

# Making delicate, artful reminders of Hungary's empire

By Claudia Capos  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

HEREND, Hungary — A slender, dark-haired Hungarian woman seated on a stool inside the Herend Porcelain Manufactory dipped her dainty brush in paint and raised its whisker-fine bristles to a translucent porcelain plate. Our tour group fell dead silent, fearing the slightest movement would break her concentration. But the artist's hand held steady. Soon, an intricate motif of blue flowers entwined with leafy vines appeared on what would become a pricey piece of Herend porcelain.

Herend is the world's largest manufacturer of hand-crafted luxury porcelain goods, which are sold in 60 countries. In an age of ubiquitous automation and digital wizardry, the world-famous enterprise in central Hungary has preserved a centuries-old tradition of molding, casting, and painting fine porcelain by hand. Herend's most famous patterns are named for its illustrious clients, including Queen Victoria, the Esterhazy family, and the House of Rothschild. The porcelain manufacturer was a purveyor to the Hapsburg Dynasty and the aristocracy in Hungary and abroad.



CLAUDIA CAPOS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Every Herend hand-painted porcelain item is unique. This artist trained for three years and is painting free-hand.

More recently, Prince William and Kate Middleton, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, received a set of Herend porcelain dishes decorated with a redesigned Victoria pattern as a wedding gift from the Hungarian government.

Our interest in Herend porcelain was piqued during an overnight stay at Hedervary Castle, once the home of the counts Hedervary, which is lo-

cated in the village of Hedervar in northwestern Hungary. Tucked away in a remote hallway of the 16th-century baronial mansion is the exclusive Herend suite, where guests stay amid Herend porcelain antiques painted with the red-and-brown Hedervary colors. Castle manager Bene Gabor unlocked the suite's antique wooden door with an oversize iron key and showed us one flo-

## If you go . . .

**Herend Porcelain Manufactory**  
H-8440 Herend, Hungary  
Kossuth Lajos U. 140  
011-36-88-261-144,  
011-36-88-261-444  
www.herend.com  
Tickets include a mini-manufacturing tour, museum entry, and coffee. Adult about \$8.  
**Where to stay and dine**  
**Hedervary Kastely**  
H-9178 Hedevár, Fo U. 47  
011-36-96-213-433  
www.hedervary.hu  
The reconstructed 16th-century castle, set in a 23-acre parkland approximately 13 miles from Mosonmagyaróvár in northwest Hungary, immerses visitors in a baronial setting. Special four-course dinners are served by candlelight in the vaulted dining room. Doubles with breakfast from \$186.

ral platter valued at \$30,000. Instantly, we were hooked on Herend and set out a week later in search of the town and factory bearing that name.

We drove through vast grain fields and deep forests to reach Herend, just west of Veszpreme.

Gift shops and etterems (local restaurants) line the streets of the village where founder Vince Stingl established his original stoneware pottery factory in 1826. Bronze busts of Stingl and Mor Fischer, who bought the business in 1839, gaze stoically across Porcelanium Square, an airy plaza framed by massive brick industrial buildings. Flapping banners initially drew us into the Herend Porcelain Museum, a trove of exquisite plates, graceful figurines, and vessels of all shapes and sizes. We walked through an original wood-burning furnace, blackened from use, and admired an immense wine canteen emblazoned with a countryside scene.

Outside, we paused to photograph a gaily painted life-size lion in front of the Porcelanium Visitor Centre where we joined an English-speaking tour group for a first-hand look at porcelain making. In a mini-manufacturing facility, we peeked over artisans' shoulders as they shaped hard-paste porcelain into elephants and eagles, formed plates and vessels on a spinning potter's wheel, and poured liquefied paste into molds for filigree jewelry boxes.

In the painting area, we wit-

nessed the artistic transformation of each fired and glazed piece. Herend's artists train for three years and may spend up to 16 hours on a single item. One artist painted brown spots on a leopard free-hand while another used a stenciled charcoal pattern to guide her strokes on a flower vase. After painting, pieces are fired one last time to set the colors and enhance 24-karat gold decoration.

