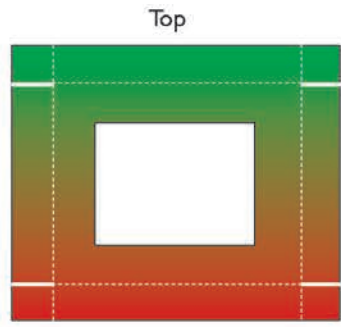
From our house to your house

THE CUTOUTS PAGE



Cut pen lines(—) score dashed lines

CRACKER BOX



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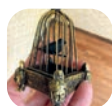
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THE MODELMAKER'S YEARBOOK

Family business spreads minis around the world

Minimum World is celebrating its twentieth year of supplying doll's house items to miniaturists around the world. We look back at how the company has grown from small beginnings

BY CHARLOTTE MERRIMAN

Minimum World began life in a small garage and twenty years later has grown into a thriving company with a big warehouse supplying miniatures to customers in more than 100 countries.

It has always been an internet-based business, originally created in 2002 by husband and wife team, Jenny and Graham Newman, in Norfolk. Jenny was a keen miniaturist and Graham was an IT professional so it was a perfect combination.

They started it in their garage and it soon overtook the whole house. They retired in 2010 and sold the business to Karen Read, who is still the General Manager. Karen's daughter, Rachel, had a doll's house and together they loved looking for miniatures and doing a spot of decorating and DIY. But it was becoming increasingly difficult to buy things in Norfolk as several doll's house shops had closed.

So when they saw that Minimum World was for sale they both fell in love with the idea of running it. Karen bought the company and moved it to an industrial estate in Loddon, the village on the Norfolk broads where her family lives. Her background has always been in retail, firstly as a buyer for Marks and Spencer and then as managing director of one of their suppliers. But this was the first time she had run her own business and the first experience with online sell-



Ben and Kate

ing, so there were plenty of challenges.

For the first summer Karen and Rachel ran the business together, but in September 2010, when Rachel left home for university, the company recruited its first employee, Tracy, who retired this summer.

Growth has been rapid and from those small beginnings the company now has a team of 20 direct employees as well as working with several freelancers and an agency. MW has customers in more than 100 countries and around half its business is with international customers. Rachel is now the

deputy general manager (and money bunny) and has recently completed her accountancy qualifications.

Another of Karen's daughters, Hannah, joined the company last year as a buyer, and is studying for her buying and merchandising degree.

Karen said: "As well as planning ahead and working closely with all our suppliers sourcing new products is crucial to us as our customers are always looking for new pieces to add to their collection and inspiration for their next project. We try to add new collections at least four times a year."

As well as buying imported stock the company works with several talented artisans in the UK. Their work can be found under British Miniatures, CP Prestige Ceramics, as well as the Minimum World brand, on the website.

Hannah said: "We found three new UK suppliers during lockdown, one making miniature food and drink, one making bricks and one making carpets, so they are all a great addition to our product range. We also make some stock ourselves, including our very popular range of framed pictures."

Minimum World is also privileged to be the UK trade and retail distributor for three prestigious international miniature brands: German companies Reutter Porzellan (See advertisement on P15) and Mini Mundus and Houseworks in the US.

The last couple of years have





Barbara - admin.



Emma, left and Hannah in dolls house kit warehouse.



Julie and Ann in the packing room.



Laura - Despatch supervisor.

presented quite a few challenges. "During lockdown, for many of our customers, their hobby was a lifeline," Karen said. "Our staff went the extra mile to exchange emails with isolated customers after they finished work and our suppliers went the extra mile to try and send us enough stock to feed the increased demand.

"We have a wonderful team of staff who mostly live in the village and their dedication during the pandemic has been amazing.

"Our picking and packing staff all love miniatures and take enormous pride in their work. Our operations manager, Kerry, who joined us last year had previously been manager of the Norwich Mothercare store. Until very recently we were an all female team but Tom joined us in May as our ecommerce manager – brave man"

Karen added: "We see Minimum World as a worldwide family which includes our suppliers, our customers and our staff. We love to see pictures of our customers' projects and have very active Facebook and Pinterest pages where customers are able to share hints and tips as well as admiring each other's work.

"We are constantly trying to improve our practices so we can do all we can to protect the environment. We use packaging that can all be recycled and is mostly made from recycled materials. Our fill is also fully biodegradable. Tom is working hard to deliver our new website which will be on a server



MW team.

with the first hosting company to be certified as 100 per cent carbon neutral. This means that all the emissions produced from our server are offset by renewable energy projects."

Three years ago the miniature world sadly lost a true veteran and expert, Alan Blackwell, who died suddenly. Karen said: "We had been a customer of Blackwells for many years and bought the business from Alan's lovely widow, Tiffany. At that point we became wholesalers as well as retailers and we now supply trade customers around the world."

Although Karen is still involved with the business, in 2013 she sold Mini-

mum World to the current owners, Ben and Kate Griffiths. It is still very much a family business and although they live in North Wales and are not involved on a day to day basis, they are also passionate about miniatures with Ben having inherited a doll's house that his grandmother had passed down to his mother. Ben is a director of several companies and brings a wealth of business experience to Minimum World.

But it is not all about business. Minimum World supports charities both in the UK and internationally, reflecting the international customer base. Since the first lockdown MW has donated around £20000 to charities as wideranging as the local dog rescue centre in Loddon to bush fires in Australia, Feeding America, British Heart Foundation, Macmillan, Alzheimers Society, World Down Syndrome Day and several more.

Ben and Kate (who is an author and illustrator) have recently founded their own charity, the Blue Bear Family Foundation, which provides advice and grants for families adopting children with special needs from Hague Convention countries.



LITTLE LINKS:

Minimum World
facebook: www.facebook.com/MinimumWorld
pinterest: www.pinterest.co.uk/minimumworld/
web: minimumworld.com
instagram: www.instagram.com/minimum_world_miniatures/



show&tell

MAKERS SHOW THEIR WORK AND TALK ABOUT THEIR MINI LIFE



We talk to Sharon Blackburn, of Sharonsminknits, about her range of knitted doll clothes she makes at her home in Northwich, Cheshire

Hi Sharon, tell us how you discovered miniatures? When a colleague asked me to re-do their miniature room box, which was a twelfth scale bathroom scene. She wanted me to change the colour scheme, which I did and enjoyed it very much. That was over 25 years ago.

What was your job or occupation before miniatures? Secretary/receptionist.

What's special about your range? I think my range of knitted doll clothes are unique. Customers can either buy them or make them as I sell my own knitting patterns. I also make my own knitting needles, because there aren't many people who do this. I'm so pleased I did as my needles have proven to be a best seller in my Etsy shop.

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

No. I always try to sell what I have made. I have many prototypes which I collect as they are my first attempts but, in my eyes, they are not good enough to sell.

What's the one tool you can't live without? Ooh lots of things but I would have to pick two - knitting needles and my Venne cottons.

What makes you pull your hair out? When I drop a knitting stitch and cannot recover it.

Where do you find your inspiration? I love Instagram. There are thousands upon thousands of inspirations on there. I can see a photo and my imagination kicks in

Tell us about a typical day in your life of miniatures. I get many ideas for my next creation, whether it is for mini knits or Blythe clothes ideas pop into my head and I just have to make them. I usually knit in the evenings when watching tv.



Do you have a doll's house or miniature collection of your own? Yes, I collect mini teddy bears which are in a display box. I also have a few 1/48th and 1/44th houses which I made from kits. I sold my twelfth scale doll's houses a couple of years ago when we moved home. I just didn't have the space for them. I still have all the furniture and accessories as I just can't part with them. Maybe, one day in the future I will buy another house and use all my minis in it. You never know.

What are your plans for the future? To keep expanding my range of minis in my Etsy shop. I currently sell twelfth scale knitted doll clothes and have recently added petite Blythe and Blythe doll clothes. I have a vast variety of Venne cottons which I use for my miniknits and sewing projects. I sell twelfth scale knitted bedding, knitted boots, slippers and booties, as well as my handmade knitting needles.

Where can readers buy your miniatures? You can find me on Sharonsminknits.Etsy.com I used to have a website but decided to close it as I find it much easier to run Etsy. I also attend York doll's house fair and have, pre-COVID, attended Pudsey fair. I love exhibiting as I get to meet my customers and make new ones.

What advice would you give to your



younger self? I would say follow your dreams and ambitions: you never know where they may take you. I wish I had done this a long time ago, but now I have I couldn't be happier

Do you have any other hobbies/interests? I love doing electronic jigsaws on my iPad as I find them very relaxing. I also love technique Lego and am currently building a James Bond 007 car.

JUST FOR FUN

Cheese or chocolate? Chocolate (she says eating a Twirl!!)

Dream career? Running my own wedding dress shop

Favourite colour? I love all colours and just cannot choose



LITTLE LINKS:

Sharon's Mini Knits
by Sharon Blackburn
email: sblack47@hotmail.com
etsy: www.etsy.com/uk/shop/SharonsMiniKnits



A herd of festive insp

Kristin Castenschiold's herd of mini reindeer takes us on a festive flight to the North Pole

BY SADIE BROWN

Kristin Castenschiold's twelfth scale reindeer are much in demand, her seasonal order book already bursting at the seams in September. "I offer the reindeer year-round as a custom order but I try to also have them in stock as we get closer to the holidays. Because they take so long to make, I limit the number to only a few of each style a year," says Kristin, always on the lookout for new ways to style her festive herd. "I've also expanded to mother and baby reindeer per requests from returning customers. My original goal was to make a team of nine reindeer which I wanted to photograph with a

beautiful wood sleigh I have. However, I've never been able to keep more than two or three in stock at a time."

Kristin, one of our most exemplary animal artisans, makes two types of reindeer. In addition to the emblematic caribou of the natural world, Kristin creates the equally evocative golden reindeer drawn from the childhood memories which go on to define Christmas throughout our lives. "It's similar to a regular deer but has the longer mane and furry hocks and is larger in size which match my visions of Santa's reindeer as a child," she explains, describing the style which also pays homage to a much loved

table decoration owned by her grandmother, who assembled a fabulous collection of Christmas decorations over the years, creating many wonderful memories. It's clear that these very special ornaments remain hugely influential for Kristin. "She always had a team of eight antique metal reindeers pulling a sled with an antique Santa candy box on her mantel," she says. "In addition, the scene included miniature German flocked sheep, cottages, and my grandparents' first Christmas tree which they purchased for \$5 from Macy's in 1946 for their apartment in the Hotel Webster in New York City. Sadly, my grandmother is no longer with



piration

us but all of these antique Christmas decorations grace my parents' home during the Christmas season. They will be cherished family heirlooms for generations to come!"

Before they're ready to set out on their annual festive flight, Kristin's reindeer start life as handpicked plastic models. Each one is carefully chosen for its potential before being paired back to allow her to start with a blank canvas. She then adds the lifelike glass eyes her miniature animals are synonymous with and creates the reindeer's unique pose before painting the base.

Above far left: A Christmas gift for someone special.

Above: Joint venture: Kristin and Martha's Christmas pony and cart.

Above right: "I want antlers like yours!"

Right: The sun sets on Christmas Eve.





Left: Mum and calf. *The most exciting night of the year.*

Below left: *Jingle bells and Christmas lights!*

Above: *No late deliveries here.*

The reindeer's lush coat is a time-consuming part of the process, but it's also one of the most important, and Kristin uses locally sourced soft alpaca wool to ensure they appear as authentic as possible. "A small bit of hair goes a long way and I was given full fleeces of it, so I probably have a lifetime supply! After all the hair is attached the intense detail begins, which is really when the reindeer comes to life and develops his or her personality!"

For Kristin, childhood Christmases also meant enjoying all the fun of the fair – the craft fair! Many readers will be familiar with Kristin and her mother, Martha as the well-known mother and daughter duo, but long before Martha's hand sewn tartan blankets were keeping Kristin's miniature reindeer warm, Kristin was accompanying her mother to shows. It was here that they sold the popular chalkware Santa Claus figurines made using Martha's collec-

tion of vintage candy moulds. "Every year, as the holiday shopping season began, I would start to look forward to the thought of Christmas," recalls Kristin with great fondness. "There is just something so magical about the decorations, food, thoughts of buying gifts and the general happiness felt around the holiday season. Once I began making miniatures, I right away tried to think of ways to incorporate the holidays with my miniatures."

