

A USEFUL AND DECORATIVE HOME ACCESSORY:  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS

Earl James Martin

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## Preface

I dedicate this work to the memory of Ernest Sohn. I truly valued my few visits with this extraordinary gentleman. I also wish to thank his gracious wife Grete Sohn for all of her help.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my advisor Jennifer Goldsborough. Without her guidance, suggestions and careful editing this work could not have been produced. I thank her for encouraging my passion for ceramics and the rituals of dining and entertaining in her classes that I have been lucky enough to be a part of.

I also wish to thank the New York Public Library and its dedicated staff. Without the resources of this great institution and its accommodation of all those seeking knowledge I would not have been able to produce this historical account.

Finally I wish to thank all of my family and friends who have been invaluable in encouraging me and supporting me through the years of my education, research and writing. Without you all this could not have happened.

## Introduction

World War II was the pivot around which the twentieth century turned. Not only did it result in millions of lives lost and the redrawing of many national borders, but it created or hastened major changes in transportation, manufacturing, technology, general prosperity, customs, and countless other aspects of life. The art world has long been aware of the changes wrought by the numerous painters, architects, and sculptors who fled Europe in advance of the Nazi juggernaut, but less attention has been paid to the decorative arts designers who were part of this exodus and who inspired and implemented many of the enormous changes in consumer goods and life-styles.

Ernest Sohn fled the Nazi persecutions of his native Germany in 1936, coming to New York like so many other émigrés. With luck and determination Sohn quickly established a career and reputation within the gift industry. His unique design approach and focus on creating objects that were always utilitarian as well as decorative helped him become a leader in the field and a designer whose name sold products across the country. Sohn was able to create designs that bridged the gap between the most modern and avant-garde and the more conventional and historically based. He designed objects that fit in especially well with changes in American home life and entertaining in the post-war period. Ernest Sohn's design style was well suited to the exuberance and expansiveness of America after World War II.

The population of the United States in the twentieth century experienced a huge growth in prosperity. This was especially true for the expanding middle class that grew to prominence in the middle of the century. Part of this extraordinary prosperity was expressed in an ever greater quantity of material goods which soon filled the homes of

most Americans. Industry across the country and around the world worked to produce goods like cars, appliances and furniture to fill the needs and wants of middle-class Americans. One industry that rose to prominence in this century by appealing to the affluence and desires of Americans was the gift industry.

The idea of a shop or department within a major retail store dedicated to gifts, novelties and items that might be useful, but were also decorative, was new at the beginning of the twentieth century. However, gift shops and gift departments soon became mainstays of American life. Supplying these retail outlets was an industry that grew extraordinarily over the course of the century. Gift wholesalers, centered in cities like New York and Chicago, worked with manufacturers to create items to appeal to a fashion-conscious public with disposable income to spend. The industry used the new field of industrial design to help create new objects and novelties to sell to the American public. Countless items that had never before been imagined were given form and decoration that made them seem like necessities.

Soon after the gift industry began employing industrial designers to create new and interesting objects, the industry began to emphasize the fact that objects were artistically designed in their retailing. The names and reputations of designers became employed as brands and tools for sales. One name that became very prominent in the gift industry from the late 1930s through the late 1970s was that of Ernest Sohn.

This study of Sohn's life and work is divided into three major sections. The first will consider Ernest Sohn's youth and his first introduction to the gift industry, as well as his career before establishing his own business in 1951. This first section will also consider the history and structure of the gift industry itself.

The second section will explore Sohn's work and success in the 1950s upon the founding of his own business. During this period Sohn created objects that were primarily modern and utilitarian but softened by design touches that made them accessible to the tastes of a large middle-class market.

The third section will consider Sohn's design work in the 1960s and 1970s when he often incorporated more decorative effects and references to historical sources. This section will also discuss the ever-expanding gift industry which became much more of a big business during the period.

This thesis will provide a critical history and examination of the work of an important American commercial designer, Ernest Sohn. I also hope this study will add to the cultural and historical understanding of American decorative arts in the post-World War II period and will contribute to the understanding and expansion of post-war American cultural history.

## Chapter 1

Ernest Sohn, the first child of Siegfried and Francesca (Bender) Sohn, was born on October 28, 1913.<sup>1</sup> He was born near Antwerp where his father was the director of a branch for a German grain company. The family remained in Belgium through the First World War. After the war the Sohn family returned to their native Germany, settling near Mannheim in the southeast Palatinate region. The remainder of Ernest Sohn's youth during the turbulent inter-war period was spent in the Mannheim area.

Ernest Sohn grew up within an educated and well-to-do upper-middle class German Jewish family. Sohn counted amongst his ancestors a math professor at the royal house of Wurttemberg. The family was not particularly religious, with only his mother attending synagogue on important holidays. Sohn's father was a successful businessman working mostly in the grain industry as a commodity trader. Sohn's mother did not work and had the assistance of a live-in maid to keep the house and attend to her three boys. The family also enjoyed the cultural life of Mannheim, visiting museums and having regular subscriptions to the opera and orchestra.

In this comfortable environment Ernest Sohn enjoyed a happy childhood. In school he showed an early and strong talent in the visual arts, in particular drawing and painting. Sohn's mother, who was an amateur painter herself, encouraged this talent. Sohn recalled being left to his own devices in art classes since his work was often as good as the instructor's. In his later teens Sohn began doing portraiture and recalled being paid the equivalent of \$100 by a family for a portrait of their young girl who had recently died.

After graduating from high school Ernest Sohn enrolled in college in the neighboring town of Karlsruhe.<sup>2</sup> At the Karlsruher Technische Hochschule, or Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Sohn began studies in architecture.<sup>3</sup> The practical, technical training he was to receive here fit well with his father's expectations that he gain a useful education that would prepare him to work and support himself. It also allowed Sohn to integrate his love for and skill in art and drawing within his studies and anticipated future career. However, this education was cut short by the removal of all non-Aryan students from the school in 1933 after the National Socialists lead by Adolf Hitler gained control of the German government.

The years before Ernest Sohn emigrated to the United States were increasingly difficult for this young man and his family due to Nazi persecutions. Sohn continued to paint and found work as a clerk at a shipping company. Nazi officials removed Ernest Sohn's family from their home, throwing their belongings down from their third floor apartment. Sohn was excluded from the social club and gymnasium where he first met his future wife Grete on grounds that he was a non-Aryan. The Sohn family actively looked for ways to escape this increasingly dangerous environment. For Ernest Sohn this meant traveling across the Atlantic Ocean to New York City in 1936.

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<sup>1</sup> The information in this section was recorded in interviews by the author with Ernest Sohn on October 18 and November 21, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on Karlsruhe see the online encyclopedia Wikipedia's entry on the subject: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karlsruhe>

<sup>3</sup> The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology is now the University of Karlsruhe (Universität Karlsruhe). Information about the university was taken from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University\\_of\\_Karlsruhe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Karlsruhe).

The first third of the twentieth century was also the initial period of development of the American gift industry of which Ernest Sohn was to become a leader.<sup>4</sup> The idea of a store or a department within a store devoted to gifts was one that grew to significance around the turn of the twentieth century. In a 1967 article the trade journal *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* acknowledged that the history of gift giving was as old as humanity itself, but emphasized that “Still, the gift and decorative accessories industry, as an *industry*, is a creation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.”<sup>5</sup> The first gift stores grew out of the stationery trade and china and glass trade.<sup>6</sup> Stationery stores began to sell small gift items and novelties, known as fancies. These gift items came to dominate the offerings of the stores as they evolved into this new breed of retail establishments. Paper goods, especially greeting cards, which also flowered in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, became a large part of the offerings of most gift shops as they evolved. China and glass manufacturers often made the novelties and other small offerings of the early gift industry as a supplement to their tablewares and other lines.

It was not until the time of World War I that the gift industry reached early maturity. One marker that the industry had reached a critical mass was the founding of

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<sup>4</sup>This section is based primarily accounts of the history of the industry found in the trade journal *Gift and Art Buyer* (later *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*): Mary Ryan, “Looking Back Over Twenty Years,” *Gift and Art Buyer* 33, no. 4 (April 1937): 35-36, 130; Charles Brownlow, “Up Through the Years with the Retailer,” *Gift and Art Buyer* 33, no. 4 (April 1937): 37-38; *Gift and Art Buyer*, ed., “Our Market Places: Gift Shows and Permanent Displays,” 33, no. 4 (April 1937): 61-63, 126, 130; Cheney Archer, “It’s a Gift! An Industry is Born,” *Gift and Art Buyer*, 38, no. 10 (October 1942): 25-26, 126; *Gift and Art Buyer*, “The Story of the *Gift and Art Buyer*,” 38, no. 10 (October 1942): 51-53; *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Histories of the Gift Shows and Exhibit Buildings,” 53, no. 5 (May 1957): 69, 182-191; *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, “A Great Industry and How It Grew,” 63, no. 5 (May 1967): 98-108.

<sup>5</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, “A Great Industry and How It Grew,” 63, no. 5 (May 1967): 99.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the china and glass trade in the United States in this period see, Charles L. Venable, ed., *China and Glass in America, 1880-1980: From Tabletop to TV Tray*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000.) Of particular interest is Chapter 4, “From Warehouse to Your House: Tableware Marketing,” 285-323.

the trade journal *Gift and Art Shop* in 1917.<sup>7</sup> Geyer Publications had founded the journal *Geyer's Stationer* in 1877. *Geyer's Stationer* included a section each month on “fancy goods” and by 1917 the demand for this kind of information was so great that Geyer founded a separate magazine for this market.<sup>8</sup>

The structure of the gift industry also crystallized in this period.<sup>9</sup> Much of the trade was concentrated in New York, which had long been the leading American center for imports from Europe and other areas. Wholesalers or manufacturers' representatives dominated the trade. These “gift houses” would represent or wholesale the products of several manufacturers. Manufacturers' representatives usually employed a group of traveling salesmen.<sup>10</sup> Each salesman would be assigned specific areas of the country and would regularly call on contacts at department stores and gift shops, both developing a relationship and creating business for his “house.” In addition to its cadre of salesmen, manufacturers' representatives almost always maintained at least one permanent wholesale showroom. Early gift houses usually had their main showrooms in eastern cities with the greatest number concentrated in New York. With the opening of the Merchandise Mart in Chicago in 1931 this city joined New York as a major center for the gift trade with gift wholesalers concentrated on the building's fifteenth floor.<sup>11</sup> Buyers, especially those from large and influential retailers like Marshall Field and Company in

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<sup>7</sup> The *Gift and Art Shop* was renamed *Gift and Art Buyer* in 1934 and then *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* in 1963 and continues to chronicle the trade under that title to the present.

<sup>8</sup> This section is based on *Gift and Art Buyer*, “The Story of the *Gift and Art Buyer*,” 38, no. 10 (October 1942): 51-53.

<sup>9</sup> The information on the structure of the gift industry is based on the author's extensive perusal of trade publications such as *Gift and Art Shop*, *Gift and Art Buyer*, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, *Giftwares*, and *Crockery and Glass Journal* dating from the late 1930s through the late 1970s.

<sup>10</sup> The author uses “salesmen” purposefully—virtually all traveling sales people in this period were men.

Chicago and B. Altman in New York, were the other key figures and tastemakers in the gift industry. What influential buyers bought and featured often was noticed both in the trade press as well as being chronicled in popular magazines and newspapers.

In addition to wholesale showrooms in key cities, manufacturers' representatives and buyers would regularly attend trade shows.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps most important to the gift trade was the Chicago Gift Show, founded in 1921 and held during one week each February and August; and the New York Gift Show, founded 1928 and also held one week each February and August.<sup>13</sup> This semi-annual schedule of shows set a certain rhythm to the year with new offerings introduced in winter and supplements and updates added for the summer shows. Other shows grew up across the country including the third major semi-annual exhibition occurring in Los Angeles beginning in 1935.

Ernest Sohn's entry into the gift industry was, quite literally, from the bottom up.<sup>14</sup> After immigrating to the United States in June 1936 he got a job working for Weil-Freeman, a manufacturer's representative, in its basement-level shipping department at 225 Fifth Avenue. The 225 Fifth Avenue building, occupying Fifth Avenue between 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Streets, had become the center in New York for the gift trade in the 1920s and would remain so throughout Ernest Sohn's career. Weil-Freeman specialized in pottery and glass gift items imported from Europe, primarily Germany, Hungary, Austria and

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<sup>11</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Histories of the Gift Shows and Exhibit Buildings," 53, no. 5 (May 1957): 189.

<sup>12</sup> This section is based on *Gift and Art Buyer*, ed., "Our Market Places: Gift Shows and Permanent Displays," 33, no. 4 (April 1937): 61-63, 126, 130 and *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Histories of the Gift Shows and Exhibit Buildings," 53, no. 5 (May 1957): 69, 182-191.

<sup>13</sup> The shows in Chicago and New York were coordinated so that representatives and firms could attend both—usually they were held at least one week apart.

<sup>14</sup> Unless otherwise noted information contained in this section was section was recorded in interviews with Ernest Sohn conducted by the author on October 18 and November 21, 2005.

Czechoslovakia. An August 1936 Weil-Freeman advertisement heralded “An important and newly designed assemblage of Glass, Pottery and China which includes Contemporary and Traditional Decorative Accessories, Distinctive Table Arrangements and Decorations, Buffet and Drinking Requisites, Smokers Accessories.”<sup>15</sup> Ernest Sohn initially worked packing and unpacking large trucks and sorting Weil-Freeman merchandise for \$12 a week. This job gave Sohn much contact with giftware items selected for the American market and provided him with inspiration. Sohn decided that he would try his hand at designing similar items. He initially made designs for a smoking set (cigarette lighter, cigarette box and ashtray) to be made in porcelain.<sup>16</sup> Weil-Freeman purchased these designs for \$25, double his weekly wage, and Sohn quit his job in the shipping department to become a freelance designer.

Ernest Sohn continued to focus on his self-education as a designer and his own giftware designs in the next few years. Sohn’s next success was selling several hundred designs to the importing house Ebeling and Reuss.<sup>17</sup> Ebeling and Reuss, based in Philadelphia, also specialized in giftware imports from northern Europe.<sup>18</sup> Ebeling and Reuss had a history of employing contract designers to create designs for items that would be manufactured in Europe and imported for the American market. It is through Ebeling and Reuss that Ernest Sohn received his first public credit as a designer. An October 1938 Ebeling and Reuss advertisement, figure 1.1, trumpeted “New Creations by

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<sup>15</sup> Weil-Freeman Inc., Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, 32, no. 8 (August 1936): 60.

<sup>16</sup> The author has not discovered any images of this set in Weil-Freeman advertisements or features in trade journals during this period.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Sohn recalled “about 500 designs” in an interview conducted by the author November 21, 2005.

<sup>18</sup> For a brief, yet informative history of the company see Venable, ed., *China and Glass in America*, 289-290.

Ernest Sohn!”<sup>19</sup> Although the young designer was virtually unknown to anyone in America, including the trade, the advertisement noted that the illustrated vases and smoking accessories “strikingly demonstrated” the “acknowledged skill of this artist in graceful curve, style and beauty of form.” Ernest Sohn’s time in the spotlight was to be short-lived—Ebeling and Reuss never again acknowledged him in an advertisement and it is unclear what other items might have been manufactured for the company to Sohn’s designs.

During the late 1930s Ernest Sohn spent many hours at the New York Public Library to expose himself to the industry and to form and design possibilities. There he studied trade and popular periodicals as well as tear sheets, illustrations of items taken from newspapers, catalogs and other periodicals. Sohn recalled that “what counts in the end is that I regularly followed up things in the public library. I looked at the glassware, I looked at ceramics, later on I looked at metalware, and worked with the metal.”<sup>20</sup> This visual education exposed him to general trends in design and possible shapes and styles for his own designs. The other key part of Sohn’s education came from his work on the job in the production of actual designs.

In late 1937 or early 1938 Ernest Sohn went to work for Warren Kessler. Sohn’s father did not trust the freedom and uncertainty of the freelancer’s life and strongly encouraged his son to find permanent work. Sohn became both a designer and production manager for Kessler. Warren Kessler was a manufacturer’s representative and also a manufacturer himself, creating a variety of items for the gift market. Nearly

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<sup>19</sup> Ebeling and Reuss, Inc., Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 34, no. 10 (October 1938): 61.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Ernest Sohn by the author November 21, 2005.

seventy years later Sohn recalled the strong personality of his former boss from whom he learned much. It was with Kessler that Sohn gained his first experience in design informed by working with the materials and fabricators in the factory. Sohn vividly recalled travelling with Kessler to a Czech glass factory in 1938 where he was to spend nearly a month learning and conferring with the glass artisans about the workability of his designs. Sohn remembered “But since I was working with the glass blowers and glass gatherers and batch makers and the furnace and so forth I could design things that could be made, not just on paper.”<sup>21</sup> This working in the factory with the manufacturer and learning the possibilities of materials first hand was to influence Sohn’s design work throughout his career. Knowing the material was important.

During Ernest Sohn’s time with Warren Kessler he also made connections with industry people. One of the most important was Mary Ryan, figure 1.2.<sup>22</sup> Ryan was a pioneer leader in the gift industry. She had come from a gift retailing background before joining the fledgling trade journal *Gift and Art Shop* in late 1917. After leaving the publication in 1920 she entered the wholesale business and then founded her own company in 1925. The firm grew and prospered under Ryan’s deft guidance and became “at its height, undisputed leader among wholesale gift organizations.”<sup>23</sup> Her showrooms, figure 1.3, dominating the second floor of 225 Fifth Avenue in New York, were “grand,

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Ernest Sohn conducted by the author November 21, 2005.

<sup>22</sup> The information on Ryan in this section is based on Mary Ryan, “Looking Back Over Twenty Years,” *Gift and Art Buyer* 33, no. 4 (April 1937): 35-36, 126; *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, “A Great Industry and How It Grew,” 63, no. 5 (May 1967): 104, 106; and *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, “Mary Ryan, Gift Pioneer, Dies,” 74, no. 8 (August 1973): 124.