The fruits of this intensive Old World-style labor are on display, and offered for sale, in the dazzling Victoria Herend Shop, where browsers can easily spend hundreds or thousands of dollars. Lighted glass showcases overflow with floral-accented dinner place settings in a rainbow of color variations, Oriental-themed vases, rose-topped bonbonnières, and assorted knickknacks.

After feasting our eyes on this princely porcelain, we indulged in cappuccino and scrumptious chocolate pastry served, naturally, on elegant Herend plates in the oak-paneled Apicius Café.

Claudia R. Capos can be reached at [capocomm@sbcglobe.com](mailto:capocomm@sbcglobe.com).

# Antique to vintage to newer bits

►LONDON  
Continued from Page M1

The affable traders at Bermondsey Square Antiques Market have seen more changes than most in the last decade. They describe how the area, a 10-minute walk south of Tower Bridge, has shaken off the dogged dereliction of postwar neglect, having been restored and developed into a mix of rejuvenated warehouses and new apartments. The antiques market continues to take center stage every Friday morning, as it has since 1948, albeit now with a reduced cast of two dozen stalls where once there were hundreds.

It's the place for genuine but affordable antiques, for silverware (cutlery in particular) and jewelry (both costume and antique), but also for more prosaic objects, such as box Brownie cameras, cigarette cases, and shoe horns. And it's one of the few surviving London antiques markets to keep its predawn kickoff — trading can begin at 4 a.m. and is all but finished by lunchtime. Hence my early start.

"I'll give you a pound if you can tell me what's inside this stick," said one of the traders. Unscrewing the egg-shaped top of a walking stick he pulls out a small white tube, attaches it to the ivory top and mimics puffing on the assembled miniature pipe. Hymie Blechman, like several of the traders in Bermondsey, has been setting up here in the middle of the night for decades. "Been traveling up from Dorset each Friday since 1965," he confirmed. "And it's still worth it; reducing the size of the market has improved the quality of what's being sold."

I passed up Hymie's deal on the walking stick, but did buy two 19th-century postcards that showed neighboring Southwark in its pre-Blitz patchwork of dense, darkly stained buildings. With the market fully explored (you can get round it in an hour), I followed another trader's advice and walked up to the river, to Butler's Wharf, where the brick warehouses, gantries, and alleyways offer a teasing glimpse of how Thameside London must have looked in the days of Dickens.

On Saturday the focus for pre-loved markets moves north. Stepping off the Tube at Notting Hill Gate, I began the walk toward Portobello Road, moving with the tide of people flowing past pastel-painted townhouses. London's most famous antiques market is a vibrant affair. Really, it's a string of small markets, each with its specialty, from antiques to food to vintage. I found the genuine antiques stalls running down the hill at the southern end of



ANDREW WHITTAKER FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Brick Lane Market unfurls every Sunday morning, a flea market at its best in the old East End, amid the immigrant Bangladeshi community, the old working class, and more.

## If you go . . .

**What to do**  
**Bermondsey Square Antiques Market**

Southwark  
www.bermondseysquare.co.uk  
Fridays 4 a.m.-1 p.m. London Bridge and Bermondsey are the nearest Tube stations.

**Portobello Road Market**

Notting Hill  
www.portbellomarket.org  
The antiques market sets up at the southern end of the road every Saturday, the vintage market under the Westway on Friday and Saturday, and the bric-a-brac of Golborne Road from Monday to Saturday. Ladbroke Grove and Notting Hill Gate for the Tube.

**Camden Passage Market**

Off Upper Street, Islington  
www.camdenpassageislington.co.uk  
Wednesday and Saturday, mid-morning to late afternoon. Angel is the nearest Tube station.

**Brick Lane Market**

Shoreditch  
www.visitbricklane.org  
Sunday 9 a.m. to midafternoon. Aldgate East Tube and Shoreditch High Street Overground are the nearest rail stations.  
**Old Spitalfields Market**  
Between Commercial Street and Bishopsgate, Shoreditch  
www.oldspitalfieldsmarket.com  
There's a daily market in Old Spitalfields, but Sunday is best for vintage. Liverpool Street Tube station is a 5-minute walk.

the road, in front of the antiques shops and arcades. The shops sell the rarefied goods — collectible pewter, porcelain, and prints — but the market stalls are more interesting, with their vintage luggage and trays of hand-weathered printers' blocks.

Farther up Portobello Road, where the Westway roars overhead, I found the vintage traders huddled under the freeway and selling everything from gramophone players to fur stoles. Here London's love of vintage comes to the fore: bits

of mid-century modern furniture, vinyl records, 1980s sportswear, and a fine selection of secondhand Barbour jackets, one of which fit me perfectly. I paid the asking price after a half-hearted haggle (most stallholders here seem happy to negotiate, but don't expect or demand bargains).

The farther up Portobello Road I walked, the more off-beat the goods became — old prams, crumbling picture frames, wooden-frame tennis rackets — and eventually I reached the scruffy pitches of Golborne Road, a stretch of neat Victorian symmetry crouching under the weird brutalist beauty of the Trelick Tower, where the bric-a-brac sellers lay out the detritus of modern life in crates on the sidewalk. The walk was worth it for the van selling Moroccan fried fish, a local landmark on wheels I was told. I headed for Ladbroke Grove Tube Station clutching a Styrofoam box full of grilled sardines.

In Islington, the bijou Saturday antiques market in Camden Passage (not to be confused with the extensive, tourist-thronged markets of Camden Town) was more manageable, easily covered in two hours' browsing.

Camden Passage has been an Islington institution since the 1960s, and the antiques and vintage shops that mark its route confirm its pedigree. The alleyways of the Passage take you back to pre-car London, and the elegant roads behind make for a fine ramble after the market. The stalls here crowded the sidewalk, pushing tea sets, jewelry, and stuffed animals under my nose. The feel was comfortable, genteel — the traders happy to chat about the way the market had changed over the years.

By contrast, the Sunday morning market in Brick Lane felt like a boisterous upstart. Right in the heart of the old East End, the lane unravels like a metaphor for modern London. At one end the migrant Bangladeshi community is celebrated for its culture and food (dubbed "Banglatown" no less); in the middle the cafes

frames. One stall seemed to specialize in gas masks and Barbie dolls, the connection not immediately obvious. I found myself paying for a scuffed pair of genuine 1980s Puma Meteor kicks, size 10. Perhaps I'll grow into them.

It's a 10-minute walk from Brick Lane to Old Spitalfields, where the Sunday vintage market is more polished. The houses passed along the way are some of the oldest in London, dating from the area's 18th-century incarnation as a haven for Huguenot silk weavers. At Dennis Servers's House on Folgate Street, preserved in its original state, you can apparently see (and smell) how the weavers would have lived. I passed up the opportunity in favor of a pint of bitter in The Ten Bells on Commercial Street, a pub once frequented by two of Jack the Ripper's victims, possibly even the Ripper himself. The Victorian tiles and weathered wood (and, unfortunately, the washrooms) generate an intoxicating 19th-century ambience, even while the clientele is modern-urban.

The large, covered expanse of Old Spitalfields places vintage and retro goods alongside craft stalls and fashion students selling their latest creations. It's a lively area, the central section of the market given over to cafes and restaurants, and the surrounding streets packed with interesting independent shops, from delicatessens to the Duke of Uke, the only store I've ever seen that specializes in ukuleles.

My three-day tour had taken me to parts of the city that wouldn't otherwise have been on my itinerary. The markets are full of life and characters, and hugely varied. Just make sure you check your baggage allowance before buying or you might end up handing a prized

pair of ill-fitting sneakers to a man in uniform at the airport.

Andrew Whittaker can be reached at [www.andrewwhittaker.co.uk](http://www.andrewwhittaker.co.uk).

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