



BEWITCHING SPA

Pat Arnell, 2002

The Enchanted Realm Gallery

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Tucson, Arizona

One look at the newspaper will tell you that winter's icy blast has been hitting hard across the nation. Even here in Tucson, where winters are agreeably mild, we've all had to rummage through the garage to discover where we put our ice scrapers. Freezing rains, piles of snow, bitter winds – admittedly, it's hard to stay jolly when your mistletoes are frozen! Here at The Mini Time Machine Museum, we keep our visitors warm with cheer, celebrating with miniature displays of holiday traditions from throughout history and around the world. Learning about *Shogatsu*, the Japanese New Year, or the *Christkindlmarks* of Germany, or seeing the beautiful details of a traditional Edwardian Christmas keeps everyone feeling merry and bright. Well... not everyone. This time of year, it's easy to forget our mischievous collection of witches, who celebrate Halloween year-round in our Enchanted Realm Gallery. Dreadfully cold? Calamitous storms? Sounds like ideal conditions for our grinchy witches of *Bewitching Spa*!

Our museum founder, Pat Arnell, created *Bewitching Spa* in 2002, as a clever addition to her ever-growing Halloween-themed neighborhood, which includes *Vincent's Interiors* (1990), *Monkey House* (1991), and the grandiose *Cauldron Coven* (1984 – 1998). Creating a spa retreat for her resident

witches, goblins and ghouls was not merely an amusing addendum – it was a practical solution to an overpopulation problem. “As a collector, it's easy to get carried away,” Pat laughs. “I had accumulated a lot of stuff for *Cauldron Coven*. I needed to create a new place to put it!” Pat's sense of humor shines through with her solution, designing a two-story beauty parlor for a community of characters not known for their beauty. The spa itself sits on the lot adjacent to *Cauldron*

Coven, complete with a graveyard out back – presumably for relaxing outdoor strolls. The building is a large, wooden repurposed birdcage, with an added exterior staircase complete with a pumpkin-head balustrade. The birdcage itself is certainly appropriate, as the open air building would allow these cackling crones to experience whatever weather came blasting through

– as well as keeping their broomsticks from floating away (be sure to look for the unattended broom hovering near the rafters). The grounds surrounding the spa are littered with witch-friendly niceties, including an army of frogs, lizards, black cats, bats and buzzards. Truly, a soothing environment.

Finding the unexpected details of any miniature display is the best part of the visitor experience, and *Bewitching Spa* has many. There is a birdbath filled with carrion for the local buzzards, a witch riding an exercise bike, and an outdoor hot tub which is really an oversized cauldron. On the first floor, one finds an apothecary, where the most judicious witch can find jars of *Icky Facial Goop* and *Bury Special Stuff*, as well as large jugs of *Wails and Moans* and *Mumbo Jumbo Gumbo*. Whatever a hag needs to keep



Bewitching Spa (Pat Arnell, 2002). Enchanted Realm Gallery. Photo by Emily Wolverton.



Buzzard eating carrion from the bird feeder in *Bewitching Spa* (Pat Arnell, 2002). Photo by Emily Wolverton.

her complexion ghastly green is sure to be found here. There is even a faux stone vanity with skulls for drawer knobs, an enchanted stone witch where the mirror ought to be (really, who wants to see their own reflection, anyway?) and a very uncomfortable looking toadstool for a seat.

The best part of *Bewitching Spa* is no doubt its patrons, with each witch competing for whom is the most wonderfully wicked. Perhaps one of the most outstanding examples is a witch by Gudrun Kolenda, a well-loved doll artist known for her masterful attention to expression and detail. Gudrun Kolenda's work has been sought-out by many collectors, each appreciating her keen understanding of how a doll's personality can elevate your miniature scene. In her article, "Snippets of Feathers, Lace and Clay,"¹ Mary Kaliski writes of Kolenda's fastidious process: working first in Fimo to create a mold; casting in porcelain; then working for hours on a single face. Her degree in Ceramics and her natural tendency to challenge herself by working smaller and smaller led Kolenda down the path of miniatures. When making dolls, Kolenda draws upon a lifetime of experiences. "All the information I have accumulated, I use now. All the Home Ec courses, all those Simplicity and Butterick patterns as a teenager, my first job making appointments at a Sears beauty salon, when I watched hair being combed and set, all the anatomy classes in undergraduate school, it all shows up in my work."² In *Bewitching Spa*, Koldenda's witch is featured at the top of the stairs, stirring a bubbling, frothy cauldron. Her black hat is crooked, twisted and pointy, and her long, soft gray hair hangs down over her black robes. She has silver wire spectacles and large brass buckles on her shoes. Although her face is superb – bushy eyebrows, warts and wrinkles – it is her hands which are most striking. Second in difficulty only to the face itself, hands are a remarkable challenge to sculpt in



Graveyard behind *Bewitching Spa* (Pat Arnell, 2002). Photo by Emily Wolverton.



Witch by Gudrun Kolenda. *Bewitching Spa* (Pat Arnell, 2002). Photo by Emily Wolverton.

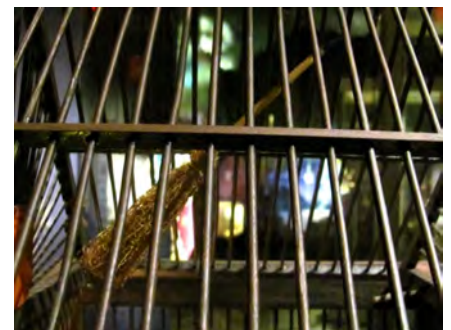
miniature; when admiring the work of any doll artisan, they are one detail which can truly elevate a piece to a master level. Kolenda's witch has long, bony fingers tipped with translucent sharp nails, and each vein and wrinkle is defined. Her hands are curled over the warmth of the brew, the glimmer of her diamond ring drawing the eye in. She is the perfect hostess to greet the gloomy gals on their way to a pampered afternoon.

However you choose to celebrate the season, there is always something to enjoy here at the Museum – whether you are a Sugar Plum or a Scrooge. And, while you are at home making your gingerbread houses, the witches of *Bewitching Spa* ask that you kindly remember that the most famous gingerbread house of them all was made by a witch...just ask Hansel and Gretel.

Emily Wolverton
The Mini Time Machine
Museum of Miniatures

1. Kaliski, Mary. "Snippets of Feathers, Lace and Clay." *Miniature Collector*. June 2006. Vol. 29, No. 2, Number 201. P. 37

2. Ibid.



Errant broom hovering in the rafters. *Bewitching Spa* (Pat Arnell, 2002). Photo by Emily Wolverton.