

Thimble Collectors Club Thimbles

Vale Fine China <--> Vohenstrauss Porzellan

Thimble Collectors Club

Lily Pond Thimble



VALE FINE CHINA Wales

A delightful water-color painting of a lily pond, complete with lily pads, frogs and cattails, encircles this distinctive thimble from Vale Fine China.

Located in the quiet Welsh countryside of the Vale of Glamorgan, not far from the capital city of Cardiff, this family-run porcelain house draws inspiration for many of its unusual decorative motifs from its beautiful natural surroundings. Owners Bob and Frances Clarke personally oversee the production of Vale's delicate bone china figurines, gift items, collector plates and thimbles. The superb decorations of Vale Fine China are usually commissioned from gifted area artists. The Clarks firmly believe that the artistic diversity they seek is best achieved from local artists working in their own studios.

Vale's use of watercolor paintings is a relatively new venture, and the exquisite colors and soft effect beautifully complement the crisp whiteness of the bone china. A hand-applied band of gold adds a luxurious finishing touch to the "Lily Pond Thimble," available exclusively from The Thimble Collectors Club.

Mallards

VALE FINE CHINA, Wales

The mallard is a familiar sight on our still inland waters. From autumn through to spring, the drake is a handsome bird with a glorious green head, white collar and tail feathers and a dark brown breast. Then he moults, losing his bright colours, and for a few months wears his 'eclipse' dress, in which he resembles his paler brown wife and child – though distinguished from them by his yellow bill. All have an eye-catching blue 'stripe' of feathers on their wings. Mallards are gregarious birds, and are often seen in large groups, dabbling for food on and near the surface of the water. They rarely dive, but cheerfully and efficiently upend themselves for a succulent snack spotted a few inches below them. To witness a whole flock springing together straight out of the water and hurtling powerfully away, wings whirring, is a striking experience.

Vale Fine China is a young company which could truly be described as a cottage industry. Based in the Vale of Glamorgan, in south Wales, they employ local craftsmen in the production of their high-quality bone china, and train them in the great traditions of porcelain modelling and painting.

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Orchids

VALE FINE CHINA, Wales

Orchids are among the most exotic of plants, their delicate, speckled flowers bringing the warmth of the tropics to even the dullest English winter day. Incredibly, there are 20,000 species in the family, ranging from the native British orchid which can still be found growing wild in our countryside to the most rarefied prima donnas of the greenhouse. Although half their number grow on the ground, the other half are epiphytic – that is, they live on rocks and the branches of trees, taking their nourishment from air and rainwater. Perhaps this ethereal lifestyle is one of the reasons they hold such fascination for us.

Jane Pickering, who painted these fragile blooms, is herself a keen gardener, and her love of flowers is evidenced in her detailed work, which is to be found illustrating many books.

Vale Fine China are a young company which could truly be described as a cottage industry. Based in South Wales, they employ mainly local craftsmen in the manufacture of their high-quality bone china ware, although their chief modeller trained in the Italian porcelain industry. Their collaboration with Jane Pickering has produced a collector's thimble which typifies their fine products.

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Orchids Thimble



VALE FINE CHINA - England

A traditional token of affection, delicately-colored orchids gently encircle this brilliant, white bone china thimble from one of Wales' most distinguished porcelain houses.

Located in the quiet Welsh countryside of the Vale of Glamorgan, this family run porcelain house draws inspiration for many of its decorative motifs from its beautiful natural surroundings. Owners Bob and Frances Clarke personally oversee the production of Vale's delicate bone china figurines, gift items, collector plates and thimbles. The superb decorations of Vale Fine China are usually commissioned from gifted area artisans. The Clarks believe that the artistic diversity they seek is best achieved by local artists working in their own studios.

The elegant "Orchids" design on this fine bone china thimble exemplifies Vale's dedication to quality. A gleaming band of gold further embellishes this thimble available exclusively from the Thimble Collectors Club.

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Pansies

VALE FINE CHINA, Wales

The common name of this delightful little flower, the pansy, comes from the French, *pensée*, a thought. Country folk have used many other names for this same flower – heart's ease, butterfly flower, kiss-me-quick, kiss behind-the-garden-gate, love-in idleness, three faces under one hood – each as pretty and fanciful as the last. It was juice from a wild pansy that Oberon took in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, spreading it on the eyelids of the sleeping Titania, to make her 'doat upon' the first live creature she would see when she woke, as a punishment for crossing him. The spell worked, and the fairy queen fell in love with the weaver, Bottom, who was wearing a donkey's head.

Vale Fine China, which has produced this attractive thimble for our club, is a young company, founded in 1986 in the Vale of Glamorgan, in south Wales. Vale describes itself as a cottage industry, employing mainly local craftspeople and training them in the great traditions of porcelain modelling and painting. It specialises in the production of collector's items – small numbers of fine-quality wares such as bone china figurines, cottages, boxes and thimbles.

