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TREASURE TROVE

An Inside Look at Marine Art Specialists at Home

By Lauren P. Della Monica

Janice Hyland and Alan Granby's pursuit of American art and antiques has led them down an enviable path, from collecting to eventually becoming dealers of the art they love. When they opened a weekend marine art and antiques shop in Dennis, Massachusetts in 1982, they did not foresee that their weekend hobby would become their full-time occupation. Now specialists in marine art, Hyland Granby Antiques — as they are known professionally — deals in marine paintings as well as a variety of objects including American patriotic folk art, canes, ship models, scrimshaw, boxes, globes, black and white sailing photographs and ship's navigational instruments. This husband and wife team has spent the past 25 years buying, researching and selling fine marine paintings and antiques — and living in the presence of their treasures.

Though they are art dealers with a constantly revolving business inventory, Janice and Alan remain committed to being private art collectors as well. The day they embraced their weekend hobby as a full-time pursuit, Janice explains, is when they agreed to segregate and protect their personal collection of about thirty pieces of marine art and antiques.

"I didn't want to start selling those things because they formed the initial collection. They have sentimental value," says Janice. "I have had people say to me 'When you do decide to sell this, will you promise you will call me first?' I sometimes agree, but I can't sell those things."

Janice and Alan's Massachusetts home is now a living art gallery and serves as both their home and their business base. Their art and antiques, both the personal collection and the ever-changing business inventory, are displayed throughout their home, attached barn and upstairs office. Rather than running a traditional art gallery that is open to the public, Hyland Granby sells through their



Alan Granby and Janice Hyland at home in Hyannis with their family, Scottish Terriers Teddy and Tucker.

website and through their exhibits at art and antiques shows in New York, Boston, Palm Beach, Nantucket and Philadelphia. Their 1849 home, South Hyannis Light, and the adjoining lighthouse keeper's home, are reserved for the personal enjoyment of their constantly evolving collection of pieces.

Having a second home has allowed the couple to build another distinct collection. Janice and Alan's New York City home, a gracious apartment on Fifth Avenue overlooking Central Park, houses their permanent display of particular works of art. "Nothing moves there. It is static," says

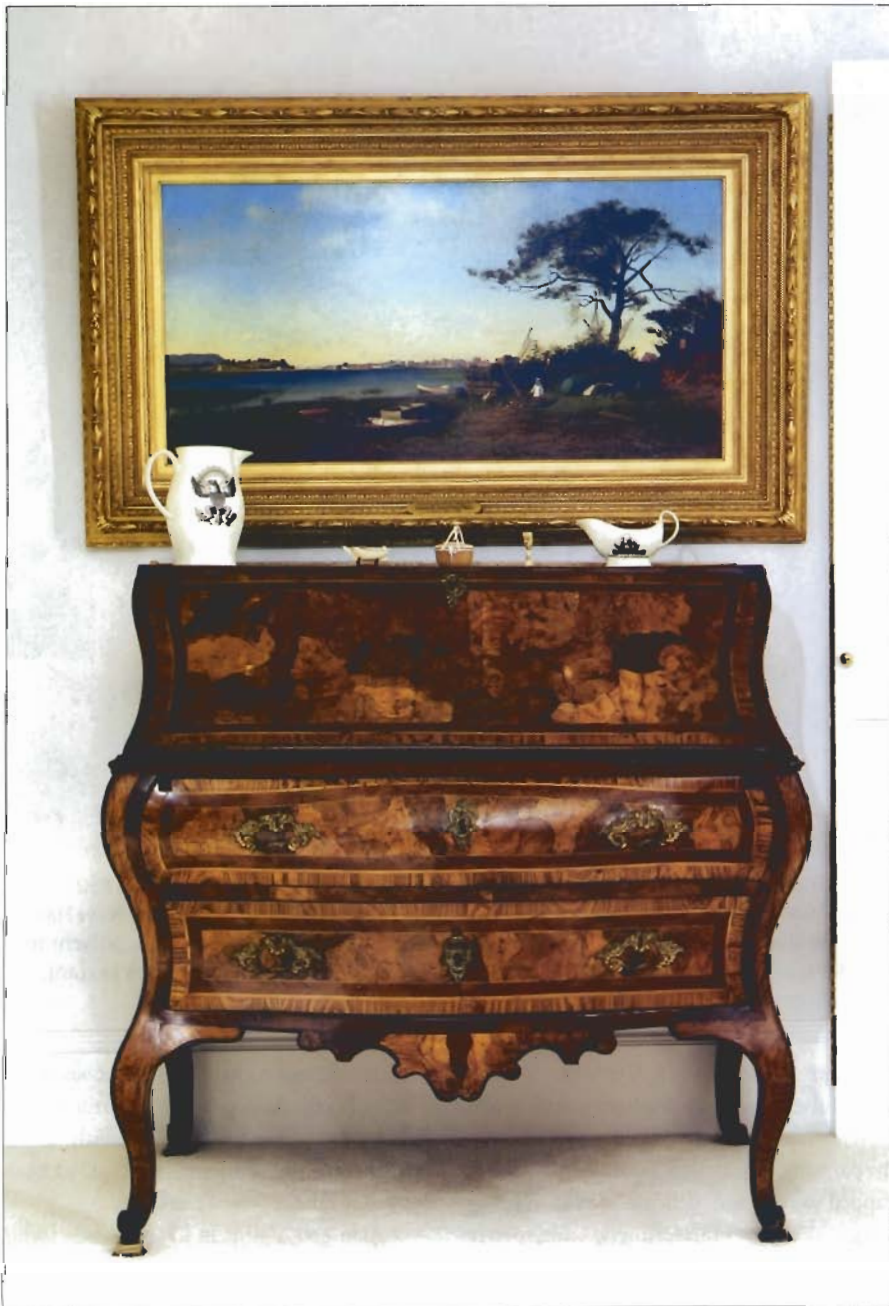


South Hyannis Light and keeper's house, home of art collectors Alan Granby and Janice Hyland.



A rare cockfighting chair with original leather surface holds one of Granby's recent books. Above the chair hang two Ralph Cahoon paintings.

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One of Granby’s favorite pieces is an 18th Century Italian Bombay desk purchased by his mother at auction in New York in 1954. Above the desk hangs a Francis Silva painting *Seabright from Galilee*. On the desk are a scrimshaw measuring stick that is one of the earliest known signed and dated pieces of scrimshaw, an ivory stamp in the shape of a fist, a whale ivory puzzle box in the shape of a whale ship’s hull, and a Liverpool jug and saucer.

Janice. “We have developed a collection of specific New York-related maritime artifacts for our New York apartment and those things stay there. That is our little New York collection.”

For some people, the art of collecting is the passion, regardless of what he or she collects. Alan Granby is one of those people. Before Alan became a collector of marine art, he collected many other things, among them fine art photography. His interest in acquiring and studying fine art photography led him to become a professor of photography at Boston University.

“When Janice introduced me to sailing I then included marine photography in my interest in other fine art photography. I have been with marine photography for a long time,” says Alan.

Visitors will notice many black and white photographs of sailboats around their home and office. Alan notes that marine photography is just starting to be discovered in recent years, with as many as six new books having been published on the subject.

This exacting interest in the history and significance of each object as a work of art is what drew Alan and Janice, each with a PhD and teaching backgrounds, from the world of art collecting as hobby to the realm of dealers. In their role as art dealers, educators to the buying and viewing public, they have spent much of their time over the past few years as scholars, authors and art historians.

In 2004 Alan produced and edited *A Yachtsman’s Eye*, a book that explores the history of maritime art in the late 18th and 19th centuries. In 2005 Alan and Janice wrote the marine art chapter for a book title *THINGS I LOVE: The Many Collections of William I. Koch*. The book and the corresponding exhibition of Koch’s art collections were on display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in the fall of 2005.

In 2006, they produced and edited another maritime art book entitled *Maritime Maverick: The Collection of William I. Koch* that documents the marine art collection that served as the catalogue for the exhibition of Koch’s collection, *Upon The Sea*, at the Society of the Four Arts in Palm Beach, Florida.

Often, buying a work of art is an informed, researched decision while other times, instinct takes the lead. In his role as dealer, Alan explains that sometimes he buys

something without knowing anything about it, such as the carved wooden carousel figure by Ludovic Gabioli he recently acquired, simply by using his collector's eye.

"I bought it because I liked it and it turned out to be an important piece," he says.