<sup>23</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, “A Great Industry and How It Grew,” 63, no. 5 (May 1967): 104.

museum-like, a mecca for virtually every important buyer from the Thirties through the Fifties.”<sup>24</sup>

Mary Ryan was the representative for many stylish and innovative lines and was recognized as an innovator and leader in the field for her progressive practices. Kessler products were among those select manufacturers featured by name in lavish full-page advertisements that Mary Ryan ran in the trade journals during this time.<sup>25</sup> A 1937 *Gift and Art Buyer* feature on her organization summarized Ryan’s innovations: “Miss Ryan has concentrated on the creation of original merchandise, on keying her lines to advance trends, on re-styling the manufacturers’ lines to meet the demands of a discriminating clientele, on keeping in close touch with designers, merchandisers, and all concerned with the field of interior design and decoration.”<sup>26</sup> A later trade journal history of the gift industry pointed to her leadership and more pointedly to her introduction of the concept of product development: “concepts many another firm follows today, of not simply ‘representing’ manufacturers, but of actually working with them in the creation, styling and coordination of new lines.”<sup>27</sup> In her obituary *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* noted “many of the prominent people in the field gained experience in her firm,” and among these was Ernest Sohn.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 104, 106

<sup>25</sup> For advertisements see Mary Ryan, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, 32, no. 8 (August 1936): 73; Mary Ryan, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, 35, no. 3 (March 1939): 31; Mary Ryan, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, 36, no. 2 (February 1940): 81.

<sup>26</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Business Biographies: Mary Ryan,” 33, no. 4 (April 1937): 110.

<sup>27</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, “A Great Industry and How It Grew,” 63, no. 5 (May 1967): 106.

<sup>28</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, “Mary Ryan, Gift Pioneer, Dies,” 74, no. 8 (August 1973): 124.

Sohn recalled Mary Ryan with affection decades after they first met: “she was the best known and most successful of the gift houses, and she was very friendly to me...she encouraged me...”<sup>29</sup> Ryan reinforced Sohn’s belief that design must be grounded in the realities of materials and production. She brought Sohn to her showrooms and introduced him to important designers and artists in the field and later showed him the drawings that they had presented to her. She emphasized that although the gift industry was based on aesthetics and beauty, the practical side must also be emphasized. As Sohn later recalled: “she said ‘now look at this—that’s a nice drawing but can it be made?’ And this was a very important thing.”

World War II was to affect all aspects of American life and the gift industry was certainly not untouched.<sup>30</sup> Hostilities in Europe soon cut off imports from most countries and wartime restrictions virtually eliminated imports from those countries with which the United States was still trading. This was a significant change for an industry reliant on imported gifts and novelties. Although war restrictions on metals and certain other materials eliminated the availability of whole categories of gift items there was still a demand to be filled. Imports from Central and South America became more prominent. American manufacturers also benefited directly from the cut-off of European sources. American manufacturers were able to take the lead in the production of gift items for the American market and remained strong forces in the post-war period when Europe was still recovering. In the same way American design and style also gained a boost.

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with Ernest Sohn conducted by the author November 21, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> Information in this section is based on the author’s careful perusal of the trade periodical *Gift and Art Buyer* from the years 1938 through 1947.

Through 1941 Ernest Sohn continued to work with Warren Kessler. Sohn even designed and helped to build a glass factory on Long Island for Kessler in order to produce glass items that were then unavailable from Europe. With the entry of the United States into the war in late 1941 Ernest Sohn left the gift industry and moved from New York to Texas. Although exempted from military service because of the birth of his daughter in 1942, Sohn was required to work in a more necessary position. He joined one of his brothers to help run a flourmill. Sohn was responsible for the shipping department of this large company that supplied the United States military among other clients. Ernest Sohn and his family remained in Texas throughout the war.

In 1945 Sohn returned to New York and rejoined the gift industry as designer and production manager for the gift house Rubel and Company. Announcing his appointment *Crockery and Glass Journal* accurately wrote that Sohn “has worked with glass factories here and on the Continent...”<sup>31</sup> The account in *Gift and Art Buyer* was a bit more flowery, stretching the truth somewhat: “Formerly employed by leading glass, lamp and metal manufacturers, he received his training in various European schools and colleges.”<sup>32</sup> The article also noted that several of Sohn’s new designs would soon be on display.

Rubel and Company was a relatively young gift house under the direction of Edmund Rubel, figure 1.4. Ernest Sohn and Rubel became friends when they both worked at Weil-Freeman in 1936 and 1937.<sup>33</sup> Rubel had worked in the gift industry as a

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<sup>31</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, “Names in the News,” 137, no. 6 (December 1945): 64.

<sup>32</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “News from 225,” 41, no. 12 (November 1945): 154.

<sup>33</sup> Interview by the author with Ernest Sohn, March 16, 2006. Encouraging this connection was the fact that Rubel came from the same part of Germany as did Sohn and his family. To his friends and acquaintances in the trade he was known as Eddie Rubel.

salesman and was to continue to focus on sales throughout his career.<sup>34</sup> Rubel left Weil-Freeman in late 1938 or early 1939 to join the young gift house of Ashford-Fenton.<sup>35</sup> Rubel became vice-president of the company and within a year the company had changed its name to Rubel and Fenton to reflect his leading role with the other principal Harvey Fenton.<sup>36</sup> The *Gift and Art Buyer* noted that the newly renamed company represented a variety of lines made by several different domestic manufacturers: “Blenko glass, Bellette wood, Cooper lamps and pictures, Tebor Crownford American-made china, Queens art pewter, Corham artificial flowers, Soria wrought iron, Mar-No-Lawn tables and Malcolm’s Creations.”<sup>37</sup> The firm continued to represent a wide variety of gift and art items produced in glass, ceramics, wood, metal, and plastic throughout the 1940s. The house also tended to focus on American-made items and used the appropriately patriotic slogan “Masterpieces of American Craftsmanship” in the early-1940s.<sup>38</sup> Harvey Fenton left the company in November 1942, joining the army for officer training.<sup>39</sup> A little more than a year later the firm underwent its final name change to Rubel and Company with

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<sup>34</sup> Weil-Freeman advertisements noted him as a salesman attending various gift shows as a representative, see Weil-Freeman Inc., Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, 33, no. 9 (September 1937): 75.

<sup>35</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “What’s What at ‘225’ Fifth Avenue,” 35, no. 2 (February 1939): 121.

<sup>36</sup> See Rubel and Fenton, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, 36, no. 1 (January 1940): 5 and *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Going on in the Trade,” 36, no. 1 (January 1940): 34.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Rubel and Fenton, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 36, no. 8 (August 1940): 46-47 and Rubel and Fenton, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 38, no. 2 (February 1942): 55.

<sup>39</sup> See *Gift and Art Buyer*, “News from Two-Twenty-Five,” 38, no. 12 (December 1942): 55.

assurances to the trade that “the firm will function exactly as before as far as location, lines represented and sales personnel are concerned.”<sup>40</sup>

Sohn’s appointment as staff designer for Rubel and Company was characteristic of a movement within the gift industry and America generally. Design had become important and noteworthy, something to be focused on, thought about, honored and marketed. American designers came to the fore. They were well known and the products they designed were identified with the designer, identified with their skill, innovations, ingenuity and taste. While this trend in large items such as automobiles and furniture was increasingly common from the late 1920s with the rise of the American industrial designer, it was uncommon in the tableware and gift fields until the mid to late 1930s. A pioneer “name” designer in the gift and tableware field was Russel Wright who, in the early 1930s began to gain recognition and national distribution with Mary Ryan of his spun aluminum serving accessories.<sup>41</sup> Wright’s pioneering use of his name and reputation to identify and sell well-designed items for everyday use in the home was increasingly commonplace in the post-war years. Many gift houses named designers to their staffs in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Sohn was among the first of the major gift house designers to be named and recognized in the post-war period.

Design increasingly became a focus for the popular press where innovative styling and designer names were often noted in editorial features. Museums and educational institutions also increasingly began to focus on design, honoring designed

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<sup>40</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Going on in the Trade,” 39, no. 12 (December 1943): 40. See also Rubel and Co., Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 39, no. 12 (December 1943): 39.

<sup>41</sup> See Donald Albrecht, Robert Schonfeld, and Lindsay Stamm Shapiro, *Russel Wright: Creating American Lifestyle*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001):141-144. This book provides an excellent overview Wright’s life and work.

household goods and designers in exhibitions and publications. This confluence of academic, museum, and press focus on design contributed to what can be identified as a “Good Design” movement during the post-war period.<sup>42</sup> The focus on design by these tastemaking entities also further encouraged the gift industry to pay attention to and feature design in their manufacturing and marketing.

In joining Rubel, Ernest Sohn had the opportunity to further expand his experience working with and designing for a variety of materials. His role as designer and production manager assured that he would be exposed to materials and their possibilities by working directly with various factories and manufacturers. Rubel and Company represented many manufacturers working in glass, ceramics, metalware, wood, and plastics. A December 1945 company advertisement listed twenty-six different manufacturers that were represented by Rubel.<sup>43</sup> Among them were a few that might still be recognized today for their innovative and well designed products such as Glidden Pottery and Blenko Glass. However, most were small manufacturers producing a variety of gift items that covered a range from elegant artware to cheap novelties.

Sohn’s identifiable early work for Rubel consisted largely of metalware items, especially spun aluminum. October 1945 advertisements in *Gift and Art Buyer* and *Giftwares* featured “New Stars to Shine For You”—an assortment of spun aluminum cocktail shakers and drinking accessories with “Hand-Hammered Cast Aluminum”

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<sup>42</sup> For a good introduction to this movement and the role of one of the major players within it, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, see Terrence Riley and Edward Eigen, “Between the Museum and the Marketplace: Selling Good Design” in John Elderfield, ed, *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century, At Home and Abroad*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994.) See Appendix A for a further discussion of Good Design.

<sup>43</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 41, no. 12 (December 1945): 11.

handles and trim, figure 1.5.<sup>44</sup> These items utilized easy-to-manufacture shapes with elegant detailing in the cast trim and end pieces giving the impression of hand hammering and transforming the cylinders into functional objects. By the following season Sohn had reworked these basic shapes with the addition of curves and color. A January 1946 Rubel advertisement proclaimed drinkware as “Smooth As Satin” and featured a similar assortment of alcohol related accessories, figure 1.6.<sup>45</sup> Sohn had transformed the straight cylinders into gently curving forms that now were embellished by “bright colored plastic bands” at their bases.<sup>46</sup> Some also featured the addition of practical, although perhaps less than elegant, handles. This line of spun aluminum, identified as *Loumas* (later spelled *Leumas*) *Ware* in a June 1946 advertisement, was a mainstay of Rubel offerings after Sohn’s appointment as designer.<sup>47</sup> Sohn continued to design somewhat different *Leumas* collections for Rubel throughout his time there. In 1947 the aluminum ware was given a highly polished surface and proclaimed “Silverbrite,” figure 1.7.<sup>48</sup> Again Sohn used similar shapes which, in addition to being highly polished, featured a hammered look on their surfaces and beaded foot bands.

The Rubel aluminum lines were also copied, a common practice in the gift industry and a strong indication of a line’s success. In June 1946 Lipper and Mann, a newly formed gift house founded by former Rubel salesmen, introduced “Spunray by

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<sup>44</sup> See Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 2, no. 3 (October 1945): 33 and Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 41, no. 10 (October 1945): 11.

<sup>45</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 42, no. 1 (January 1946): 23.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 42, no. 6 (June 1946): 84. Aluminum ware was manufactured for Rubel under the *Leumas* name through the 1960s.

<sup>48</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 43, no. 3 (March 1947): 35.

‘Cellini Studios,’” figure 1.8.<sup>49</sup> This spun aluminum line featured silhouettes very reminiscent of Sohn’s with the addition of “contrasting bow-knot handles of rich copper.”<sup>50</sup>

In addition to his work with metals at Rubel, Ernest Sohn was also exposed to the potentials of ceramics, primarily through his experiences with Glidden Pottery. Sohn credited his work at Glidden under the guidance of Glidden Parker with his real education in the characteristics of ceramics and possibilities for their design.<sup>51</sup> Glidden Parker founded Glidden Pottery in 1940 in Alfred, New York, adjacent to the New York College of Ceramics at Alfred University.<sup>52</sup> From that time Rubel was Glidden’s exclusive representative.<sup>53</sup> Glidden became known for clean, simple, modern shapes and stylized patterns on a dense stoneware body. Glidden produced a variety of items both decorative and utilitarian, including dinnerware. Ernest Sohn worked with Glidden to develop a few patterns to be applied to dinnerware shapes designed by Glidden Parker.<sup>54</sup> One was a set of circus-inspired figures including clowns and trapeze artists, figure 1.9, that recalled similar decorations Sohn had created for his young daughter’s bedroom. Another was *Plume* a stylized feather decoration that was introduced by Rubel in June 1946, figure

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<sup>49</sup> Lipper and Mann, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 42, no. 6 (June 1946): 170. The formal opening of the Lipper Mann showroom was noted the following month, see *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Going on in the Trade,” 42, no. 7 (July 1947): 286.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Interviews with Ernest Sohn by the author on October 18, 2005 and March 16, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> For an extensive account of Glidden see Margaret Carney, *Glidden Pottery*; (Alfred, NY: Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, 2001.)

<sup>53</sup> See Rubel and Fenton, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 36, no. 8 (August 1940): 46-47.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Ernest Sohn by the author on November 21, 2005.

1.10.<sup>55</sup> Glidden Parker was frequently recognized by the “Good Design” movement. One example of this was the Museum of Modern Art, New York citing Glidden in 1947 for the modern simplicity and utility of his casserole designs.<sup>56</sup> In the same year Parker was also honored for his casserole designs in the twelfth National Ceramic Exhibition at the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts.<sup>57</sup> Parker won a prize sponsored by Richard Gump, head of the influential Gump department store in San Francisco, for “the best designed piece or pieces suitable for mass production.”<sup>58</sup> In this case the casseroles exhibited were decorated with Sohn’s *Plume* design, figure 1.11. While working with Glidden, Sohn’s activities were not just limited to pattern design, he also assisted the company in refining its manufacturing processes and machinery for greater efficiency.

While working with Glidden exposed Ernest Sohn to some of the most innovative and best-designed products on the market, his own design work was not always cutting edge and often was dictated by commercial requirements of the business. Sohn above all was a practical and versatile designer and was able to create items in a variety of styles be they innovative and modern or conventional and historically based. Examples of Sohn’s more historically inspired designs were featured in trade advertisements in August 1948. The *Ambassador*, figure 1.12, was a combination tabletop lighter and cigarette holder in silver plate with clear references to historical silver forms in its beaded foot decoration

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<sup>55</sup> See *Crockery and Glass Journal*, “Right Out of the Kiln” 138, no. 6 (June 1946): 47.

<sup>56</sup> See Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 44, no. 1 (January 1948): 17.

<sup>57</sup> See *Gift and Art Buyer*, “New Talent Scores at National Ceramic Exhibition,” 44, no. 1 (January 1948): 88.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

and carefully balanced profile.<sup>59</sup> Even more obvious in its historical connection was the *Leumas Early American* collection, also featured by Rubel, that month, figure 1.13.<sup>60</sup> Here Sohn used turned wood handles and somewhat conventional shapes to create serving items that would most likely appeal to the majority of Americans who were interested in historically inspired design. These two examples still had a certain elegance and charm that was not always present in Sohn's most commercial and conventional designs. A good example of this is Sohn's design for *Planter Plates* introduced in 1949 under Rubel's *Indoor Gardener* brand.<sup>61</sup> These proved to be so popular that Rubel doubled the variety of offerings just a few months later, figure 1.14.<sup>62</sup> *Planter Plates* featured nineteenth century prints like those of Currier and Ives surrounded by a circle of copper or brass mounted in front of a container designed to hold a plant which would grow over and around the plate while the whole ensemble hung on a wall. Variations on this theme were created that included candleholders and even a lamp, figure 1.15.<sup>63</sup> In reflecting on these designs in later years Ernest Sohn recalled that they were quite popular. He also was quick to dismiss them as "kitsch" and shrug them off as something that was done for commercial reasons.<sup>64</sup>

Ernest Sohn's time at Rubel marks the emergence of his specialization in the design of certain types of items that were also tied to trends in American homelife.

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<sup>59</sup> See Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 44, no. 8 (August 1948): 7.

<sup>60</sup> See Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 44, no. 8 (August 1948): 41.

<sup>61</sup> See Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 45, no. 7 (July 1949): 7.

<sup>62</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 46, no. 2 (February 1950): 32-33.

<sup>63</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 46, no. 7 (July 1950): 7.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Ernest Sohn by the author on March 16, 2006.