Having recently retired, Martha has left the work treadmill behind. She is now seeking to enjoy her newfound freedom to focus on soaking up that festive atmosphere in miniature with some highly anticipated new projects. Martha is currently working on an exciting project which harks back to those days at the craft fairs, creating miniature characters based on the candy mould designs which have brought mother, daughter and many

others a great deal of seasonal joy. Kristin credits her mother's influence for much of her creative streak. "Together we're always trying to think of new, inspiring ideas to incorporate in our work. It keeps things interesting, so you don't run into a rut from making the same old thing over and over."

These inspirational new ideas include Martha's Christmas carts, piled high with festive joy and Yuletide decorations. The original idea stemmed from one or two miniature ponies who were feeling a little forlorn after spending some time searching for their forever stable. Martha took the chance to combine these gorgeous ponies with hand-crafted Christmas carts. Following their success at doll's house shows prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, mother and daughter are now hoping to take the design even further, creating carts for other occasions.

The festive season is especially hectic for Kristin. In addition to running a thriving miniatures business and having the demands of a young family to care for, she also lives on the family Christmas tree farm owned by successive generations. Being surrounded by



Above: Family heirlooms. Kristin's Christmas memories.

Above right: *The night before Christmas.*

the new shoots of Christmas on a daily basis, it's not surprising that the festivities continue to have such a profound influence on her miniatures work. She even manages to mix the two together occasionally! "We proudly display a few Christmas themed miniature boxes in the tree farm office every year for families to enjoy while picking out their Christmas tree."

Kristin is also an exceptional photographer, with a gift for creating atmosphere. Many of her beautiful snowy images capture the glow of the cold winter sun, ready to fall below the horizon, and setting the scene for the most magical night of the year. Other scenes capture the excitement of a

visit to the North Pole. Here, a little girl seizes the opportunity to give a carrot shaped gift to one of the golden reindeer inspired by Kristin's grandmother's ornaments. The silver Christmas tree in both this scene and another where Santa can be found posing for the perfect greetings card image, is a thing of beauty. Glistening with the most striking tiny ornaments in rich greens, blues and golds. It wouldn't look out of place gracing the festive window displays at Harrods.

Kristin's reindeer have become an international herd, almost as well travelled as Rudolph himself. They have found suitable stabling across the globe, including in one instance, moving into a custom built design. "I have one collector who is building a reindeer stable with several mums and babies as well as several male

reindeer dressed in harnesses ready to pull Santa's sleigh," says Kristin. "It makes me so happy that something I make can be treasured and cherished as families celebrate the holidays every year much like I still admire my grandmother's wood decoration that inspired me as a child."

Tradition is so important at Christmas time and it has been wonderful to witness first hand how Kristin's own family history has inspired her miniature art, leading to the creation of pieces which will go on to become part of our own stories.



LITTLE LINKS:

Heart "Felt" Canines

email: heartfeltcanines@gmail.com

etsy: www.etsy.com/shop/kdc123

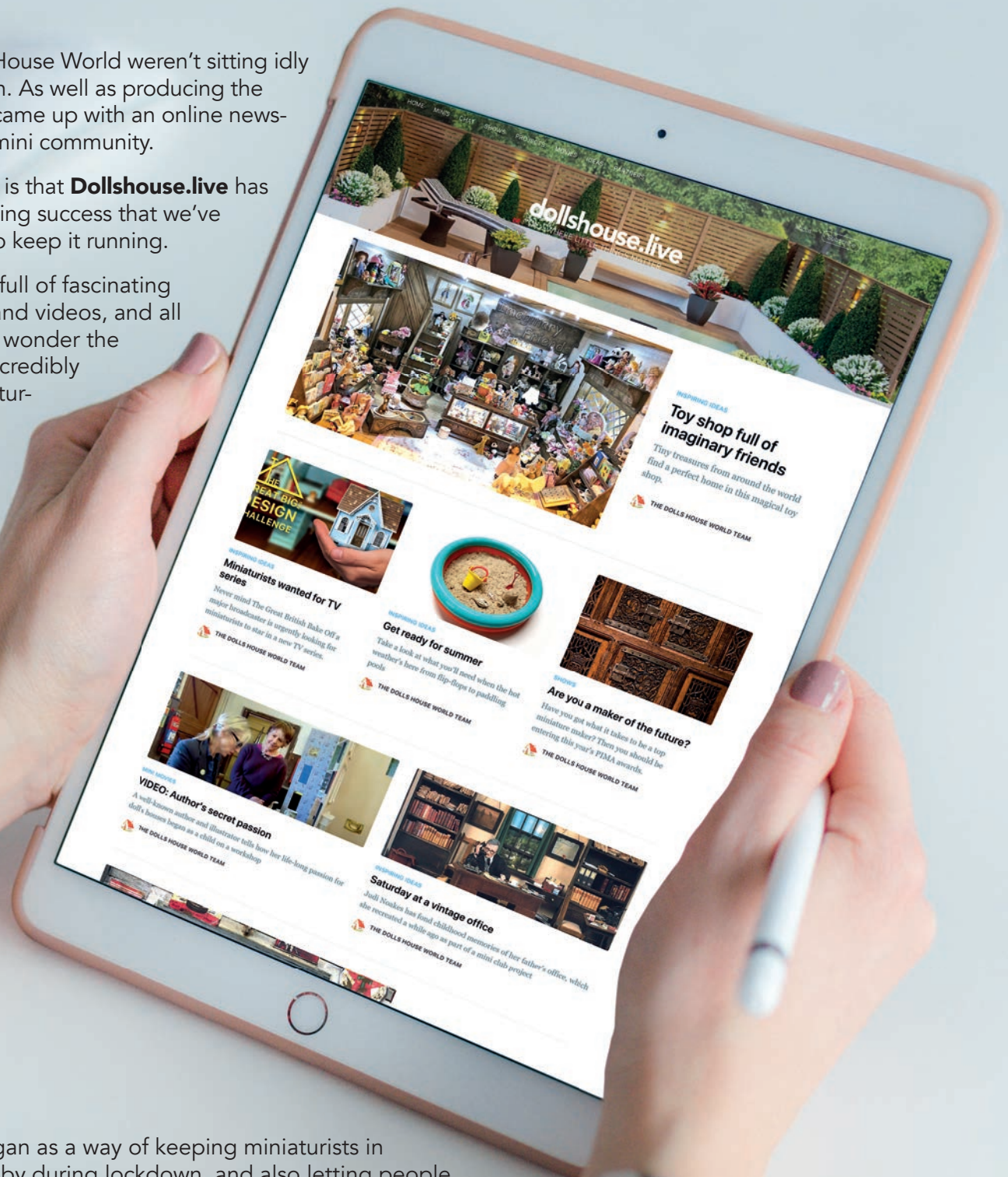
facebook: www.facebook.com/heartfeltcanines

Don't miss **dollhouse.live**

The team at Dolls House World weren't sitting idly by during lockdown. As well as producing the magazine we also came up with an online newsletter to serve the mini community.

But the good news is that **Dollhouse.live** has been such an amazing success that we've decided we have to keep it running.

Dollhouse.live is full of fascinating features, projects and videos, and all totally free — little wonder the site has become incredibly popular with miniaturists in the UK and around the world.



The newsletter began as a way of keeping miniaturists in touch with the hobby during lockdown, and also letting people know how makers and others were coping with isolation.

But it has grown incredibly. Now our mini mad team add new features every week. We are sharing articles from the magazine, but are bringing you a wealth of exciting new content and up-to-the minute news on shows and makers.

So don't miss out. Go to **www.dollhouse.live** on your computer or phone now to read the site everyone's talking about.

Quick and easy

Christmas tree domes are fun, festive and easy to make

BY SANDRA HARDING

Cut the Christmas trees to size to fit inside the dome using wire cutters.

- Paint the top and the side of the base white and let it dry.
- Paint glue all over the Christmas tree and immediately roll it, or cover it, in glitter and let it dry.
- Put a thicker, second coat of paint on the TOP ONLY of the base, and immediately push it into the "snow". Shake off excess and take off any

You will need

- Pack of small Christmas trees (mine were from Works)
- Thimble holders, or small glass domes (mine were from eBay)
- Wire cutters, glue, tweezers, paintbrush, small trays to hold glitter, glue etc
- Silver or gold glitter, red glitter if needed, or colour of choice.
- White acrylic paint
- Loose white "snow" (I used powdered wallpaper paste, as the texture looked just right — and it was all I had)

Decorations:

- I used no hole pearls for one, tiny Christmas sequins from a gingerbread house kit for another, and red buds from a pack of Christmas potpourri for another. Red glitter could be used instead. Tiny silver/gold stars for the top of the tree. Tiny beads also work well, as do sequins, cut up into tiny pieces. In other words, use whatever you have that's small enough.



from around the rim (to allow the glass top to fit). Let it dry.

- Glue the tree onto the middle of the base and let it dry.
- Glue on whatever decorations you choose. Add star to the top and let it dry thoroughly before placing the glass dome on — the glass will go misty if you don't.



Return of the Chr

After a successful return to a live show in September the London Dollshouse Festival team are busy with the final preparations for their one day Christmas Show

Established in 1985, the London Dollshouse Festivals are always searching the globe for the best craftsmen who can perfectly replicate every day life in miniature.

Artists from all corners of the world attend the London shows, specialising in all aspects of miniatures from a grand, fully decorated mansion to a humble clothes peg and everything in between.

Organiser Charlotte Stokoe said:

"There were times in the last 18 months when we did not think we would ever return to Kensington but we did it! The KDF London Showcase has come and gone and we had a fabulous time."

"We are not wasting any time and are busy preparing for the KDF Christmas Showcase on December 4 at Kensington Town Hall.

"We really appreciate everyone's support of the show over the last 18

months, both craftsmen and customers. We couldn't have got here without you.

"The Christmas Show is a one day event so we recommend you book your tickets in advance as we will be limiting numbers through the door."

Here's a brief taster of some of the artists who will be exhibiting at the Christmas Showcase, but you can find a full list of exhibitors online at dollshouseshowcase.com



▲ Cornellieson Gallery

Merry Christmas from Cornellieson Gallery where you will find that special piece to finish your miniature home. Commissions taken, for a portrait or special painting. Just ask!

● Email: cornelliesongallery@gmail.com
www.cornelliesongallery.com



▼ DCT Miniature Fashions

It's a sad farewell from DCT. They say: "Please come and say goodbye. We are very sad to say that after 30 years, we are now retiring and this Christmas Kensington will be our last. Thank you for your custom over the years."

● Email: dctminiaturefashions@btinternet.com
www.dctminiaturefashions.co.uk



Christmas Showcase

► Nom de Plume

Look out for a unique collection of vintage doll's house furniture and furnishings from the 20th Century, as well as some quirky little houses ideal for an unusual Christmas present.

● Email: charlotte.stokoe@btinternet.com



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www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Raptor



Sarah's mesmerising doll takes the top award

A character doll wins the prestigious Perfection in Miniature Awards for the first time as judges cast their expert eyes over beautiful miniatures from talented makers

BY CHARLOTTE STOKOE

We were pleased to be able to have the Perfection in Miniature Awards (PIMA) back at the London Dollshouse Festival in September. Our usual judges were joined by David Ward, such an experienced maker himself, and there was certainly some lively discussion about all the entries. Judging the competition seems daunting at first, but as you begin to study the work more closely, it becomes easier to select the ones that you think are really special.

First place went to Sarah Hendry of Pocket People, who imagined and then created Greta Boyd. It was a big departure from Sarah's usual work and a labour of love. Not the most conventionally beautiful entry we have ever had, but she was mesmerising.

The judges were impressed by the incredible detail Sarah got in her character, right down to eyebrows, eyelashes, and diamond ring. She could even be disrobed!

