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One of a Kind covers wacky to wonderful

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RITA ZEKAS
LIVING REPORTER

Went to One of a Kind spring show and sale at the Direct Energy Centre at the CNE last Saturday, spending four and a half hours to check out 450 artisans.

DecoRita didn't do them *all*. We concentrated on the decor element, though we were sidetracked by the recycled felted (boiled wool) bags by Tracy Crandall (tlcbags.com) and were compelled to drop by Danny Pollak's booth for a costume jewellery fix.



TARA WALTON / TORONTO STAR

At the Wroot of It makes cute dishes that will make cooking fun.

Some of the decor items were good, some were bad and some were just fromage – more artsy-craftsy than during home ec night with a Brownie pack.

Tin Tin's Custom Lamps blew us away. Tin Tin's takes found objects like ice skates, guitars and golf bags and recycle them into functioning lamps – and they aren't cheesy. Well, maybe the lamp assembled from a bucket of Corona beers topped by a sombrero is. But think how cool it would be for patio parties or on campus in lieu of a kegger.

The three iron in the golf bag is the dimmer switch, as is one of the strings of the guitar. The prices are reasonable: \$190 for the skate lamp, \$175 for the Corona lamp, \$275 for the golf bag and \$316 for the guitar. Email: mjansons@sympatico.ca.

Got the Corona lamp? You'll need accessories like beer and bottle glasses reformed and recycled from Corona, Steam Whistle and Belgian Wit empties. Artech Glassblowing Studios works this magic and charges \$18 each.

Loved, loved, loved Dale M. Reid's black-and-white photography. A photo of a deserted farmhouse in a flat landscape was so Dorothy's-house-before-the-tornado, but it was and a photo of a pair of ankle strap stilettos beside an exotic flower that followed me home. Its title, "Danger Cobra," sealed the deal.

Don't judge me. I'm a shoe slut.

The photos are framed and start at \$195 and go to \$600. Reid's been doing photography full time for only four years. Before that, he was in banking for 25 years. His website is dalemreidphotography.com.

Suffer from neck pain, muscle tension, headaches, lower back pain, repetitive strain injury or sleeplessness? For some folks, even shopping is a pain. That's where Harvest Pillows come in, therapeutic pillows made of buckwheat hulls, which mould to the contours of the body. And buckwheat is dust-mite free because the hulls are too loose and cool to attract the critters.

Prices start at \$25 for a lumbar pillow to \$70 for king size.

The Harvest Pillow folks make sure their buckwheat is cracked, not rolled. When flattened, buckwheat is used as filler in concrete. Ouch.

Visit harvestpillows.com.

Janice Lutsenko's Pressed Flower Art is not our cup of chai, but we're not rocket scientists. (Lutsenko's clientele includes a NASA scientist who is crazy for her quilts-blowing-in-the-wind scenes.)

The pictures are made from dried flowers but are not just airy-fairy Victorian florals, though she has them, too. They are a hit with everyone from teens to grandmothers – the twentysomethings and thirtysomethings buy the purse, shoe, dress and figure pictures. And it's not just a chick thing: 40 per cent of the buyers are male.

"Accountants are my niche market," Lutsenko says. "They buy unabashedly romantic ones for their offices. It appeals to them because the work is so exact. "

Also for that reason, her work is big with quilters.

Gynaecologists buy the florals for their waiting rooms; cottagers love her rustic, outdoor scenes. Prices start at \$39 and go to \$900. Her email is lutsenko@telus.net.

Everyone needs spice in their decor and Sylvain Tremblay's knockout pepper mills decked out in polka dots and blazing hues do the trick. There is even a fabulous fish model that does swimmingly. Sorry.

The small ones are \$60, medium are \$80 and tall are \$110.

"It's art for the table," Tremblay says. "Don't match dark wood with dark wood. The pepper grinder should stand out."

See peppermilltremblay.com.

These days, it's chic not to match the dinnerware, either. And it's cheeky to use dinnerware by At the Wroot of It, featuring such sassy plate-attudes as "Dinner Is Ready When the Smoke Alarm Goes Off" and "Forget Love I'd Rather Fall in Chocolate."

Carrie Wroot's best customers are "gaggles of girls giggling."

Prices range from \$16 for mugs ("Sexy Women Have Messy Kitchens") to \$150 for canister sets. Everything is dishwasher and microwave safe.

Email: carriewroot@yahoo.ca.

We're suckers for animals, so we plotzed over Diane Marier's wonderfully whimsical clay menagerie of puffins, penguins, zebras and giraffes made into everything from wine

coolers to a duck Dutch oven.

Prices range from \$35 for duck egg cups to \$325 for a saucy duck vase. At dianemarierceramique.com.

You could display your beasties on a cabinet from Feargrieve Designs. We liked the green one priced at \$2,000 and made of Baltic birch topped with aluminum kick plate. It is geared to the condo market and would be perfect for a mini bar or in an entranceway.

Perhaps we liked it because we could drink to it – it was named "carmenere," after a blended wine.

Visit Feargrieve.ca.

All that shopping – and sampling hot sauces – make for major thirst. Why do they charge usurious prices for bottled water and pop? Can't get either for under \$3 – and we're not talking humungous litre size – not even from the vending machine.

Next time, we're packing our own.

We can always buy One of a Kind funky glasses to drink it from.

Rita Zekas' DecoRita column appears Saturday in Weekend Living. rzekas@thestar.ca.