These, as well as certain Sohn design motifs, would be repeated again and again in his work over the next few decades. The design of drinkware and items for serving alcohol and other beverages continued to be an important part of Sohn's design work for the company. The strong demand for well-designed items to serve and hold drinks was indicative of an emerging cocktail culture in the post-war period. A 1951 editorial by Walter Browder in *Crockery and Glass Journal* pointed to this trend with some astounding statistics.<sup>65</sup> Prior to the end of World War II "65% of the liquor consumed in the United States was consumed outside the home, in bars and restaurants mostly; only 35% of our liquor was drunk at home."<sup>66</sup> By 1951 the statistics had see-sawed: "Today, almost the reverse is true; about 70% of the country's liquor is drunk at home; and only 30% is bought and drunk on the outside."<sup>67</sup> The source of this information was the trade group Licensed Beverage Industries which also indicated the "trend towards more home-drinking has developed mainly during the past couple of years."<sup>68</sup>

Browder's editorial revealed that the trend for serving alcohol in the home was part of "America's growing, ever growing predilection for entertaining at home *more casually*."<sup>69</sup> Objects for casual home entertaining were a rapidly growing market and one that the gift and tableware industries were uniquely positioned to take advantage of.<sup>70</sup>

This became a specialty and focus in the work of Ernest Sohn from his time at Rubel

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<sup>65</sup> Information in this section is taken from Walter Browder, "Liquor, Bar Accessories and Home, Sweet Home," *Crockery and Glass Journal* 148, no. 3 (March 5, 1951): 5.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Italics are original to text.

through the end of his career. One of his first useful, yet decorative and designed, serving items was “The ‘Original’ Ham and Egg Oven To Table Server” advertised by Rubel in January 1948, figure 1.16.<sup>71</sup> The simple spun aluminum pan was embellished by a shaped and hammered bronze handle. This relatively simple design is perhaps most telling in its name—“Oven To Table Server.” The idea that something could serve both as a cooking device and a serving dish was a constantly seen theme in serving items for the home in the post-war period. An item that could both cook and serve eliminated extra dishes and work for its owner. Two years later Ernest Sohn had enhanced this frying pan form with an alcohol burner and stand, figure 1.17, making it appropriate “for glamorous cooking during company entertaining” according to *Crockery and Glass Journal*.<sup>72</sup> The *Buffet Burner* as it was dubbed was part of “*French Provincial Tableware by Leumas*” which was “To delight the taste of the epicure” according to the Rubel advertisement.<sup>73</sup> In addition to the *Burner* which allowed for at-the-table cooking, the pictured casseroles combined utilitarian brown pottery appropriate for use in the cooking process. This utilitarian ware was enhanced and made more glamorous by “gleaming copper” serving trays and lids featuring jaunty handles.<sup>74</sup> The combination of different materials in one serving or entertaining accessory, here copper with ceramic, became a key Sohn motif that he continued to utilize throughout his career.

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<sup>70</sup> The author will discuss the movement for casual home entertaining extensively in the second chapter.

<sup>71</sup> See Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 44, no. 1 (January 1948): 11.

<sup>72</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, “Right Out of the Kiln,” 146, no. 2 (February 1950): 66. For the advertisement shown in figure 17 see Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 45, no. 2 (February 1949): 13

<sup>73</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 45, no. 2 (February 1949): 13

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Other items that were to become Sohn specialties were also seen for the first time in his Rubel productions. One was the large coffee urn or beverage server on warming stand. The trade magazine *Giftwares* in February 1950 featured one such server that stood fifteen inches high, held 20 cups and combined copper in the body with copper and brass in the stand and legs, figure 1.18.<sup>75</sup> Accompanying the urn in the illustration are ceramic coffee cups with copper saucers, again revealing Sohn's penchant for combining materials for a sense of the unusual and to add visual interest.

Another new specialty of Ernest Sohn were chafing dishes which Rubel first featured in an August 1950 advertisement, figure 1.19.<sup>76</sup> These cooking and serving items were proclaimed "For the Home Chef—A Gourmet's Delight."<sup>77</sup> The use of chafing dishes for cooking and serving at the table or buffet experienced a renaissance in the late 1940s and through the 1950s, a renaissance that was strongly tied to an upsurge in home entertaining during the period. Sohn's chafing dishes for Rubel were fairly conservative in their styling with curvaceous cabriole legs and added detailing in the collar that held the chafing dish and water pan aloft on these legs. An example in a private collection of this or a very similar design also evidences Sohn's penchant for combining materials in one serving item, figure 1.20. While the majority of the piece is copper, the cooking pan appears to be aluminum and the legs and fitting attaching the handle to the body are brass or bronze. Finally the finial and the handle are made of wood, a practical and easily shaped insulating material.

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<sup>75</sup> *Giftwares*, "New York Show Trends," 6, no. 7 (February 1950): 23.

<sup>76</sup> See Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 46, no. 8 (August 1950): 9.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

The idea that a chafing dish such as Sohn's was a perfect item to use in informal, casual entertaining was evident in its inclusion in a 1951 window display at McCreery's department store in New York. This window display was illustrated in a *Giftwares* article about how retailers might take advantage of the "seasonal demand for outdoor living accessories," especially those related to barbecuing.<sup>78</sup> The McCreery window featured an "Outdoor buffet setting" with a window placard reading "Jim and I called up everyone we knew when we saw how rare the day—and had a barbecue. What fun to see him do the cooking and burn the buns..."<sup>79</sup> This sort of informal and casual entertaining was facilitated by such utensils as the Rubel chafing dish.

One of the last and most successful forms Sohn designed for Rubel and one that would become a Sohn specialty was a lazy susan introduced at the summer gift shows in 1950. An August 1950 advertisement featured the new *Laizy Daizy*, figure 1.21, with the headline "It's New! It's Unique! It's Smart!"<sup>80</sup> This new serving accessory was intended to captivate and be shown off by those entertaining in the home: "Every hostess will immediately be enchanted with this new, smart, gay conversation piece."<sup>81</sup> Ernest Sohn's unique design was in the form of large simplified flower. Eight removable, petal-shaped ceramic dishes fit into a two part round ceramic base.<sup>82</sup> Between the bottom and top halves of this base were ball bearings, which allowed the top half with the dishes in place

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<sup>78</sup> See *Giftwares*, "How to Climb Aboard the Barbecue Bandwagon For Volume Summer Sales," 7, no. 10 (May 1951): 10-12.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>80</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 46, no. 8 (August 1950): 7. While this advertisement uses the spelling *Laizy Daisy* the author has found that the trade name was correctly spelled *Laizy Daizy*.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

to easily twirl. A brass handle was mounted in the center allowing the whole unit to be lifted and brought to the table or any other place. A Rubel brochure for the *Laizy Daizy*, figure 1.22, highlighted its versatility for a variety of home entertaining uses.<sup>83</sup> The text of the brochure highlighted the fact that the dishes were ovenproof, could be removed and were equally useful individually and as a set: “Complete, it can be used as an hors d’oeuvres dish; singly, the pieces make attractive ashtrays, dessert dishes, etc.”<sup>84</sup>

The *Laizy Daizy* was evidently quite a sensation and a success for Sohn and Rubel. In November 1950 it was singled out by *Crockery and Glass Journal* as an item worthy of promotion in an instructional article on selling with signcards.<sup>85</sup> Its unique construction and versatility made it the ideal candidate for promotion. The example signcard headline pointed to the *Laizy Daizy’s* potential as the perfect gift: “For the Thoughtful Hostess the Best In Lazy Susans.”<sup>86</sup> Its usefulness and potential to lessen work and make entertaining easier was a key part of the sales promotion. The example signcard emphasized this with text reading “Eight ovenproof serving pieces—keep food hot longer, not so many dishes to wash, stove-to-table serving” and also “Removable sections—use as individual casseroles, easier to store and wash.” Real promotions soon followed this fictional one as the *Laizy Daizy* was sold across the country.<sup>87</sup> The *New*

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<sup>82</sup> The ceramic parts were produced by Glidden Pottery.

<sup>83</sup> The brochure is in a private collection and accompanied a *Laizy Daizy* still residing in its original shipping box.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Marian Anderson, “How to Make Salesclerks of Signcards,” *Crockery and Glass Journal* 147, no. 5 (November 1950): 26-27.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>87</sup> One *Laizy Daizy* the author has examined in a private collection was retailed by the Bon Marché department store in Seattle, Washington according to the shipping label on the original box. Another

*York Times* noted in late November 1950 that the *Laizy Daizy* was available at the leading retailer, B. Altman's and was an ideal gift.<sup>88</sup> The article emphasized how a lazy susan such as this "is anything but lazy...a useful piece of equipment for the homemaker during the holidays" and "To Expedite Serving Throughout the Year."<sup>89</sup> Rubel itself proclaimed the *Laizy Daizy* a "Dazzling Success" that would be hard to top.<sup>90</sup> However, this did not prevent the company from marketing a *Crystal Daizy*, a similar serving item made primarily of glass. A few months later Ernest Sohn and Rubel promoted *The Ferris Wheel*, figure 1.23, which was not far removed from the *Laizy Daizy* in its novelty form and use of individual dishes that might be removed for serving, cooking and cleaning.<sup>91</sup> Both the *Laizy Daizy* and the *Ferris Wheel* show Ernest Sohn's Rubel work at its most interesting, combining usefulness and functionality with charm, wit and novelty. All of which would be most welcomed in mid-century home entertainment.

Ernest Sohn's time at Rubel was fruitful for both Sohn as a designer and Rubel as a business. Sohn had the opportunity to grow in learning and experience with a company representing so many varied lines and materials. His time at Rubel increased his skills as a gifted designer who created design after design that was well styled, functional and, above all, marketable. Rubel in this time became one of the leading gift houses in the field. Ernest Sohn had a great part in this success.

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advertisement shows the model was sold in Los Angeles as well, see Robinson's, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, February 14, 1951: 25.

<sup>88</sup> *New York Times*, "Lazy Susans Appear for Holiday Tables To Expedite Serving Throughout the Year," November 27, 1950: 27.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 47, no. 1 (January 1951): 7.

<sup>91</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 47, no. 2 (February 1951): 9.

However, by June 1951 Ernest Sohn had left Rubel to embark in his own business.<sup>92</sup> No incident or problem prompted this departure but a few reasons can be conjectured.<sup>93</sup> Of course there was the potential for greater financial gain if his new business was successful. Sohn would also win much greater freedom in his design work and he would determine the direction of his own company. This freedom included the freedom *not* to design some of the more kitsch items Sohn produced at Rubel. Increased recognition and perhaps even fame could be found in this new business: no longer was the name Rubel on the packaging and the product, it was Sohn.

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<sup>92</sup> Announcements were made in all the trade journals, see for example *Gift and Art Buyer*, "News from 225," 47, no. 6 (June 1951): 110, 112.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Ernest Sohn by the author on March 16, 2006. In this interview Sohn indicated he had no negative feelings toward Rubel and still considered Edmund Rubel a friend after his departure.

## Chapter 2

Ernest Sohn's establishment of his own firm and the opening of his showroom at 225 Fifth Avenue were significant news in the trade. All of the major trade publications made note of Sohn's endeavor in their June 1951 issues.<sup>1</sup> The trade accounts cited Sohn as a well-known figure in the industry who was responsible for designing many successful lines. The *Gift and Art Buyer* featured a photograph of the bespeckled designer smoking a pipe, figure 2.1, and said Sohn "As designer and production head for the last fifteen years with firms in '225,' he has created numerous items such as planter plates, Laizy Daizy, chafing dishes and other informal buffet services."<sup>2</sup> *Giftwares* magazine cited his previous employment, "Mr. Sohn will be remembered from the showroom of Rubel and Company where he was the general manager," and the fact that he "has been designing popular items for the past fifteen years."<sup>3</sup> All of the accounts noted Sohn's versatility as a designer and that the new firm would offer ceramic, glass, metal and plastic items. *Giftwares* cited Sohn's "new merchandising slogan—'Useful and Decorative.'" This slogan was to be used by Sohn for much of his career. The June 1951 trade publications also noted that Fred Press, a sculptor and designer, would replace Sohn at Rubel and would work in a wide variety of materials as Sohn had done.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See *Crockery and Glass Journal*, "What's Doing at 225 Fifth Avenue," 148, no. 6 (June 1951): 62; *China Glass and Decorative Accessories*, "The Gift and Art Center," 70, no. 10 (June 1951): 68; *Giftwares and Home Fashions*, "Notes from New York," 7, no. 11 (June 1951): 63; and *Gift and Art Buyer*, "News from 225," 47, no. 6 (June 1951): 112. The new business was also reported in the business lease section of the *New York Times*, see *New York Times*, "Two More Concerns Rent In 600 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.," June 14, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, "News from 225," 47, no. 6 (June 1951): 112.

<sup>3</sup> *Giftwares and Home Fashions*, "Notes from New York," 7, no. 11 (June 1951): 63.

<sup>4</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, "Industry News: Close-Ups," 148, no. 6 (June 1951): 36; *Gift and Art Buyer*, "News from 225," 47, no. 6 (June 1951): 110. Press was to become Rubel's "name" designer and

The launch of Sohn's line and opening of his showroom were done at a strategic time in the market season. The new showroom was open and available for store buyers to browse during the important New York summer shows, a time in which a huge volume of buying was done in anticipation of fall and Christmas sales. A full-page advertisement by Ernest Sohn Associates, as the new firm was known, ran in three of the major trade journals in July 1951 and further highlighted the new venture. The advertisement in *Crockery and Glass Journal* featured an invitation to buyers, "You are cordially invited to see our useful and decorative home accessories," superimposed over a newspaper column with the heading "Going On in New York."<sup>5</sup> This issue of the magazine also previewed the National China, Glass and Pottery Show which was to take place July 15 to 20 at the Hotel New Yorker, the first of the major shows occurring after the opening of the Sohn showroom.<sup>6</sup> The "show trends" previewed by the magazine featured "the informal trend," leading to "more bar and serving accessories sold today than ever before," just the sort of items Ernest Sohn Associates had to offer.<sup>7</sup> A different advertisement ran in the July issues of both *Giftwares* and *Gift and Art Buyer*, figure 2.2. It trumpeted "The Finest Chafing Dish ever created" and invited buyers "to see our complete line of new creations in stainless steel and other media for informal entertainment."<sup>8</sup> With these advertisements Sohn further publicized his new venture and

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was cited in their ads from that time forward and also often had his name as part of the mark on Rubel products.

<sup>5</sup> Ernest Sohn Associates, Advertisement, *Crockery and Glass Journal* 149, no. 1 (July 1951): 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, "New York is Hot in July," 149, no. 1 (July 1951): 91-97.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>8</sup> Ernest Sohn Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares and Home Fashions* 7, no. 12 (July 1951): 59 and Ernest Sohn Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 47, no. 7 (July 1951): 15.

his new lines to gift buyers who would be flocking to New York for the New York Gift Show from August 20 through 24.

Ernest Sohn Associates' entry into the market seemed quite successful and reports of the opening of the showroom in the trade press were quite glowing. *China, Glass and Decorative Accessories* wrote of the "buffet luncheon and cocktail party marking the event," noting that "Many leading buyers from the New York City area attended and inspected attractive displays of useful decorative home accessories in ceramics, glass, wood and metals, all designed by Mr. Sohn."<sup>9</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal* ran a photo of the "all-day open house" introducing the new showroom. The photo featured several prominent buyers as well as Sohn and his wife and associates, figure 2.3.<sup>10</sup> Amongst the prominent buyers pictured was Joe Giarrocco, buyer for the B. Altman department store of New York. Giarrocco was one of the most powerful and influential buyers in the country during this period.<sup>11</sup> B. Altman's promotion of Ernest Sohn designs was key in his firm's early success. In fact Ernest Sohn later recalled that it was B. Altman's early backing of his designs and, in particular, a full-page advertisement run in one of the most chic New York publications, *The New Yorker*, that helped to ensure his success.<sup>12</sup> The advertisement, figure 2.4, appeared in the December 8, 1951 issue of the magazine and featured a grouping of five gifts for men which would "highlight their entertaining" in the

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<sup>9</sup> *China Glass and Decorative Accessories*, "The Gift and Art Center," 70, no. 11 (July 1951): 40. It seems particularly appropriate that the showroom opened with a buffet lunch and cocktail party.

<sup>10</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, Illustration, 149, no. 2 (August 1951): 69.

<sup>11</sup> For more on Giarrocco and his powerful position as Altman's buyer see Charles L. Venable, ed., *China and Glass in America, 1880-1980*, 296.

<sup>12</sup> Interview by the author with Ernest Sohn on November 21, 2005.

future.<sup>13</sup> Amongst these masculine gifts for drinking, smoking and eating, Sohn's signature chafing dish of stainless steel and ebonized wood was prominently displayed. Altman's feature of this chafing dish is made more noticeable by the fact that their weekly advertisements in the *New Yorker* were usually devoted to fashion items and women's wear.<sup>14</sup>

December also marked an important turning point for Sohn's young company. It was during this month that a new partnership was announced between Ernest Sohn and a leading sales representative named Jack Orenstein, figure 2.5.<sup>15</sup> Orenstein, several years older than Sohn, began his career in the industry in 1919.<sup>16</sup> By 1922 he and partners founded a firm based at 225 Fifth Avenue for importing and selling Chinese and Japanese art items. In 1934 he and a partner founded Everlast Metal Products which became an early leader in the manufacture and use of aluminum in decorative and serving items.<sup>17</sup> Everlast was certainly a success, it produced and sold a huge volume of material and had a leading role in defense manufacturing during World War II.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> B. Altman and Co., Advertisement, *New Yorker*, December 8, 1951, 30.

<sup>14</sup> In the six months before and after this advertisement ran B. Altman ran only two other advertisements other similar advertisements in the *New Yorker*, one for English crystal, the other for a new modern dinnerware set.

<sup>15</sup> Accounts appeared in all the trade journals: *China Glass and Decorative Accessories*, "The Gift and Art Center," 71, no. 4 (December 1951): 90; *Crockery and Glass Journal*, "Industry News: Forms New Company," 149, no. 6 (December 1951): 125; *Giftwares*, "People and News," 8, no. 5 (December 1951): 62; and *Gift and Art Buyer*, "News from 225," 47, no. 12 (December 1951): 106. These form the basis of this section unless otherwise noted.

<sup>16</sup> See *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Saluting the '40 Year' Pioneers," 53, no. 5 (May 1957): 139.

<sup>17</sup> For more on Everlast and their process of manufacturing see *Giftwares and Homewares*, "Giftwares Looks Behind the Scenes: Everlast Metal Products, Inc.," 6, no. 4 (November 1949): 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> For more on Everlast during World War II see *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Going on in the Trade," 40, no. 11 (November 1944): 108.

