



FRANCISCAN NEWSLETTER

Vol. I, No. I

April, May, June 1994

Editorial

James Elliot, Editor

Welcome to the first issue of the *Franciscan Newsletter*. This newsletter began because for years I have asked other people to start a newsletter. Not getting any takers, I felt that I had passed the buck long enough. So here it is and I hope you enjoy it.

In this first issue, there are articles on Ivy, photographing your collection, and Franciscan padres. In every issue there will be questions from readers, as well as profiles on collectors and their collections. In future issues, the newsletter will cover china, glassware, the embossed/handpainted patterns, early dinnerware lines, artware, terra cotta gardenware, tiles, earthenware lines, family china, the independence line and, of course, the unusual. Also to be included is what is being produced today in England.

Readers are invited to contribute with pictures, questions, suggestions and corrections. Please ignore the spelling and grammatical errors. However, do not hesitate to correct information. This is the purpose of this newsletter: to be an open forum for discussion.

Pricing will be avoided unless necessary. Scarcity will be discussed. I agree with Delleen Enge: A price guide is only good for the day it was written.

Observations and rumors will be reported. Hopefully, the readers can either disprove or substantiate information.

As for me, my interest has been, always, Franciscan. It started with my earliest memories of Franciscan Ivy. My mother purchased a set in 1962. Quite a difference from the sets from Montgomery Wards. I can remember being told to be careful, pieces don't come cheaply. I remember my mother's friend next door had Apple and the friend across the street had Desert Rose. She said she had to have Ivy to be different from her best friends. The teapot and teacups were all stained and broken from the years of those coffee clatches, as well as morning tea. Another favorite memory was the day we put the Ivy away and started using malamac (there were seven children in my family). Mom bought some new pieces from the best Nebraska department store, Miller & Paine. She promptly dropped the vegetable bowl in the car, taking a huge chunk out of the rim. The dishes went away into the "for good" cabinet. Hence my beginning when she gave me the Ivy in 1979.

More later.



Franciscan Franciscans

Franciscan ware was named after the Franciscan Monks who play prominently in California's history. Their missions line the California coast as an ever-present reminder of their existence. Undoubtedly spurred on by this sense of rich history, Franciscan ware designers created two of our most interesting collectibles: the toby pitcher and the monk wine bottle.

The toby pitcher was introduced in the El Patio line. To date, I have found tobys in turquoise gloss, yellow gloss, maroon gloss and coral gloss. I have heard of, but have not seen, tobys in other colors.

The wine bottle is rumored to be from an order produced by Gladding McBean for a winery. Rumor also has it that crates of them are in existence. Besides a monk, there is a nun, a male and a female Native American. Colors so far found have been cobalt (known as Mexican blue), coral gloss, yellow gloss and turquoise gloss.



2901 Los Feliz

After the plant closing in 1984, the lot that was the Franciscan plant was sold and cleared. Later in the 1980s – due to the Savings and Loan disaster – the property went to the Resolution Trust Corp. However, as of this last year, the property is up again for commercial development. The property had to be cleaned for toxic wastes from the production of pottery. There is still a mound of earth that has to be moved to a waste site.

All that remains of the Franciscan plant is a fence and a mailbox. The mailbox still reads 2901 Los Feliz.

Lincoln, California

In 1976, Interpace announced the closure of the Lincoln terra cotta/tile plant. Pacific Coast Building Products of Sacramento purchased the plant and is currently operating it. Production includes sewer tile, terra cotta replacement pieces for historical buildings, as well as other terra cotta products.

This is the memorial that was erected during the Interpace years. In the background is sewer tile waiting for shipment. The plant still operates as the Gladding, McBean Company.



Photographing Your Franciscan

Shel Izen

It is no mystery, the photography of pottery. With a few basic tools, you can produce some wonderful photographs for your own personal use such as insurance, article illustrations, and perhaps home wall decoration.

You will need at least a 35mm camera with adjustable focus and shutter speeds, a tripod and a cable release. In addition, it is nice to have a macro-lens or close-up filters to enable you to focus close to photograph a special detail or maker's mark.

