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Stouffville Hosts Jiu Jitsu Seminar

Stouffville Martial Arts Academy on Ringwood Drive was the venue for Professor Chris Robinson's Brazilian Jiu Jitsu seminar recently. Prof. Robinson (front row second from left) is one of the few Canadian Gracie Jiu Jitsu black belts under Royler Gracie, the son of Grandmaster Helio Gracie, the man who invented Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. The students had an enjoyable time as they learned new techniques.



November 16th to December 31st, 2009

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Treasures & Heirlooms

By Rob Reid

A warm, white and wonderful Christmas to everyone. Here we have an interesting plate that actually encompasses three different categories of collectibles. It is a large 9.5 inch plate made by Blue Mountain Pottery for the Avon Company as a Christmas collector plate.

The Avon Company was created in 1886 by David McConnell. He created a rose-scented perfume as a free gift to help with his door-to-door book selling business. The perfume was so successful that he abandoned the book business to establish the California Perfume Company, in New York City. As the company grew he hired more and more representatives and the company opened its first non-US office in Quebec in 1914.

After his death in 1937, his son took over the business and changed the name in 1939 to Avon, in honour of Shakespeare's hometown of Stratford-on-Avon. The company was taken public in 1946 and the famous "Avon Calling" advertising campaign introduced in 1954. Today their products, which include jewellery, soaps, Christmas ornaments, clothing and household goods can be found almost anywhere in the world, with sales exceeding \$8 billion annually.

The company has produced a Christmas collectors' plate for more than three decades and this plate is one example from 1979 made by the Blue Mountain Pottery Company. The company was founded in 1947 in Collingwood, Canada and used the red-brown clay that was found along the shores of Georgian Bay for its pieces.

These items were created using a unique, and trademarked, glazing process known as "retlowing" decorating. Two different liquid glazes, one light and one dark in colour, were applied by hand. When fired in the kiln the light glaze would run and this created streaking patterns against the dark glaze, resulting in every piece being different. This uniqueness of every piece also helped in its collectability.

The most popular and recognizable colour has always been the green-toned glaze, but many other colours have been produced including harvest gold, mocha, cobalt blue, pewter, red, brown etc. While the company produced a variety of items over the years including decorative bowls, vases and animal figures, as well as kitchen canisters and tea and coffee sets, it closed its doors in 2004. The last owner blamed increased competition from Asia, shrinking demand and an unstable tourism market in the wake of SARS as key factors for the closure.

Today both Blue Mountain Pottery and Avon products have large worldwide fan bases. The older and more unusual, or rare, pieces are quite collectible in both categories, but add in Christmas as a third group and you get this plate which would appeal to many different people for many different reasons. That said this is not a difficult piece to find, nor is it expensive to buy. In today's market one should be able to acquire it for around \$25.

I welcome inquiries about any objects and look forward to seeing and perhaps writing about them. Please forward a photo and a description to me through Stouffville Free Press or drop them off at Reid's Antiques, 6397 Main St. Stouffville during regular business hours or via Roberto.reidsantiques.com.