Jack Orenstein was a born salesman. He headed a large sales staff that covered all parts of the country including several regional showrooms. Everlast ran prominent monthly advertisements in the trade press and regularly advertised nationally in the leading women's and interiors magazines. Orenstein seems to have had a magnetic personality and often was elected to leading positions in trade organizations and charities.<sup>19</sup> In announcing the new partnership with Sohn, *Gift and Art Buyer* significantly noted "The new firm will largely retain the same sales force which has worked under Mr. Orenstein for the past years...."<sup>20</sup> Included in this sales apparatus was a second showroom in Los Angeles, which gave the young firm footing on both coasts and in the burgeoning population center of southern California.<sup>21</sup> In his new partnership Sohn became closely associated with another industry leader, Orenstein, and gained a seasoned sales organization to promote his new designs. Their many connections in the field and long experience in sales would prove invaluable in Sohn's future success.<sup>22</sup>

A new design style emerged with the founding of Ernest Sohn Associates. Ernest Sohn, freed from the confines of working under someone else's direction, was able to

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<sup>19</sup> For example, in the same month that Sohn and Orenstein announced their partnership Orenstein was elected president of the 225 Fifth Avenue Association, a trade group dedicated to promoting those companies located in this gift center, see *Giftwares*, "Shopping the Markets: New York," 8, no. 6 (January 1952): 64.

<sup>20</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, "News from 225," 47, no. 12 (December 1951): 106.

<sup>21</sup> The Los Angeles showroom was opened officially in July 1952 and was headed by William Orenstein, Jack Orenstein's son. See *Crockery and Glass Journal*, "What's Doing at 225 Fifth Avenue," 151, v. 1 (July 1952): 120; *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Going on in the Trade," 48, no. 7 (July 1952): 200; and *Giftwares*, "Trade Winds," 9, no. 6 (July 1952): 62.

<sup>22</sup> Indicative of this was full-page advertisement run by Orenstein and Sohn in the January 1952 issues of *Giftwares* and *Gift and Art Buyer*. It announced Jack Orenstein Associates "appointment as exclusive selling agents for Ernest Sohn Creations" and that Orenstein's sales force would be presenting Sohn's designs at an impressive 13 upcoming trade shows including the major china and glass show in Pittsburgh and the gift shows in Chicago and New York. See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 8, no. 6 (January 1952): 9 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 48, no. 1 (January 1952): 11.

experiment in a fresh manner with a variety of materials and forms. While Sohn continued to focus on similar kinds of objects, largely household accessories that would be used in cooking and serving food and drink, his design style became bolder, sleeker, more innovative and modern. Sohn's new and fresh designs ensured public acceptance and success for his fledgling firm. From his firm's founding through late 1953 Sohn's new design style was expressed in four major areas: Pyrex glass serving ware, stainless steel and copper chafing dishes and related items, *Copper and Color* ceramic serving aids, and wrought iron decorative accessories. In true Sohn fashion mixing and cross-pollination between these categories and materials was used to full advantage.

One of Ernest Sohn's earliest products and one that marked a departure from the more conservative design style he was confined to at Rubel were the Pyrex beverage and food servers Sohn introduced in 1951.<sup>23</sup> These designs combined Pyrex-brand heat-tolerant glassware with black plastic covers and handles and a final touch of plastic coil wrapping, figure 2.6. In the Pyrex collection Sohn exhibited a very sleek and contemporary aesthetic. He used a hard scientific/industrial material, Pyrex laboratory glass, and softened and humanized it slightly with the addition of simple colorful plastic accents and black plastic handles in shapes of circles and spheres.<sup>24</sup> A February 1952 advertisement in *Giftwares* featured the Pyrex collection, figure 2.7, and exhibits the

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<sup>23</sup> Among the first products marketed by the new company, they are the only ones marked "Ernest Sohn Associates," a mark that was dropped after the formation of the partnership with Jack Orenstein and the renaming of the company Ernest Sohn Creations.

<sup>24</sup> Carafes and pitchers in a private collection examined by the author have handles in ring shapes and a casserole has two side handles in a ring shape and a cover finial in the form of sphere. While the Pyrex glass, especially in the carafe forms, is close to the shapes of laboratory ware it is clear that it was made for the company in the way it is marked and the way that the forms have been adjusted to home use.

variety of items that were available.<sup>25</sup> Here the versatility and multiple uses of these items is highlighted: the carafes and lipped pitchers can serve both cold and hot drinks, martinis or coffee, while the addition of a glass filter attachment transforms the lipped pitcher into a coffeemaker as well. The ability to use the serving item in the preparation of the beverage is echoed in the “cafferoles” which provided stylish servers that the advertisement also notes are “For cooking directly over flame—not in oven.”<sup>26</sup> Sohn offered the plastic wrapping in a variety of colors, black and white for those with a more stark style and brown, red, green, and chartreuse for those looking for a bit more playfulness.

Sohn’s Pyrex collection became a critical and commercial success over the next two years. An early national feature of one of the Pyrex carafes came in the January 1952 issue of *House and Garden* magazine where a Sohn carafe was used in an illustration titled “Country flavor for a Sunday supper.”<sup>27</sup> Sohn’s carafe seemed to strike favor with the editors of *House and Garden* and it was again featured by the magazine in the next issue. Two different sizes of the carafe were displayed prominently in buffet and table settings illustrating “An American Idea in Entertaining,” figure 2.8.<sup>28</sup> The features in this important publication also pointed to the fact that Sohn’s Pyrex was being retailed in leading stores. In the first instance *House and Garden* noted the carafe was available through Hammacher Schlemmer in New York and in the second that they were available

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<sup>25</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 8, no. 7 (February 1952): 7.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. This sentence also points to the fact that the plastic wrapping and handles would most likely be damaged in a hot oven.

<sup>27</sup> Nika Standen, “For Sunday-Night Supper Try Cooking With Cheese,” *House and Garden*, January 1952, 46-47, 87.

<sup>28</sup> *House and Garden*, “The American Idea in Entertaining,” February 1952, 58-61, 124.

through W. and J. Sloane, New York and Saks Fifth Avenue. When another important shelter magazine, *House Beautiful*, highlighted Sohn's Pyrex carafe in July 1952 in their new and innovative products section, they noted that it was available through another leading New York retailer, Abraham and Straus.<sup>29</sup> By the Christmas season Sohn's carafe was featured in Lord and Taylor's full-page advertisement of gift items in *House and Garden*, figure 2.9.<sup>30</sup>

The trade press provides further insight into where and how Sohn's Pyrex items were sold. In a July 1952 *Giftwares* profile of Victor's, a Long Beach, California gift shop, Sohn carafes were conspicuous in an illustration of the shop's displays, figure 2.10.<sup>31</sup> This shop was located in a newly developed shopping center that was part of a burgeoning suburban area of Long Beach. *Giftwares* characterized it in this way "Modern stores service the community in a modern manner—with an easily accessible parking area for 2000 cars."<sup>32</sup> The store itself was dedicated to promoting the new American postwar lifestyle. The owners wanted to create "a modern shop where they could *specialize* in Casual Living items—where they could meet the trend with useful, fashion-right merchandise."<sup>33</sup> While the focus of the shop was to be modern in its outlook, the merchandise and store design were not necessarily so. The display units were composed of knotty pine and characterized by *Giftwares* as "authentically provincial in styling" while the other merchandise pictured in the illustrations made the

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<sup>29</sup> Julie Polshek, "It's Worth Mentioning," *House Beautiful*, July 1952, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Lord and Taylor, Advertisement, *House and Garden*, November 1952, 36.

<sup>31</sup> This section refers to *Giftwares*, "Victor's Specializes in Casual Living," 9, no. 6 (July 1952): 40-42.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* Italics and capitals are original to the text.

Sohn carafes stand out as the most modern in their design.<sup>34</sup> In the article *Giftwares* tellingly noted that many homes “can be overflowing with well-stocked china, glass and silver accessories but greatly lacking in the countless new developments for indoor-outdoor casual entertaining. New and old brides are equally anxious to bring their homes up to date....”<sup>35</sup> Ernest Sohn carafes were the kind of items that would allow homemakers to make these updates. Significantly the Sohn Pyrex line was located in the barbecue, patio accessories, and bar section of the store where “Giftwares for informal entertaining receives biggest promotion....”<sup>36</sup>

The trade press provided two more examples of the retailing of Sohn Pyrex in 1952. The *Gift and Art Buyer* profiled a new shop located in Manhasset, New York in August 1952.<sup>37</sup> The Gilbert and Leonard shop located in this “fast-growing, smart New York City suburb” was dedicated to giving “a metropolitan choice in accessories for the home.”<sup>38</sup> This store featured a more modern, streamlined interior created by architect Norman Cherner and featured sleek products like the Sohn carafes. A new gift shop in addition to the Maramor, an upscale Columbus, Ohio restaurant, was profiled in the October 1952 *Gift and Art Buyer*.<sup>39</sup> Ernest Sohn Creations occupied a central display table in an illustration of the new shop. Sohn Pyrex and Sohn chafing dishes were part of

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “A Shop in Manhasset,” 48, no. 8 (August 1952): 83-85.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>39</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Maramor,” 48, no. 10 (October 1952): 44-45.

the mix of traditional and more modern items geared towards the Maramor's well-heeled clientele.

Perhaps most revealing of the success and innovation of Sohn's Pyrex line was its almost immediate imitation by other gift firms. Sohn's previous employer Rubel and Company brought out a line of coffee bottles as early as August 1951.<sup>40</sup> Rubel featured its new "hostess servers" in a full-page advertisement in the December 1951 *Crockery and Glass Journal*, figure 2.11.<sup>41</sup> The larger carafe at top right is almost a direct copy of Sohn's forms with the wood handle and the more squat profile being the only differences. The small "Servette" at the middle left nearly replicates Sohn's smaller individual coffee servers except for its rounded bottom.

Sohn continued to utilize Pyrex to create new and innovative designs for many years. An updated version of Sohn's previous Pyrex carafes combined copper or stainless steel with wrought iron in a sleek form and was introduced by the firm in the spring of 1953, figure 2.12.<sup>42</sup> This carafe and warmer were selected by officials of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Merchandise Mart in Chicago for honor in their summer Good Design exhibition which opened in June 1953 at the Mart.<sup>43</sup> This high critical honor was duly noted in the trade press and also brought recognition in the popular press for Sohn's carafe with both the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times*

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<sup>40</sup> See *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Merchandise Cues," 47, no. 8 (August 1951): 92.

<sup>41</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Crockery and Glass Journal* 149, no. 6 (December 1951): 39.

<sup>42</sup> The carafe was introduced in the spring, see Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares*, 11, no. 4 (April 1953): 7. The illustrated advertisement, figure 2.12, is Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares*, 12, no. 2 (August 1953): 77.

<sup>43</sup> Museum of Modern Art, *Good Design, June 1953*, ([New York?]: Museum of Modern Art, 1953), item 195. The listing also noted that the "Coffee carafe and warmer" were available for B. Altman for \$9.00.

highlighting it.<sup>44</sup> In the *Times* article the carafe even warranted illustration. The Good Design award was also an effective marketing tool, Orenstein and Sohn proudly employed the Good Design logo in an August 1953 advertisement, figure 2.12.<sup>45</sup> The honor seemed good for sales of the carafe since it was listed in the 1954 Good Design exhibition in a section devoted to “Popular Sellers from Good Design 1950-1954.”<sup>46</sup>

An August 1951 Sohn advertisement in the *Gift and Art Buyer* featured one of Sohn’s Pyrex carafes in combination with a “*Wittcrosse* Warmer,” figure 2.13.<sup>47</sup>

*Wittcrosse* was the line name for a variety of chafing dishes and related warmers and serving items that were Sohn mainstays for many years. What would become Sohn’s trademark chafing dish, figure 2.14, was also the first item that Sohn advertised in July 1951, figure 2.2.<sup>48</sup> With little modesty Sohn called it “The Finest Chafing Dish ever created” and pointed to its beauty and utility. It was made of durable stainless steel “polished to a silver bright lustre, non-tarnishable” with ebonized legs and handles and featured “finger tip heat control, allowing increase or decrease of flame or complete snuffing.” Sohn had the *Wittcrosse* line manufactured by a company located in La

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See Appendix A for more on the Good Design movement in the United States and the Good Design Exhibitions specifically.

<sup>44</sup> *Giftwares*, “Good Design: Summer Selections Emphasize Shiny Surfaces, Bold Colors,” 12, no. 2 (August 1953): 48-49; Betty Pepis, “Home Furnishings Shown at Museum,” *New York Times*, September 23, 1953, 38; and *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “‘Good Design’ Items Offered to Grace Home,” April 25, 1954, F8.

<sup>45</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares*, 12, no. 2 (August 1953): 77.

<sup>46</sup> Museum of Modern Art, *Good Design, Fifth Anniversary*, ([New York?]: Museum of Modern Art, 1954), item 71.

<sup>47</sup> Ernest Sohn Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 47, no. 8 (August 1951): 15.

<sup>48</sup> Ernest Sohn Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares and Home Fashions* 7, no. 12 (July 1951): 59 and Ernest Sohn Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 47, no. 7 (July 1951): 15.

Crosse, Wisconsin.<sup>49</sup> Through contacts at Marshall Field's in Chicago Sohn was able to work with Butch Wittenberg, owner of a metal fabricating factory in La Crosse and a skilled machinist. Over a period of several weeks working in the factory with Wittenberg, Sohn was able to create his simple and elegant forms in hard-to-manipulate stainless steel.<sup>50</sup>

Sohn soon expanded the *Wittcrosse* line to include a range of "Buffet and Serving Accessories" as advertised in the *Gift and Art Buyer* in March 1952, figure 2.15.<sup>51</sup> This range of designs could accommodate a variety of serving and cooking needs including sautéing, baking, charcoal grilling and keeping things warm (or cold in case of the ice bucket) on the buffet table. Sohn used a few component parts in several different combinations to create this family of items. The *Wittcrosse* collection is not a wholesale departure from Sohn's previous chafing dish and serving items created in copper and other materials for Rubel.<sup>52</sup> However, this new *Wittcrosse* line was more angular, clean and geometric and more modern than most chafing dishes on the market at the time.

Sohn's use of stainless steel for this new line was quite advanced. Prior to World War II stainless steel was not seen in items for the home and after the war it slowly gained acceptance. Sohn's use of stainless steel in items that would be featured on the dinner table or buffet was quite fresh and interesting in 1951 and 1952. Sohn highlighted

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<sup>49</sup> The information in this section was recorded in interviews by the author with Ernest Sohn on October 18 and November 21, 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Sohn considered this a significant accomplishment later in life. The *Wittcrosse* name came out of a conglomeration of the last name of Wittenberg and the name of town where the factory was located.

<sup>51</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 48, no. 3 (March 1952): 11.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 1. Sohn would soon introduce copper as an alternative to stainless steel in the *Wittcrosse* line.

new and innovative use of materials by designers in the giftware field in a November 1952 article for *Giftwares* magazine.<sup>53</sup> Sohn wrote that designers were “no longer limited to ‘traditional’ materials, but are free to roam through the many media that are available in such great abundance.” Sohn extolled the advantages of stainless steel which he called “the sterling of the future” and a “material of unequalled practicality and beauty.”

Whereas silver would easily tarnish and scratch, stainless steel was hard, durable and had a similar beauty to sterling when highly polished, according to Sohn. To take advantage of these new materials and make items that would appeal to consumers by filling their needs, Sohn insisted a designer needed to be both creative and have an extensive knowledge of the materials, how they behave and how they can be manipulated. Here Sohn was writing about himself, about his strong beliefs in what design should be and how a designer should work to become successful.

The *Wittcrosse* line was accepted across the country and was manufactured for decades.<sup>54</sup> As we have seen, B. Altman’s in New York gave Sohn’s chafing dish an early and important feature through its *New Yorker* advertisement (figure 2.4) and promotion in the store itself. This chafing dish was also featured during the 1951 Christmas season on the West Coast. Robinson’s Department Store included it in an advertisement of gift items that were “Handsome to Look At...Delightful to Use” that ran in the *Los Angeles*

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<sup>53</sup> This section refers to Ernest Sohn, “The Changing Taste in Giftwares Materials,” *Giftwares* 10, no. 5 (November 1952): 18.

<sup>54</sup> A May 1967 firm advertisement in an issue of *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* celebrating the history of the gift industry highlighted the Wittcrosse chafing dish with the headline “Good Design Never Grows Old.” The ad indicated the firm had sold “over 100,000 to date,” see Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 63, no. 5 (May 1967): 127. This particular model of chafing dish continued to be manufactured and retailed by the firm into the 1970s.

*Times*.<sup>55</sup> At the same time Sohn's chafing dishes were highlighted nationally in the shelter magazine *House and Garden*. In the December 1951 issue a Sohn chafing dish is central to an illustration for a buffet, a set-up that "is a good mixer and simplifies service," figure 2.16.<sup>56</sup> The *Wittcrosse* line was again featured the next month in *House and Garden* and continued to be seen in this and other shelter magazines.<sup>57</sup>

The trade press also provides indications of the widespread acceptance of the *Wittcrosse* line through its frequent appearance in a variety of articles on new shops or promotions in 1952 and 1953. Perhaps most interesting were two department store features on American design. The first occurred at Miller and Rhoads, the leading department store of the Richmond, Virginia area, in April 1952.<sup>58</sup> Miller and Rhoads used this "American Design Show," the second of its kind at the store, to satisfy strong customer interest in American-made china, glass and gift items. The promotion involved extensive newspaper advertising, special displays in windows and inside the store, and a variety of special events and activities revolving around American products. One of the firms to be featured in this American design promotion was Sohn's with a highlight on the *Wittcrosse* chafing dish. The "magnificent chafing dish" was "the focal point of contemporary display starring creations of Ernest Sohn."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Robinson's, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, November 26, 1951, D28.

<sup>56</sup> *House and Garden*, "Make Music the Point of Your Parties," December 1951, 135.