Thimble Collectors Club

Piggies

VALE FINE CHINA, Wales

In this little scene of farmyard bliss, the proud mother pig seems to be smiling affectionately as she surveys her litter of healthy piglets. Her natural maternal indulgence allows her to turn a blind eye to the squealing and squabbling antics of all eight youngsters. A fat little pink pig, rooting through the grass and earth, is one of the delightful sights and sounds of a happy farmyard.

Nowadays, we have a number of different breeds of domestic pigs with such wonderfully evocative names as Gloucester Old Spot, Landrace, Saddleback and Large White. All are descended from the wild boar – an animal that was once common over Europe and Asia. Wild pigs used to roam the streets of London in centuries gone by – better, perhaps, that they should remain in a country meadow, like this happy group!

Artist Lawrence Taylor, originally from County Durham, has collaborated with Vale Fine China to produce this endearing thimble, exclusively for the Thimble Collectors Club. Formed in 1986, Vale Fine China is proud to describe itself as a cottage industry. It specialises in producing collectors' items – from limited numbers of hand-painted, high-quality bone china figurines and cottages, to charming thimbles such as this.

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Pink Roses

VALE FINE CHINA, Wales

A pair of delicious roses in prettiest pink adorns this charming thimble. The British have always had a special affection for their roses, and blooms of every hue from purest white, creamy ivories and pinks, sunny yellows and mellow apricots, to fiery red and dark, rich crimson are lovingly tended across the country, whether they are tumbling over a rustic cottage door or gracing the splendid gardens of a stately home. Whether they are loved more for their appearance or for their sweet fragrance cannot be judged, but one thing is certain – their hardiness and tolerance help roses to flower throughout the unpredictable northern summer and long into autumn. Lucky gardeners in the sheltered south can sometimes even pick a rose on Christmas Day!

Vale Fine China has produced this delicate thimble for our Club. This company, founded in 1986 near the South Wales coast, is proud to describe itself as a cottage industry. Its hand-picked workforce have been trained in the great traditions of porcelain modelling and painting, and the company specialises in the production of collector's items – small numbers of beautifully hand-painted, high-quality bone china figurines, cottages and small gift items; and delightful thimbles such as this.

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Cornfield VICTORIA, England

Founded by a former Wedgwood craftsman, Glyn Jones, Victoria make their fine bone china in Fenton, once a separate town, but now a district of Stoke-on-Trent, the acknowledged home of the world's finest bone china. Over the years, Victoria have established a high reputation as makers of delicate bone china pieces and lifelike animal sculptures. Their skilful craftsmen were the natural choice to reproduce this charming study of a cornfield by Liverpool-born artist Jennifer Eachus, who was awarded the prestigious Benson & Hedges Gold Award in 1982.

This delightful miniature masterpiece of singular charm and wit takes you into a golden cornfield on a balmy summer's day. A harvest mouse has paused momentarily in his playful activities to observe you. You can feel his snout quiver. Nothing to fear here, he decides and continues his gymnastic feats among the swaying stalks of corn. This is truly an outstanding example of the art of the thimble which will enhance your collection.

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Strawberries Thimble



VALE FINE CHINA - Wales

A bright early summer morning, the song of the skylark carried on the breeze, and a fresh batch of strawberries are ripening on the vine. In the tradition of Britain's finest porcelain houses, Vale Fine China brings us this delicate thimble, colorfully decorated with ripe, red berries.

Operating in the serene Welsh countryside of South Glamorgan, owners Bob and Frances Clarke take great pride in the delicate bone china figurines, collector plates, and thimbles they produce. With the help of local artists working mainly in their homes, the Clarkes take cues from the beautiful natural surroundings of the area in choosing their designs. One of the only manufacturers to use watercolor paintings for their designs, Vale has become world-renowned for the uniquely brilliant colors of their wares.

These luscious strawberries are a perfect complement to the creamy whiteness of the bone china, and each thimble is finished with a hand-applied gold band. The "Strawberries" thimble, a fine example of British craftsmanship, is available exclusively from the Thimble Collectors Club.

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Wheat Field Thimble



VICTORIA CHINA - England

Golden shafts of wheat bending gracefully under a bright blue sky provide an arresting decorative theme for this fine English bone china thimble from Victoria. Liverpool-born artist, Jennifer Eachus, created the original design — including a splash of color in the deep red field poppy and a dash of whimsy in the little field mouse.

Founded in the town of Fenton by Glyn Jones, a former craftsman at the renowned house of Wedgwood, Victoria's skilled staff is the beneficiary of centuries of ceramic-making tradition. For Fenton, now a part of Stoke-on-Trent, is in the historic cluster of villages in England's famed Staffordshire district — long a center of pottery and porcelain-making.

It was the English who developed the formula for bone china which still sets the standard for quality today, and over the years Victoria has established an enviable reputation for its outstanding fine bone china pieces. Thus, this highly respected firm was uniquely qualified to adapt and reproduce this Eachus scene on a thimble. Available exclusively from The Thimble Collectors Club, "Wheat Field" combines the beauty of fine bone china with the charm of an imaginative decorative motif.

Thimble Collectors Club

Family Picnic VICTORIA CHINA, England

In the dappled sunlight of a softly wooded glade, an elegant Victorian gathering celebrates a special occasion with a family picnic. Crisp linen tablecloths are laid on the ground and the creaking wicker baskets are set down, ready to reveal their bounty of tasty pies, succulent roast chicken, jewel-coloured jellies and gingerbread. Before the picnickers begin their feasting, they sit and listen to a favourite poem. The reader's clear voice is echoed gently by the whispering leaves, rustling in the midday breeze. Then, their appetites whetted by her words, the listeners are ready to tuck into the waiting feast, until, satisfied, they can lie back on the cool ground and revel in the beauty of nature's open-air refectory.

This charming scene has been painted by Adam Hood, a young artist whose love and knowledge of the countryside has been heightened by a year spent working on an important conservation project. Victoria China has faithfully captured his interpretation of the family picnic for ever on this delicate thimble, demonstrating once again its skill as a maker of fine bone china pieces. The company was founded by Gwyn Jones, a Wedgwood trained craftsman, and is based in Fenton, a district of Stoke-on-Trent.

Thimble Collectors Club

Good Night VICTORIA, England

Stoke-on-Trent is the acknowledged home of the world's finest bone china. This famous city has developed from five North Staffordshire towns that grew up in an area rich in coal and clay.

Victoria make their fine bone china in Fenton, once a separate town, but now a district of Stoke. Founded by a former Wedgwood craftsman, Victoria made their reputation with their delicate bone china pieces and lifelike animal sculptures.

For the Thimble Collectors Club, Victoria chose an endearing piece of art by English artist Linda Worrall and fused its pastel colours into their gleaming bone china. The result is a charming, quality thimble for your collection.

Thimble Collectors Club

Songbird

VISTA ALEGRE, Portugal

It is often forgotten how great a debt modern Europe owes to Portugal. For it was the brave Portuguese seamen of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries who first sailed around Africa to the East to discover the treasures of China. Amongst those treasures was the secret of making porcelain, a secret that took European craftsmen centuries to perfect. Thus for many years the only fine porcelain to reach Europe came from Portuguese traders.

A few pieces still exist that prove that porcelain was made in Lisbon in the 1730's. However it was not until 1824 that Jose Ferreira Pinto Basto founded Portugal's first porcelain factory in the grounds of the Vista Alegre Ermida farm, close to a baroque style chapel. He was a truly enlightened man for his time whose motto "Man above profit" was borne out by his care for his workers, including the building of houses, schools and a theatre.

The workers responded by developing the talent to produce some truly exquisite ceramic ware. In the Vista Alegre museum you can see how craftsmanship and fashion has evolved over the past 160 years. Here you have a thimble that started out as the rich clay of Portugal and has been transformed into a miniature piece of art by craftsmen imbued with the tradition that is Portuguese porcelain.

Thimble Collectors Club

Bird Thimble



VISTA ALEGRE PORCELAIN - Portugal

The decorative richness that characterizes Portuguese art is evident in this colorful thimble. A celebration of the glories of Nature, it shows a golden-hued bird perched on a flowering branch.

Appropriately, the maker is Vista Alegre, meaning "delightful scene." The firm was founded in 1824 under the name of Ferreiro Pinto & Filhos. It draws on native artisans and international artists to create works of exceptional beauty and quality.

Vista Alegre porcelain uses the fine white clay found in the Aveiro region of northwestern Portugal. The firm's proud "crown" hallmark suggests its pre-eminence as the largest porcelain maker on the Iberian Peninsula. Heads of state visiting Portugal are typically presented with state gifts of this fine porcelain. Vista Alegre has also been collected by the crowned heads of Europe and appears in museums throughout the world.

Thimble Collectors Club

Flamingoes

VISTA ALEGRE, Portugal

Truly flamingoes are among the most exotic and beautiful members of the feathered kingdom. With their long, slender legs and delicate pink plumage they are a graceful sight as they make their watery parade, searching for shellfish in the lake shallows, and when they rise en masse into the air they become a glorious, rosy, wheeling cloud - a veritable sunset on wings.

Robert Morton started painting natural history scenes when he was only five years old, and his interest in the subject has never abated. Through his exhibitions he has gained wide recognition as a watercolour artist with a detailed knowledge of the birds and animals he depicts.

Vista Alegre, which has so accurately reproduced Robert Morton's delightful work, was founded in 1824 by Jose Ferreira Pinto Basto, whose family still control it today. Based in the small village of Vista Alegre (which means "pleasant view") in the district of Ilhavo some fifty miles south of Oporto, the factory originally produced glass and earthenware products. However, the founder's dearest wish was to make fine china ware, and when deposits of china clay were discovered in Portugal in 1834 the factory turned to manufacturing the exquisite porcelain items for which it is still famous today.

Thimble Collectors Club

Flamingos



VISTA ALEGRE PORCELAIN - Portugal

Graceful and exotic, the beautiful flamingo is captured forever in subtle shades of rosy-white and grey on this lovely thimble.

Vista Alegre, whose name means "Delightful Scene", is the creator of this porcelain work of art. The firm, founded in 1824 under the name of Ferreiro Pinto & Filhos, draws on native artisans and international artists to create works of exceptional beauty and quality. The porcelain is made from the fine white clay found in the Aveiro region of northwestern Portugal. Vista Alegre fine porcelain giftware has been presented to visiting Heads of State in Portugal, collected by the crowned heads of Europe and has appeared in museums around the world.

The pride and expertise that has gained Vista Alegre the admiration and respect of collectors worldwide, is evident in this extraordinary thimble, available exclusively from The Thimble Collectors Club.

Thimble Collectors Club

Doves

VOHENSTRAUSS, West Germany

The dove has long occupied a special place in our mythology. Symbol of peace and gentleness, its image occurs again and again in art and literature. Alfred, Lord Tennyson, in his poem *The Princess*, speaks of 'The moan of doves in immemorial elms, And the murmuring of innumerable bees'. How surely these two lines conjure up the golden English summer of tradition, where white doves flutter from the dovecote of a mellowed manor and bees plunder the flowers of a high-walled garden!

This delicate thimble typifies the fine ware produced by Vohenstrauss, a porcelain house which takes its name from the East Bavarian town in which it is situated, close to the Czechoslovak border. The town adopted as its emblem the mighty sixteenth-century Friedrichsburg castle - which also features as the hallmark of Vohenstrauss porcelain.

The factory was founded in 1901 by Johann Seltmann, and by 1914 employed more than five hundred workers, specialising in decorative items and fine-quality dinnerware. Today, Vohenstrauss is still growing and its porcelain is as sought after overseas as in its native country.

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Doves Thimble



VOHENSTRAUSS PORZELLAN · Bavaria, West Germany

Graceful doves, as snowy white as the clouds in the pale blue sky, provide a delicate decorative motif for this fine porcelain thimble from Vohenstrauss.

Johann Seltmann founded his porcelain house in the eastern Bavarian town of Vohenstrauss in 1901. He chose the town's official symbol - historic Friedrichsburg Castle - as his hallmark. The firm specialized in producing coffee and tea services of the pure white, translucent porcelain for which this region of Germany is famous. In little more than a decade, the company had expanded to employ 500 craftsmen. After recovering from the setbacks of the two World Wars, Vohenstrauss has continued to grow and prosper, specializing in high-quality dinnerware and gift items.

The delightful "Doves Thimble" - crafted of beautiful Bavarian porcelain and finished with luxurious accents of hand-painted gold, is available exclusively from The Thimble Collectors Club.

Thimble Collectors Club

Golden Leaves

VOHENSTRAUSS, West Germany

Close to the Czechoslovakian border in eastern Bavaria is the small town of Vohenstrauss. In this historic part of Germany, Johann Seltmann founded the porcelain house which bears the town's name at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Despite the setbacks of two World Wars, Vohenstrauss has steadily grown, specializing in good quality dinnerware and beautiful gift items.

The thimble selected by Vohenstrauss for the Club's members is delightful. Twenty four carat gold is used to form an attractive leaf design on both sides of the thimble. Under the glaze there is a delicate scalloped relief and inside the thimble is the signature of Johann Seltmann, father of this fine old Bavarian porcelain house.

Thimble Collectors Club

Golden Leaves Thimble



VOHENSTRAUSS PORZELLAIN - W. Germany

Close to the Czechoslovakian border in eastern Bavaria is the small town of Vohenstrauss. In this historic part of Germany, Johann Seltmann founded the porcelain house which bears the town's name at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Despite the setbacks of two World Wars, Vohenstrauss has steadily grown, specializing in good quality dinnerware and beautiful gift items.

The thimble selected by Vohenstrauss for the Club's members is delightful. 24 kt gold is used to form an attractive leaf design on both sides of the thimble. Under the glaze there is a delicate scalloped relief and inside the thimble is the signature of Johann Seltmann, father of this fine old Bavarian porcelain house.