

MOSSY COMMENTS - #13

When we heard that Adela Meadows, an expert on French faience ware, was going to be the speaker at the 2001 National Convention, we decided that we'd ask her to identify some of our faience salts. As you probably know, French faience is tin-glazed pottery, and comes in many shapes and colors. The best known is Quimper ware, which is covered in several books and considered valuable by a number of collectors.

Since the Convention was in California, we didn't want to haul our salts that far so we made pictures of them and their marks and showed them to Adela. Not surprisingly, she couldn't be sure of everything when working just from pictures, but she did add some information to our files that we'd like to share.

One of our faience pottery salts is a goat with two baskets on its back. This is special to us because we got it from the Tompkins, when George was still alive. It had one horn missing, but Kay made a professional-looking repair to replace it. The goat and its mark are on the right. Adela said it was made by Keller and Guerin, from Saint Clement.

A second salt which Adela identified is a double decorated in 4 colors. Its mark belongs to George Martel, of Desvres, a town in the far north of France. She didn't give any estimate of its age.

A third double was marked "Dinan", the name of another French town. She identified this as pottery from Desvres, made to be sold in Dinan. A funny way to do business, by today's standards. Modern makers would put the selling town's name on the side or some other more conspicuous place to make a souvenir piece.

We have a blue and white pottery double that we bought 19 years ago and have been trying to identify ever since. One of our books shows a similar one that dates as 1745, but our salt is signed "Made in France" which clearly puts it after 1891. We showed it to Millicent Mali (another author on French faience) once, and she guessed Angoulene pottery. Adela couldn't identify it – the mark puzzled her.

Our final faience salt(s) are a man and lady, each holding two baskets. They are marked only with a number. Adela guessed they came from Desvres, but without a mark that can only be a guess. Several years earlier an antique dealer had guessed Rouen, because he had seen several marked vases with similar decorations. Maybe some day we'll meet someone who knows about their costumes and can pin down the town or maker for us. If you have any information, we'd love to hear about it.

We hope you went to the Convention and enjoyed it as much as we did. We also hope you have a few French faience dishes in your collection to show others how broad the world of open salts can be.

Ed Berg

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<p><i>Goat</i></p>	<p><i>Keller & Guerin Mark</i></p>
	
<p><i>George Martel</i></p>	<p><i>Martel Mark</i></p>
	
<p><i>Dinan (Desvres)</i></p>	<p><i>Dinan Mark</i></p>
	
<p><i>AR Double</i></p>	<p><i>AR Mark</i></p>
	
<p><i>Man & Lady Pair</i></p>	