

# Madame Boudelay's BRIDAL BOUTIQUE

Utilizing previous articles in AM and our sister publications as well as cutouts by Ann Vanture and various thrift-store finds, Rhea Avery created a lovely bridal boutique.

**M**adame Boudelay's Bridal Boutique is my \$15 treasure. I found the Greenleaf Tennyson kit at a thrift store. When I got it home my husband looked it up on the Internet and discovered that it was selling for \$265 because it was a discontinued kit. Score! (Greenleaf has since come out with a laser-cut version.)

My husband was really impressed with our bargain and offered to build it for me. Assembling houses is not something I enjoy, so I was happy to have him do it. He actually likes reading instructions and following directions. He did a beautiful job and even made a turntable for it.

I had always loved the bridal articles in Ashdown's various publications, so I decided to turn this house into a Victorian bridal salon. I filled it with wedding and trousseau items and decorated it with feminine pastels. It's my favorite dollhouse.



## Rhea's sources

Much of what I made for this house was found in *American Miniaturist* and its sister publications. I don't have room to store complete magazines, so I cut out the articles that I am most interested in and keep them in files. I find it very helpful to have all the related pages together in one place. Here are some of the articles that were useful to me for bridal items and for jewelry:

- Meet the maker – Harriet Farmer's trunk (AM)
- Bridal Galleries – gowns – Terri Davis, Randy Fenoli (AM)
- Victorian Wreath Bridal Shower – Laurie Sisson's Cutouts (Dollhouse Miniatures)
- Gowns and wedding items (Dollhouse Miniatures, June 2003)
- Honoring the Wedding Day – JoannSwanson's trunk and gown (Dollhouse Miniatures, June 2000)
- English Rose – White Cottage Miniatures trunk (Dolls House World)
- Dripping with Precious Gems – Zoe Manley's jewelry (AM)
- A Girls Best Friend – Pamela Turner's jewelry (Dolls House World, May 2002)

I also looked at single pictures of gowns that I had cut out and glued on paper. Articles on shops gave me some display ideas, but those were just pictures of shelves and cabinets.

**Left and right:** The Greenleaf Tennyson was purchased at a garage sale and transformed into a lovely

**The part I love is finding bargains and turning castoffs into something beautiful. At least fifty percent of my miniatures come from thrift stores and garage sales, and I make everything I can. I hope the hints I share will help during these financially difficult times.**



I have been doing miniatures for twenty-five years, and the part I love is finding bargains and turning castoffs into something beautiful. At least fifty percent of my miniatures come from thrift stores and garage sales, and I make everything I can. I hope the hints I share will help everyone enjoy their hobby more during these financially difficult times.

A few months ago I discovered Ann Vanture's beautiful paper minis through her ads in *American Miniaturist*. I have always liked cut-



outs, but sometimes the lids don't fit the boxes, etc. Hers are very high quality, printed on good paper with beautiful ink, and everything fits perfectly. They are really fun to assemble, and are a wonderful addition to any mini scene.

I retired five years ago from a lifetime working as a Certified Medical Assistant but still can't find enough time for minis. My last ten and a half years were spent with a wonderful family practitioner at a local area clinic, and I was able to share my love of miniatures with my patients and co-workers. I put up scenes in a cubby above my desk, and soon my fellow workers and

patients began bringing me mini gifts. The scenes I used them in became even more special and were reminders of wonderful people. I got through a lot of stressful days by thinking about the project I would work on when I got home. At my retirement party my office manager said that no matter how terrible a day she was having, she knew she could always walk past my desk and smile.

My favorite room in the

dollhouse is the bridal salon. On the walls, I used fabric ironed on to heavy Pellon interfacing. This stiffens it

and keeps glue from leaking through. These were purchased at craft stores with forty- and fifty-percent-off coupons.

**The lavender carpet was a child's jacket I found at Goodwill. That was \$2.99 versus \$14.99 for a small piece of dollhouse carpet.**

That's much cheaper than paying \$3 a sheet for wallpaper, and your choices are unlimited. The lavender carpet was a child's jacket I found at Goodwill. That was \$2.99 versus \$14.99 for a small piece of dollhouse carpet.