For most pottery, I prefer a non-distracting background, such as that produced by seamless paper that you can buy at your camera or art supply store. This paper is available in several colors and widths; the narrower widths being most suitable for home use. I like a neutral thunder gray color as it goes with most any color and style of pottery.

Find a table to work on and place it close to a bright window and a wall to which you will be taping the seamless paper.

There are stands you can buy or rent to hold the seamless, but if possible it works just as well to tape the beginning of the roll to the edge of the table and unroll the roll along the table and up part of the wall, then cut off the roll and tape the cut end to the wall. Be careful when working with the paper that you do not wrinkle or crease it. You now have a horizon-line-free work surface.

Place one piece of pottery on the "set" that you have created, and observe how it catches the light from the window. Load your camera with the type of film you want to use, set the proper film speed and place it on the tripod. Look through the camera and move the pottery around until it looks the way you want it. Experiment with changing the camera angles to accentuate the pottery's strengths. Low bowls may require a higher angle, while tall straight pieces may look better head on or just slightly high. Some pieces may need to be propped up a bit toward the camera by placing matchbooks or pieces of folded paper under the piece. Be sure any propping does not show by looking through the viewfinder.

You should be looking at a piece of pottery that is being lit strongly from one side. To balance the light on the opposite side of the window, you can use reflector cards made from white cardboard for a "soft fill," or shiny reflector boards available from art supply stores. These boards can be cut to a convenient size and held in place on the set with poster putty. Make a small ball from the putty and position the reflector card where you want it out of view of the camera. Put the putty down and place the card in it to make a little stand for it. By moving the reflector card around, you will observe how it fills in shadows and balances the light. You may need more than one reflector card to balance the scene.

If the pottery is highly reflective, the reflector cards can add highlights that enhance the photograph. If you want to eliminate or reduce reflections, a polarizing filter on the front of your lens can help.

Now everything is ready for the exposure. Assuming you want the entire piece in focus, and you are close to the piece, you will have to shoot with a small F-stop. Set your camera to F-22, or the smallest F-stop you have on the lens, and turn the shutter speed dial until your exposure meter registers the correct shutter speed using the cable release. Then "bracket" your exposure. Take one exposure after increasing the shutter speed by one stop and then decrease one stop and take another exposure. This will assure a good exposure.

Know that you can put several pieces of pottery on one set. You can put some on pedestals and plates can be put in plate holders that dealers use for display. A variety of backgrounds can be used; try fabric or crumpled paper for texture. You want to be careful not to take too much away from the pottery itself.

Pottery can also be photographed outdoors. Open shade is preferable to bright sunshine. For maximum control, a studio lighting set-up can be purchased. Your local camera store will be able to help you get what you need.

I hope this article helps you enjoy your pottery in yet another way. You may feel free to contact me should you have any questions at:

Izen Photography
7345 - 35th Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 527-4755

Editor's note: These suggestions should enable you to photograph your Franciscan for future issues. Send in your pictures!



The Line on Franciscan Ivy

For the Ivy collector, one of the first noticeable differences is the lining on many pieces. Lining is the line that was handpainted on rims, bases and handles. Lines on flatware such as plates was done mechanically by a liner. For Desert Rose, the lining disappeared in 1947. Ivy production began in 1948, with the lining disappearing on certain pieces around 1954. I have found lined pieces marked with 1954 marks.



The lining on Ivy added shape to the pieces since, unlike Desert Rose or Apple, the rims and handles were not painted branches. However, due to cost reductions, the labor-intensive, expensive lining disappeared.

Here is a list of lining that was discontinued prior to 1955:

- Teapot, handle & rim of lid
- Coffee Server, handle, rim of lid & base
- Pitcher, handle & base
- Gravy Boat, handle & rim of attached underplate
- Cream, handle
- Sugar, handles & rim of lid
- Casserole, handles & rim of lid
- Pickle, rim
- Tumbler, rim
- Butterdish, base rim

Of all the butterdishes I have seen, the lining has been an odd shade of green. However, if you match the green to the vine on pieces earlier than 1952, they do match. The lines of the vines changed color from the earlier period of brown vines to the later period of green vines.

