



Three Bears' Cottage

By Bluette Meloney

Enchanted Realm Gallery

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One walk through our Enchanted Realm Gallery can bring out the child in anyone. The gallery is fueled by imagination, a colorful neighborhood of fantastical beasts and storybook creatures. There are wizards and dragons, fairies and elves, mischief-makers and wandering souls. Our Enchanted Tree, filled with the burrows of precocious city mice, greets visitors with a crinkly smile – encouraging them onward into the wonderland. Children naturally feel quite at home in this gallery, happily hopping back and forth among the displays, pausing only to catch a glimpse of Fairy Caitlin in her knothole. Adults are struck with the warm familiarity of the characters, the waves of nostalgia inviting fond childhood memories.

One piece in particular has tremendous appeal for young and old, alike: Bluette Meloney's *Three Bears' Cottage* (2000), a true fairytale feast for the eyes. Created at one of Rik Pierce's highly sought-after workshops,^{*} Bluette fashioned her cottage to be the home of the fabled bear family, made famous by that notorious blonde intruder, Goldilocks. The scene perfectly captures the pivotal moment when Goldilocks awakens, finding herself face-to-face with the grizzly inhabitants of the home which she has so rudely invaded. She appears either frozen mid-yawn or mid-shriek, while Baby Bear points at her, accusingly. Papa Bear is growling ferociously, dressed in what appears to be some unfortunate woodman's shirt; only Mama Bear seems calm. It is no surprise that our



Three Bears' Cottage (Bluette Maloney, 2000). Bluette created this cottage in a class taught by fellow miniature artisan, Rik Pierce. Enchanted Realm Gallery. Photo by Amy Haskell.



Details from *Three Bears' Cottage* (Bluette Meloney, 2000). Two tiny bears are tucked into a burrow in the landscape (left), contributions from Louisa Rael. Alice Zinn created a head trophy, hiding near the rafters of the cottage (right). Enchanted Realm Gallery.

Photos by Amy Haskell & Emily Wolverton, respectively.

museum docents love to use Bluette's piece in their School Tours, inciting the children to re-tell the story using the miniature clues throughout the house.

This charming display tells another story all its own, about the generosity of miniature artisans and their capacity for creative collaboration. In her article "Not Too Big, Not Too Small," author and miniature artisan Sharon Reeve writes about the many pieces that fill the cottage's walls, gifts from private shops and individuals, including herself.¹ The cottage was crafted by Bluette as part of her ongoing



Detail from *Three Bears' Cottage* (Bluette Meloney, 2000). The fruit basket is from Susan McKanna of Molly Brody Miniatures. Enchanted Realm Gallery. Photo by Emily Wolverton.

commitment to produce items for auctions that are dear to her; in March of 2001, the auction of this particular piece generated funds for the National Kidney Foundation of Louisiana. With this worthy goal in mind, more than 20 artisans² sent in items to help tell the tale and bring life to the cottage. Alice Zinn created the Bear Family



Detail from *Three Bears' Cottage* (Bluette Meloney, 2000). Enchanted Realm Gallery. Photo by Amy Haskell.

as well as a fabulously macabre mounted trophy of a man's head, hidden high above in the rafters. Rona Lee assembled and gifted the metal frame beds, in addition to hand-piecing the gorgeous mini-quilt on Mama Bear's bed. Baby Bear's soft afghan was painstakingly knit by hand by Mrs. C's Fancy Work, while Sharon Reeve herself, who works under the name Sharon Reeve Interiors, donated the rest of the miniature bedding. The landscaping of the cottage could be considered a character in and of itself, with crawling vines, velvety grass, and bright floral bursts – much of which was made possible with the help of Reeve. Rik Pierce made the wheelbarrow near the front steps and the hand-wrought fixtures were a gift from Hammer-n-Smith. The patient eye will see the Blue Jay's nest on the sill, and the most careful seeker can spot the butterflies hidden among the flowers.³ Tucked into the wisteria vine is a teddy bear (so shaggy that he could be mistaken for a sheep!) holding a miniscule sock monkey. See if you can spot the silver bowl and bear by Pete Acquisto in the kitchen, or the tiny bears and cabin set on the fireplace mantle— a gift from Sylvia Mobley. Truly, there are too many treasures to list here, making for a delightful treat for visiting miniature enthusiasts.



Details from *Three Bears' Cottage* (Bluette Meloney, 2000). Rik Pierce and Bluette Meloney are both masters at creating aged, distressed finishes with wood and clay. Enchanted Realm Gallery. Photos by Emily Wolverton.

The story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* is a timeless children's classic, teaching young readers about the consequences of selfish and careless behavior. Here we have the story brought to life, inspiring generosity and kindness by example. It seems that here in the Enchanted Realm, *small* is a size that's just right.

Emily Wolverton
The Mini Time Machine Museum

♦Rik Pierce, of Frogmorton Studios, is world-renowned for his fantasy architecture and accessories

1 Reeve, Sharon. "Not Too Big, Not Too Small." *Dollhouse Miniatures*. March 2001. Vol 31, No 3. P 16 – 18.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. The butterflies were donated by Lola's Originals