Deri Terry – *Gentleman’s Library*

A Perfect Classic Atmosphere

by Pam North

Deri Terry calls her latest project *Gentleman's Library*. “I always have wanted a library in my dollhouse,” she explained. “From the time I began working on a large, front-opening house in 2007, I had visions of the perfect English library - one with beautifully paneled walls, built-in bookshelves, pictures of hunt scenes, horse trophies, and lots of books.”
The most important aspect of this project, walls paneled in walnut to impart a warm, rich atmosphere, had been a fruitless search for her. She had found stainable/paintable components, but actual walnut paneling was not compatible proportionally to her dollhouse room. She recently had completed a paneled room box, painted white, entitled *Restful Retreat* (A.M. May 2017), and fortunately that project was serendipity, leading to the perfect solution for the library; that same room box also was available in walnut, and it even had bookshelves! As soon as Terry allowed herself to release her previous concept that the library had to be in her dollhouse, she realized that a room box might be an even better showcase for her theme and its accompanying treasures. That lightning bolt moment set new ideas flowing, and she purchased the walnut room box.
“I immediately set to work, beginning with the lighting. Creating miniature rooms is a great outlet for my creativity, but the electrical aspect is not my cup of tea, so my husband always does the lighting for me. I glue fixtures in place, but he drills the holes for the wires, and connects them to the transformer.”

Terry relished the challenge of incorporating all the masculine elements into a cohesive vignette. “I envisioned a stately room, but also one that was inviting. The leather club chair, in which the gentleman doll is seated, appears worn and comfy. The quality of the items in the room implies that the gentleman is wealthy, and has varied interests. The trophies and ribbons convey a love of horses, while the military portrait and box of dueling pistols hint of family ancestry and traditon. The books reflect his varied and eclectic tastes; leather-bound, gilt-edged classics are mixed with gardening books and a few contemporary ones from the *Game of Thrones* series, all contributing to the image that the owner is well-read. The cigars, cognac, and newspaper signify that this is where our resident relaxes. His pocket watch rests in a dish, because he bows to no schedule here.”

“It was important for the library to be luxurious and traditional, but not too stuffy. Some humor was in order, so I added the naughty dog to the vignette. I glued the man firmly into the chair, manipulating his wire frame into a lifelike pose. The struggle for the newspaper conveys that while he may be king of his castle, his pooch clearly rules the roost, and the humorous situation implies the playful relationship between a man and his beloved companion, hopefully stirring emotions in viewers of the scene. A spaniel seemed the perfect choice for the gentleman, due to the breed’s royal English lineage, and sweet, calm temperament. Art imitates life in this scene; I have four Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, so I often add miniature versions to my creations.” It also brings an extra personal touch to her creation.
Terry had been collecting books and accessories for a miniature library for some time before starting this project, and she drew attention to several of the items. “Some of my treasures in this room box are: the side table that is actually a hidden safe; a bronze Olszewski figurine, entitled *Hunt With Hounds;* and dueling pistols in a handmade wooden box by Terry Harville. The safe is a Bespaq table that Jeanetta Kendall converted; it holds the owner’s important papers and family jewels. I love including items that have hidden features. There is something magical about seeing people mesmerized by tiny objects in a room that reveal hidden secrets initially unseen. In this case, it’s lifting out what appears to be an ordinary table, and exposing the little hidden safe filled with treasures. Even people with no real interest in miniatures appreciate the unexpected surprise, and it is the special touches bring enchantment to an ordinary dollhouse. Although this is a traditional room, the white stag head (a craft store find) gives it a fresh update, bringing it into the new millennium. I never limit my search to miniatures stores!”
The decision to use the walnut room box has brought Terry no regret. “The warmth of the wood, leather, and navy blue velvet, accented by touches of gilt, convey a feeling of relaxed richness. The room is luxurious, yet comfy. Viewing it, I imagine myself grabbing a good book, and sinking into the leather club chair with my dog, enjoying the smells of leather, wood, cigars, and cognac. I truly have enjoyed creating this library. I'm not sure what my next miniature project will be, but it likely will require research, because suddenly I feel a strong urge to curl up with a good book!”

What a perfect Father’s Day gift a similar piece would make for a lucky male recipient!