<sup>57</sup> Nika Standen, "For Sunday-Night Supper Try Cooking With Cheese," *House and Garden*, January 1952, 46-47, 87.

<sup>58</sup> *Giftwares*, "American Giftwares Co-Star in Unprecedented Promotion," 9, no. 5 (June 1952): 33-35

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

A second “American Design Show” was held by the Rochester, New York department store McCurdy’s and highlighted by *Crockery and Glass Journal* in December 1952.<sup>60</sup> McCurdy’s planned the show “to introduce the public to the newest and best in American table ware and decorative accessories.”<sup>61</sup> The show was heavily promoted through the local press and featured representatives from fifteen manufacturers who “were on hand to tell the customers about their products, explain interesting processes, discuss modern trends.”<sup>62</sup> Representing Ernest Sohn Creations was Orenstein sales associate Arnold Adler dressed as a chef, figure 2.17, to give customers “a taste of chafing dish cookery” and show them “how easy buffet entertaining can be with proper table and serving accessories” such as the *Wittcrosse* chafing dish.<sup>63</sup> Ernest Sohn Creations was also highlighted in the show program given to customers when they visited the store. The firm was credited for providing resources to the modern hostess: “Jack Orenstein Associates, caterers par excellence to the buffet hostess. Ernest Sohn-designed lazy susans with oven-proof dishes and modernized chafing dishes.”<sup>64</sup> It appears that in-store demonstrations like this were fairly common ways of educating, promoting and selling for both the company and department stores across the country.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, “McCurdy’s Holds American Design Show,” 151, no 6 (December 1952): 107-109.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>65</sup> At a November 1952 “Open House” at W. and J. Sloane department store in Beverly Hills, California one of the featured activities was “demonstration of chafing dish cookery by Sohn,” see W. and J. Sloane, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 1952, A9. A similar promotion was held at Woodward and Lothrop department store in Washington D. C. where customers were invited to “come, see the

While Sohn's *Witterosse* chafing dish took center stage at the McCurdy's show, a lazy susan with ovenproof dishes was also noted in the show program. This piece was part of a third major line of items that were a success for Ernest Sohn Creations in its first few years of business. Sohn and Orenstein began marketing and advertising their first major ceramic collection during the late spring and early summer of 1952.<sup>66</sup> This distinctive and innovative ceramic collection called *Companion Casuals in Copper and Color*, was featured in an advertisement appearing in the July 1952 trade magazines, figure 2.18.<sup>67</sup> In this advertisement we see Ernest Sohn's penchant for combining materials with each piece composed of "Gleaming Copper, wrought iron and Colorful Ceramics."<sup>68</sup> One of the first pieces to be marketed in the *Copper and Color* line was the lazy susan that was mentioned in the McCurdy design show program. This lazy susan was dubbed *Lazy Leaves* and was first highlighted in the trade press in the spring of 1952, figure 2.19.<sup>69</sup> The design recalls Sohn's *Lazy Daisy* for Rubel. It featured individual dishes that hooked onto a central revolving iron stand that could be removed for easy storage and serving. The *Lazy Leaves* dishes and the other *Copper and Color* items were

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wonderful ways to cook and serve with a chafing dish" designed by Ernest Sohn. See Woodward and Lothrop, Advertisement, *The Washington Post*, November 20, 1952, 18.

<sup>66</sup> Earlier collections seem to have existed, this author has discovered little about them. What looks like ceramic casserole dishes on metal stands can be seen in a July 1951 photograph of the new Ernest Sohn Associates showroom, see *Giftwares and Home Fashions*, "People and News of the Trade," 7, no. 12 (July 1951): 74. The first advertisements by Jack Orenstein Associates after the announcement of the partnership with Sohn mentioned "Informality Ovenproof China," see Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 8, no. 6 (January 1952): 9 and *Gift and Art Buyer* 48, no. 1 (January 1952): 11. These early lines may have been experimental stepping stones prior to reaching the *Copper and Color* collection.

<sup>67</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 48, no. 7 (July 1952): 141 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 9, no. 6 (July 1952): 15.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> *Giftwares*, "Buyers at Chicago Market Applaud Modern, Practical Design," 9, no. 2 (March 1952): 24 and *Crockery and Glass Journal*, "New Products," 150, no 5 (May 1952): 50.

noted in the trade press and advertisements for being ovenproof, allowing use of these items to both cook and serve. Another distinctive addition to the *Copper and Color* collection was a large coffee pot and stand that was first advertised by Jack Orenstein in August 1952, figure 2.20.<sup>70</sup> This coffee pot echoes the modernity and geometry found in other Sohn designs of the time with its conical shape and hard angled iron handle and stand. The pot held twenty four cups and stood over fourteen inches tall when resting on its warmer, underlining Sohn's tendency to design on an oversized scale appropriate for home entertainment and buffet serving. A February 1953 advertisement highlighted other "Buffet Accessories" in the *Copper and Color* line that were also oversized and useful in multiple ways for entertainment, figure 2.21.<sup>71</sup> The *Jumbo Casserole* could be used for hot items and also as "an attractive salad server" while the *Party Pail* was even more versatile and could be used for "hot soups, beans, spaghetti or cold ice-cubes, etc."<sup>72</sup>

The *Copper and Color* line quickly found widespread acceptance with buyers and appearances in the national press. *House and Garden* magazine highlighted the *Copper and Color* chafing dish "for modern settings" in a November 1952 feature on Christmas gifts for the household.<sup>73</sup> In the same issue a Boston gift shop featured the *Copper and Color* casserole with warmer in its selection of "Original creations by Ernest Sohn, Fifth

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<sup>70</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 48, no. 8 (August 1952): 129 and *Giftwares* 10, no. 1 (August 1952): 51.

<sup>71</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 49, no. 2 (February 1953): 135.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> *House and Garden*, "Christmas Household Gifts," November 1952, 191.

Avenue.”<sup>74</sup> By the following May *Copper and Color* was again being featured in the shopping section of *House and Garden*. The Holiday House shop of Upper Montclair, New Jersey advertised the collection with the headline “For Today’s Living” and said “Designer Ernest Sohn bows to America’s growing taste for casual entertaining in this inspired group of buffet accessories,” figure 2.22.<sup>75</sup> Abraham and Straus in New York also featured *Copper and Color* in its summer offerings that year. A June 15, 1953 advertisement, figure 2.23, highlighted “Ernest Sohn’s design for casual dining!”<sup>76</sup> Abraham and Straus proclaimed the *Copper and Color* servers a “boon to the outdoor hostess who’s bored with barbecues—these handsome servers are the most practical and most decorative pieces of their kind we’ve seen” and had them available in the store’s fourth floor gift shop.<sup>77</sup> A September 1953 Saks Fifth Avenue advertisement in *House and Garden* featured a twin *Copper and Color* casserole set, available at its Guest and Gift Shop in New York, Beverly Hills and Detroit.<sup>78</sup> The set was extolled as “The perfect set-up for dining al fresco....”<sup>79</sup>

*Copper and Color*’s suitability to the post-war lifestyle with its greater informality and casual entertaining was also clear from its depiction editorially in both the trade and popular press. In a November 1952 *Crockery and Glass Journal* feature on “Easy Entertaining” thirty-five leading buyers highlighted the products best suited the

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<sup>74</sup> Chestnut Hill Giftmart, Advertisement, *House and Garden*, November 1952, 94.

<sup>75</sup> Holiday House, Advertisement, *House and Garden*, June 1953, 21.

<sup>76</sup> Abraham and Straus, Advertisement, *New York Times*, June 15, 1953, 5.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Saks Fifth Avenue, Advertisement, *House and Garden*, September 1953, 39.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

strong trend for informal entertainment.<sup>80</sup> The products were selected for the modern day hostess who “wants to enjoy herself at her own parties” and “make entertaining elegant but easy.”<sup>81</sup> Sohn’s *Lazy Leaves* was highlighted in the section of the article on “Easy Storage.”<sup>82</sup> Storage was considered vital to the buyers because entertaining demanded larger parties in homes that often had little storage space. The *Lazy Leaves* server was highlighted because each leaf dish was removable and stackable in a much smaller space than when in use. In the “Buffet Ware” section the *Copper and Color* coffee pot was highlighted.<sup>83</sup> The magazine outlined the buffet trend in this way: “Count in casual trends, lack of dining area, fewer maids: buffet is here to stay.”<sup>84</sup> The magazine characterized the large buffet or cocktail party as the modern equivalent of the formal dinner for eight of previous generations. These large gatherings necessitated large serving items like the Sohn coffee pot.

Sohn *Copper and Color* items were also featured in an October 1953 *House and Garden* article on “New Directions in Dining.”<sup>85</sup> The magazine asserted changes in home life had led the dining room to become less important and defined: “Partly because space is limited, partly because household help is nearly extinct, walls no longer define where we eat.”<sup>86</sup> Entertainment had also become more relaxed according to the

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<sup>80</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, “Easy Entertaining,” 151, no. 5 (November 1952): 19-35.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>85</sup> *House and Garden*, “New Directions in Dining,” October 1953, 156-166.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

magazine: “we have found gay, informal ways to organize large parties. Today, many a party begins at a buffet table set up in an alcove, foyer, or patio and then branches out to small tables and trays with individual place settings.”<sup>87</sup> *House and Garden* tellingly featured *Copper and Color* serving ware in an illustration for “an informal buffet party near the window in your living room,” figure 2.24.<sup>88</sup>

The final group of items that dominated Ernest Sohn Creations’ offerings in its first few years were decorative accessories made from black wrought iron. A March 1952 advertisement displays typical items in the wrought iron range, figure 2.25.<sup>89</sup> While all of these items are useful, they tend toward an emphasis on the decorative: each one might hold a plant or a candle or organize magazines but the decorative flourishes of the wrought iron dominate. The use of black wrought iron during the early 1950s was quite fashionable and was a part of many gift houses’ offerings. Sohn acknowledged the “current vogue” in a November 1952 article where he endorsed the use of wrought iron to create “a pleasing shape... a practical ornament.”<sup>90</sup>

It is interesting to note that what is perhaps the most practical item featured in the March advertisement, the folding stand and tray, is the most free from decorative flourishes and perhaps the best design. A related design, the *Fold-A-Way* table, was

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 163. Only the chafing dish on the right and the sugar and creamer towards the center are Sohn designs.

<sup>89</sup> This section refers to Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 9, no. 2 (March 1952): 7.

<sup>90</sup> Ernest Sohn, “The Changing Taste in Giftwares Materials,” *Giftwares* 10, no. 5 (November 1952): 18.

among the new products introduced by the firm in the summer of 1952, figure 2.26.<sup>91</sup> This sleek, simple and useful design became a critical success when it was selected for inclusion in the Museum of Modern Art's and Merchandise Mart's Good Design exhibition that opened in January 1953 at the Mart in Chicago.<sup>92</sup> Honors such as this one bolstered Ernest Sohn's reputation and added to the success of the firm.

The mid and late 1950s were a time of growth and expansion for Ernest Sohn Creations. Ernest Sohn generated new designs at a furious pace in a large variety of materials. The firm's showrooms expanded in size a number of times while a new fabricating and assembly factory opened in 1956 facilitating the firm's success.<sup>93</sup> The following sections will consider the major groupings or collections of items that were both interesting in their innovations as well as important in the firm's success.<sup>94</sup>

Ernest Sohn Creations introduced two large collections in 1954 that utilized a metal new to the firm, aluminum. Both Sohn and Jack Orenstein had years of experience creating and marketing aluminum gift items at Rubel and Everlast respectively so it was not surprising that the young firm utilized this versatile metal. Ernest Sohn's aluminum

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<sup>91</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Nice to Have Around the House," 48, no. 7 (July 1952): 182. This design was highlighted in a Lord and Taylor advertisement which appeared in *House and Garden* magazine in November 1952, see figure 2.9

<sup>92</sup> Museum of Modern Art, *Good Design, January 1953*, ([New York?]: Museum of Modern Art, 1953), item A10.

<sup>93</sup> For examples of the firm's showroom expansions see *Giftwares*, "What's Doing at 225," 12, no. 2 (August 4, 1953): 100 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 51, no. 7 (July 1955): 145. The "new modern plant" combining warehouse, factory and office space was opened by the firm in Elmhurst, Long Island late in 1956 in order to "facilitate and expedite its customer-service," see *Giftwares*, "What's Doing at 225 Fifth Avenue," 18, no. 5 (November 1956): 40. See also *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Newsfront," 52, no. 11 (November 1956): 16.

<sup>94</sup> Many less interesting, less innovative and less important designs will not be addressed.

collections demonstrate a new and fresh approach to a material that had become familiar to Americans.

Sohn's first aluminum collection was introduced to the trade at the winter gift shows at the beginning of 1954. A full-page advertisement for the new line appeared in the *Gift and Art Buyer* in February 1954, figure 2.27.<sup>95</sup> Here we see Sohn exhibiting another of his key design characteristics. He has reused forms and ideas already created and made them new and interesting by slight modifications and additions. Most of these aluminum items on warming stands follow the general forms he created for his *Copper and Color* ceramics and retain the copper covers while the burners themselves are borrowed from the *Wittcrosse* line. This reuse and adaptation provided two benefits: giving a recognizable style for consumers to associate with the Ernest Sohn Creations brand and to simplify the manufacturing and extend the life of designs once they were created. The reuse and adaptation also allowed Sohn to provide something "new" for buyers in a market that emphasized and preferred the new to a great extent.

The *Giftwares* advertisement suggests the use of the new line in the modern hostess' home. These cooking and serving aids were "For the Living Room Cook," they were to be used on a buffet or coffee table for informal entertainment where the hostess might both cook and serve in the presence of her guests. These items were "Practical—with a thousand uses" according to the firm.<sup>96</sup> Their versatility must have been a selling point for retailers—these aluminum designs were sold for many years. A May 1957 advertisement by the Los Angeles department store Bullocks, figure 2.28, featured the

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<sup>95</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 50, no. 2 (February 1954): 135.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

aluminum designs alongside the *Copper and Color* coffee server under the headline “Smart Ernest Sohn patio serving accessories.”<sup>97</sup> These servers would “make your informal patio serving more attractive and practical.” The next year may have been the final season for this aluminum line. Marshall Field’s in Chicago featured these “versatile serving pieces” under a “manufacturer’s closeout” sale in May 1958.<sup>98</sup>

Ernest Sohn Creations’ second aluminum-based collection was introduced at the trade shows and through the trade press during the summer of 1954. Advertisements in *Giftwares* and *Gift and Art Buyer* introduced *Sonium* in July 1954.<sup>99</sup> The advertisement proclaimed the eponymous line “a new fashion in decorative serving accessories” and emphasized the new group as “coordinated merchandise for oven to table service.”<sup>100</sup> The new line was also launched at a showroom party in June 1954. *Giftwares* noted the new line was “ovenproof, and has detachable black handles” and included chafing dishes, trays, salad bowls and ice buckets.<sup>101</sup> *Sonium* casseroles and serving pan were featured in a August 1954 advertisement in *Gift and Art Buyer*, figure 2.29.<sup>102</sup> Sohn had again worked with his trusted partner Butch Wittenberg in La Crosse, Wisconsin to develop and manufacture these aluminum alloy items.

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<sup>97</sup> Bullocks, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1957, B7.

<sup>98</sup> Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 20, 1958, 4.

<sup>99</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 14, no. 1 (July 1954): 11 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 50, no. 7 (July 1954): 36.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> *Giftwares*, “Trade Tidings,” 14, no. 1 (July 1954): 20.

<sup>102</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 50, no. 8 (August 1954): 131.

Consumer acceptance of the *Sonium* designs was strong, necessitating an increase in production by the end of 1954-early 1955.<sup>103</sup> *Sonium* was by then being retailed in prominent stores across the country. In January 1955 Woodward and Lothrop department store in Washington DC advertised *Sonium* calling it “up-to-date 20<sup>th</sup> Century metal” that was “lightweight, easy to clean, practical.”<sup>104</sup> A few months later W. and J. Sloane in Los Angeles was advertising “New spring accessories for your serving in smart, oven-to-table *Sonium*” and extolled its lightness, durability as well as the line’s unique features such as “removable stay-cool” handles.<sup>105</sup> *Sonium* continued to be produced and retailed by leading stores through the end of the decade.<sup>106</sup>

At the same time Ernest Sohn began to utilize aluminum as a material in his design another metal also became prominent in the firm’s offerings: brass. Sohn began to use brass or brass plated metal in the fall of 1953.<sup>107</sup> By October 1953 the firm was advertising “Elegance in Brass” and featuring candlesticks and a fruit bowl that combined brass and wood, figure 2.30.<sup>108</sup> Sohn soon began utilizing brass for a myriad of products

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<sup>103</sup> Advertisements in January 1955 referred to “unprecedented consumer acceptance” leading to “delay of deliveries” and necessitating expanded production to ship on time. See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 15, no. 1 (January 1954): 25 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 51, no. 1 (January 1954): 71.

<sup>104</sup> Woodward and Lothrop, Advertisement, *Washington Post and Times Herald*, January 16, 1955, 29.

<sup>105</sup> W. and J. Sloane, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 1955, C9.

<sup>106</sup> The final advertisement this author has found featuring *Sonium* dates from 1959, see Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 6, 1959, 5.

<sup>107</sup> The trade press first noted Sohn's use of brass in September 1953. *Giftwares* featured an ice bucket with a brass frame in the new products section and also noted that the Wittcrosse line would be offered in brass as well as copper and stainless steel. See *Giftwares*, “Show Stoppers,” 12, no. 3 (September 1953): 34 and *Giftwares*, “Shopping the Markets: Around Los Angeles,” 12, no. 3 (September 1953): 76.