Should pieces that are lined be considered more valuable than unlined later pieces? In the rarer pieces, no. Teapots are always hard to find. However, on more common pieces such as

sugars, creamers and gravy boats, expect to pay more than its unlined counterpart. Usually I have found it may be 20 percent more. Is it more desirable? While lining adds shape and definition, unlined pieces exhibit a cleaner, more contemporary look. Whether or not it is more desirable is a personal choice with each collector. Why not get one of each?

Collectors on Collecting

Another Franciscan Collector

When your Editor, James, asked me to write about my Franciscan collection, I told him I didn't have one.

I have a few pieces of artware— five or six — but certainly not enough to qualify as a collector.

And James asked, "What about your dinnerware?"

My dinnerware...well, maybe I am a Franciscan collector. And, though I didn't realize it, I have been for over 40 years.

Way back in 1954, as newlyweds, my husband and I chose Franciscan Wheat for our dinnerware. We bought it in South Bend, Indiana, in a small gift shop.

At that time, our combined incomes were \$2 an hour. Together we made \$80 a week! And paid about \$12 for a 16-piece starter set of dinner plates, bread and butter plates and cups and saucers. We bought two starter sets, and four of the wonderful fat mugs. It all cost about \$50, more than half a week's wages. The store owner gave us one of the wheat stalk ashtrays as a bonus. They were 75¢, more than we thought we could afford for frivolity.

Our Franciscan Wheat was a rich caramel color. We didn't even know, until we started collecting in earnest, that it was also made in avocado green and light beige.

Nor did we know about the number of pieces that Franciscan made in their Wheat pattern. Aside from four sizes of plates and three different individual bowls, more than 30 accessory pieces are available, including five pitchers — none of which were sold at the small store where we bought our first dinnerware.

In the early 1960s, we moved from our little midwest house into a much bigger turn-of-the-century one in Seattle. And we felt we had outgrown our Wheat. We gave it, all but the mugs and the teapot, to the Goodwill. We kept the mugs and gave the teapot to wheat-farmer friends.

Twelve years ago, after many years of collecting, we started our own antique shop. As we shopped yard sales, thrift stores and antique malls, we noticed our Franciscan Wheat turning up.

And finding a place on our kitchen shelves. We now have every piece. From the little wheat stalk ashtrays to the grand soup tureen, we've returned to our youth. Only better.

The only pieces we do not have enough of are the covered individual casseroles and the luncheon plates.

Fortunately, as yet, Wheat is not highly sought after. With the help of our collector friends it has only taken us about four years to acquire all of it.

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Collectors on Collecting

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Our most spectacular find was the soup tureen. One fall weekend, we were planning a dinner party. We had an autumn-leaf tablecloth and a cornucopia centerpiece. And, of course, our Wheat. We planned a hearty stew-type dish, which required the tureen we didn't have. I called several of our dealer friends. One had a tureen buried in his basement...and it was expensive.

We decided to forget it and spend our day shopping antique malls. Our travels took us a hundred miles. And there, in one of the malls in the last town, we found a Wheat tureen, the only one I've ever seen, in perfect condition for \$16!

We took it home, washed it, and that same night filled it with stew, bringing it to our friends at our perfect harvest table.

We began our second set of Franciscan dinnerware shortly after moving into an English tudor-type house. In our shop, we began to notice Coronado. Its swirly shape seemed to go with our furniture and burgundy was our color.

We found a few odd pieces, and, of course, told all our customers and friends how much we liked it.

It didn't take long to find out how difficult burgundy is to find. We had given up ever acquiring enough to set a table when a customer of ours (a collector of ivory Coronado) called and told us where we could buy a set of burgundy at a price we could afford.

