

View from the Salt Box - #50

There recently was a discussion on the Open Salts Quick Topic Web Site* about a clear glass salt cellar being sold at K-Mart. It was in the Martha Stewart Living section, was clearly labeled “Salt Cellar”, and cost us \$1.98. The top is 3 inches across, so it is kind of big for use as an individual. The bottom is embossed with the word “Taiwan” and “MSe”, which we guess means Martha Stewart Enterprises. A number have been sold to collectors, but we wonder how many will ever be used for holding sodium chloride.



Martha Stewart Salt Cellar

This is the first time we have seen a modern open salt from the Far East sold for use in the home. There were a number of figural salts in the past, but each was aimed at the collector market. The first was a group of 6 “spectacular famous salt dips” made in Korea for A.A. Imports. These included a carriage, cradle, wheelbarrow, anvil, frog and spittoon. We covered these in detail in Salty Comments #27. Since then a number of shapes from Taiwan and China have shown up, with the Martha Stewart one being the most recent. Most have stickers which are easily removed by “antique” dealers. We make it a point to leave them on so we can tell their origin in the future.

The two modern “Far East” salts we have owned the longest are a glass basket and a swirl pedestal. The basket has a Taiwan sticker, and we have seen it in pink as well as clear. The swirl pedestal is embossed “Taiwan” on the bottom. It resembles one embossed Portieux, and we have no idea of its age.

The Far East figurals with nests include a duck, a rabbit and a hen. The first two of these have Taiwan stickers. The duck is obviously a copy of the old one, and the rabbit is a copy of the one by Summit Art Glass. The hen is different in that “Made in Taiwan” is embossed on the bottom. We have seen it in pink as well as in blue.

About 1993 a copy of the old “bird with seed” appeared. It was made in China, and ours has a sticker saying this. The resemblance to the original McKee one is amazing – the only real difference we have identified is that the protruding eyes on the new one are rounded by fire polishing. We have seen it in blue, pink and apple green.

One other recent “salt” with a Taiwan sticker is the bulbous glass shape at the right. They don’t sell it as such, though it looks closer to an open salt than the Martha Stewart one. Its label calls it a “Stackable Candle Holder”, but it will work well for many uses and looks reasonable in the collection. We have it in frosted blue as well as in green.

Finally there is a porcelain double marked “Limoges China”. It is nicely done, but we suspect the mark is a way of identifying China as the country of origin. We wonder if they have a town called Limoges over there.

We expect more “open salts” will be coming from the Far East because labor is inexpensive over there. We like to have a copy of each to compare with the old salts they imitate, but we keep the stickers on them so we can be sure of our identification.



Ed Berg

*Quick Topic Web Site is: www.quicktopic.com/3/H/Jo9oDfHgeWJILEWR

September 2002

