

Simply Irresistible!

By DEBORAH QUAILE

In a newly renovated space that's the colour of sunshine and accented by rich burgundy highlights, Campbellville welcomes Irresistible Dolls, a Gallery of the Finest Collections. The shop's grand opening on Thursday, October 3 will prove that it's truly a doll collector's dream.

Owner E. Lisa Lister Stoodley is very excited about her launch.

"I'm in heaven with the dolls," she enthuses. "I always had to buy my dolls from the United States, so I thought this shop would be the best of both worlds. Collectors have to pay customs, shipping and other fees just to get individual dolls into Canada; I thought I could eliminate that by bringing dolls together under one roof." Lisa has been an avid collector for many years, and her new store will reflect her own passions with dolls and accessories, such as clothing, baby buggies, or tea sets, and doll magazines on collecting, creating, and shows.

"I met designer Robert Tonner at a doll show and had a one-on-one with him. His Betsy McCall doll is irresistible," she adds. "In February of next year I'll be in New York at an International Expo doll fair to meet Marie Osmond, a close friend of Mr. Tonner. She's really changed the doll industry. Last year she purchased a doll company and is changing the way that dolls are retailed - bringing the doll artists and doll shops closer together."

The doll market is not, as many people would assume, only open to women. Many avid collectors, magazine writers or artists are male, and there are a wide variety of ages that pursue the market. Dolls usually range from three inches to 32 inches in size. Irresistible Dolls will feature exclusive doll lines by Madame

Alexander Doll Company (Cissy, Wendy, Ann and Hannah & Friends); Susan Wakeen Signature Doll Company; the famous Marie Osmond Doll Collection (*Adora Belle* and designer porcelain creations); Zapf Creations (*Colette Doll* and *Maggie Raggie*); and New Zealand doll-maker Jan McLean Designs (*Lollipop Girls*). The Tonner Doll Company with *Betsy McCall*, *Tyler Wentworth*, and *Kitty Collier* will host Lisa's Grand Opening week, where there will be numerous prizes and gifts.

To emphasize her location, Lisa has had a sign crafted locally that will feature a large reproduction of a small ceramic figurine that she created for her mother when she was 12 years of age. The three-dimensional doll figure will be carved 14 inches high, and covered in gold leaf. The silhouette will be mounted inside a cutout in the sign, which will be hand carved and painted in her signature colours.

Lisa is as much fascinated by the history of the companies as she is by their products. "Madame Beatrice Alexander Behrman, known as 'the first lady of dolls,' founded The Alexander Doll Company 79 years ago. She lived over her father's doll hospital - the first in America - and often played with the dolls waiting to be mended. Her love of dolls led the dynamic woman to create her own fine quality, handcrafted dolls. She initiated a series of firsts in the toy industry, such as the first doll based on a licensed character (*Scarlet* from *Gone with the Wind*), which led to the creation of dolls based on characters from popular motion pictures; the first to bring feature baby dolls to market; and the first to create dolls in honor of living people (like Queen Elizabeth, or the Dionne Quints). She also introduced the grown-up fashion doll (21" Cissy) with high-

heels and haute couture." The Alexander Doll Company is the only major manufacturer in America.

"Susan Wakeen," Lisa notes, "one of the most celebrated doll artists, started at her kitchen table. She used to make the rounds of local stores with her first original doll, Angie, eventually selling out at Toy Fair 1985. Susan Wakeen Dolls are life-like sculptures. Her *Signature Collection* is the top-of-the-line, and limited to small runs of 750-1250. They're all weighted like a real baby."

Marie Osmond, the famed entertainer, philanthropist, doll marker, wife and mother of seven, began working with the L.L. Knickerbocker Company in 1990. The next year her dollson QVC were an immediate success. Marie was featured on the front of *Doll Reader* magazine and was actually the first human to grace one of their covers. She's now the driving force behind "Marian" (formerly L.L. Knickerbocker) which her husband, Brian Blossil, acquired last fall.

Designer Robert Tonner's has the ability to capture the magic of childhood in winsome, delightful child dolls as well as interpret the elegance and glamour of haute couture in his adult fashion dolls. The 21st century version of Betsy McCall is as adorable as her 1950s predecessor. Robert Tonner dolls have captured the imagination of collectors and fashion designers worldwide, revolutionizing the fashion doll industry.

Max Zapf of Zapf Creation promotes its artistry and craftsmanship from the idyllic German countryside, where they still produce in the original factory. "Baby Cakes," "Baby Annabell," "Colette Collection," "Designer Collection" and their newest addition "Maggie Raggies" are a fine line with quality accessories.

"Jan McLean's limited edition porcelain continues to bewitch the most discerning art and doll collectors worldwide. Each item has a uniquely cheeky or alluring expression - an attitude that exudes personality. Jan employs the skills of a mould-maker, cobblers, milliners, a beader, and a jeweller at her workshop where she hand paints every face. Her newest project, Lollipop Girls, are 12" vinyl cuties who are all about attitude. Brigitte, Cassie, Pipi, Bebe, Lulu, Cissy, are making their debut at the Gallery."

Anyone who's ever enjoyed dolls will want to see Lisa's spectacular opening collection, from one-of-a-kinds and Limited Editions, to items just for playtime. Watch for up-and-coming doll lines to join Irresistible Dolls Gallery, like Gotz, Linda M. Rick (Precious Moments), Cindy Marshner Rolfe Dolls, Mundia Designs from France, Richard Simmons, and Trisha Romance.

"I want to be the BEST doll shop in Canada! Being an avid doll

lover and creator gave me the inspiration to indulge my passion and open an exclusive doll shop. To me, dolls capture the youthful imagination we hold dearly. They are truly works of art - the sweet faces, loving looks, or that aura of innocence are so irresistible, especially when their inquisitive eyes seem to lock on to you. I know that collectors will find that special treasure right here in my gallery of Irresistible Dolls."

Lisa will continue to expand the gallery to provide something for everyone, whether it's soft and cuddly, glamorous and beautiful, or for fun and playtime. Watch for Doll of the Month specials, or acquire over time with the layaway plan. Special artist signings will occur in the new year. As well, Irresistible Dolls will be working with the community through sponsorship of local groups.

Lisa welcomes customer comments and requests by email at irresistibledolls@yahoo.ca or phone. Her gallery's website, which is refreshed daily, is www.irresistibledolls.com



Campbellville's newest business venture - Irresistible Dolls

"Irresistible Dolls" Gallery of the Finest Collections

October
3 to 7

Grand Opening!



Hours
M-W 10-5
Th-F 10-8
S/S 9:30-5:30

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