<sup>108</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 12, no. 4 (October 1953): 75.

including magazine holders, serving carts, waste baskets, planters, etc.<sup>109</sup> Perhaps most distinctive and noteworthy was Sohn's use of brass in combination with glass and ceramic for stylish modern serving accessories. The first installment of the brass-accented serving items was introduced during the winter trade shows and was noted in the trade press in the spring of 1954. In February *Crockery and Glass Journal* featured a Pyrex bowl that had been dressed up by Sohn with a brass carrying rack and brass cover, figure 2.31.<sup>110</sup> Sohn had transformed this utilitarian item into something much more glamorous and appropriate for entertaining by combining it with the metal accents. In fact the firm marketed this *Brass and Crystal* line as "Serving Accessories for the Smart Hostess" on promotional tags.<sup>111</sup> The domed cover and thin finial at its center seen on this Pyrex bowl became characteristic of Sohn's brass lines. We see similar finials and covers on white ceramic items combined with brass fittings that *Giftwares* featured in March 1954, figure 2.32.<sup>112</sup> Here Sohn took his idea for combining ceramics with metal to the next level. The metal portions of coffee server and creamer recall the iron fittings that wrapped the *Copper and Color* equivalents but here they are made less geometric, softer, and more elegant with the gold-toned brass handles and covers. The trade journals and firm advertisements continued to feature additions to the brass and glass and brass and china lines throughout 1954 including a shrimp set which artfully held ice, shrimp,

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<sup>109</sup> The firm used brass or brass plated wire to create such items, replacing the wrought iron used in the early 1950s. These items were often fairly conventional and won't be considered here.

<sup>110</sup> *Crockery and Glass Journal*, "New Products from the Pittsburgh Market," 154, no. 2 (February 1954): 45.

<sup>111</sup> Original promotional tag attached to a Pyrex bowl in brass carrying rack in a private collection examined by the author.

<sup>112</sup> *Giftwares*, "Spotlights," 13, no. 3 (March 1954): 54.

sauce and toothpicks all in one unit (see figure 2.41), a double ice bucket and a triple casserole set on warming stand.

Nineteen fifty-five brought further exploration of the brass-and-white-ceramic and brass-and-glass collections by Sohn. In February 1955 the firm advertised a cocktail set that combined a glass cocktail shaker with a brass lid and finial in *Giftwares*, while in *Gift and Art Buyer* they highlighted “Table Accents in White China and Brass,” figure 2.33.<sup>113</sup> Both the cocktail carafe and the coffee pot featured a slight modification to the finial which became the standard finial form: the addition of a disc in the middle with a tapering inward above and below the disk. In the *Gift and Art Buyer* advertisement tall china cups on brass saucers complemented the lithe, elegant form of the coffee pot with its brass bail handle and cover.<sup>114</sup> The sugar (with brass cover) and creamer matching this set stood on a brass tray.<sup>115</sup> Again at midyear Sohn introduced more additions to his very successful brass accented collections. Orenstein and Sohn held a party at 225 Fifth Avenue in late June both celebrating the new lines and the expansion of this growing firm into further showroom space.<sup>116</sup> *Giftwares* noted that buyers from around the country were exposed to Sohn’s deft use of “brass and white china, brass and glass, and brass and walnut combinations” in elegant serving and display items such as those advertised by the firm in August 1955, figure 2.34.<sup>117</sup> With these offerings and others Ernest Sohn

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<sup>113</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 15, no. 2 (February 1955): 55 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 51, no. 2 (February 1955): 117.

<sup>114</sup> These recall the ceramic cups with metal saucers that Sohn had designed earlier for Rubel.

<sup>115</sup> *Giftwares*, “Highlights: New Merchandise at 225 Fifth Avenue,” 15, no. 2 (February 1955): 75.

<sup>116</sup> *Giftwares*, “Party Season Opens Early at 225 Fifth Ave.,” 16, no. 1 (July 1955): 16.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 51, no. 8 (August 1955): 125.

sought to make available items he believed the public desired. Looking ahead to the market of 1956 he said that “people are tiring of the slick, clinical look of extreme modern” and that they “desire merchandise which is simple but which has warmth.”<sup>118</sup>

Sohn’s brand of simple and warm design seems to have struck a chord with store buyers and the American public. Sohn’s brass and glass and brass and china lines were perhaps more widely accepted than any of his previous lines. As early as December 1954 the *Chicago Tribune* cited a Sohn-designed china casserole as an ideal gift for the home.<sup>119</sup> This casserole on brass warming stand with brass cover was available at the leading department store Carson Pirie Scott, which described it in an advertisement that month as “A wonderful serving accessory for buffets, parties” and noted it was “guaranteed ovenproof.”<sup>120</sup> By the following year Sohn’s expanded line of brass accented serving items was seen in prominent shops across the country. One smaller shop that featured Sohn’s brass accented pieces prominently was the Holiday Gift Shop in Penn Yan, New York.<sup>121</sup> This shop in upstate New York catered to a tourist trade and to a local college population and found Sohn items among some of the better sellers. One large display shelf, figure 2.35, featured Sohn brass and china items as well as other Sohn designs.

Betty Pepis of the *New York Times* selected perhaps the most monumental of all the brass and china items, the oversized samovar or coffee urn, for inclusion in an article

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<sup>118</sup> *Giftwares*, “Gift Wholesalers at 225 Look Forward to Fine Business—1956,” 17, no. 2 (February 1956): 67.

<sup>119</sup> Anne Douglas, “Gifts for the Home,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 8, 1954, A1.

<sup>120</sup> Carson Pirie Scott, Advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 1, 1954, 19.

<sup>121</sup> *Giftwares*, “Relaxed Atmosphere Draws Customers,” 16, no. 3 (September 1955): 45-47.

on “Fresh Accents For the Home” in Sunday magazine section in the paper’s October 16, 1955 issue, figure 2.36.<sup>122</sup> The curvaceous form of the samovar with its simple stand and cover warranted its inclusion in this article dedicated to items that might refresh a room through their “look of individuality.” Significantly Pepis noted all the items she selected had in common “a polished, rich quality very much in keeping with today’s trend toward elegance.” While the high price of the samovar may have been out of reach for most customers, this piece was used by a variety of prominent stores to attract interest in Ernest Sohn’s other brass accented offerings and to their gift departments generally.<sup>123</sup> The samovar was prominently displayed like a beacon above a range of brass and china Sohn designs in a B. Altman’s display at their Manhasset, New York branch illustrated in the January 1956 *Gift and Art Buyer*.<sup>124</sup> Sohn’s samovar was also prominently featured in the new contemporary gift shop floor added to tony New York jeweler Black, Starr and Gorham, which was featured by *Giftwares* in August 1956.<sup>125</sup> Alongside the samovar were a variety of Sohn china casseroles with brass warming stands and covers. Again the samovar made a prominent appearance at a new branch of Gimbels which opened in February 1957 in suburban Pittsburgh.<sup>126</sup> At this new branch the gift shop occupied a prominent location on the first floor and the samovar provided a central focus in a circular display of various Sohn-designed serving items.

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<sup>122</sup> This section refers to Betty Pepis, “Fresh Accents for the Home,” *New York Times*, October 16, 1955, SM52.

<sup>123</sup> Pepis noted it was available for \$29.95 at Saks Fifth Avenue.

<sup>124</sup> Walter Kleinschrod, “Opportunities: Clocks and Barometers,” *Gift and Art Buyer* 52, no. 1 (January 1956): 75.

<sup>125</sup> *Giftwares*, “Contemporary Design Prevails in Better Gifts,” 18, no. 2 (August 4, 1956): 36-37.

<sup>126</sup> *Giftwares*, “Gift Departments in Shopping Center Branches,” 19, no. 6 (June 1957): 46.

Advertisements by various department stores also suggested possible uses for these wares and indicate the popularity of Sohn's brass and glass and brass and china lines. Items and collections of items were advertised by leading stores in Washington, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles over a dozen times in 1955 and 1956 in the cities' most prominent newspapers: the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>127</sup>

A prominent May 1956 Marshall Field's advertisement featured Sohn designs as well as those of his competitor Georges Briard and suggests a reason why these designs were so popular, figure 2.37.<sup>128</sup> Here Field's highlights the fit between Ernest Sohn's designs and the postwar American lifestyle. The advertisement proclaims America "a party loving country where informality keynotes the best parties..."<sup>129</sup> Field's notes the "buffet in white and gilt" highlighted by Sohn's designs typifies the most informal, most American form of entertaining.<sup>130</sup>

Again we see the most telling reflection of Sohn's brass and glass and brass and china lines' success in the fact that other gift houses mimicked them. While a general move in the gift industry toward using brass as an accent metal became apparent in 1954, Ernest Sohn's style of combining brass with other materials was one of the most widely copied.<sup>131</sup> Rubel and Company advertised coffee servers and casseroles on stands in June

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<sup>127</sup> The author has discovered at least 13 separate advertisements for these items through the use of the Proquest Historical Newspapers Database.

<sup>128</sup> Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 21, 1956, 25.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Brass seemed to replace wrought iron as the favorite accent metal in the giftware field at this time.

1955, figure 2.38.<sup>132</sup> The forms of the Rubel casseroles especially recall Sohn's designs. The following year brought yet another close copy by a competing gift house: in July 1956 Everlast advertised their *Primavera* collection which combined white ceramic with brass stands and covers, figure 2.39.<sup>133</sup> While the collection does have a distinctive style it draws on Sohn's designs heavily, down to the brass saucers for the demitasse cups. Items that closely mimicked some of Sohn's most popular brass accented pieces continued to be introduced by other gift houses through at least 1958.<sup>134</sup>

While some competitors drew heavily on Sohn for inspiration, others wasted no effort and simply copied his designs wholesale. One such company was Quon Quon Co. whose brass and china offerings were highlighted in the *Gift and Art Buyer* in October 1956, figure 2.40.<sup>135</sup> In response to this and other wholesale copying of the Sohn's designs, the firm ran an advertisement denouncing "Piracy of Design," figure 2.41.<sup>136</sup> The advertisement loftily quoted John Ruskin to correlate copying with cheaper and lesser quality goods and illustrated the three most copied designs. Orenstein and Sohn used this prominent advertisement to offer these most popular items at a lower cost, thus turning a problem into a further success for the company.

Ernest Sohn continued to use brass and white china in his designs for several years. One design that stands above all the rest was a samovar or large beverage server

<sup>132</sup> Rubel and Company, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, 51, no. 6 (June 1955): 7.

<sup>133</sup> Everlast, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 18, no. 1 (July 1956): 37.

<sup>134</sup> See Pitman-Dreitzer and Co., Advertisement, *Giftwares* 21, no. 6 (June 1958): 44.

<sup>135</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Color, Style, Profit In New Tableware Offerings," 52, no. 10 (October 1956): 91. These examples are so close to Sohn's this author first thought they had been misattributed by the trade journal.

introduced by Sohn in the summer of 1958, figure 2.42.<sup>137</sup> This extraordinary item with its undulating ceramic body held aloft by a brass stand shows Sohn's design at its most exuberant and playful. This enormous piece, rising nearly two feet above the tabletop, held an extraordinary fifty cups of liquid.<sup>138</sup> The samovar did not escape the attention of at least one prominent publication: the *New York Times* featured it in an article on "Entertaining Made Easy" in September 1958.<sup>139</sup> The article noted "new table and buffet accessories for entertaining at home are decorative as well as practical."<sup>140</sup>

Practicality was one of the key characteristics in Ernest Sohn's design philosophy, a characteristic that can be discerned in another major line introduced in the summer of 1956: *Georgian*. This line marked the first time that Sohn utilized historical forms or ideas in his designs since his time at Rubel. *Georgian* was first advertised in the trade journals in July 1956, figure 2.43.<sup>141</sup> A party on June 19 at the firm's showrooms was highlighted by this line which combined, as the *Gift and Art Buyer* noted, "Georgian design with contemporary styling."<sup>142</sup> Sohn used his characteristic simple, clean taste to create forms that recall the past in their paneled bodies with handles that evoke those of historic metal beverage pots. Sohn and the firm were undoubtedly responding to a

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<sup>136</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 52, no. 6 (June 1956): 10.

<sup>137</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 54, no. 8 (August 1958): 105.

<sup>138</sup> An example in a private collection examined by the author stands approximately 23 inches high.

<sup>139</sup> *New York Times*, "Entertaining Made Easy," September 21, 1958, SMA34

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* This piece is certainly decorative but practical when filled with over three gallons of liquid is another question entirely.

<sup>141</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 18, no. 1 (July 1956): 47 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 52, no. 7 (July 1956): 35.

<sup>142</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Pages from a 225 Reporter's Notebook," 52, no. 8 (August 1956): 168.

growing demand for more formality in design and an upsurge in the ever-present American love affair with historic forms. The *Georgian* pieces followed closely on the success of Sohn's brass and ceramic designs but here the metal handle was replaced with ceramic, molded and gilded to fool the eye. The finials however retain Sohn's penchant for combination of materials, they are made of brass attached through holes in the tops of the lids.<sup>143</sup>

While the *Georgian* line seems to have included a range of serving accessories, the beverage pots were the best sellers.<sup>144</sup> The firm introduced at least two teapot forms, one of which was strangely curvaceous for this line and another that echoes the straight paneled sides of the other *Georgian* items, figure 2.44.<sup>145</sup> The *Georgian* line also marked the first time that the firm introduced a combination automatic coffeemaker and server. This new innovation combined a ceramic pot with an interior metal mechanism that would brew coffee through a percolation method when the pot was plugged into an electrical outlet. After the coffee was brewed the brewing mechanism could be removed and the pot unplugged for serving.

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<sup>143</sup> This analysis is based on examples in a private collection examined by the author.

<sup>144</sup> The author has discovered a covered casserole dish on stand as well as a salad bowl in trade journal illustrations, see *Giftwares*, "A Product Panorama," 18, no. 2 (August 4, 1956): 60 and *Giftwares*, Gift Departments in Shopping Center Branches," 19, no. 6 (June 1957): 46. While the *Georgian* line was not heavily promoted by major department stores through advertisements (to date the author has found no advertisements for this line), the coffee pots and coffee sets must have sold reasonably well due to their fairly regular appearance on the secondary market today.

<sup>145</sup> The first was illustrated in *Giftwares*, see *Giftwares*, "Gifts Ready for the Early Bird Market," 18, no. 6 (December 1956): 42. For the second see *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Merchandise Highlights," 53, no. 1 (January 1957): 96.

Sohn was able to create this percolator model due to a new partnership with Hall China Company of East Liverpool, Ohio.<sup>146</sup> Hall had been in business over fifty years and was known for making ceramics for use in both home and institutional settings.<sup>147</sup> Hall was especially well known for creating highly durable ceramics for use in the kitchen, ceramics regularly exposed to the high temperatures and stresses of hot ovens and boiling liquids. In Hall Ernest Sohn gained a partner able to produce high quality ceramics on a larger scale and more inexpensively than before. With Hall he also gained a ceramic body that could withstand great stresses, like the high heat of the electric percolator mechanism seen in the *Georgian Automatic*.<sup>148</sup>

In 1957 Ernest Sohn Creations began to use another material prominently: wood. While Sohn had utilized wood prior to 1957, it was in this year that wood took a more central role and remained a staple in the firm's offerings from this time forward.<sup>149</sup> Two collections were introduced at the winter trade shows of 1957: *Style Trends* and *Vestaware*. *Style Trends* was a variety of serving accessories crafted from mahogany

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<sup>146</sup> While it is clear that Hall China primarily produced Ernest Sohn's ceramics beginning with the *Georgian* line, it is not exactly clear when this partnership started. It seems most of the brass and china line was also produced by Hall which was confirmed by communications in 2005 and 2006 between the author and Hall researchers Gary and Paula Barneby who have consulted the Hall company archives. At least one period advertisement confirms that the ceramic parts of some Sohn brass and china items were made by Hall, see Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 19, 1956, B1. Also the author has discovered ceramic casserole dishes from Sohn's brass and china line with a standard Hall mark of the time.

<sup>147</sup> For more information on the Hall company and its products see Gary and Paula Barneby, *Hall China Tea and Coffee Pots*, (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2005), Jeffrey Snyder, *Hall China*, (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2002), Margaret and Ken Whitmyer, *Collector's Encyclopedia of Hall China 3rd Edition*, (Paducah, KY: Collector's Books, 2001.)

<sup>148</sup> The ceramic body of Sohn items prior to the partnership with Hall was less durable and more prone to cracking and crazing when subjected to heat stresses based on those examined by the author in private collections. This is not seen in Hall produced items. Ernest Sohn could not recall who produced his ceramics before Hall in an interview with the author conducted March 16, 2006.

<sup>149</sup> Wood was used in the ebonized finials, handles and legs of Sohn's *Wittcrosse* line from their introduction in 1951 and also appeared combined with brass in decorative accessories in 1956.

such as those illustrated in the firm's February 1957 advertisement seen in figure 2.45.<sup>150</sup> In addition to the trays and ice bucket illustrated, the line featured a variety of items like cheese boards and salad bowl sets in what the firm called "teak-finished mahogany."<sup>151</sup> The allusion to teak was likely a calculated one; high style furniture and decorative accessories from a variety of Danish and other Scandinavian designers were very well known in the United States by this time. These items, often made from teak, were climbing toward their height of popularity with the American public. Sohn and his firm were likely responding most specifically to the offerings of Dansk, a young firm that by 1957 had gained much notoriety and a large volume of sales in the gift field for a variety of items including staved teak accessories.<sup>152</sup>

While Sohn's *Style Trends* wood designs were attractive but not greatly innovative, the *Vestaware* line the firm introduced at the same time was something new and more interesting. The line was first advertised in February 1957, figure 2.46.<sup>153</sup> Here Sohn used his characteristic combinations of materials to create ensembles of wood, pottery and glass. While Sohn's use of elongated and simple forms in pale blue pottery

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<sup>150</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 19, no. 2 (February 1957): 39.

<sup>151</sup> This wording, which undoubtedly came from the firm itself, was used by the trade journals describing new items in the line, see *Giftwares*, "New Merchandise is Ready," 19, no. 1 (January 1957): 64 and *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Merchandise Highlights," 53, no. 4 (April 1957): 47.

