

SHARDS OF WISDOM

“Heard it Through the Grapevine”



Where the Yellow Went

Ralph Finch brings up the hobby's No. 1 topic and asks...Is this yellow journalism?



I am going to segue several topics into one (and you will recognize why other writers with more self-control haven't):

Back in the 1950s, a popular toothpaste ad claimed, *“You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent!”*

(Or, 1868 to forever: “Carter's Little Yellow Liver Pills”)

And: Many collectors often come to the same conclusion after having collected since...Truman was in the White House (the 1950s) and recognized that it was time to get rid of some stuff. It is never easy. And as a compulsive collector, I hate hearing that term. I am a believer in the collection axiom: He who dies with the most toys wins!

Part of the problem older collectors often face: “My kids don't want it.”

Another challenge is: How to price it? Related to: “Where the heck did we get it?” And, sometimes: “Why the heck did we buy it?”

So, Janet is packing things up, putting an educated price on some, a number picked at random on others. Then she asked...



Clear glass embossed “Urine Specimen Bottle” with a pouring spout. 4-¾” tall.

(OK, see the questions above, but change the word “we” to a more accusative “YOU”... and with an attitude.)

And—I'm old—I replied: “I don't remember.”

Truly, at the age of 83, having an item embossed: “URINE SAMPLE BOTTLE” seems rather...familiar. And handy.

Where did I get it? (See the often-stated “I don't remember” defense above. At my age, that is more commonly heard than a politician claiming “The Fifth.”)

BTW: On the bottom it is embossed “Professional Specialties Co.” and on the reverse are measurements going from one to six ounces. And if six ounces may seem like a lot, notice that elephants can pee 12 to 15 gallons a day, one of the several reasons that most people don't have a pet elephant...and can you imagine the size bottle an elephant's vet must have? And does all this information fall into the category of not BTW, but “TMI”?

FYI: My wife, who loves me (she's a saint) and has patience with me, has publicly claimed: “I am not responsible for that man!”

PEE-PS: I checked on Google, and there were 68 urine sample jokes, plus uncounted “off-color” references...(and what color are off-color urine sample jokes?) But I picked this one:

“I took a urine sample at the doctor's office today. I think my kleptomania is getting out of hand.”

Pee-peeS: Two people commented on this story. An old and wacky friend said: “Ralph, I hope you didn't pay for amber and got a clear glass.”

I asked Ferdinand Meyer if they had a bottle like this in their collection, and he succinctly replied: “Wee don't.”

Wonderful! I'm jealous of how much humor Ferd got out of TWO words. Well, succinctness has never been one of my strengths ... I'd explain why, but it would take me pages to explain. (Honestly.)

The Finches are Shipshape

And that's always better than being keelhauled, admits Ralph Finch.

On September 13 this past year, we joined the crew at South Bay Auctions, a firm anchored in East Moriches, New York. The outfit boasts *“a family-owned and operated auction house, specializing in artwork and antiques for over 35 years.”*

The sale we took part in was big on naval items, especially ship-related lots, like ship designs and paintings, British *woolwork (whatever that means), and perhaps your only chance to own two antique wrought iron double-flue harpoons with hinged barbs. I couldn't tell if they sold for a whale of a bargain, but...if you missed out on them, don't blubber.

Talking about naval-related items: I admit, being slightly overweight, I haven't seen my navel button in years.

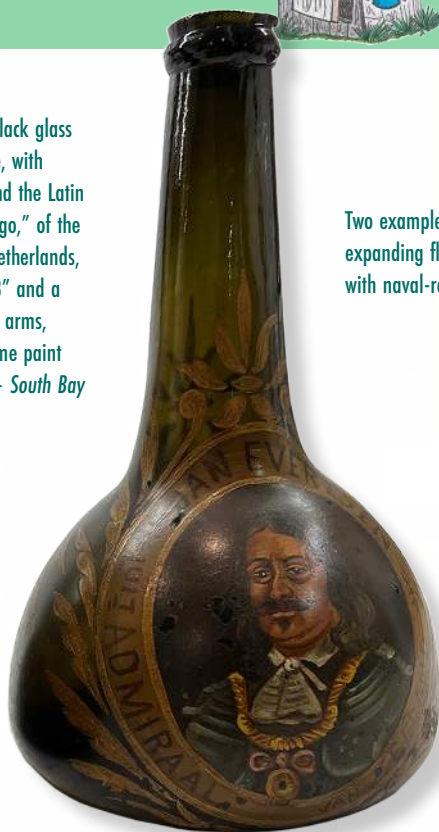
*And, to make us feel smarter: The meaning of ‘woolwork’ is needlework (as embroidery on canvas or knitting) made with wool.