In the 10 years since then, with diligent shopping and the help of our friends, we've filled our china closet with burgundy Franciscan Coronado. Our best find was the salad bowl. And our favorite pieces are the nut cups...or maybe the demitasse cups...or maybe the butter dish.

In the late '80s, we moved again. This time, our house was one built in the '50s. And again, our antiques shop inventory helped us find a new set of dishes.

Starburst. We didn't like it at first, and sold those pieces we found quickly and for low prices. But as we looked at its '50s lines and stars, we decided it was right for our house. Of course, by the time we decided it was for us it had become collectible and expensive and hard to find.

Once again we were lucky, and late on the last day of a sale we found a complete service for eight for \$40. And we were off on yet another set of dishes. We now have an almost complete collection, but are still looking for canisters and tumblers. So we still have something to keep us searching.

Wheat and Starburst were both made during the same time period, the early '50s, yet they are entirely different. Wheat lends itself to the homey country look, while Starburst is sleek and sophisticated, "modern" as we of the country persuasion would have called it back then.

And we have yet another set of Franciscan dinnerware: handpainted Franciscan Poppy. Also produced in the '50s, this one is not easy to find. For the three years or so we've been collecting, we've found plates and cups and saucers, but no serving pieces. Again, our collector friends have helped us, and we are lucky enough to have a pitcher and tumblers and a

teapot. So, even without matching serving pieces we can set a fine table.

Can we eat enough meals to use all this dinnerware? We try. The Wheat is used for every day from Labor Day until Easter when the Starburst comes out for the warmer months, and we use the Coronado and Poppy for special meals all during the year.

But the best part of our dinnerware is the memories connected with it. The meals we've shared with friends eating from our Wheat, Coronado, Starburst and Poppy will always be remembered, as will the fun and excitement we've had finding every piece and the thoughtfulness of our friends with their gifts adding to our collection.

After writing this, I've decided we really are Franciscan collectors. Any suggestions for our next set of dinnerware?

Letters

I read about the *Franciscan Newsletter in the Daze*. Where do I sign up? As a suggestion, maybe skip the early Franciscan and embossed patterns that are covered in Engle's two books. Cut right to the earthenware and fine china. I often pick up pieces that are Franciscan, but I haven't a clue as to which pattern it is. Just a thought.

— Lou, Centralia, Washington

Thank you for the self-addressed stamped envelope. Your newsletter is on the way. The newsletter will cover early patterns as well as the handpainted/embossed patterns. Information will not be duplicated from previously published books, however it will be added to. Earthenware and china will be covered, as well as glassware and tiles. Reprints of catalogs will be standard for the *Franciscan Newsletter* as well as numerous pictures. Readers, send in your brochures!

I have just started collecting. Can you tell me what books are the best for reference? I can't seem to find much on the different patterns.

— Kim, Hickory, North Carolina

Please see the article on books on page four of this issue. These are the basic references every Franciscan collector needs. The purpose of the newsletter is devoted to the promotion, enjoyment and collection of Franciscan. We hope this helps!

The Franciscan Newsletter

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Thanks for your support and encouragement to: Reba Schneider,
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Apple Marmalades

Pictured above are three variations of the Apple marmalade. The apple finial is larger on the original marmalade. The mark on the base is from 1940 to 1947. The second marmalade features a smaller finial. The mark on the base is from 1949-53. The restyled marmalade was offered in spring of 1983 and discontinued when the plant closed in 1984. An apple Apple marmalade.



"His" & "Her" Mugs

Beginning in 1977, Franciscan offered "Franciscan Classic Gifts." Pictured are the "His Mug," also known as the 12 oz. mug and the "Her Mug," also known as the 10 oz. mug. Available were one, two, or four "His" or "Her" mugs and two or four "His" and "Her" mug sets. In 1979, the offering was discontinued. The "Franciscan Classic Gifts" which included the "His" and "Her" mugs were available only in Desert Rose and Meadow Rose.

Books on Franciscan

There is a wealth of information about Franciscan already in print. Here are some books we highly recommend for the Franciscan collector:

From Franciscan Expert Delleen Enge:

Franciscan Ware by Delleen Enge; Collector Books, Paducah, KY, 1981. Paperback, out of print.

