

SHARDS OF WISDOM

"Heard it Through the Grapevine"

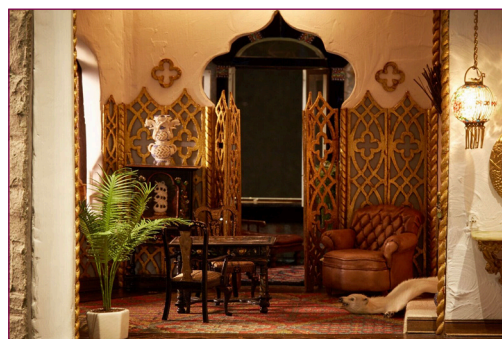


The \$8.5 Million Astolat Dollhouse Castle: World's Most Expensive Dollhouse

Appraised at \$8.5 million, the Astolat Dollhouse Castle costs more than a fully furnished condo in New York City. But then, this is no ordinary dollhouse. It's nine feet tall, has 29 rooms, weighs 800 pounds and is furnished with 10,000 miniature pieces including extravagant furnishings, working fireplaces, stained glass panels, oil paintings, mirrors, gold miniature jewelry, fine rugs and fabric, and even rare mini books more than 100 years old. All of these were meticulously handcrafted by artisans from all over the world.

The dollhouse was created primarily by Colorado-based miniaturist Elaine Diehl, after she got inspired by Alfred Tennyson's poetry about the *Lady of the Lake*. Over a thirteen year period, between 1974 and 1987, Elaine Diehl built the castle taking help of experts and miniature artists from around the world.

Consisting of seven levels, stairways, and hallways, Astolat Dollhouse Castle was created for 360 degree viewing. As with the Colleen Moore dollhouse, certain exterior walls are fixed to create a 3-D viewing experience. The basement level consists of the Knights of Columbus room, wine cellar, kitchens, and the armory. The main floor contains the entrance foyer, main stairway, and butler's closet. Next level up contains the formal living room, dining room, and music room and its audience balcony. The fourth level contains the private library containing dueling pistols, a library of miniature books, fireplace, miniature daguerreotypes, and the oil painting display area. Fifth level contains the sleeping quarters. Sixth floor contains the grand ballroom, musician's alcove, bar area and sitting rooms. Wizard's tower is on the top level and contains hand-painted zodiac signs, telescope, observatory and astronomical depictions.



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