



GINGERBREAD HOUSE KITBASHING CONTEST Location: Rotunda

Issue No. 21 Thursday, December 15, 2011

The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

One of our missions here at The Mini Time Machine Museum is to bring the joy and wonder of the miniature world into the homes of our community. Our kitbashing contests are just one way we keep this goal active, providing contestants with a means to experiment creatively on a smaller scale. Our 2nd Kitbashing Contest came just in time for the holidays: using the kit provided by the museum as a starting point, contestants would produce their own small gingerbread house, being as imaginative as possible with their own concept or theme. Judges would base their winners on use of materials and originality. The result was pure delight, providing the museum with a sticky-sweet neighborhood of frosty miniature buildings on display throughout the month of December. Our panel of judges included our museum founder, Pat Arnell, as well as Beth Giachetti, the President of the Tucson Miniature Society and the owner of Cake Boutique, Mindy Illes. We had three categories: Adult, Youth and People's Choice. The Adult prize would be a \$100 gift card to Williams-Sonoma. The Youth would receive \$25 in Candy Craze Fun Money as well as a \$50 certificate with Fandango. The People's Choice winner would receive a \$25 gift certificate to Cake Boutique. Each would get a trophy to commemorate the contest.

In the Adult Category, it was a mother-daughter duo that took home the prize. Kelly Parham & Tari Holloway had never made a gingerbread house before, although Tari – the mother – works with miniatures on a regular basis. Tari has recently moved to the Tucson area and was waiting for her new home to be completed when she discovered our



Frosty's Greenhouse, winner of the Adult Category.

kitbashing contest. Enlisting the help of her daughter, the two of them set out to make a greenhouse, a real challenge for a couple of gingerbread novices. The result was *Frosty's Greenhouse*, a gorgeous little home with an addition on the side filled with fresh fruit, flowers and veggies. Tari did most of the construction, revealing to us her secret of melting Halls Cough Drops© to make the glass enclosure of the greenhouse. "The whole house smelled like eucalyptus!" she laughed. While her mother perfected her gingerbread architecture, Kelly worked tirelessly making the finishing touches and baskets of edibles, using fondant like modeling clay. Every detail is edible, including Frosty's sign, comprised of edible paper. What better way to while away the time waiting for your new home other than building one yourself? Who knows, after this Kelly and Tari just might make this a new holiday tradition!

The winner of our Youth Category is Lauren



Different Colors, winner of the Youth Category.

Evans, age nine, who learned how to make gingerbread houses by helping her mother each year. Our kitbashing contest was her first attempt at completing a gingerbread house all on her own, and the tricks she has learned from her mother are readily apparent. Techniques such as melting candy to make liquid surfaces had this house standing out among the competition. She named the piece *Different Colors*, and it certainly lives up to its title: bright gumdrops and Good n' Plenty© make the landscape a squishy and vivid delight, while crunchy rock candy gives the scene some texture and realism. The blue-green pond seems to glow from within, a magical invitation to any eager young ice skater. The jolly rancher windows would allow anyone gazing outside to see an ever-green world, despite the snow. Lauren said that the most difficult part of the piece was the snowman, who didn't want to stand upright. However, it was his tilted stance that charmed the judges- it seems as if he is peering down the lane, hoping for visitors. If the rainbow's end is at the North Pole, this frosted home of *Different Colors* would surely house the pot o' gold.

We couldn't have a contest without letting our visitors vote on their favorite, and the nominations flew in! The winner of our People's Choice award went to Ginny Opsal and her little house, *Peak-A-Boo Blue*. The concept behind this yummy piece was to make a building for candy storage, rather than a traditional house. There are no windows and no door- Santa enters through the bottom to get at his sugary stash. Having the house raised above the ground on mouth-watering bite-size Reese's Peanut Butter Cup© pillars was surely the

enchanting touch that earned this piece more votes than any other. Ginny has been making gingerbread houses for several years, each year making them as gifts for a long list of lucky folks including residents at the assisted living home near her neighborhood. In spite of all of her years of experience, she is still learning new tricks as well as what *not* to do. "I did have one incident," she laughs. "Some of the frosting had dried before I had a chance to add my decorations. So I thought, why not just spritz it with a little water? Big mistake! The walls all

collapsed!" Needless to say, we at the museum are glad she decided to rebuild, and to make time in her busy building schedule to take part in our contest!

We hope that this contest not only inspired our contestants to rise to a challenge, but that the joy of building a gingerbread house made this holiday season even brighter. The museum would like to thank all of those who participated in our 2nd Kitbashing Contest, and to encourage the curious and enthusiastic to participate in those to come!



Peak-A-Boo Blue, winner of the People's Choice Category.

Emily Wolverton

The Mini Time Machine Museum