Delleen's first book on Franciscan. Sometimes referred to as "Franciscan Book I." A wonderful introduction to Franciscan, it covers the history and many of the early patterns produced by Gladding McBean. Since it is out of print, expect to pay \$25 or more for an edition.

Franciscan, Embossed Handpainted by Delleen Enge. Delleen Enge, Ojai, CA, 1992. Paperback.

Delleen's second book on Franciscan. Sometimes referred to as "Franciscan Book II." Met with great response, this is the resource for collectors of the handpainted, embossed dinnerware lines such as Desert Rose and Apple. Books can be ordered from the author and publisher Delleen Enge. Send \$19.95 plus \$2 (plus sales tax if resident of California) to Delleen Enge, 154 E. El Roblar Dr. Suite #10, Ojai, CA 93023.

Catalina Art Pottery, Delleen Enge, Ojai, CA, 1982. Paperback, out of print.

A reprint of a 1942 sales brochure featuring artware produced by Gladding, McBean & Co. Lines included in the catalog are Oxblood and Polynesia Ware, as well as others. This only published book on artware unfortunately is out of print. Expect to pay at least \$45 for an original edition.

From Other Authors:

Pottery, Gladding, McBean & Co. No publisher, no date. Copy.

A photocopy reprint of a sales catalog of Gladding, McBean terra cotta gardenware.

Architectural Terra Cotta of Gladding, McBean, by Gary F. Kurutz. Windgate Press, Sausalito, CA, 1989. Hardcover, out of print.

Covers the history, terms and production of terra cotta in the Lincoln plant. Also includes buildings constructed with terra cotta in California. Expect to pay \$95 or more for an out-of-print edition.

Price Guides:

A Seller's "Companion Guide" to Delleen Enge's Book Franciscan Embossed Handpainted. 1994 Values by P.R. Trait. Paul Trait, 1993. \$6.95.

An excellent price guide for the Franciscan handpainted patterns in Delleen's book. One of the best price guides on the market. This should be the standard for all price guides! Can be ordered from Paul Trait, 3875 Telegraph Rd., Suite #137, Ventura, CA 93003. \$6.95 plus \$1; California residents add 50¢ sales tax.

Franciscan Price Guide by Marv Fogleman. Marv Fogleman, Santa Ana, CA, 1993, \$12.

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Books on Franciscan

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Covers handpainted/embossed as well as china and many other patterns. Well worth purchasing. Can be ordered from Marv Fogleman, 1914 W. Carriage Dr. Santa Ana, CA 92704. \$12 includes postage and handling.

Since this newsletter is based on the fact that a lot of information has already been covered by the above publications, we highly recommend the investment. Also note: Please do not copy an author's hard work for customers or friends. Besides being illegal, it is depriving someone of their livelihood and just compensation.

Franciscan Collectors Club, USA

All collectors and dealers joining the Franciscan Collectors Club will receive the Franciscan Newsletter quarterly.

Dues are \$20 annually and are due on the anniversary date of your initial membership.


Depending on response, future activities will be planned. You are invited to make suggestions.

Sponsors

Collectors and Dealers may become sponsors. Sponsors will receive a business-card size advertisement. Please send a business card along with \$25 per issue. Other arrangements can be made. Sorry, no liner advertisements.

Contributors

Contributors are welcome. All contributors may request that their name, address or phone number be used. This is a good chance for the collector to find pieces for their collection or to have readers contact them. Unless permission is granted, all letters and articles will be anonymous.



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Enclosed is my check for \$20 for membership in the Franciscan Collectors Club, USA.

Please send to:

NAME: _____

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Southern Trust & Commerce Bank

Example of Gladding, McBean Decorative Tile and Roof Tile (Small Mission).

Architect Wm. Templeton Johnson

Tile Contractor San Diego Tile & Woodstove Co.

Roof Tile Contractor Sold through W.J. Bailey Co., Agents



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TO: