

San Francisco Fall Antiques Fair 2012

Anh-Minh Le

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Browse the pages of your favorite shelter magazine or home goods catalog and you're sure to come across it: nautical influences on a large scale (such as lighthouse-patterned wallpaper or a porthole-shaped mirror) and in small details (beach shells in a glass vessel, a banner made of signal flags). Need an accent pillow illustrating various sailor's knots? You'll find it at Gump's. A 30-inch-tall carved wood anchor? Pottery Barn's got that.

Locally, those looking to infuse more authentic elements into their homes are in luck: The San Francisco Fall Antiques Show kicks off Oct. 25 and runs through Oct. 28. The theme this year is "Sea Worthy: The Best of Nautical Art and Antiques." Although the aesthetic is classic, the current popularity of high-seas style coupled with the city playing host to the 2013 America's Cup means the timing and location couldn't be better. (The show takes place at Fort Mason, situated along the water with views of the Golden Gate Bridge.)

Sure, visitors to the four-day event can expect some of the, well, expected - such as paintings, prints and engravings bearing boats and ships. Yet there is much more to the show, which is now in its 31st year. Head to dealer Earle D. Vandekar of Knightsbridge Inc.'s booth to see an antique tin sign in the shape of a pocket watch adorned with a Ralph Cahoon oil painting titled "Shreve's Watch Shop, Boston."

Kathleen Taylor of the Lotus Collection will have a 1920s French Art Deco silk brocade with a wave pattern in gold and blue hues on display. Nicholas Braver Gallery, a New York outfit specializing in nautical and sporting antiques, will offer a mix of antiques, from a pair of Imperial Japanese navy observation binoculars dated 1945 to a mid-century sterling silver model of a sailboat.

Epoca, which has showrooms in San Francisco and Los Angeles, will be bringing an English William IV oak ship's rum keg with brass lettering that reads "The King, God Bless Him."

"Essential item"

"The English oak barrel keg was an essential item on every ship (from 1655 until 1970) as the Royal Navy was issuing daily rum rations to all enlisted men," notes Epoca owner Eric Petsinger. "Originally, the scuttled butt was a simple cask with a lid. Eventually, the scuttled butt gave way to the grog tub from which the daily rum or grog toast at noon was issued."

The history lesson accompanying many of the items is reason enough to go to Fort Mason next week, says Holland Lynch, the curator of the show's loan exhibition. "One of the great things is even if you aren't looking to buy right now, the dealers love to talk about their pieces. They love to educate people. There's such a wide range of objects, often with great stories behind them."

One of the loan exhibition's best conversation pieces may be the model of a World War II torpedo that was manufactured in Chicago. "It's not something you think of when you think of works of art," says Lynch, "but it's visually arresting and is quite sculptural." Yew Tree House Antiques is providing a 7-foot-long fully rigged model of a sailing ship that dates back to 19th century England.

The loan exhibition will be nestled among an installation that consists of towering waves - a collaborative effort between architect Andrew Skurman, decorative painter Willem Racké and Moroso Construction. Skurman has once again been charged with translating the show's theme into a decor scheme, executed by numerous artists and builders.

After considering various Greek statues (such as the sea god Poseidon), Skurman was ultimately inspired by Katsushika Hokusai's "The Great Wave Off Kanagawa," a woodblock print created in the 1820s. The artist, says Skurman, "continued the traditional Japanese depiction of waves in his more modern and simplified style that I've always very much admired."

"Victory and sport"

Upon setting foot in Fort Mason's Festival Pavilion, visitors will walk beneath the waves, as well as enter into them. The effect is that of "being propelled by them into the show," says Skurman. "The waves are dynamic; they are about victory and sport." During the preview party, at the center of the waves, the America's Cup trophy will be on display.

(In addition to designing the space, this year Skurman will be among the experts featured in the show's lecture series. He and San Francisco interior designer Ann Getty - who each have recently released monographs - will share images and ideas from their work.)

With the San Francisco Fall Antique Show's theme in mind, San Francisco-based One Kings Lane (www.onekingslane.com) is launching a flash sale on Saturday devoted to nautical merchandise. The proceeds of the sale are earmarked for Enterprise for High School Students, the nonprofit program that is also the beneficiary of the show.

"I looked for marine-inspired objects that would fit into a range of interiors," says Dara Rosenfeld, one of the local interior designers

participating in the sale. "For example, the red ship's lantern that I had made into a pendant light would look beautiful above a breakfast table, and the unusual coral I found is a great object to pair with art books to create a tablescape."

Rosenfeld explains the coastal look's broad appeal thusly: "I think nautical elements in an interior provide a sense of comfort," she says. "Whether one boats or not, people love the water and have nostalgia for summers at the shore. ... Nautical design is timeless."

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10:30 a.m.-7 p.m. Oct. 25-27, noon-5 p.m. Oct. 28. Fort Mason Center Festival Pavilion, S.F. \$15 in advance; \$20 at the door. Preview Party Gala Benefit, 7-9 p.m. Wednesday. Tickets: \$250. www.sffas.org.

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