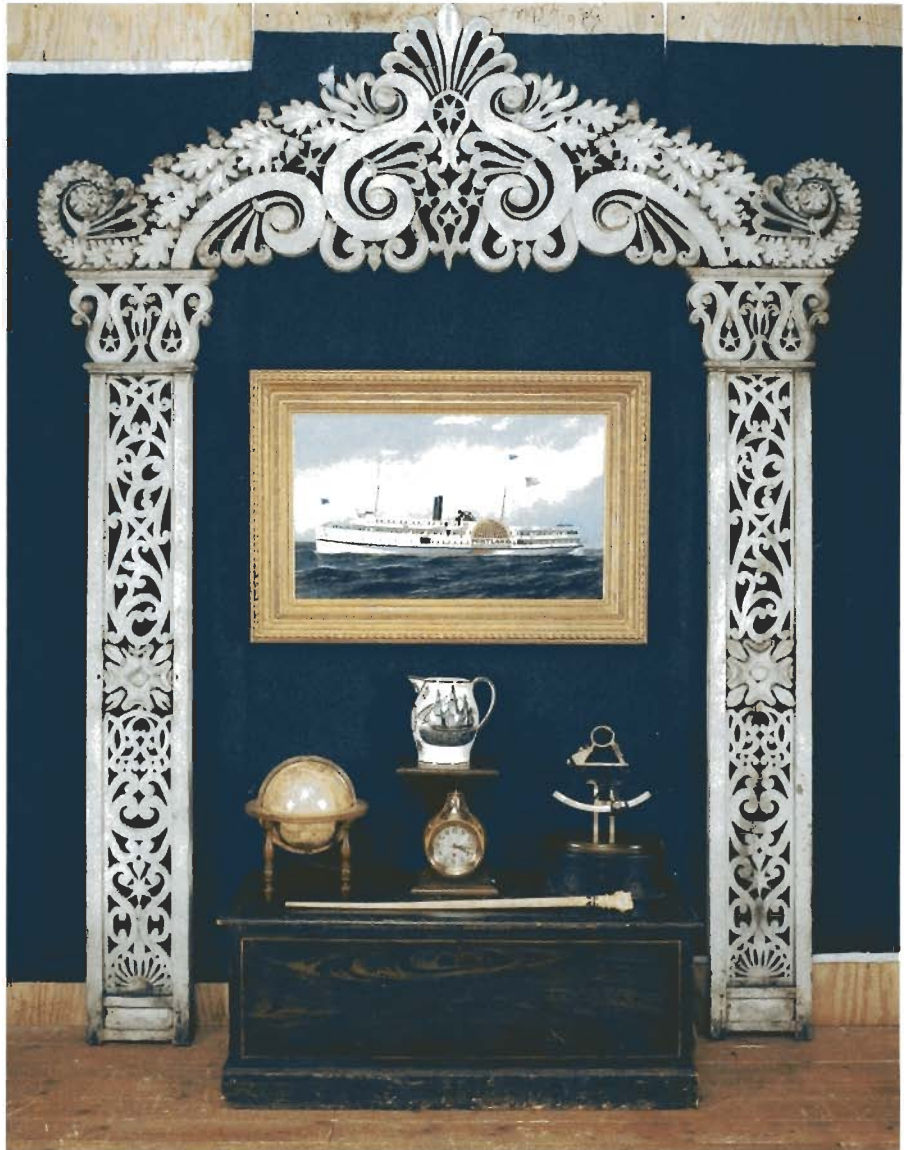
Alan learned, within a day or two of his purchase of the carousel figure, that the artist, Gabioli, was a well-known sculptor and was reputed to be the greatest of all band organ makers. Alan then learned of and located an out-of-print book on the sculptor and realized just how special a piece he found. Most of the time, however, Alan searches for and buys specific pieces about which he is already quite knowledgeable. Some clients come to him looking for a specific work of art and then Alan makes it his business to locate the item in question. More often than not, though, he is shopping for himself and for his upcoming art shows. Some pieces are those he has had his eye on for years.

As we tour their home, one can't help but notice the parallel relationship between the expansive sea and what is inside the frames of many of the paintings. In the barn, not only are paintings hung but entire vignettes are arranged. There could be no more appropriate home for these paintings. In order to prepare for their art show exhibitions, such as the annual Winter Antiques Show at the Seventh Regiment Armory in New York held this past January 19 – 28, 2007, Janice and Alan explain that they pre-arrange their exhibits to scale in their barn. Their display for the show, including the art and antiques, fabric-covered walls and the crown molding installed in the booth, travels from their Massachusetts home to the art fair as a pre-arranged room.