<sup>152</sup> Dansk and its chief designer Jens Quistgaard rose to prominence in the United States in 1955 when his work was featured at several leading department stores, see *Giftwares*, "Young Danish Designer Visits California," 16, no. 6 (December 1955). While Dansk began to advertise in the trade press in 1956, it was January 1957 when the company ran its first prominent advertisements, a clear indication of their quick success in the American market. This first full-page advertisement featured several examples of the firm's designs in teak, see Dansk Designs Inc., Advertisement, *Giftwares* 19, no. 1 (January 1957): 48 and *Gift and Art Buyer* 53, no. 1 (January 1957): 69.

<sup>153</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 19, no. 1 (January 1957): 25 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 53, no. 2 (February 1957): 113.

and the wood warming stands and covers evoke Scandinavian design of the time, Sohn's unique combination of materials is all his own.<sup>154</sup> This attractive combination seemed to strike an immediate interest among the press and buyers. The *New York Times* pictured the *Vestaware* ceramic coffee pot as well as another *Vestaware* beverage server, this one a Pyrex carafe with a wood collar at its neck, both on wood warming stands, in a feature titled "It Is a Wise Wife Who Serves the Coffee Hot" in March 1957.<sup>155</sup> In July Cecelia Schaeffer of the *Chicago Tribune* highlighted *Vestaware* in the paper's regular column on "What's New in the Kitchen."<sup>156</sup> Schaeffer remarked on the pleasing contrast between the wood of the warmer and cover, the brass of the finial and the pale blue of the pottery. She also emphasized that these casseroles were "Ideal for wedding gifts, for a new home, or for dining in the patio" since each possessed a second cover of the same "high glaze ovenware" allowing for cooking in the same dish before the covers were switched for serving.<sup>157</sup> Advertisements by leading department stores such as Marshall Field's in Chicago and B. Altman's in New York, figure 2.47, featured Sohn's new collection and also emphasized its versatility and the pleasing contrasts between materials.<sup>158</sup>

By late 1958-early 1959 Ernest Sohn had further refined the combination of wood, pottery and metal with the introduction of his *Doric* line. In *Doric* Sohn created

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<sup>154</sup> The firm's name for the line also evokes Scandinavia to this author's ear despite the fact that its root, Vesta, is the ancient Roman goddess of the hearth and home. Significantly the pale blue color of the pottery was called "iced blue" by the firm, see *Giftwares*, "In the Works for January," 18, no. 6 (December 1956): 41.

<sup>155</sup> *New York Times*, "It Is a Wise Wife Who Serves the Coffee Hot," March 23, 1957, 15.

<sup>156</sup> Cecelia Schaeffer, "Handsome China Casseroles Keep Food Piping Hot," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 12, 1957, B16.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>158</sup> See Marshall Field and Company, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 19, 1957, B3 and B. Altman and Co., Advertisement, *New York Times*, April 21, 1957, 65.

some of his most beautiful designs in what was probably his most successful ceramic line. A December 1958 advertisement previewed the line that the firm would feature at the winter trade shows, figure 2.48.<sup>159</sup> The bulbous forms of the coffee pot, creamer and sugar bowl are some of Sohn's most curvaceous. Other pieces in this extensive line shared a curving or rounded profile while a few had a more geometric edge, figure 2.49. All shared the delicate fluting that is alluded to in the line's name. Most pieces came with warming stands that combine brass plated metal and walnut or sat on wooden trays. One casserole dish has a walnut cover while another has only a wooden finial. Other finials were made of brass. In *Doric* Sohn again mixed materials in the line's cups and saucers, this time ceramic cups on wooden saucers.<sup>160</sup> One of Sohn's signature forms, the large samovar or coffee server, sits on a wooden platform on which a brass alcohol burner and brass stand hold aloft the capacious ceramic body with its brass and wood spigot.

The elegant forms and unique combinations of *Doric* seemed to have struck the fancy of buyers and the public generally. The line became a special favorite of the *Los Angeles Times*, which featured various *Doric* pieces editorially five times in 1959, including three consecutive Sundays in June.<sup>161</sup> The line seemed to have appealed to the writers and editors because it could easily be mixed with other dishes and was

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<sup>159</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 54, no. 12 (December 1958): 90.

<sup>160</sup> For the cups and saucers see *Giftwares*, "Ring in the New, Showtime in Chicago," 23, no. 1 (January 1959): 30 and *Los Angeles Times*, "Bright Touches for the Table," June 21, 1959, L60.

<sup>161</sup> See *Los Angeles Times*, "Table Accents," June 7, 1959, J38; *Los Angeles Times*, "Accent Marks for Decorative Themes," June 14, 1959, J42; *Los Angeles Times*, "Bright Touches for the Table," June 21, 1959, L60; Barbara Lenox, "Summer Servers," *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 1959, JJ20; *Los Angeles Times*, "Practical Presents," December 6, 1959, I34.

appropriate for casual and more formal settings. In November 1959 the *Chicago Tribune* also selected *Doric* to highlight in a story about “a special showing of home accessories and giftwares by Ernest Sohn” that was “on display in Marshall Field and Company’s second floor ‘Casual Living’ section.”<sup>162</sup> The paper characterized Sohn as a distinguished designer best known for serving accessories that combined a variety of materials in interesting ways.<sup>163</sup> An advertisement for the leading New York department store B. Altman’s featured the *Doric* line and other Sohn creations as gift suggestions in an advertisement a month later in mid December 1959, figure 2.50.<sup>164</sup> Perhaps most interesting in the Altman advertisement is the lazy susan at the bottom center. Sohn had again reinterpreted one of his signature forms: each of the ceramic petal-shaped dishes could be removed for serving and storage. The Altman advertisement also shows that Sohn had integrated wood in combination with other materials, notably in the bent glass shrimp server with walnut handles and in the ice bucket with a wooden knob. The *Doric* line’s success continued unabated at least through the mid-1960s. It continued to be featured prominently in advertisements by leading stores across the country including the Broadway Stores of Los Angeles which highlighted *Doric* as a “Classic” in May 1965, figure 2.51.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Designer Ernest Sohn’s Accessories on Display,” November 22, 1959, A7.

<sup>163</sup> The article also exaggerated Sohn’s formal training greatly.

<sup>164</sup> B. Altman and Co., Advertisement, *New York Times*, December 18, 1959, 8.

<sup>165</sup> Broadway Stores, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 1965, E3. This was one of the last retail advertisements for *Doric*.

### Chapter 3

Ernest Sohn Creations was already a major success by the end of the 1950s, a success the firm would build upon through the 1960s. Ernest Sohn Creations' growth mirrored that of the gift industry itself, which also expanded greatly through the 1950s, well surpassing the billion dollar retail sales mark during the latter half of the decade.<sup>1</sup> As the industry grew and the country's population migrated, other regional centers became more and more important. One sign of this was the opening of a third Ernest Sohn Creations showroom in Dallas in the summer of 1959 in order to serve the growing southwestern United States.<sup>2</sup>

Ernest Sohn was not at a loss to fill this expanded showroom space. The pace of new designs introduced by the firm seemed to grow with each passing year. In 1960 Sohn introduced two major collections: *Riviera* and *Contessa*. *Riviera* was introduced during the winter trade shows and first advertised in the trade magazines in February 1960, figure 3.1.<sup>3</sup> The advertisement noted that this group of "Sophisticated Buffet Accessories in Ovenproof China" was available in several colors as well as white. In *Riviera* we see Ernest Sohn at his most elegant and modern, figure 3.2. The shapes are pared-down cylinders accented by precise handles and concave covers. The use of color provided the only decoration on these simple forms.

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<sup>1</sup> Industry estimates marked this milestone as happening in 1956. By 1959 a volume of \$1,175,000,000 was estimated, see Walter Kleinschrod, "Editorial: Challenge of the 60's," *Gift and Art Buyer* 55, no. 10 (October 1959): 37.

<sup>2</sup> *Giftwares*, "On Location: Southwest," 24, no. 1 (July 1959): 65 and *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Going on in the Trade," 55, no. 7 (July 1959): 132.

<sup>3</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 25, no. 2 (February 1960): 45 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 56, no. 2 (February 1960): 121.

This fairly stark aesthetic did not seem to please all buyers. The line was soon offered with the addition of a floral pattern and brass covers and stands for certain pieces, (figure 3.2, at right.)<sup>4</sup> This bow to more conservative tastes was characterized by *Giftwares* as bridging “the gap between traditional and contemporary.”<sup>5</sup> The decorated version seems to have been more saleable to buyers including those at B. Altman’s which featured the collection the following year in an “Event for summer entertaining,” figure 3.3.<sup>6</sup> Altman’s noted the “Pastel floral pattern on white ground mixes with other china patterns, makes gracious addition to your own service.”<sup>7</sup> In other words this collection would integrate with other more traditional dishware. The more conservatively decorated *Riviera* proved to have greater appeal. This taste was underlined when rival firm Lipper and Mann copied the form in inexpensive Japanese china and applied a decorative pattern to it as part of their “Mardi Gras Assortments” introduced in early 1961, figure 3.4.<sup>8</sup>

The second major collection of the 1960s, *Contessa*, was introduced at the summer trade shows and first advertised in August 1960, figure 3.5.<sup>9</sup> Here Sohn further adapted to the strong taste in 1960s America for things that evoked the past. The forms

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<sup>4</sup> The decal pattern, called *Bouquet*, was originally based on hand-painted floral designs created by Stig Lindberg for Gustavsberg pottery of Sweden in the late 1940s and early 1950s. *Bouquet* was originally applied to Eva Zeisel’s *Tomorrows Classic* shape, which was also produced by Hall China starting in 1952.

<sup>5</sup> *Giftwares*, “Shopping 225,” 26, no. 2 (August 4, 1960): 63.

<sup>6</sup> B. Altman and Co., Advertisement, *New York Times*, July 9, 1961, 36. It is interesting to note that Sohn has in typical fashion reused a preexisting shape, the large coffee urn from the brass and china collection, to serve the same function in this *Riviera* grouping.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> The coffee pot at mid left, creamer and sugar by it and the casserole at top center are clearly copied for Sohn’s *Riviera* designs, see Lipper and Mann, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 57, no. 1 (January 1961): 71.

<sup>9</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 26, no. 2 (August 1960): 51 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 56, no. 8 (August 1960): 137.

pictured in the advertisement are still fairly simple; however, their pronounced foot rims and heavy gilding at top and bottom with a pseudo coat of arms in gold at center are much less modern. Other items in the *Contessa* line included glass serving trays and barware with the same emblem applied in gold as well as a group of paneled shapes which were borrowed from Sohn's earlier *Georgian* collection, figure 3.6. Finials for most of the ceramics are in the form of stylized pineapples cast in metal and gilded, again evoking an eighteenth-century inspiration. *Contessa's* more conservative detailing was endorsed by buyers who stocked it in prominent stores across the country for several years.<sup>10</sup>

In 1961 the firm again introduced two major collections, one ceramic and one metal. The ceramic collection, called the *Butter Mould Line*, was a calculated effort by the firm to tie into public interest in what was known as Early American or Americana, an interest that grew ever stronger in the early 1960s. *Giftwares* magazine characterized this public appetite in the summer of 1960: "Americana is money in the till for most gift retailers."<sup>11</sup> *Giftwares* outlined three main groupings of Americana including one that "makes use of Early American motifs and styles, but makes no attempt to reproduce the original artifact's shape or function."<sup>12</sup> In the *Butter Mould Line* Ernest Sohn did just this. February 1961 advertisements introducing the line, figure 3.7, showed three typical

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<sup>10</sup> See B. Altman and Co., Advertisement, *New York Times*, November 27, 1960, SM93; Continental Merchandise Mart, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1961, WS7; Broadway Stores, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, May 26, 1963, K4.

<sup>11</sup> Hazel Kleban, "Americana for Today," *Giftwares* 25, no. 6 (June 1960): 25.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

Sohn forms, forms that were included in all of his ceramic buffet services.<sup>13</sup> Sohn used antique butter molds from his personal collection to create the decorative motifs and reinforced the idea of the old and the handmade with the addition of closely spaced lines circling the exteriors of the pieces suggesting that they had been thrown on a wheel.<sup>14</sup> The colors, “Jade and Mahogany,” also added to the antique feel of the line with the brown coming close to Rockingham glazed wares of the nineteenth century, figure 3.8. The firm’s promotion of the line strongly tied into the appetite for Americana. A promotional tag attached to items read “The “Butter Mould” is the trade-mark of our early American tradition. The designs represent original patterns created by our colonial artisans.”<sup>15</sup> The spelling of “Mould” itself reinforces this antique association. Perhaps only the bamboo and metal warming stands contradicted the nostalgic connection, although this natural material does not seem entirely incongruous.

Response to the *Butter Mould Line* was favorable. The *Los Angeles Times* featured *Butter Mould* in an illustrated two-page spread one Sunday in March as something new and interesting but yet “Reminiscent of the Past.”<sup>16</sup> Leading stores like Lord and Taylor featured it across the country.<sup>17</sup> Ramsey’s Corner, a leading gift shop in Salt Lake City, featured the *Butter Mould Line* in a table display suggesting buffet

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<sup>13</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares* 27, no. 2 (February 1961): 37 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 57, no. 2 (February 1961): 131.

<sup>14</sup> Ernest Sohn had several examples of butter molds on display in his home in the fall of 2005 and spring of 2006 and mentioned to the author that he had lent the one used to create the *Butter Mould* motif to a Red Wing Pottery convention several years before. The *Butter Mould Line* was unusual for Sohn in that it was produced by Red Wing Pottery of Red Wing, Minnesota, not Hall China.

<sup>15</sup> Tag came attached to a casserole cover in a private collection examined by the author.

<sup>16</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, “Reminiscent of the Past,” March 26, 1961, 50-51.

<sup>17</sup> Lord and Taylor, Advertisement, *New York Times*, May 14, 1961, 35. Lord and Taylor also had its own exclusive glaze on the line, noted as “a rich butter-gold” in the advertisement.

service, figure 3.9.<sup>18</sup> The shop highlighted typical Sohn pieces including the samovar or coffee urn and an open fondue dish on warmer as well as the more unusual mushroom-shaped salt and pepper shakers. The *Butter Mould Line* was quite appropriate to this shop selling a typically diverse array of items ranging from modern to the more traditional.

While the *Butter Mould Line* certainly reinforced the firm's "made in America for Americans" emphasis in 1961, Sohn's other major line in metal was a bit more exotic.<sup>19</sup> The *Prado Collection Hand Forged*, although made in the United States, sought to take advantage of the fashion for Spanish-inspired design that was strong at the time. This forged iron collection, as seen in a March 1961 advertisement, figure 3.10, was a highly decorative group of occasional furniture, such as the featured table and screen, as well as other accessories like candlesticks, plant stands and magazine baskets.<sup>20</sup> While the *Prado* collection was keyed to a significant home-furnishing trend, Ernest Sohn later recalled it was not terribly successful and was promoted by only a few stores.<sup>21</sup>

The second part of 1961 brought another expansion of the firm's showroom space as the main office in 225 Fifth Avenue was doubled in size.<sup>22</sup> One new group of items that helped to fill this added space was a selection of serving accessories, bookends and smoking paraphernalia that combined wood (rosewood or, more commonly, walnut) with

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<sup>18</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, "Take Color, Comfort, Blend with Care," 57, no. 5 (May 1961): 38. Another typical Sohn form, a lazy susan with five removable dishes, was also part of the *Butter Mould* collection, see *Giftwares*, "Product Spotlight," 27, no. 5 (May 1961): 25.

<sup>19</sup> This slogan was noted in *Giftwares*, "Shopping the Market: East," 27, no. 1 (January 1961): 85.

<sup>20</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 57, no. 3 (March 1961): 126.

<sup>21</sup> Interview by the author with Ernest Sohn on October 18, 2005. This author has only found one advertisement that promoted *Prado*, a table was included in a Spanish themed promotion; see Broadway Stores, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1963, 9.

<sup>22</sup> See *Giftwares*, "On Location: East," 27, no. 6 (June 1961): 40.

inset plaques of enameled metal, figure 3.11.<sup>23</sup> Sohn had previously combined wood with decorated tile insets but it was with the enamel and wood items that the firm had a great success.<sup>24</sup> This sort of enamel and wood design continued to be produced by the firm for several years. The motifs on the enamel were highly decorative, with certain patterns bordering on the saccharine. Other patterns were more abstracted and elegant, showing Ernest Sohn's willingness to produce a range of items to appeal to different tastes. One of Sohn's most notable designs in this line, in many ways very typical of Sohn, was a casserole on stand, figure 3.12. In this piece Sohn had reused existing forms, a casserole dish from the brass and china line and a *Doric* warming stand, with a cover that combined both wood and enameled copper. The combination of so many materials in a single item is very characteristic of Sohn and in this case quite charming.

At the end of 1961 Ernest Sohn was asked by the trade journal *Gift and Art Buyer* to write about his predictions for the "style trends" for the following season.<sup>25</sup> This article sheds light on Sohn's design philosophy at the time and accounts for the emphasis on decorative and historical touches that were stronger during the rest of his career. Sohn stated his belief that a designer is not an artist or fashion leader who shapes the public's tastes. For Sohn the commercial aspect was first and foremost: "The designer must be first of all a merchandiser who is supposed to have a kind of sixth sense of what might

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<sup>23</sup> These items were noted in *Giftwares*, "Shopping 225," 28, no. 2 (August 4, 1961): 50.

<sup>24</sup> This conclusion is based on the extensive advertisement of these items by department stores as well their frequent appearance in the secondary market as noted by this author.