This is the first time a doll has won the competition but she was incredibly special.

Second place went to Floral Decor Minis for her entry 'September Flowers'. Yevheniia had taken part in one of our online shows, but as she lives in Russia, has not been able to travel to London for a live show yet, so it was so exciting to see her work first hand. Made from polymer clay, the detail was unbelievable and showed miniature flowers at their very best.

Third place was a painting of a Formal Garden with Temple by Leslie Smith, tiny dots making up the beautiful composition. Leslie has been attending the show for many years and his work always amazes. It is so perfectly done that you only see that it is painted if you look very closely. No wonder his work is part of many of the great modern day doll's house collections.

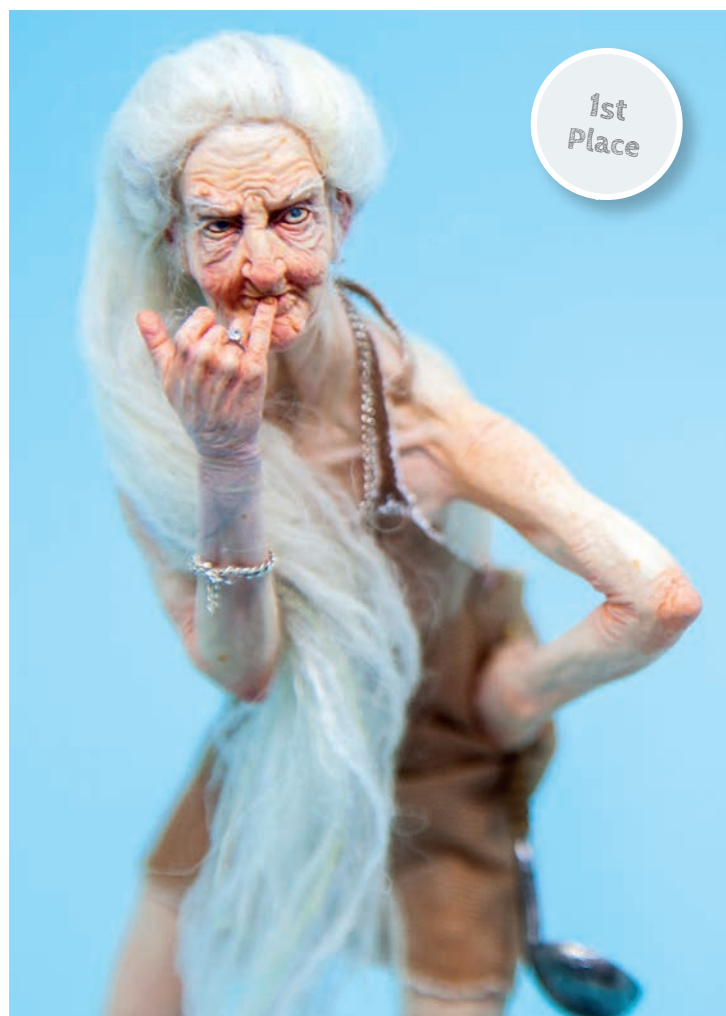
Highly Commended entries were

Tipu's Tiger by Alexandra Blythe who has to get a special mention. The full size version of this automata is in the V&A Museum and must be one of their visitors favourite exhibits. The amount of skills needed to create this piece is mind-blowing and Alexandra did an amazing job. It was just a joy to behold.

Other Highly Commended pieces were also inspired by the V&A Museum. The Queen Anne's Chest by Small Time and the Elizabethan Bedcover (which won the 'People's Choice Award') were both copies of exhibits at the V&A.

The other Highly Commended entries were the Wine and Spirit Trunk by new exhibitor Conny Dungen, a Violoncello by last year's winner Yosh Sagi and an Ikebana Style Flower Arrangement - Petite Fleur.

From top far left: Wine and Spirits Trunk - Legendary Luggage in Miniature; Miniature Violoncello - Yosh Sagi; Ikebana style flower arrangement - Petite Fleur.



Above: Sarah Hendry, of Pocket People, took a big departure from her normal work to create Greta Boyd, but she wowed the judges.

Above left: Unbelievable detail in polymer clay earned Floral Decor Minis, from Russia, second spot for her miniature flowers.

Left: Leslie Smith has been creating beautiful paintings for many years and Formal Garden with Temple was one of his best.

Below left: You can see the full-size version of this automata in the V&A Museum, but we doubt it's as spectacular as this miniature by Alexandra Blythe.

Bottom left: Elizabethan Bedcover by Microdolls.

Below: The Queen Anne's Chest by Small Time was another miniature replica of a piece in the V&A.

rangement by Petite Fleur.

The Perfection in Miniature Awards has been running now for seven years and we are so proud of the competition. The level of work now being entered is incredible and we have to thank Ahmed Al Thani for his continued support. It really is a highlight of our show.

● All entries in the 2021 PIMA are shown on the 'Competition' page of our website www.dollshouseshowcase.com. PIMA 2022 will take place at the KDF Summer Show 2022.



Make a sledge out of card and transform it

Elize takes you step-by-step through cutting and sticking layers of card to create an old-fashioned sledge that can be used as a shelf

BY ELIZE VAN ES

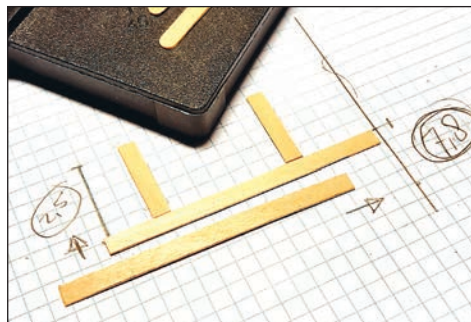
There are so many miniatures you can make with little means and materials that you can find around the house. With that in mind, and also the gratification of using a miniature in a new way, this little sledge is easy to make and can be quickly transformed into an outside/porch decor table. Have fun making it and giving it your own personal touch!



Step 1. Draw a pattern for your sledge irons. Because we are working with

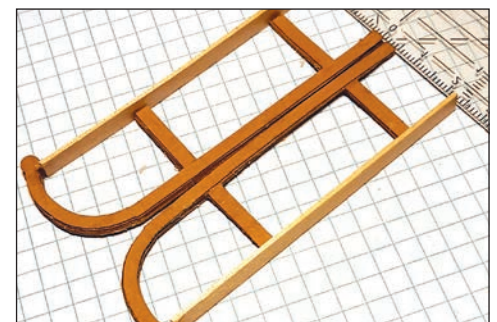
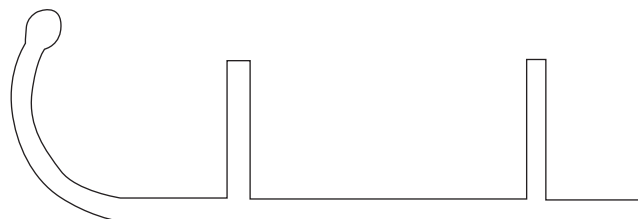
thin card stock we want 8 cutouts. It seems like a lot of work, but I find the end result more realistic than working with thicker material and less cut-outs.

Glue 2 sets of 4 cut-outs together. Make sure everything is aligned. When working with card stock or board I love using bookbinder's glue. It becomes a bit elastic and leaves room to bend and shape and also it sets really fast. You have to work fast though! When completely dry, sand the edges gently.

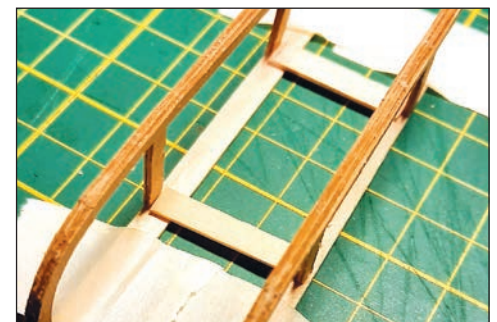


Step 2. Take your coffee stir sticks and cut 2 to 7.8cm and 2 to 2.5cm. They are very easy to cut. I use a chopper because it's fast but scissors or a knife will work as well.

Pattern



If necessary sand the edges gently. Glue the long ones on top of the sledge irons. Align the side and back. You don't want anything sticking out.

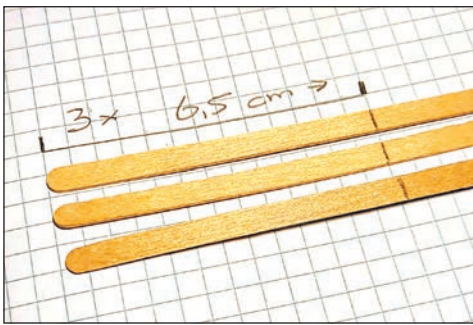


Glue the short ones between the legs. A bit of masking tape and working on the edge of your mat helps to glue them on correctly.

You will need

- Card stock - light brown
- Tacky glue or bookbinders glue
- 6-8 coffee stir sticks
- 2 toothpicks
- Thin metal wire
- A small piece of thread
- Watercolour paint
- Cutters
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Emery board or sand paper

MINI MAKES



Step 3. Cut 3 pieces to 6.5cm from your coffee stir sticks for the sledge seat. Sand the edges a bit round.



Glue the sticks on top. Leave little openings between them. This is also the moment you can easily scrape off extra glue with a toothpick.



Sand the TOP inner edges of the long sticks glued to the sledge iron a bit round. Make sure they fit and align nicely and there are no sharp corners. When completely dry, gently sand away any irregularities.



Step 4. For the shelves cut 2 sets of 4 pieces of 3cm long from your coffee

stir sticks. Glue the 2 shelves together. Make sure the sticks are glued tight together and **DON'T SAND THEM** just yet. Let dry!



Step 5. Punch a small hole at the top of the sledge iron to glue in the wire. Do this on both sides. Cut a piece of wire a bit bigger than the opening between the two sledge irons. Fold the wire, hold the middle and bend the two sides back. This is an easy way to make a little hook.



Cut the wire to fit. Make sure the hook is in the middle. Glue in the little holes you made.



Take the shelves, sand a little corner out gently to make the shelves fit perfectly on the sledge legs. Use an emery board or sanding paper. In this stage you can also cut the 2 toothpicks to fit and glue them to the front of the shelves. Let dry. When completely dry, gently sand away any leftover irregularities.



Step 6. Let the painting begin! I just love this part. You can make the sledge any colour you like. For this project I wanted an aged, classic look so I used watercolours. Some grey, blue, green, browns with a lot of water. Just go with the flow, don't be shy – work with the different colour tones and get rid of too much water using a tissue or sponge. I let the work dry between layers; sand away when there is too much colour or if you don't like the result. For the sledge irons I used a mix of watered-down black and brown paint.



Take your piece of thread and tie it onto the sled. If you want you can use a drop of glue on the knot. I also painted the thread lightly with the same mix of watered-down black and brown, to give it an aged look as well.

Basically you're finished. You have a sledge and by putting in the two shelves you can transform it into a decorative table for a porch or indoor Christmas scene. Or you can give it to your mini kids to play with.



Lynn's vintage toys are lovingly hand-crafted

Take a walk down memory lane to view toys that you may recall from long ago perfectly handmade by miniature artisan Lynn Jowers

BY JOAN MCKENZIE

Full disclosure, Lynn Jowers and I are friends. While I have never met Lynn in person, I do think of her as one of my dearest friends on Earth. Our friendship started soon after she sent me the first miniature treasure that I purchased from her Etsy shop in July of 2015.

My first request was for a cradle, which had been crafted with raised relief sculptured teddy bears using her signature cherry wood, stained to perfection with her steady hands and employing beeswax to bring out the gorgeous wood grain shades. These delicately crafted miniatures beg you to touch them, and to feel the unexpected silky softness of cherrywood - almost made pliant. The rich finishing patina lights up any room as your eyes go immediately to whatever Lynn has created. I find that my friends and neighbours want to touch her work, and I happily allow them to experience this distinct pleasure.

When I initially found Lynn's Etsy shop, I desperately wanted to purchase her miniature children's school desk. It was more than a year before

I indulged myself with this perfect little desk. However, once it arrived, I realised that I had found an artisan who was more than extraordinary. A dream had come true, and it was as if this dream had fallen from the sky for me - at my tender age of 65. Elation followed. And it stayed.

