

Don't Throw Out Those Christmas Catalogs – Yet

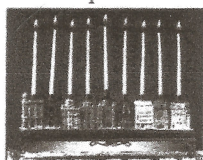
BY DIXIE TRAINER, NELLYSFOR, VA

With thanks to Joe Kopitz, Stephen Hendrickson, Pat Smith, and Seth Weine, all of New York City, whose fascination with the new and bizarre compels them to clip catalogs and send them to your faithful (and equally fascinated) correspondent. For free copies of any of the catalogs below, just call or go to the website listed.

This year, souvenir buildings light up, scale down, serve drinks, lie on the floor, play music, organize your books and challenge the mind. Collectors of the Real Thing in souvenir building world (that's us) will nonetheless find much to enjoy—or deplore—in this year's catalog roundup of little buildings and their go-withs. In fact, two of the best go-withs are FREE for the asking.

Light Up Buildings

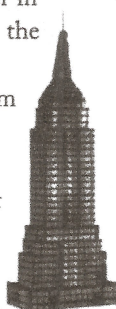
Fans of Souvenir Buildings That Light Up (a most excellent subset) can choose from a number of options. First is the Lost Synagogues of Europe Menorah that includes nine European synagogues destroyed during WWII. Designed by architectural students, the resin synagogues include Frankfurt, Dortmund, Dresden, Cologne, Kaiserslautern, Munich, Plauen, Hanover and Leipzig. 5-1/2" H x 15"W x 3"D. \$110.00 from www.artandartifact.com or 800-231-6766. Menorah candles are extra.



Fans of Williamsburg, VA will like the lighted porcelain houses by Lang and Wise. The finely detailed buildings

include a bulb and cord. The Governor's Palace is a hefty 13-1/2" high by 9-1/2" square; others include the Bruton Parish Church (18" H), the Shoemaker's shop, Christina Campbell's Tavern, and the Prentis Store. The last two are retired, so invest now for the future. Call 800-446-9240 or visit www.williamsburgmarketplace.com

However, this year's winner in the light-up department is the 23" high replica of the Empire State Building from Dept. 56 and available at the Fortunoff Christmas Store. Before Christmas, it was \$185. A smaller, and less expensive ESB from Dept. 56 seems to light up, and comes as a Christmas tree ornament for \$17.50. Available from 800-FORTUNOFF or www.fortunoff.com and www.gimbels.net



Scale Down

Charms and thimbles with souvenir buildings are all over the place this year. Oenophiles can personalize each stem glass of wine with a wine charm of landmark buildings from Big Ben to the Taj Mahal. Resin/silver and just \$14.95 from the SkyMall at 1-800-skyMall or www.skymall.com. Keyword: 56118A.



Charm bracelets and/or silver or gold building charms lurk in many catalogs. Bruton Parish Church (\$18) in Silver

is in the Williamsburg catalog. The Eiffel Tower, Big Ben and the Leaning Tower of Pisa are available in silver or gold from 888-442-7227 or www.treasurescatalog.com. The Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triumph and other Gallic icons are available in gold or silver from www.frenchinspirations.com

Those who like really little buildings will want the St. Basil's from Moscow pewter thimble that's just 1-1/8" High, and only \$9.95. It's from what must be souvenir building/thimble heaven at www.gimbels.net or 888-633-1463 (not THAT Gimbels, silly; Gimbels and Sons in Boothbay Harbor, ME). Whether you can use them for sewing is another matter.



Serve Drinks

For the cocktail set, a cocktail shaker disguised as a lighthouse harks back to Prohibition era, when even barware had to be disguised. The original Jazz Age design has been faithfully reproduced in polished aluminum, and is very handsome. The lighthouse is generic, but after a couple of martinis, who cares? www.wallstreetcreations.com

Wine lovers can indulge themselves in stemmed goblets using pewter souvenir buildings—presently the Eiffel Tower and the Statue of



Liberty—as the stems. Future additions will include the Leaning

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Tower of Pisa, Big Ben, St. Basil's Cathedral and the Petronas Towers. Available for \$89 apiece from 877-CHALICE or www.globalchalice.com.

Lie on the Floor

Would you like to stomp all over those French or pay homage to them? Either way, you will like an Eiffel Tower translated into a handmade 100% wool rug in sophisticated tones of gray, beige and black. Makes a striking entry rug or accent wherever souvenir buildings are displayed. About 5' x 8', \$225. from www.artandartifact.com.



Play Music

A handcrafted, wooden music box with a gaily painted St. Basil's Cathedral on top plays the romantic Lara's theme from Dr. Zhivago. 11" high and \$69.00 from 800-482-4179 or www.treasurescatalog.com



Organize Your Books

Greek and Roman temple fragments make good souvenir buildings and bookends. From Athens comes the Erectheum, with columns and



caryatids from the Porch of the Maidens as 14 1/2"H, faux stone resin bookends. \$45 for the pair from 888-870-8047 or www.acornonline.com.

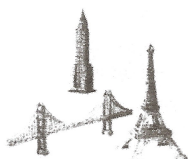
From Rome, the Temple of Vespasian, both the corner and the straight columns. The scaled, resin columns are 13-1/2"H and \$19.95 or 12"H and \$14.95 respectively, (or set of two for

\$29.95). Call 800-525-0733 or visit www.DesignToscano.com



Challenge The Mind

For those who like to build as well as to collect souvenir buildings, Flax has several mind boggling and attractive three-dimensional building puzzles. You can build your own Golden Gate Bridge or Eiffel Tower in about two hours from wooden kits, which come with the pieces, architectural blueprints, fact file, and sandpaper. NO tools or glue needed. The large Golden Gate is 60" long x 17" high, and goes for \$45. Big Eiffel tower is also \$45, smaller versions also available.



Flax also has a huge assortment of the popular 3D architectural puzzles made from sturdy foam board, that's printed with doors, windows, etc., so the finished product is astonishingly realistic.

This year's new entry is Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany, inspiration for Walt Disney's Fantasy World. Be forewarned, it has 836 pieces, is rated very difficult, and will take about 35 hours to construct. 15"H x 10-3/4"W x 22-1/8"D. \$29.95 from 888-352-9278 or www.flaxart.com



Freebies

And finally, for the true souvenir building aficionado, the best go-withs

of all: free catalogs of souvenir buildings. They're fun to look at, and they don't take up any room on your shelves. The first is from Landmark Creations, which specializes in Christmas tree ornaments, including both famous and obscure souvenir buildings. Great selections from the Leaning Tower of Pisa, to San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House. Tel: 800-588.3844, or www.Landmark-Creations.com

The second, titled "Architectural Truth" is from the House of Ascot, whose principal designer, Timothy Richards, creates stunningly detailed architectural miniatures using copper, stained glass, etched brass, and British gypsum plaster. (These are definitely architectural miniatures, a class above souvenir buildings). Prices range from \$89.95 for a single bookend version of Oscar Wilde's 1762 Georgian house, to the \$5,495 for the Temple of the Four Winds, the Palladian temple featured in last year's catalog roundup. The catalog also offers a large selection of handsome architectural posters. Available at 800-717-3105, or www.houseofascot.com

STOP PRESS

Last minute arrivals include a Cathedral Clock that bears some resemblance to Notre Dame in Paris (the Rose Window over the entrance is the clock face), and an exquisite Guillotine cigar cutter modeled after the famous apparatus of the French Revolution. This one works, and even includes a bucket to receive the cigar tips. This may or may not be a monument, but it is certainly bizarre. The clock is \$129; the guillotine is \$97.50, both are available from 800-866-0232 or www.noblecollection.com