SHARDS OF WISDOM

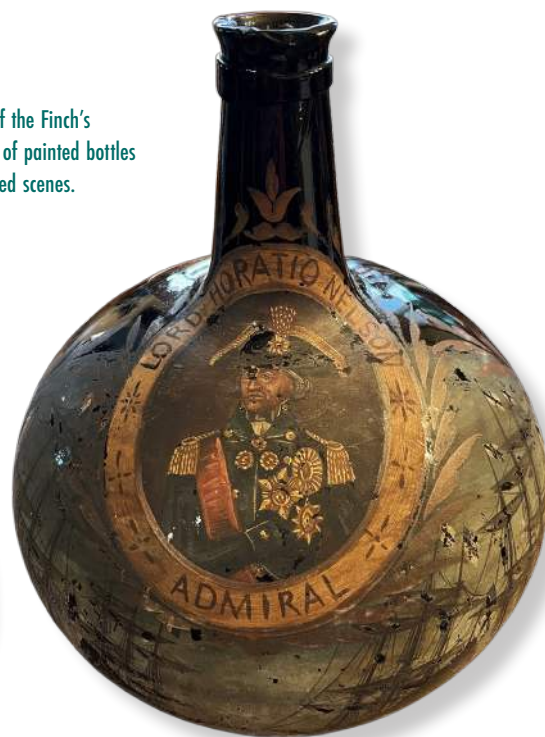
"Heard it Through the Grapevine"



[Left] Lot 27. Dutch black glass onion-form wine bottle, with painted Naval scene and the Latin motto, "Luctor et Emergo," of the province of Zeeland, Netherlands, along with date, "1763" and a partial Zeeland coat of arms, 18th/19th century. Some paint loss. 8- $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 6- $\frac{1}{2}$ " dia.— *South Bay Auctions*



Two examples of the Finch's expanding fleet of painted bottles with naval-related scenes.



The Finches were interested in launching another item into our expanding fleet of painted bottles with naval-related scenes, and we set our sights on Lot 27, described (edited) as:

*"Dutch black-glass onion-form wine bottle, with painted Naval scene and the Latin motto, *Luctor et Emergo, of the province of Zeeland, Netherlands, along with date, '1763', and a partial Zeeland coat of arms, 18th/19th century. Some paint loss. 8- $\frac{1}{4}$ inches high. Estimated at \$200-\$300."*

Sadly, Lot 27 was underestimated, and when the cannons settled, it was \$1,100, plus the buyer's premium of 25 percent, plus \$143 for shipping, plus...the final figure: \$1,518.

FYI #1: The term "black glass" is relative. Those of us with a black glass bottle know that if you hold it up to a very bright light, you often recognize a hint of dark amber or dark green. In this bottle, you could hold up to the sun and only see...black. And the glass on this bottle is so thick that you might—if you were a fool—use the bottle to drive a nail into a board. "1763?" With luck, this bottle could be around for a few more centuries.

FYI #2: Zeeland is the Netherlands' westernmost and least populous province.

FYI #3: *The phrase means "I struggle and overcome." If I had a casino motto in Latin, it would translate as: "I struggle and—sometimes—break even."

March – April 2024

So, once again, I went to see—sea in my bathrobe and claimed victory (thanks to Janet). Did Lord Nelson ever claim a victory wearing only his bathrobe?



Horatio Nelson, 1st Viscount Nelson, 1st Duke of Bronte. Portrait by L. F. Abbott (1799).