My own youth had been cut short after losing my dad to a drunk driver in December of 1956. The following 64-year obsession with miniatures and the self-indulgence I allowed myself as an adult has been an attempt to heal from that truncated childhood. Growing up I had been taught that material things cannot bring you happiness. I am here to tell you that when it comes to the perfect miniature treasure, for me, that thinking is not only mistaken, but downright nonsense!

Once my mortgage was finally paid off, I planned to order a few items from Lynn twice each year. Every delivery has always been even more exciting than the last. When I finally held that little school desk, I was amazed at all of the detail, the patina of the wood, the silky finishing. I opened the desk-

top and saw that it opened and closed exactly like the full-size versions. I have so much admiration for this piece, and every other piece that has arrived since that day.

It has even become somewhat of a tradition that when my friends come here, I share my latest masterpieces from Lynn. Even among those who are not familiar with the miniature world, I have found that their admiration is authentic, and they now seem to understand that my bottomless obsession is substantial enough to be categorised as nourishment for my soul.

Lynn was born in the UK where she and her husband Dennis ran a successful electronics company with help from their son Colin. Dennis had lived in South Africa as a child for many years before he met Lynn. Lynn had experience making quite a few pieces of full-sized furniture with her husband, so she knew all about dovetailing and mitred joints. Dennis taught her how to make fixtures and jigs to hold the pieces of wood in place. They are a great team.

As a child Lynn grew up in a joy-





Top left: The fireplace mantel holds a Lynn Jowers dog kennel and a 1/48th scale rocking horse.

Top: Lots of Christmas goodies are ready for Santa to enjoy.

Above centre: A little boy trying to figure out the abacus.

Above: A 1/48th scale tiny dog with a kennel.

filled filled home. She has only happy memories of days spent with her siblings and loving parents. She is the youngest of nine children. There were five girls and four boys! She now has only three sisters and one brother left, which is the saddest part of being the



youngest in any family.

Lynn typically gets many of her ideas for new miniatures as she is drifting off to sleep at night. She does not typically daydream about what might appeal to her beloved repeat customers, it's always about what would be a dream come true for her own doll's house that she has been allocating small bits of time to finishing sporadically, when the muse inspires her, over the last many years. This is the same doll's house that she bought in wooden plank form for a project, several decades ago. A small glimpse into that doll's house shows a little girl climbing the stairs in a modestly sized but exceptionally elegant cottage with all sorts of nooks and crannies. It is the most unusual little cottage I have ever seen.

Lynn owns quite a bit of woodwork-

ing machinery, some small and some quite large. Each piece of miniature furniture starts with a plank of wood that must be cut and thinned down to the correct twelfth scale thickness. She has a serious admiration for quality tools, so her workshop contains plenty of these.

Some tools she uses every day, others are seldom used but they are all essential in their own way. She has been asked many times about her methods of turning out such beautiful work. She maintains that she uses a mixture of techniques, the old, where she uses the mortise and tenon joints, mitred corners, and the more modern techniques to help produce the relief carvings. All of these techniques work very well together to produce beautiful modern and vintage style miniatures.



Lynn chooses wood with an exceptionally fine grain and finishes each piece with beeswax polish.

Small detailed furniture is difficult to make. For instance, twelfth scale offers its own level of complexity, but moving down to 1/24th scale has even more increased challenges, which is why these toys that she has perfected have made me so enthused. Lynn often spends more than an entire week making one single piece. With each piece she makes, she pretends that it is for her own collection. Then she feels certain that when it is completed, her admirers will be as pleased as she is with the end offering.

As all miniaturists know, the 1/24th scale usually sells for less money than the twelfth scale model despite the extra time required, even though the smaller the piece, the more difficult it is to complete. When it comes to miniatures, without the benefit of having elves in the workshop it all falls to one person. Lynn has a home to manage and a loving husband who is retired so making time for all of her responsibilities and ensuring quality family time can be challenging. However, Lynn feels as though she was put on this earth to make miniature furniture. Lucky for us!

Once you hold a miniature masterpiece created by Lynn in your own hands you should understand immediately that this has been very carefully measured and joined together, and that these treasures could never be mass produced with the same results. Corners would be cut, and the end product would be vastly different in too many ways than was originally intended. This is why there have been times where I have waited more than six months for what I have requested. However, it is always arguably my most cherished package that arrives here twice each year.

This feature's photographs are meant to be samples showcasing some of the vintage toys that Lynn has recently created in twelfth scale and what her inspiration was for these tiny masterpieces. To begin, there are



Left: Stockings are hung by the chimney with care! A Santa doll is going for a ride in a Lynn Jowers' wagon.

Top: A collection of tiny tools.

Above: This little pull-a-long duck actually has moving wheels.

Below left: A tiny doll's house full of teddies.

some toy wagons similar to one her own father made for her as a child.

After the wagon was completed, I found that she had made a tiny open bed dump truck, approximately 1 1/2" long. I was immediately over the moon for this perfect little toy. I wanted to buy one for every miniature loving friend that I have.

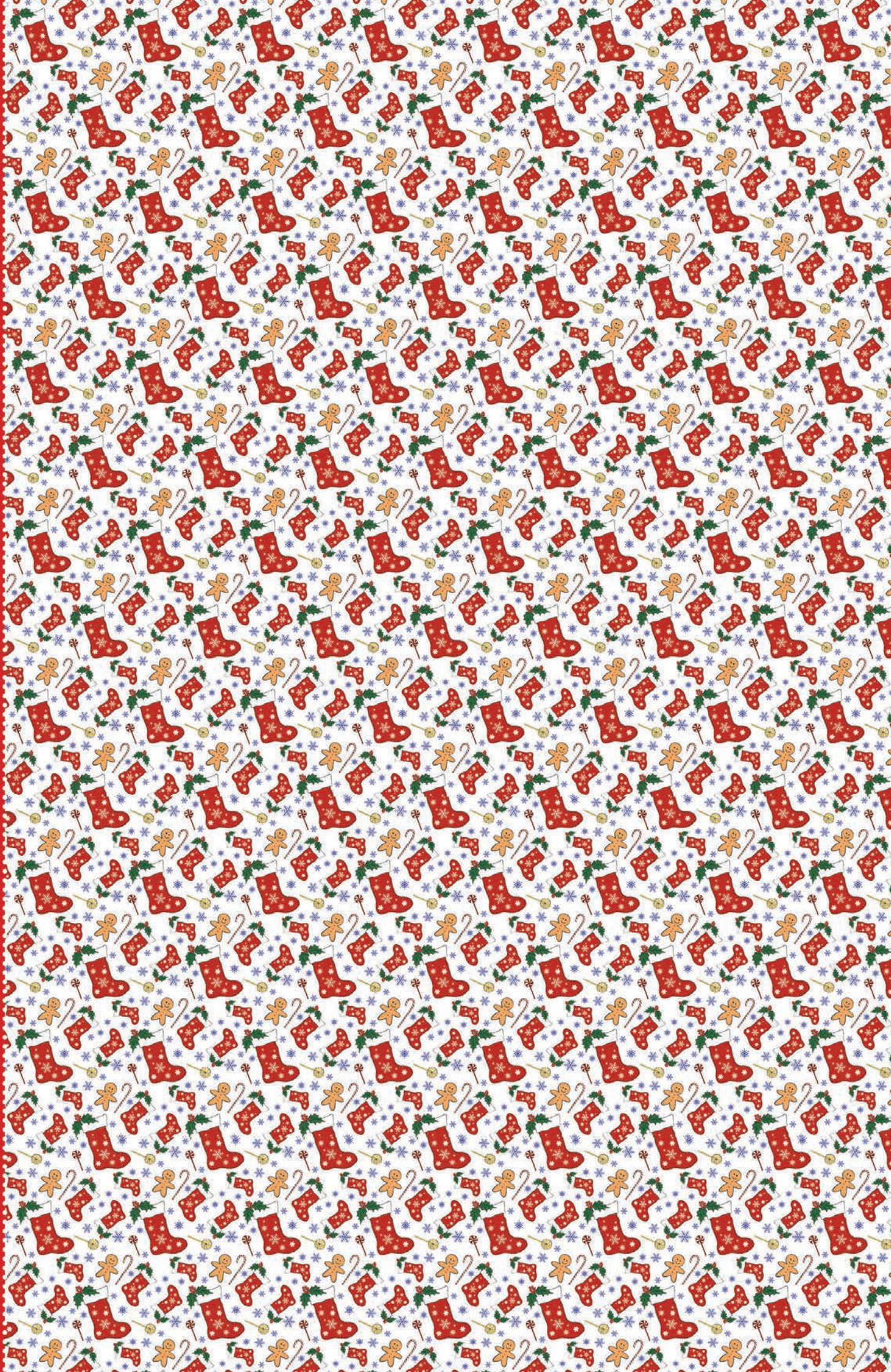
Next, I became infatuated with the tiny doll carriage that is only a bit over 1" long. I have several little bears and bunnies that fit into this carriage perfectly. It is the mirror image of a toy pram that I had as a small child, before the age of 6.

Many of the pictures from this article belong to my own personal collection. As I might have mentioned, Lynn's work is something completely unique and immediately identifiable. I cherish each piece that I own and have purchased over the years. In my opinion, Lynn Jowers should be recognised as an international treasure.

*From our
house to
your house*

THE CUTOUTS PAGE 2

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Garland and wreaths add a seaside Christmas theme

Karen shows how to create a quick wreath and garland for your tree, and decorates hers in beach style. You can choose your own theme

BY KAREN HRTZ

Make a wreath and some garland with a beach theme to decorate your miniature beach house this season. You can add some glitter to make it more festive if you desire or keep it clean and subtle. The festive wreaths can also be fun ornaments for your life size Christmas tree!

Step 1. Cut a piece of jute about 3 foot long. Put some glue on the plastic ring and secure the end of the jute.



Hold it in place long enough for the jute to stick securely to the ring.

Step 2. Wrap the jute around the ring, applying a little glue a little bit at a time, keeping the loops tight against each other so that the ring is completely covered.

Step 3. Glue a few tiny seashells onto the wreath and let dry.



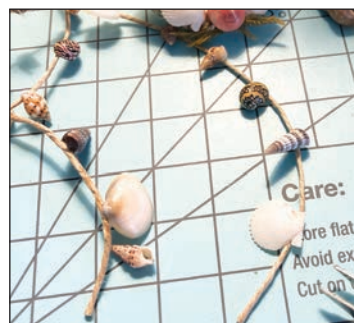
Step 4. For the garland, simply cut a piece of jute about 18" long. Glue tiny seashells onto the jute, spacing them

about an inch apart. Let dry and wrap around the Christmas tree or drape on a windowsill or doorway.



You will need

- Fine jute cord
- Tiny seashells
- Plastic ring (mine are 1.5" wide)
- White glue
- Scissors
- Ruler





Let's get to clearing the snow in our mini house



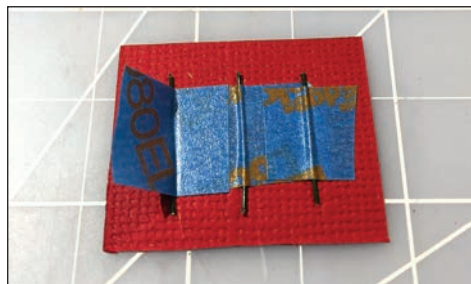
If the mini snow is going to be falling in your area this winter, you better start work on making a snow shovel right away

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

Step 2. Cut 3 pieces of thin wire to 5/8" long.



lus to rub the paper down against the wire. I used a smaller stylus and then a larger one to smooth out the paper.



Step 3. Tape one wire in the centre. Then tape the other two. Run your nail along the edge of the wire to get the tape snug.

Step 5. Cut a toothpick to 3/8" for the handle. Sand the cut edges with sandpaper.



Step 6. Cut down a shish kabab skewer or a wood dowel to 2 5/8" long to use for the shovel neck.