"We always lay out the booth at home in advance so when we get there we can just put everything in place," Janice explains. "At the end of each show we remove whatever has sold and add in other pieces."

Janice and Alan's research skills and teaching instincts are also evident in their art show displays. I recently spent considerable time at Hyland Granby's exhibition booth at an art show in New York reading the extensive information cards beside each of the objects displayed. Though the works of art are beautiful to observe, I found that there is often more meaning in the pieces than one might expect.

One of the most interesting paintings in this regard is *Steamship Portland* by Antonio



In the Granby's barn hangs Jacobsen's *Steamship Portland* surrounded by a c. 1850 carved pine doorframe from the garden house of President Franklin Pierce in New Hampshire. On the painted wooden sea chest below rest a Loring celestial globe, a polychrome transfer Liverpool porcelain jug, a strong yacht signal cannon, a raised bridge sextant, and an ivory cane with a fist at the top clutching a serpent.

Jacobsen (American 1850-1921). It is a beautiful example of a Jacobsen painting of a vessel, showing the artist's exquisite mastery in painting small details, like his white-capped waves and delicate clouds moving across the sky. Interestingly, this pretty painting commemorates a tragic historical event. This painting shows the *Portland* on one of its regular voyages ferrying passengers between Portland, Maine and Boston, Massachusetts. However, on November 11, 1898, 192 lives were lost as the *Portland* sunk at sea twenty miles off the coast of Cape Cod

in a terrible storm that became known as the *Portland Gale*. Alan says that the painting has become even more collectible recently, as the remains of the *Portland* have now been located off the shores of the Cape.

Alan gets a glint in his eye while in his office showing a recent acquisition, also by Jacobsen, this one depicting a scene of the New York harbor.

"This painting breaks the stereotype of Jacobsen, which is always nice to do," says Alan. "It is atypical because we normally see port side portraits of ships but to have this whole scene

Fitz Hugh Lane's *Yacht America from Three Views*, c. 1851 with the presentation telescope awarded to Captain Brown upon his victory aboard *America* in a race that was then renamed the America's Cup in honor of Brown's win.

with multiple vessels is extremely rare."

Alan explains further, that the company that owned this ship commissioned Jacobsen to paint her, and then had postcards made of the painting to be sold to the public. In this detailed painting, done in 1910, the central ship, the flag-bearing ocean liner *Oscar II*, is surrounded by a number of tugboats, a commuter yacht, a sidewheel steamer and the Staten Island ferry.

What interests Alan and Janice most about their marine paintings, beyond their aesthetic beauty, is the tale told by each piece. Currently in Alan and Janice's home is an exceptional example of James Edward Buttersworth's sailboat racing scenes: a painting depicting a race between the yachts *Atalanta* and *Mohawk*. Best known and collected for his paintings of sailing races and the America's Cup trials, Buttersworth's (American 1815-1894) paintings are popular with sailing enthusiasts and marine art collectors. The work is, according to Alan, "amongst the finest examples of J.E. Buttersworth's American yachting scenes."

In this painting, the upper sails flap regally in the wind and the dramatic sky boasts rich, pink hued clouds above the rolling sea, both realistic in its fine details and suggestive in its colors and shadings. Another



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breathtaking work by Buttersworth is *Halcyon*, depicting the yacht *Halcyon* plowing through the sea below a darkening, ominous sky, with the contrast between the white of the sails and the dark sea and sky providing the essential balance in the work. A third work by Buttersworth, the sizeable *Black Warrior*, c. 1853, depicts the clipper ship complete with precise details such as the

figurehead on her bow. "What I like best about these lyrical yachting scenes is that they tell a story," Alan adds.

Be it photography, paintings, folk art or navigational instruments, the best part of doing what Janice and Alan do is certainly the opportunity to live with each of these treasures. Their home strikes a balance between their scholarly, research-oriented approach to dealing in fine marine paintings and the whimsy of being an avid collector of many beautiful things. ●



Lauren P. Della Monica is a Fine Art Consultant based in New York City. She works with collectors around the country, from first-time buyers to experienced collectors, to develop art collecting strategies and to acquire and display works of art in their homes and offices. She provides professional market insight and individually researched purchase recommendations in keeping with each collector's buying and collecting strategy. Website: www.lpdmfineart.com, Email: lauren@lpdmfineart.com Tel. 917-697-0591.



Halcyon by J.E. Buttersworth