**Above:** What Rhea calls, simply, The Blue Room.

**Left:** Linens for the shelves, made from scraps of fabric and lace.

**Right:** The attic, "where all the work gets done," with a lovely dress on display.





The wedding trunk was \$0.99 at a thrift store. I painted it, lined it with scrapbook paper, and trimmed it with gold cardstock cut from Christmas cards. The silver bench and the wedding dress were both Christmas ornaments purchased at a thrift store and garage sale.

I made the other wedding gowns and nightgowns from scraps of fabric and lace—some antique—from thrift stores and fabric stores. Linens in the wedding trunk are just scraps of the same, tied with ribbon or lace. I loved that

part, as you get to be creative. Necklaces and perfume bottles are beads. I cut mini labels from ads to make them more realistic.

The beautiful boxes in the foreground and trunk are Ann Vanture's, as is the fashion book; the purses are from Hobby Builders.

The hat room is also furnished with thrift store and garage sale finds. The sofa was a garage sale item that I recovered. I made the chair from a kit. The mannequin is from a thrift store, and the purses and most of the room's hats are from Hobby Build-

**Above:** Madame Boudelay's bridal boutique, Rhea's favorite room in the entire dollhouse.

**Right:** The hat room, too, is filled to the brim (pun intended) with numerous thrift-store finds.

ers. Hatpins are beads glued onto straight pins. The carpet is upholstery fabric from a garage sale. The cats in the room are thrift-store finds. The pictures on the wall are from a needlework catalog, and the frames were made with a mini miter box.

The pink bag and boxes and the hat book are Ann Vanture's creations.

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The entryway is filled with jewelry inspired by articles in the sister publication *Dolls House World*. I bought the cameo brooch, the filigree necklace, and two of the bracelets at a miniature show, and two necklaces are toe rings from an earring store. The tiny earrings are from thrift stores and garage sales. Everything else is made from jewelry findings,

toenail charms, and rhinestones. Really fun! Again, you get to be creative.

The jewelry case and cash register are from Hobby Builders. The cupboard is from The Dollar Tree, which is a great source for miniatures. The carpet is a child's coat and the wallpaper is fabric, which was 10 cents at a garage sale. The chair by the door is a painted garage-sale buy. The hat is a lapel pin from a thrift

**Above:** What Rhea calls simply, The Blue Room.

store. (Always check the jewelry displays. Many wonderful minis started out as jewelry.) The basket of cloth cats is from a garage sale, and the fashion book is Ann Vanture's.

The shelves and cases in the blue room are from Hobby Builders, as are the mini shoes, gloves, and fans. Shoeboxes are cutouts from *Dollhouse Miniatures*. I made the camisoles in the case, and the linens on the shelves are just more scraps tied with trim. Some of the perfume



**Above:** Jewelry inspired from *Dolls House World* articles fills the entryway.

**Right:** Numerous Ann Vantures Miniatures that Rhea used. See page 79 for cutouts of your own.

bottles are mine; some are Ann's. Hers come with cute labels. Two canisters on the shelf are made from the moisture absorber in vitamin bottles. These can be painted or covered with paper or mini food labels. The yellow boot on the counter was a stickpin. The carpet is fleece and the wallpaper was a child's dress.

## Bridal boutique

The sewing machines all came from garage sales and were a dollar each. The chairs were thrift-store purchases. The tables were all made from scraps saved from kits. The dress forms and one of the shelves are from Hobby Builders. Some of the sewing items are theirs, some are from Ann Vanture's sewing kits, and others I have made or collected through the years. One of the shelves is a Michael's cupboard, which they sell for 99 cents. I bashed it and made extra compartments with wood scraps. I made the pincushion and pattern pieces. The bolts of fabric are scraps wrapped around cardboard.

I have to admit that most of



The attic is where all the work gets done. It was a little dark, so I used white paint and a sunny yellow. The paper on the wall and shelves was made by putting fabrics on my copying machine. I used the blank side of unwanted wallpaper so it was thick enough to glue.

the credit goes to the wonderful readers who have submitted articles about their own projects and made me want to make the same things. Before I started reading miniature magazines, I thought no one would ever need more than one dollhouse. We just finished our tenth. 