Step 4. Cover one side with wood glue. Press together with your fingers, wait a minute, and then use a ball sty-

Mrs. Santa has been keeping the path way clear for Santa's arrival home. Make your own little shovel to add to a winter scene.

Step 1. Cut two pieces of red card stock to 1 1/4" x 1" Preferably a smooth textured paper. I just used the smoother side of what I had.

You will need

- Red card stock
- Craft knife
- Metal ruler
- Thin wire
- Wire cutters
- Blue tape
- Yellow wood glue
- Ball stylus
- Wood cutters
- Toothpick
- Fine sandpaper
- Shish kabab skewer or a wood dowel
- Small scissors
- Gloss varnish



Step 7. Cut red card stock to 3/8" tall to the circumference of your shovel neck (pole). It will wrap around the pole.



Step 8. Put wood glue on, wait a minute, and wrap it onto the wood pole. You want the edges to butt together.

Step 9. For the handle end of the same pole, cut two pieces of red card stock to 1" long. The width will depend on what you use for the shovel neck. Mine was about 1/16-1/8".



Step 10. Glue them on both sides of the pole keeping in mind where the join is on the bottom part of the pole. The butted seam you made earlier would be at the back of the pole.

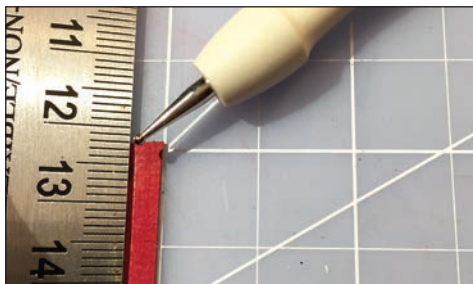


Step 11. Wrap another piece of red paper around those two handle pieces. Be sure to keep the butted seam at the back.

Step 12. Bend the long card stock handle pieces out and then make light creases where they would bend by folding.



Step 13. Place the toothpick handle inside with wood glue.

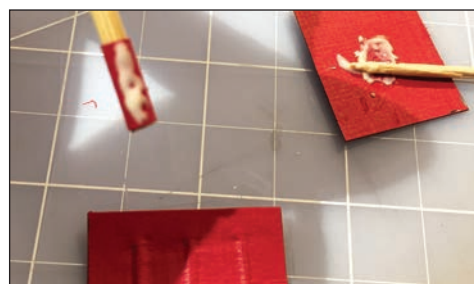


Step 14. Score the bottom of the shovel blade with a ball stylus.



Step 15. Wrap the shovel base around something curved. I used my glue bottle. This is where the wire you inserted will do its job. Bend gently, you don't

want to crease the paper.



Step 16. Glue the pole base onto the back of the shovel base. Let dry.



Step 17. Once the glue is dry, use small scissors to snip away the excess paper on the handle.

Step 18. Give it a coat or two of gloss varnish.

You can age it if you like. I kept this one nice because it is Santa's snow shovel. I imagine he would like it shiny like his sleigh. Now he can come home to a safe pathway thanks to the woman of the house!



Bake ginger & honey loaf cake for winter

A loaf cake will make a great addition to a festive table, especially if it is dressed up with a wrapper of greaseproof paper and Christmas greenery

BY GINA THEESFIELD

This beautiful ginger and honey loaf cake, with the amazing candied orange peel, is exactly the perfect thing to brighten up these cold winter days.



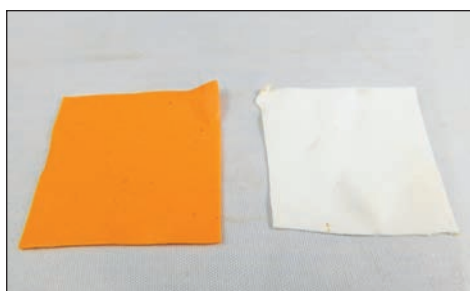
Step 1. Roll out tan polymer clay to 1/2" thickness and cut out a 1" x 1/2" rectangle with a clay cutter.



Step 2. Texture bread using stencil brush and needle tool. Use any other of your favourite texture methods. I also use a rolled up ball of aluminium foil.



Step 3. Use a soft brush and pastel chalks to shade bread. Start from lightest to darkest. I used orange and 2 shades of Red Iron Oxide. Then bake your bread according to clay instructions



Step 4. Combine white and translucent clay and roll to a very thin layer. Roll out orange clay to a thin layer.



Step 5. Lay translucent/white layer on top of orange layer and roll it out just a bit more to weld layers together.



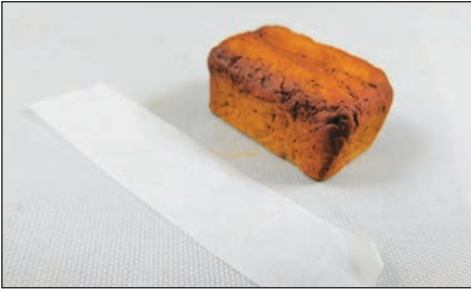
Step 6. Texture both the white side and the orange side with stencil brush or toothbrush. Cut off thin strips. Curl the thin strip into a curl shape. Bake thin strip according to clay instructions.

You will need

- Polymer Clay (tan, orange, white and translucent)
- Pastel chalk (shades of orange and brown)
- Stencil brush or toothbrush

- Soft brush
- Greaseproof paper
- Needle tool
- Dried lycopodium
- 1" x 1/5" clay cutter
- Glue
- Twine





Step 7. Cut a piece of greaseproof paper into a strip that is 3/8" wide by 2" long.



Step 8. Wrap greaseproof paper around bread and glue, making sure that the seam of the greaseproof paper is at the bottom of the bread.



Step 9. Cut a small piece of dried lycophodium and glue it to the top of the greaseproof paper.



Step 10. Tie a piece of thin twine around the bread loaf.

Step 11. Trim twine ends and glue curled piece of orange peel to the top.

● www.etsy.com/shop/Calicogarden

Quick and easy

Sandra goes back to base to make a simple Christmas cake

BY SANDRA HARDING

When I made a Christmas tree under a glass dome (see P47) it struck me that the base looked like a Christmas cake, and I decided to make one for some silly reason, so here it is. I now have a nice glass dome without a base which may end up with a flower arrangement in it later; so that's another Q&E I guess.

- Paint the top and sides of the base in white acrylic and let it dry.
- Paint the bottom

You will need

- Base of a glass domed thimble holder
- White acrylic paint, and silver or gold paint
- Dried, fake snow, or in my case dry wallpaper granules, and a dish to hold them
- Little bit of greenery, as near as you have to holly
- Tiny red berries or beads, or in my case red berries from potpourri
- Tiny piece of trim to go around the base. I used a gold tag holder from my stock.
- Glue, tweezers, paint brush



band in gold or silver and let it dry.

- Paint the top and sides again with a thicker white coat, and push it immediately into the "snow" making sure it's all covered. Make sure to remove any that's on the gold. Let it dry.

- Place good amount of glue in the cake centre and add greenery, little leaves and berries or beads too it. Use whatever you have to hand; it could be tiny flowers, poinsettia for instance. Let it all dry.

- Add the trim between the gold base and the white cake to tidy it.
- Now find a use for the little glass dome you have over. You'll think of something.

Bright as a button

Just a thought. If you don't have a glass dome lying around doing nothing then maybe experiment with two buttons of the right size, or even cut out thick card.



Make accessories for your fireplace

Use materials you might have around your full-size house to create a log basket and fireplace tool set for your doll's house

BY ELIZE VAN ES

I just love making miniatures from materials I can find in and around my house. We are coming up to the festive season and that also means cork wires and tea lights are easily accessible. If you can't find them in your own home then maybe your neighbours, relatives or friends have them. Just ask, so you can recycle and use them to make some lovely twelfth scale miniatures.

For this project I took apart an empty lighter and used the metal cap. So now I have some other amazing parts to use for future DIY miniature projects. Have fun making this little project!

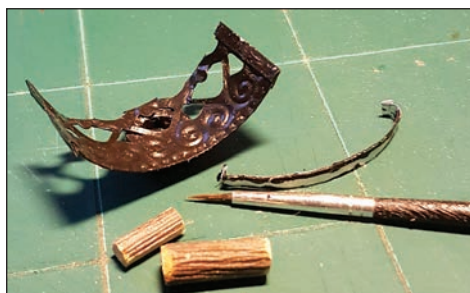
Log basket



Step 1. Go outside and look for twigs or very small branches that would be the right size for twelfth scale logs. Just use your mini eye, there are no exact measurements. Whatever looks realistic and natural is perfect. Cut the twigs to about 1" long.

Step 2. Use a box cutter or knife to slice off some chips at the edges to give the logs a more realistic look. If

you see irregularities, just sand them away. Let the pieces of wood dry for at least 24 hours.



Step 3. Take your piece of metal and cut a slice about 2 1/2" long. Bend slightly as shown in the photo. Glue the ring on the bottom, in the middle. Make sure the metal base stands straight and firm on the ring.

Step 4. Take your tea light holder and cut off the top double folded strip. Bend to shape and measure to fit on the log basket base, plus a bit extra on both sides for gluing. You want it to look like an egg shaped basket. Don't glue the handle in yet!

Save the rest of the tea light holder, you'll need a small piece for your fireplace toolset.



Step 5. Paint the metal base and the handle. I painted a black base and used touches of brown at the edges to make it look a bit rusty. But of course you can paint it any colour you like!



Step 6. When the paint is dry, glue the half of your logs into place. Make sure the base doesn't tumble. Fit the handle and glue it in, on the inside. Let it dry for two hours. Then glue in the rest of the logs.

Fireplace toolset

Step 7. Cut three pieces of wire, about 1" long. Bend them in three equal hook shapes, with a little hook at the end to hang the tools on. See the photo right.

You will need

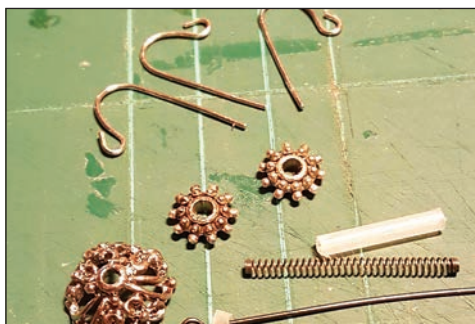
- Tacky glue
- Cutters
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Round nose
- Flat nose pliers
- Ruler
- Watercolour paint
- Emery board
- Sanding paper

Wood rack

- Dry natural twigs
- 1" long bendable metal
- Empty tea light holder
- 1" ring, plastic or metal
- Acrylic paint - brown, black

Fireplace toolset

- Muselet (wire cage that fits over a champagne cork)
- Jewellery findings - 3 rings and a base
- Metal or jewellery wire
- A small juice box straw
- A metal pin or metal wire with a small eye bent at end
- The metal cap of a disassembled lighter
- Plastic bag sealer
- Plumber's hemp
- Black acrylic (spray) paint
- Air drying clay or poster buddies



Step 8. The height of your toolset hanger without the hooks on top is about 1.8". Measure the total height of your jewellery finding (3 rings and a base) subtract that from the height of the toolset hanger. That is the height of the juice box straw you need. Cut the straw to size. Then cut the straw in 2 pieces: 1/3 and 2/3.

Step 9. Cut a very small ring from the leftover straw and glue it on the end of the pin. Push the pin through the bottom of the jewellery base, put a jewellery ring over the pin on top, then the 2/3 piece of straw and the second ring to seal. Glue together and let dry for 15 minutes. At this stage a piece of the pin will be sticking out.

Step 10. Fill the bottom of the jewellery base with clay or poster buddies and make sure the base with the 2 rings and first piece of straw stands straight and firm. Let dry for 45 minutes.

Step 11. Take your 1/3 piece of straw and place it over the pin, seal with the 3rd jewellery ring. Take the 3 hooks you made and fit them into the last ring. Cut if necessary so everything fits and levels out on top. When you're happy, glue together and let dry for 2 hours.



Step 12. Take your cork wire and cut and remove the bind wires (the thin ones). Bend the legs back carefully till everything is flat. You now have a circle with 4 legs attached; each leg has a little eye on top to hang the different tools on the stand. Cut one leg off at the end. Cut a second leg off with 'wings' to about 0.3" from both sides.

Step 13. Cut the metal cap from the empty lighter in shape. Sand the edges. Take the first cork wire leg, bend a little and glue to the inside of the metal cap. Let dry for at least 2 hours.

Step 14. Take your plastic back sealer, bend in a 'U' shape and cut to size. Length is about 1.7". Flatten the ends with your flat nose pliers.



Step 15. At this stage you can paint the stand, the shovel, the tongs and your second cork wire leg with the 2 wings. I used black paint. Let dry.

Step 16. Last step is the broom you already painted. Take a small string of plumber's hemp. Drape over the two 'leg wings' and glue in. You can repeat this if you want the broom to be thicker. Make sure it stays flat and let dry. In the meantime cut a small circle from the leftover tea light holder. Punch a hole in the middle and make a cut on one side from the bottom to the hole. Place this around the cork wire leg and fold over the top of the horse hair. Use pliers to straighten the fold. Cut the horse hair to size. Paint the cap black and let dry.

Step 17. Hang the fireplace tools on the stand and it's finished. Sit back and enjoy the miniatures you just made!

Try making a cute little bench in card

Make a little bench for any room in the doll's house. Kris takes you through it step-by-step using just mount board and cardstock

BY KRIS COMPAS

I have a notebook where I keep catalogue pictures of furniture for inspiration. They are on my mini wish list to make from mount board and card stock.

I have used 3 layers of mount board for the leg/arms. This makes a fine and sturdy bench. You could use 2 layers of mount board and it would still make a sturdy bench. You would have to widen out the seat base by $\frac{3}{32}$ " to compensate for the loss of the 2 pieces of mount board (one for each side) in the leg/arms. Don't do this by adding to the long sides; cut the pattern in

half and add in the middle, lengthwise. Keep the seat base to 3 layers.

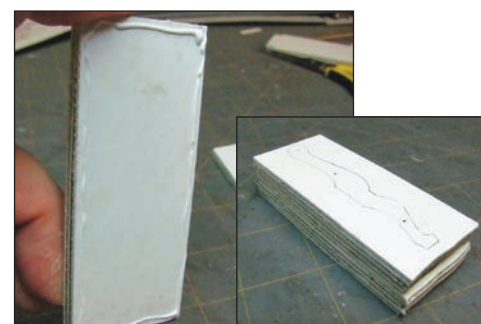


Step 1. Copy the leg/arm pattern onto paper 12 times. Use glue stick to glue the paper to a piece of mount board. Cut out the leg/arm patterns with your craft knife. This uses the least amount of mount board depending on how close you have put the patterns.

Or copy the pattern 4 times onto paper and glue to 3 layers of mount board, (that's been glued together with wood glue first) and cut out the leg/arm pattern using a scroll saw. When gluing the mount board together don't use too much glue or the mount board warps. Smear the mount board around a bit on the glue and then line up the pieces.

Or copy your pattern once onto card stock for a pattern to trace from. Cut 12 pieces of mount board, 3 pieces for each leg/arm. Glue these stacks together using wood glue.

Step 2. Trace the leg/arm pattern onto one of the mount board stacks.



Step 3. Glue the stacks together using tacky glue. Only glue along the edges, away from your pattern.



Step 4. I am using my scroll saw to cut the stacked 4 legs out all at once. Please, don't let having to cut individual 8 to 12 leg/arm patterns out deter you from making this bench. Just put a new blade in your craft knife and spend a little time, take a couple of breaks and you'll have the leg/arms cut out before you know it.

You will need

- Mount/mat board
- Ruler
- Paper/pencil
- Glue stick
- Knife
- Yellow carpenter's glue
- Scroll saw
- Tacky glue
- T-pin
- Toothpicks
- $\frac{5}{64}$ " bit
- Drill
- Fine sandpaper
- Bamboo skewer
- $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowel
- Foam core
- Thermolam batting
- Material
- Scissors



Step 5. Place the legs out like mine, 2 facing left and 2 facing right.



Step 6. Place the pattern onto the legs and mark using a T-pin for the holes.



Step 7. Use toothpicks for the rungs. Use a 5/64" bit. Test the size on a scrap stack of mount board to see if this works for you. Cut the tapered end off the toothpick, sand and insert in the hole. I drilled holes where marked. Don't drill through.



Step 8. Trace the seat base onto 3 pieces of mount board, cut out with a

knife and glue the pieces together. Or you can glue the mount board together first and cut the seat base out all at once like I did with the legs.

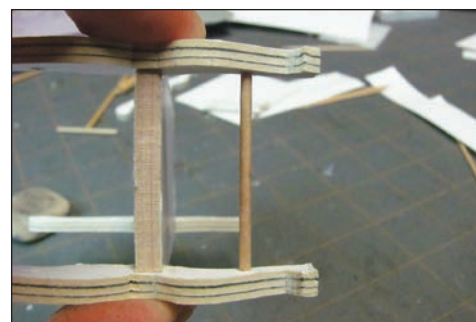


Step 9. Glue two legs into the notches of the seat base. Set this off to the side to dry.

Step 10. I'm holding the bench with a leg temporarily set into a notch and measuring from outside edge to outside edge of the legs. I measured 1 5/8". I am going to subtract 1/8" because my holes aren't drilled through. I still might have to trim, depending on how deep I have drilled my holes. That's what dry fitting is for.



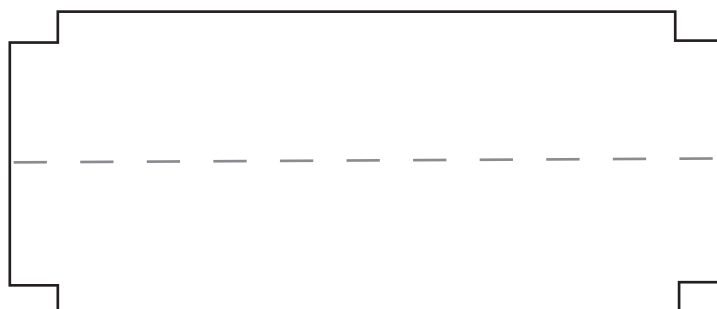
Step 11. I am cutting my toothpicks at 1 1/2" and marking the centres at 3/4". Sand the ends of the toothpicks just to take the raggedness off and insert them into the holes on the legs. Trim the toothpick if needed. Dry fit both sides.



Step 12. While you have the toothpicks and loose legs temporarily on the bench, measure between the toothpicks for the length of the long rung. I measured about 3 5/8" to 3 11/16".

Pattern:

Cut on dashed line and spread apart to 3/32" to make larger when using 2 layers of mount/mat board for leg/arms.

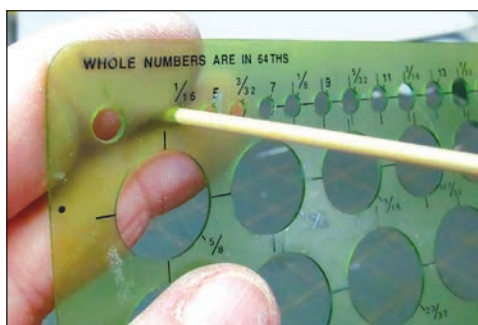


Leg/Arm





Step 13. You can fancy your bench a bit by using triangular files and sandpaper to create beads and other shapes.



Step 14. I am using a bamboo skewer for the long rung that connects to the two toothpicks on the legs. I buy these at the grocery store. I've sanded it just a bit so that it fits into the 1/16" hole in my circle template.



Step 15. I've used my craft knife to whittle the ends down.

Step 16. I am using a T-pin to mark a hole in the centre of my toothpick rung. Don't push too hard, just enough for a small drill bit to fit into.



Step 17. I am going to use my trusty little drill bit set to drill these holes. The easiest way I have found to drill something like this is to start out with a smaller bit than what you need and graduate up to the bit that will fit.

Step 18. I drilled a hole in one rung and glued the skewer in.



Step 19. Temporarily fit the bench together and check the length of the centre rung. Trim if needed.

Step 20. Glue the other short rung, (toothpick) onto the long rung, (bamboo skewer).

Step 21. Glue the rung assembly into the legs on the bench.

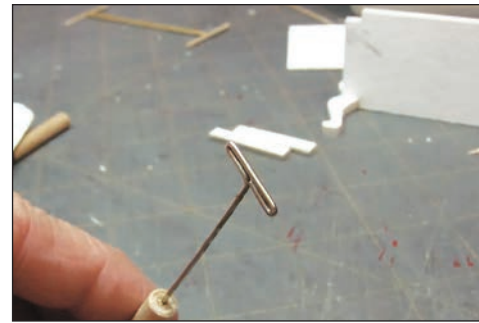


Step 22. I'm going to make the upper section and I'm measuring between the sides, (leg/arm), it's 1 1/4".

Step 23. The first part of this section is made from mount board. Cut a strip of mount board 3/16" wide and at least 5 1/2" long. Measure and mark 1 1/4" four times on this strip. Use a square to draw and cut the lines.



Step 24. I've glued one on top of the other; now I have two pieces.



Step 25. I am using a piece of 1/4" dowel for the top of the section. Measure and mark for 2 pieces at 1 1/4". You can cut the 1/4" dowel with a craft knife by rolling the knife and dowel until you can snap the dowel apart. Or use a little mitre saw.

Step 26. Mark the centre of the ends of the dowels with a T-pin. I've drilled the holes starting out with a smaller bit than I needed and graduated up to the 5/64" bit for the toothpick that will be glued in.



Step 27. Glue bits of toothpicks into

MINI MAKES

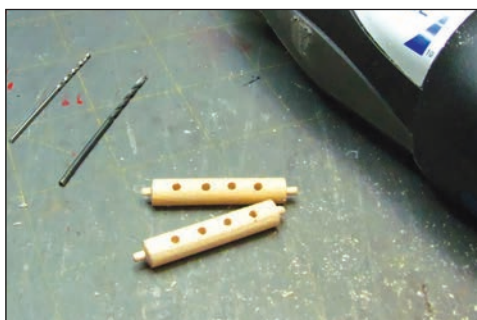
the holes leaving about $\frac{3}{32}$ " out. We are going to 'dowel' this section into the bench for sturdiness. Yes, that's Digger's paw. He likes to lay between me and the keyboard on my arms while I type.



Step 28. Remember the 2 pieces of mount board you just made up? Use a T-pin to mark the centres of each end.



Step 29. Drill holes for the toothpicks to go into. Grip the ends of the mount board tightly when drilling or the mount board will spread apart.



Step 30. Measure and mark the dowels into $\frac{1}{4}$ " sections. Use a T-pin to mark the holes. It is important that these are in a straight line. I used my Dremel to drill these holes but it could have been done with the little drill set.



Step 31. Transfer the markings from the dowel to the mount board piece. Mark with a T-pin.



Step 32. Drill out matching holes.

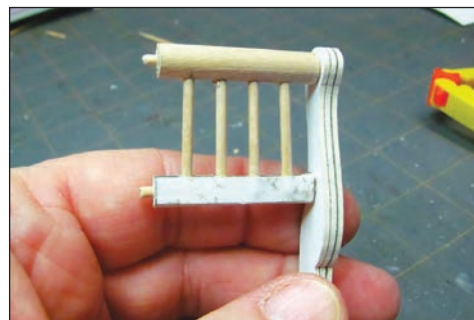
Step 33. Put the dowel and mount board piece into a loose side and measure between the two. Measure about $1\frac{1}{16}$ " between. I am going to add a bit to top and bottom for the toothpicks to be inserted. Total $1\frac{5}{16}$ " is what I'll cut 8 toothpicks.

Step 34. Glue the toothpicks into the mount board piece, because the mount board is more flexible than the $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowel and you might need the flexibility to move the toothpicks slightly to get them into the $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowel.

Step 35. Dry fit the $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowel on. Dry fit the section onto the bench to see if you need to trim the toothpicks.

Step 36. The section did fit after trimming so I glued it in. The next thing is to glue the leg/arm on. Put some glue in the notch so the leg is glued to bench.

I did not dowel the leg into the bench. I thought the notch gave me enough surface to glue. If you want to dowel it, drill into the flat area between the upper and lower sections on the side where you can see the layers of mount board. We will cover this edge with a layer of card stock.



Step 37. Measure the width of the leg/arms. I like to cut the strips of card stock just short of the width that is measured.



Step 38. Glue the card stock strips on covering the layers of mount board on the leg/arms and the edges of the seat base.

Step 39. Sand the bench, then paint and sand 3-4 times for a smooth finish.

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Step 40. I gave it a coat of Krylon clear gloss outside. Then I brushed on and wiped off a coat of grey paint and mixed some dark brown with the grey and painted that on in spots. I did not dilute the paint with anything. I used a scrap of T-shirt fabric to buff the whole thing when it was dry.

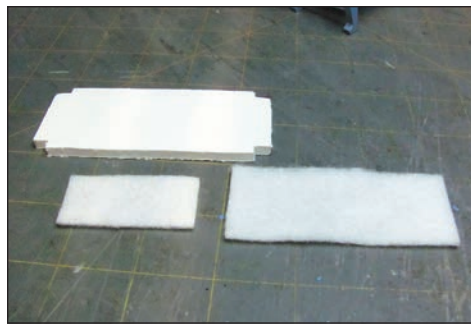
Bench upholstery



Step 41. Make a pattern for the seat cushion using the seat base pattern. Trace the seat base pattern onto card stock. When you cut it out leave the line on the scrap. Set the new pattern on the bench; do you have about a 1/32" all around?



Step 42. Trace your new pattern onto foam core and cut out. Dry fit the foam core onto the bench. Trim if needed.



Step 43. Cut two pieces of Thermolam batting.



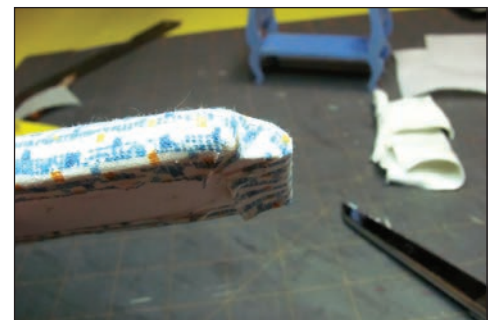
Step 44. Glue the small piece on first, then the larger one. The next piece is cut to fit the top; don't go over the sides. The fourth piece is cut to be glued to the sides with tacky glue. Cut out the notches.



Step 45. Glue the Thermolam onto the sides and trim off the extra. Glue onto your fabric.



Step 46. Cut into the corners. Apply glue into the notch and onto the fabric.



Step 47. Press the fabric into the notch and pull the fabric down and create a triangle. Squeeze tightly on the triangle of fabric to secure. Trim off the triangles. Glue the seat cushion to the seat base.

Step 48. Add some piping if you wish.



Gift bag & wrapping paper

The Chester club passed on their way of making Christmas accessories

Bag

- Cut a 4in square of wrapping paper and fold in half. Glue with glue stick.
- Trace round template and cut out.
- Score and fold along dotted lines. Punch four holes as marked on the template.
- Use an awl if you do not have a hole punch handy.
- Fold and stick side seam and

base.

- Thread bunka through holes to make the handles and glue in place.

Paper

- Cut three lengths of straw pin long.
- Cut three pieces of paper, each 2in square.
- Stick small strip of double-sided tape to top and bottom.
- Starting at the bottom edge, wind the paper onto the straw.



You will need

- Wrapping paper
- Drinking straw
- Bunka
- Small hole punch
- Glue stick



Candy cane

Festive mini-make from Chester Dolls House and Miniatures

You will need

- Red polymer clay
- White and transparent polymer clay

- A 6mm ball of each colour will be enough to make about 40 candy canes and enough waste for a whole bag of sweets.

- Take a small piece of each colour and roll a very thin sausage about 1/8in thick. Put both side by side and then roll/twist them together until you get the pattern you want and you lose the edges of the individual sausages. The final thickness should be about 1/16in.

- Cut into 1in lengths, place on a tile and form it into a walking stick with a hook on one end.



Julia's style reflects the heart of Christmas

Discover a world of festive sparkle and elegant design with Julia Stewart's magical miniatures and she finds inspiration all around her

BY SADIE BROWN

A talented designer, Julia Stewart perfectly describes her miniature style as glam/chic, something which often sees her taking quality kits and transforming them into a range of high end aspirational furniture and accessories, all glittering with the air of historical elegance which is at the heart of her now signature style. "My love of miniatures came from when I was a child. My grandmother had this wonderful glass doll's house with beautiful items in it, and we were not allowed to touch. I wanted to play minis so badly with them."

However, it was through accompanying her sister, Laura Montgomery, to shows which led Julia to really discover the potential of small scale and her own artistic talent. "Between her, Bridget McCarty and Laura Crain, they sucked me right into the miniature world and I have never emerged," says Julia. "When I decided to start selling

miniatures, I looked for a void in the market place and decided to go from there. I find inspiration for my work anywhere. Anything from a paper napkin, to thrift stores, antique stores, art, or items that happen to be lying next to each other in my messy art room."

From glittering Christmas trees to a hall table featuring an ombre paint effect and a stunning settee with cushions encased in hand dyed rich raspberry velvet, Julia's portfolio is crammed with glamorous designs. "I love taking affordable miniatures and making them look very expensive," she says, believing that the only boundary to creative potential is your

own imagination. "If you use very nice fabrics and patterns, this can go a long way to making something feel expensive." That sense of imagination can be seen in play with two dressers, demonstrating the art of creating an entirely different look for two identical or very similar pieces of furniture.

Papered with a floral design, one dresser's lavender theme follows through to the items which accessorise it. Here you'll find one of Julia's hats, their fun designs inspired by the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. The old book and the birdhouse were made from kits, and whilst sadly Julia can't recall the origins of the bird cage with the tiny bird sitting inside, it makes a thoroughly stunning addition to the scene. The second dresser has a tartan led twist, but what makes this piece really special are two of the miniatures sitting on top, collaborations between Julia and her brother, Kirk, aided by a sprinkling of modern technology. The marvels of 3D printing are being increasingly adopted by the miniaturist, enthusiastic

Far left: This sleigh is bursting with seasonal magic.

Above left: An overflowing festive candy selection made just for Christmas.

Left: Julia's twelfth scale Christmas shadow boxes are perfect for display in a doll's house or room box and could even be a wonderful holiday gift.

Above: This tray of holiday treats has a festive sparkle.





Above: This little scene is filled with the colours of Christmas and special presents are waiting to be opened.



Right: Stored in this mini trunk are festive family heirlooms that are ready to rediscover year after year.



to discover new and exciting ways to create, so it was a delight to discover that Kirk had printed both the vase and the candlestick found on the dresser. Julia then worked some miniature magic, decorating the candlestick and bringing the vase to life with a beautiful bouquet of white flowers.

Julia's canopied daybeds, the base for which brings together two kits, a daybed and a mirror, also offers an especially fine example of her talent for magical, inventive design. With an air of genuine vintage owing to the handkerchiefs which form their distinctive canopies, the beds are always covered in a beautiful selection of cushions, the overall finish achieving the height of small scale luxury.

Meanwhile, ranging from around

3½ to 5 inches in length, Julia's miniature pieces illustrate just how easily glamour can meet functionality to produce magnificent statement pieces. "My miniature wall clocks were inspired by some vintage watch faces I had collected. I started mixing them with old jewellery and they were a match made in heaven."

Some of Julia's most intriguing ideas have centred around Christmas. An old trunk is filled with festive memories and decorations and is just one piece evocative of Christmases past and present. Her seasonal collection also includes wonderful gift trays laden with candy and added sparkle, but special mention must go to a Christmas tree which repurposes mini ice cubes to help create a magical winter wonderland.

A love of miniatures has also enabled Julia to indulge one of her other passions, the world of ballet. In her self-described 'tutu factory' Julia creates what she admits are some of her most complex creations, but also adds that these wonderful pieces are amongst the most satisfying, and it's easy to see why they've danced their way to becoming a firm favourite.

For Julia seeing her creations connect with others is by far the most important aspect in her work. "The thing I find most satisfying about selling miniatures is seeing the smile on people's faces when they find just the right item, or they look at something I have created, and it makes them smile. Miniatures should be a happy place for everyone."



Three Christmas prizes to be won in wordsearch

Minimum World have given us three lovely prizes for readers to win.

First prize is a Christmas-themed roombox and accessories; second prize is a dining room set with Christmas food and drink and third prize is a Christmas decoration set.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is to spot the one word missing from the grid. Email the missing word to richard@ashdown.co.uk with 'Minimum World Competition' in the subject line. Please include your name and address so we can send your prize if you win.

Closing date is December 12, 2021.

Zena kit winners

Winners of the wordsearch competition in issue 341 were: Sandie McGlade of Essex, Susan Richter from Washington NJ, and Monique van Rooijen from The Netherlands. They correctly identified the missing word 'vintage'. They each won printed kits from Zenas Miniatures.

www.zenasminiatures.com
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MINIMUM WORLD
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 BUILDING SUPPLIES
 LIGHTING
 HOUSES

WALLPAPER
 CARPETS
 CURTAINS
 FURNITURE
 DOORS

WINDOWS
 DOLLS
 RESIN FIGURES

Two party outfits that will fit little dolls

Knit pretty little clothes so your girls can go to the party. These outfits are ideal for an indoor scene or on the snow-filled front step



BY DESNA TYSOE

Cape

Cast on 50 stitches K 10 rows Next row K
Next row K5 P to last 5 K5
Repeat last 2 rows 4 times
Next row. K5 cast on 2 on these 7 stitches K9 rows.
Cast off 2 at end of next row.
Break cotton.
Rejoin to centre 40 stitches work 11 rows SS.
Break cotton. Cast on 2 sts at begin- ning of last 5 sts.
K11 rows. Working as before with 5K sts at each end, work 10 rows on all stitches.
Next row. K4 (K2 tog K3) repeat to last 6 sts.
K2 tog K4.
Work 5 rows K.

Next row, K4 (K2 tog K2) repeat to last 8 sts.
K2 tog K to end.
Work 3 rows K.
Next row. K5 (K2 tog) rep to last 4 sts. K4.
Work 2 rows K.
Next row. K2 (pick up loop between sts and K into it. K1) repeat to last 2 sts. K2.
Stocking stitch 18 rows.
Next row K14. K3 tog. K to end.
Next row P13 P3 tog P to end.
Cast off. Sew up hood seam.
Sewing contrast pick up 32 stitches around hood.
P1 row K1 row. Repeat last 2 rows.
Cast off in K.
Make up. Sew in ends.
Thread ribbon at neck.

Pants

Cast on 14sts. K 1 row.

Starting K SS 4 rows. Continue in SS. K2 tog both ends of every K row until 6 sts. Work 7 rows.
Inc both ends of every K row until 14 sts. Work 4 rows.
K1 row. Cast off. Make up.
Sew in ends and join side seams.

Dress

Front: Cast on 38 stitches K3 rows
Pattern 1st row K
2nd row P
3rd row K1* (K2tog) 3 times (yarn for- ward K1) 6 times (k2tog) 3 times.
Rpt from * to last st K1.
4th row K
Repeat pattern rows 8 times.
Next row P
Next row K2 tog to end.
Next row P
Next row K2 tog twice K to last 4 sts, K2 tog twice.
Next row P
Next row K2 tog K to last 2. K2 tog. Start P SS 5 rows*
Next row K6 cast off 1 K to end.
P1 row. Cast off.
Join yarn to other 6 sts. P1 row. K 4 K2 tog.
P1 row. Cast off.
Back: Work as for front to * Continue in SS for 4 rows. Cast off.

Sleeves

Make 2 the same.
Cast on 14 sts K1 row.
Next row. K4 (M1,K1) 6 times K4
K2 rows.
Cast off stitch at beginning of next 2 rows
K2 tog at both ends of next row.
K5 rows.
K2 (K2 tog) 6 times K2.
Cast off.
Make up. Sew in ends. Join side seams. Sew in sleeves and put on doll before joining shoulder seams. Add ribbon. Sew lace skirt onto doll.

Top

Cast on 14 sts. K1 row.
Working in SS starting K work 4 rows. On next 4 K rows increase in first and last st.
Work 8 rows.
Next row P11 K11
Next row. Cast off 12.
Work 7 rows. Cast on 12. K1 row.
Next row. P11. K11.
Work 8 rows.
K2 tog each end next 4 rows. Work 4 rows. K1 row. Cast off.
Make up. Sew in ends. Sew underarm seams. Cross fronts and sew in place. Add bow to finish.

You will need

Cape and dress:

- To fit a 3in doll
- Size 20 needles
- Anchor pearl 8 cotton
- Ribbon

Party dress:

- To fit Heidi Ott child doll.
- Size 20 needles
- Anchor pearl 12 cotton
- Ribbon and lace

Abbreviations:

SS: stocking stitch, K: knit, P: purl



Debbie gives beautiful ballroom to museum

A Christmas gift of miniature wallpaper turned into an amazing project that eventually became a stunning museum display for people to admire

BY DEBBIE WALKER

Miniature projects often take us on journeys; we don't expect. This was definitely the case for me with my original, custom room box The Ballroom Dining Room. This journey began on Christmas Day in 2016 and would ultimately take me two provinces away to the Miniature World Museum in Victoria, British Columbia.

That Christmas my fiancée gifted me a variety of miniatures including a beautiful 13" x 17" laminated paper sheet of 'marble' flooring. It was too beautiful for me to cut so I knew I wanted to build around it.

I drew up the plans and then searched for someone to cut the MDF pieces I would need to make the room box. Glenn Johnson, a colleague at my workplace, enlisted the help of his friend Ken Kolstad, and together they



cut the pieces for me.

I began with all the prep work, including the windows, doors, wallpaper, furniture and construction began in August 2017. By September it was time to decide on the artwork and I settled on four pieces. The first was a framed work of art of a lady, which I purchased at the Chicago International show in April 2014. Then I got an original floral oil painting by an



88-year old woman from Stuttgart, Germany named Gabriele Leiner (also purchased at the Chicago International) and then two original watercolours by local artist, Helen Friesen, which I framed myself. The last part of this project was the installation of the lights, the accessories and food.

It took 11 months to complete this project – it is the highest end piece I have ever done and it far exceeded my expectations. If anyone is wondering why I called it The Ballroom Dining Room it is because once the supper is finished the furniture can be moved away revealing the marble floor and everyone can return for the ball.

But this isn't the end of the story. In July 2018 my fiancée and I took a trip to Victoria, B.C. (two provinces west of Saskatchewan, a 3 day drive). I had never been to Victoria so we spent two days touring around and one of the places we visited was the Miniature World museum in downtown Victoria located at The Empress Hotel. I was very impressed with their collection!

They had miniature scenes depicting moments throughout history, room boxes, doll's houses and even King Arthur and his sword, Excalibur. Before we left I made a point of getting



Above left: Miniaturist Debbie Walker and Glenn Johnson who came to see the project in person before she took it to Victoria.

Left: On display at the Miniature World Museum in Victoria, British Columbia.



Above: The flooring that started this project along with the wallpaper, windows and doors.
Right: The dining table with the candelabra on creates romance.



their business card, which I took home and put on my desk where it sat until April 2019.

On April 22 I decided to take the plunge to see if the museum would



be interested in The Ballroom Dining Room for their collection. After all, the worst they could say is "No," but if I never asked the question I would never know the answer. I sent an email to the Office Manager, Megan Kellar, asking that question. It was not long before I heard back from Megan and the answer was a resounding, "Yes"!

We emailed back and forth on the details and ultimately my fiancée and I decided to drive it out there and deliver it personally. For a lone ranger miniaturist such as myself (in Saskatchewan with no club or store nearby) having a piece of mine on public display in a museum is the ultimate honour and I couldn't pass up the opportunity to see it through.

We made a vacation of it and drove through the USA to Port Angeles and took the Coho Ferry to Victoria. On

June 25, 2019 I entered the museum with The Ballroom Dining Room. I introduced myself to the lady at the counter and she immediately called to the ladies in the back, "Debbie is here!" Megan, Grady, the Exhibits Manager, and three other women were all there to see it and they were seriously excited for its arrival! I don't know who was more excited – them or me! I hadn't anticipated such an enthusiastic reception, in fact, I hadn't even thought about what to expect when we got there. So that was extra special and something I will never forget.

I unpacked the room box and set it all up for them. One of the reasons I wanted to deliver it personally was to ensure that it arrived in perfect condition, which it did. Megan showed me where it would be put on display in the museum. They would order the pedes-

Left: A view of the entrance with the 'stained glass' window and embellished painting.

Above: The Reutter soup set with an original watercolour by Helen Friesen of Regina, SK.

tal and Plexiglas case and would need to set it up in the museum with special lighting. It took about eight months for everything to come together, but it went on public display in the museum in February 2020 and it looks absolutely smashing!

When we got home and I walked by where it had sat in my house I couldn't believe I had given it away as it was my most high end piece. But, you know, what? It's in Victoria so it's too late for that and the museum is so happy to have it and I am so happy that others will get to see it. I think we'll just have to go back for a visit and I can't wait to see it!

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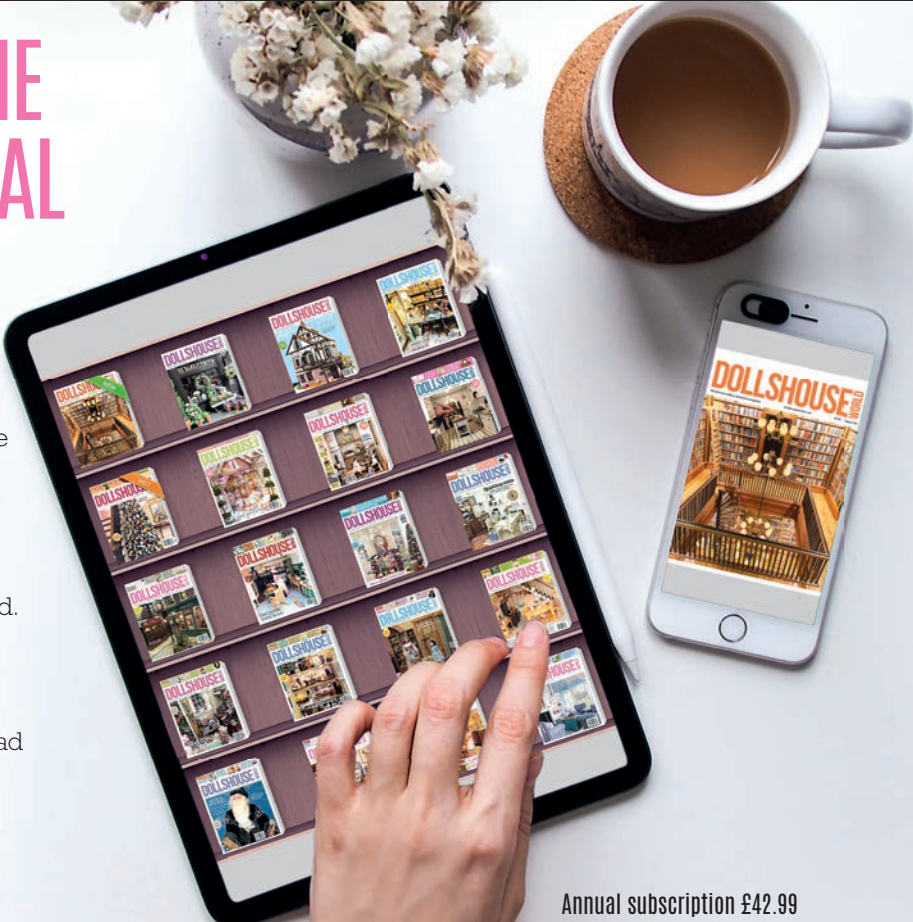
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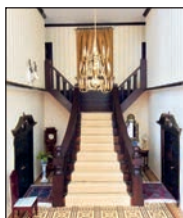
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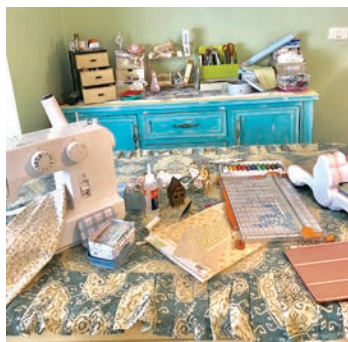
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SMALL TALK

WE CHAT WITH READER SILVIA GARCIA ABOUT HER LIFE IN MINIS

Hi Silvia, when did your love of miniatures begin? Ever since I was a child I have been passionate for the world of miniatures and doll's houses. My first house was made on an old shelf that my mother didn't use; it was Barbie scale and I made all the furniture and accessories. I can even remember lighting the house up with Christmas lights.



And you're still mad about minis? Miniatures are my passion and I think a lot about them during the day. I get to create when I have finished with my duties as a mother, after eight at night or while my children are doing their homework.



Where do you create? I have a small studio in my house with a lot of shelves where I keep my materials like fabrics, laces and ribbons along with unpainted furniture, paints, brushes, etc. I have a small laser cutting machine, a punching machine, and a sewing machine.

I also knit while I wait for my children in the car, and in my mother's house while they converse with her. So I always carry a backpack with me with things I can work on.



What do you love about your studio? It is a place where I find peace. I can do what I like there and I can forget about the problems of daily life for a moment. Despite not being a very big space I have everything I need. I also like it because it is a place where I can share my passion for miniatures with my daughter, Beatriz.

Where do you display the miniatures you've made? I have a showcase in the living room where I put my finished miniature art work. I put them there or inside my doll's house which is in a different room.

How would you change your studio if space was no problem?

I'd have many shelves on the four walls with small drawers to put my materials and small things in, as if it were a haberdashery. Also, I'd have a large desk in the middle with a great lamp with a magnifying glass along with my machines such as the die-cutter, the sewing machine and the laser engraver.



● We want to feature more readers in Small Talk and we would love to hear about your life in minis and your passion for making or collecting, or both. Just send a quick email to richard@ashdown.co.uk to express an interest.



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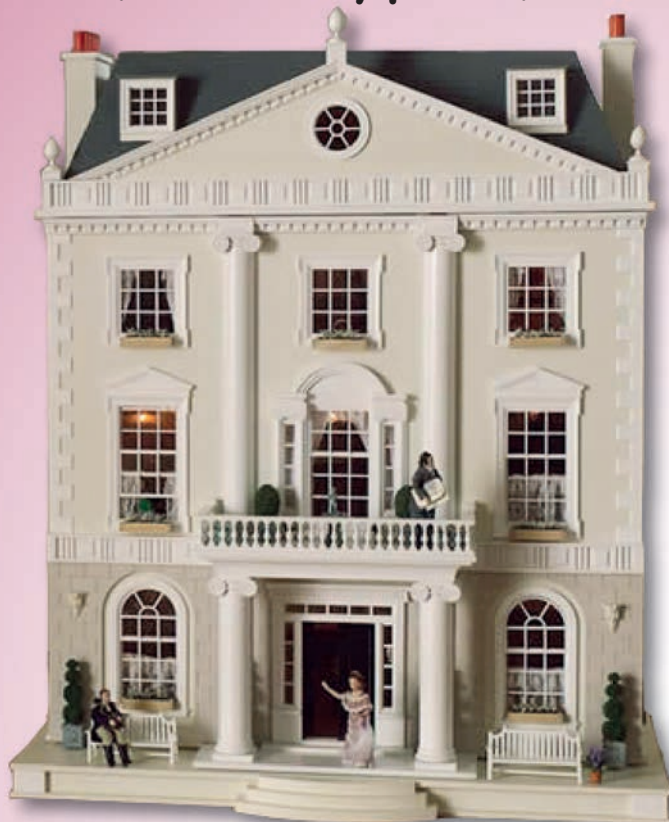
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