

Lamorindans Love Christmas Collections

By Cathy Dausman



Dana Windatt and her beloved dollhouse.

Photos Cathy Dausman

When it comes to Christmas collections, Lamorindans, as the song suggests, do have a few of their favorite things.

Erla Boren of Moraga says her Eskimo collection has "outgrown the mirrors" on which they rest. The round and smiling ornament characters are a happy reminder of her native Iceland. There are now decades of the "Frosty Friends" series, which Hallmark began in 1980.

Boren's tables show Eskimos on icebergs and riding Polar bears. She has mostly kept up with the annual new ornament release, but doesn't have the 1983 and 1984 issues. The ornaments she bought long ago, paying \$2.50 each, today fetch \$200 on eBay, Boren says with a smile. She keeps her Eskimo collection now for the enjoyment of her grandchildren, who don't seem to notice the lack of snow in Lamorinda.

As for Peg Hoffman and her room-sized Snow Village display in Moraga, she says, "People should never start these things." Its assembly normally requires four days, although Hoffman managed a two-day rush job

this year to accommodate her party schedule.

The family Christmas tree must first be lighted and decorated before the village takes shape at its base. Snow Village City boasts lighted shops, a mill, a church, a dry goods store, a windmill, plenty of cars and foot traffic and an abundance of miniature Christmas trees – all lighted, of course. Rudolph with his nose so bright prances atop one city roof. Skiers share the outdoors with fox and deer near a countryside log cabin. A man carves pond ice next to Maple Creek covered bridge, and children build a snowman.

Hoffman says the village design is different every year. It seems the only thing missing is an HO scale train. While Hoffman would love to include that, she may be too busy shoeing her cats away from the diorama. They tend to use the roads as their own thoroughfare anyway, examining the village like giants from another world.

Hoffman intentionally left out the operating ice skating rink this year, too. "It makes the cats go bonkers,"

she says.

Dana Windatt bought her white three-story Victorian dollhouse with her own money as a child. "This is my scrapbook," she says, explaining that decorating it has brought her back to her youth. Originally Windatt only draped the outside with lights for Christmas, but has since completely decorated the interior. The dollhouse has nine rooms, including the two-story hallway, and attic. Having only sons, ages 10 to 18, Windatt sought decorating help from friends' daughters.

The Moraga resident wallpapered everything, and then decorated a 'girly girl' bathroom, complete with pearl-bubbles in the tub. There's an

Life in LAMORINDA



Peg Hoffman's Snow Village.

Eloise in Paris themed pink bedroom, where a portrait of Jackie O. hangs over the bed.

has a table set with tiny Starbuck's coffee mugs and a jar of cookies. Boxes of miniature Twinkies adorn the counter.

The kitchen, with its subway tile flooring and white cabinetry,

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