<sup>25</sup> This section refers to *Gift and Art Buyer*, ed., "The Year Ahead," 57, no. 12 (December 1961): 50, 96, 102.

sell next season.”<sup>26</sup> The designer, according to Sohn, was someone who could create objects for a certain clientele at a certain price. In his case this was “the broad middle class of the United States.”<sup>27</sup> Sohn reasoned that a designer of mass-produced objects could not create extreme changes in style or color; such changes would not be accepted by the buying public and would only be applauded by a few critics with highly sophisticated tastes. The designer instead must consider what his buying public might desire and how each item might fit in with their existing style or preferences. Sohn realized that the American public largely desired the traditional: “What is the ‘trend?’ The traditional qualities of Early American, Continental Regency, or Empire, Chippendale or Oriental are the motifs that are predominant and desired by our buyers.”<sup>28</sup> Sohn indicated that these traditional motifs would be incorporated into his collections. However, Sohn also spoke as an artist: “Sometimes [we] forget ourselves and create as we would like to create—simple, classic forms of utility, where the materials used suggest the form....”<sup>29</sup> It is between the decorative historical references and the simple and utilitarian that Sohn’s designs continued to hover.

Ernest Sohn Creations and Jack Orenstein Associates again expanded in 1962, this time opening showroom space in the new Atlanta Merchandise Mart.<sup>30</sup> Atlanta had become an increasingly important center for wholesaling in the southeast United States. Within the new and the old showroom spaces the firm unveiled a myriad of designs for

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 96

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 96, 102.

<sup>30</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “News of the Industry,” 58, no. 1, (January 1962): 149.

the year. In January 1962 the firm advertised the *Tuliptime* group, figure 3.13.<sup>31</sup> *Tulip-Lites*, decorative candle holders of metal and colored glass, came in three assorted sizes.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps more interesting was the ceramic collection also highlighted in the advertisement. This collection, known as *Petal*, included the full range of typical Sohn offerings in a buffet service: lazy susans, serving dishes, samovar, casseroles, coffee pot, etc.<sup>33</sup> Their lobed forms suggest large gourds or squash, echoed by the metal finials replicating stalks.<sup>34</sup> In typical Sohn fashion these buffet service items often were accompanied by metal warming stands, each plated in gold for added luxury. In *Petal* Ernest Sohn reincarnated the botanical forms first used by eighteenth-century European ceramic factories but stripped them down to his signature simple shapes with no decoration. The forms themselves and their proportions made pleasing, whimsical designs that would appeal to many buyers.

In July 1962 Jack Orenstein Associates mounted its largest ever promotion of Ernest Sohn Creations.<sup>35</sup> The firm took a dozen pages of the leading trade journal, *Gift and Art Buyer*, to publish a catalog of the huge variety of the “many useful and decorative home products” then available. Each page was devoted to a different grouping of products such as trays, “Walnut and Pewter,” candleholders, “Susans and Servers,” etc. Two consecutive pages were devoted to “Gifts in Gold” and “Stainless Steel”

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<sup>31</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 58, no. 1 (January 1962): 48.

<sup>32</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 58, no. 3 (March 1962): 67.

<sup>33</sup> See *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Industry News: Brack Shops Los Angeles,” 58, no. 2, (February 1962): 176.

<sup>34</sup> While the forms are botanical in inspiration they do not seem to represent the petals the line name suggests.

respectively, figure 3.14.<sup>36</sup> Here we see a good example of Sohn's versatility and ability to appeal to a wide-ranging market. The gold-plated metal designs appealed to those interested in more traditional and luxurious motifs and also provided coordinating items that could be teamed with Sohn's *Petal* ceramic ware. The stainless steel items show Sohn's design work at its most modern and progressive. The shapes are generally simple and straightforward with little connection to the past. The simple forms in the modern material of stainless steel are softened slightly with accents in wood. The chafing dish at the bottom right is particularly notable since it is the updated version of one of Sohn's original successes, *Wittcrosse*. This version also became quite a success for the company and was sold widely and even was used to symbolize chafing dish cookery on the cover of a popular cookbook about the subject, figure 3.15.<sup>37</sup> The final page of the advertising section highlighted "Buffet Services in fine ovenproof china in our famous patterns *Doric, Petal, Contessa*," another important portion of the firm's business.<sup>38</sup>

The years 1963 and 1964 brought greater exploration of existing Sohn lines. The firm introduced further iterations of their candle holder collections each spring season, figure 3.16.<sup>39</sup> While these items are somewhat wanting as compelling design they surely proved moneymakers for the company at their low price.<sup>40</sup> Tortoiseshell and floral

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<sup>35</sup> This section refers to Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 58, no. 7 (July 1962): 19-30.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 26.

<sup>37</sup> This chafing dish was featured on the dust jacket illustration of Marie Roberson Hamm, *The Second Chafing Dish Cookbook* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963).

<sup>38</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 58, no. 7 (July 1962): 30.

<sup>39</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 59, no. 2 (February 1963): 125 and Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 60, no. 2 (February 1964): 103.

<sup>40</sup> These candle holders were advertised extensively by major stores across the country.

designs on vinyl and metal were inserted into ranges of smoking items and serving ware as decorative motifs.<sup>41</sup> Enameled plaques on wood in various designs were used to create decorative clocks.<sup>42</sup> Sohn responded to the growing interest in gourmet cooking, especially fondue, by introducing fondue pots into his range of metal items available in copper, stainless steel and brass, figure 3.17.<sup>43</sup>

Perhaps most captivating amongst the firm's offerings were the ceramic buffet collections that were an important focus of each year's introductions. At the 1963 winter shows Ernest Sohn Creations introduced *Esquire*, which was advertised by the firm in January of that year, figure 3.18.<sup>44</sup> In *Esquire* Sohn returned to the simplicity and utility that he as a designer found ideal. The collection included the full range of usual serving items, figure 3.19, all with textured matte black glaze on the outside accented by a simple band of incised lines and clean white glazed covers and interiors. Most of the pieces had an oval cross-section not far removed from rectangular geometry. As was typical with Sohn buffet items, many pieces were available with metal warming stands. *Esquire* found appeal with buyers and was retailed at leading stores such as Marshall Field's in

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<sup>41</sup> For the *Tortoise Shell* collection see, Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 59, no. 8 (August 1963): 127. For the *Floral* collection see *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, "Product Parade of 225," 60, no. 2 (February 1964): 130.

<sup>42</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 60, no. 8 (August 1964): 151.

<sup>43</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 60, no. 7 (July 1964): 35. Sohn had introduced fondue pots earlier in his career, for example in the offerings of the *Butter Mould Line*. Sohn's chafing dishes (from *Wittcrosse* on) could also have accommodated fondue cookery. However, it was in 1963 and 1964 that the firm made a specific promotion of metal fondue ware.

<sup>44</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* 59, no. 1 (January 1963): 53. It is not absolutely clear that the *Esquire* title only applies to the buffet service, it may have also been used to designate the tableware also advertised here.

Chicago and Macy's in New York.<sup>45</sup> In a June 1963 Macy's advertisement appealing to the bridal market, Sohn's *Esquire* collection was included in a grouping of "thrifty, exciting conveniences for your new homes."<sup>46</sup> Macy's boasted this "contemporary design oven-to-table china created by Ernest Sohn" was guaranteed to provide "service with style."<sup>47</sup> The tableware also advertised by Jack Orenstein Associates in January (figure 3.18) was a first for Sohn who had previously only created mugs and cup and saucer sets that would coordinate with his buffet lines.<sup>48</sup> No further information has come to light about this line but its wide gold banding may have inspired the following year's buffet collection.

In 1964 the firm introduced the *Empire Group* which it advertised in July, figure 3.20.<sup>49</sup> *Empire* marked the final introduction of a coordinated ceramic buffet collection in an original and modern style by the firm.<sup>50</sup> The line's name obviously hearkened back to the luxury of early nineteenth-century porcelains. However, outside of the matte gold banding at the top of pieces and around finials, *Empire* shared little in common with the detailed neoclassicism of that period. Sohn had created in *Empire* another group of elegant simple forms, many oval in cross-section like those of *Esquire*, with ribbon handles forming precise triangles angled away from the bodies and topped by simple

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<sup>45</sup> Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, April 21, 1963, K11 and Macy's, Advertisement, *New York Times*, June 2, 1963, 108.

<sup>46</sup> Macy's, Advertisement, *New York Times*, June 2, 1963, 108.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> This is the only time Sohn created tableware of this sort to the author's knowledge.

<sup>49</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 60, no. 7 (July 1964): 34.

<sup>50</sup> After this the firm introduced few other new ceramic collections and those that were released often recycled existing forms or were based on historical or traditional models. A reason for this might have been the increasing cost of creating new ceramic shapes in terms of mold making and other considerations.

spherical finials, figure 3.21.<sup>51</sup> The *Empire* group was not accompanied by the metal warming stands usually retailed with most of Sohn's ceramic buffet accessories.<sup>52</sup> *Empire* proved to be popular, possibly because its simple forms and gold banding recall the white china with gold decoration widely known as "Wedding Ring," a perennial favorite of Americans since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>53</sup> One advertisement for *Empire*, by the Broadway department stores in Los Angeles, figure 3.22, noted the pieces, "moonlight white, elegantly accented with a lustrous gold band," were "A gracious signature for the knowledgeable hostess."<sup>54</sup> The store seems to have been appealing to a customer who was modern yet somewhat conservative.

The latter half of the 1960s brought an increasing focus on decorative patterns and the historical by Ernest Sohn Creations which reflected a general movement toward this aesthetic in the industry and presumably the country as a whole. The firm introduced collections that were even more blatantly historically based. In January 1965 Jack Orenstein Associates advertised *Early American*, figure 3.23.<sup>55</sup> Here turned wood detailing and patterned inserts have transformed existing Sohn products like *Tulip-Lites*,

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<sup>51</sup> Pieces with oval cross-sections included the coffee pot, creamer and sugar, soup tureen, and some casseroles. Other pieces had round cross-sections, most notably casserole dishes in various sizes.

<sup>52</sup> The author has not discovered any metal warming stands in advertisements, trade features or in the secondary market. However a metal ladle was sold with the soup tureen and the samovar had the typical metal and wood spigot. The author has examined two examples of the *Empire* soup tureen in a private collection, both of which were accompanied by Sohn metal ladles.

<sup>53</sup> The popularity of *Empire* is confirmed by its regular appearance in the secondary market as noted by this author. The "wedding ring pattern" was retailed by many firms starting with the mid nineteenth century French and German manufacturers.

<sup>54</sup> Broadway Stores, Advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1966, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 61, no. 1 (January 1965): 33.

trays, ice buckets and a serving cart into something that would appeal to a buyer craving a connection to America's past. A similar, if even more blatantly specific collection appeared the following season and was advertised in July 1966, figure 3.24.<sup>56</sup> In this *Pennsylvania Pewter* collection Sohn utilized traditional rimmed plate forms, turned wood and other conventional shapes and emphasized the connection to a colonial past by literally imprinting them with the year 1789. Other firm offerings were decorative although less historically connected, such as those advertised by the firm in January 1966, figure 3.25.<sup>57</sup> The swirling floral on the canister set and the hounds-tooth check of the magazine holder, umbrella stand and wastebasket made these offerings stand out.

Simple, unornamented designs also continued to be offered by Ernest Sohn Creations in the many cooking and serving items the firm produced to appeal to the strong gourmet market of the time. In 1965 the firm introduced collections that utilized teak and marble, new materials for Sohn and ones that would be a mainstay for several years. In July they advertised some of these offerings, figure 3.26.<sup>58</sup> The elegant shapes visible in the bottom half of the advertisement show Sohn returning to his love of the simple and utilitarian where the material itself provides the only decoration. Another collection introduced that year was *Flameware*, which the firm featured in a full-page advertisement in December 1965, figure 3.27.<sup>59</sup> In a sense this was a reintroduction since most of the shapes, stands, and copper covers were very little changed from one of

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<sup>56</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 62, no. 7 (July 1966): 43.

<sup>57</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 62, no. 1 (January 1966): 28.

<sup>58</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 61, no. 7 (July 1965): 36.

<sup>59</sup> Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 61, no. 12 (December 1965): 25.

Sohn's original buffet serving lines, *Copper and Color*. The coffee pot, a stock item at Hall China, and the turned detailing of the wood handles made this collection slightly more conservative than its predecessor.<sup>60</sup>

Nineteen-sixty-seven marked a significant year for the gift industry and a year of change for Ernest Sohn's business. In July of that year the leading trade publication *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* reported that the gift industry had reached a volume of two billion dollars annually, doubling the milestone of one billion achieved a decade before.<sup>61</sup> As this volume indicates, the gift industry had truly become big business. The value and sales potential of gift and tableware companies was increasingly recognized by the larger business community. The late 1960s was marked by larger companies, often from historically unrelated industries, purchasing smaller gift firms. Ernest Sohn Creations and Jack Orenstein Associates entered into just such an arrangement in early 1967 when their firm merged with Liquidonics Industries of Westbury, New York.<sup>62</sup> Liquidonics was primarily a successful maker of hydraulic and telecommunications equipment and was building future profitability by acquiring other businesses under its corporate frame.<sup>63</sup> Trade accounts indicated that Sohn and Orenstein's business would "operate as the consumer products division of Liquidonics."<sup>64</sup> While this merger did bring a windfall

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<sup>60</sup> Ernest Sohn indicated that he had not designed the coffee pot shape in *Flameware* in an interview with the author on October 18, 2005, this was a traditional shape already produced by Hall.

<sup>61</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, "Today's Retailer: A Statistical Profile," 63, no. 5 (May 1967): 39.

<sup>62</sup> See *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, "Orenstein, Sohn Merge With Liquidonics," 63, no. 3 (March 1967): 13.

<sup>63</sup> See Terry Robards, "Market Place: Limelight Now on Liquidonics," *New York Times*, August 25, 1967, 52.

<sup>64</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, "Orenstein, Sohn Merge With Liquidonics," 63, no. 3 (March 1967): 13.

of capital to Sohn and his partners it did not seem to greatly change the business since the trade account also noted: "There will be no changes in management, sales policies and other operating policies within the Orenstein-Sohn division...."<sup>65</sup>

Perhaps the most significant public change for the firm after its merger with Liquidonics was a change of name. An August 1967 advertisement for the firm noted that Etc Industries, Inc., was the successor to Jack Orenstein Associates, figure 3.28.<sup>66</sup> The range of decorative and useful accessories presented in this promotion for "New Designs for Fall" was not a departure from previous work, however. These items ran the gamut of Sohn's offerings—wood and enamel, traditional clocks, barware, marble, etc. The following season the firm introduced a colorful collection of "informal party-serving-ware in the gayest, most dazzling colors ever!" as a January 1968 advertisement proclaimed, figure 3.29.<sup>67</sup> The use of full-color in the firm's advertisement was new but this appeal to the flower-power generation with selections in "Slicker Yellow, Patio Orange, Hot Pink and Chlorophyll Green" offered items that were familiar. Ernest Sohn had reused serving items and forms that had long been in the firm's catalogue and combined them with fresh colors and a new pattern for items that would "stand up remarkably well to the stress and strain of teen-age parties."<sup>68</sup> The finials and handles are particularly easy to recognize from previous incarnations. The use of plastics as seen

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Etc Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 63, no. 8 (August 1967): 133.

<sup>67</sup> Etc Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 69, no. 1 (January 1968): 125-126. A note about the volume number: For an unknown reason the journal skipped from volume 63 for 1967 to volume 69 for 1968.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

here became more common for the firm in the latter half of the 1960s, likely because this material had become much easier and less expensive to manufacture.

More sober groupings of items continued to be offered by Etco Industries as well. Sohn presented a variety of serving items in teak in a July 1969 advertisement, figure 3.30.<sup>69</sup> The beautiful graining of this wood, alone or combined with glass, plastic or metal, continued to be a mainstay of the firm's offerings as we see here. Sohn's affection for combining materials to create interest and eye appeal also continued during this period as we can see in a fondue pot first noted in the trade the same month.<sup>70</sup> These fondue sets combined "Nucerite" which *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* noted was "a special ceramic fused to a stainless base."<sup>71</sup> In the Nucerite fondues, figure 3.31, we see Sohn play with the colorful ceramic enamel available in red, green, blue or yellow contrasted against the deep graining of the teak base and the shiny stainless steel frame.

Ernest Sohn designs continued to be retailed by leading stores across the country in the late 1960s. Two representative advertisements for Sohn designs, by leading Midwestern retailer Marshall Field and Company, can be seen in figure 3.32 and 3.33.<sup>72</sup> In the first, figure 3.32, which appeared in October 1968, Field's highlighted "combinations of white marble, gleaming chrome and teakwood, richly hued."<sup>73</sup> The range of accessories pictured would be "Gay as bright accents on your table—delightful

<sup>69</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 70, no. 7 (July 1969): 50.

<sup>70</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* "Merchandise Highlights," 70, no. 7 (July 1969): 94-95.

<sup>71</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* "Merchandise Highlights," 70, no. 9 (September 1969): 73.

<sup>72</sup> Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1968, A1 and Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, April 8, 1969, 6.

<sup>73</sup> Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1968, A1.

as gift ideas” according to the retailer.<sup>74</sup> The second advertisement which appeared in April 1969 featured a grouping of “Color-Happy Buffetware” similar to that advertised by Etco the previous year.<sup>75</sup> Attempting to appeal to a younger, more hip consumer, Marshall Field’s noted that these serving items in “Bold lemon yellow and zesty lime green...swing out in accents of smartly grained walnut and ceramic tile.”<sup>76</sup> They would allow the buyer to “Put on a happy new look for your spring and summer entertaining...”<sup>77</sup>

The final chapter in Ernest Sohn’s career dawned in 1970. Mergers and consolidations within the gift and household accessories industry became increasingly commonplace at the end of the 1960s. Phyllis Sweed, the editor of *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, called them “a sign of the times” in a February 1969 editorial.<sup>78</sup> In this article Sweed highlighted “the concept of total selling” as a reason behind all of these mergers.<sup>79</sup> She elaborated on the trend: “Firms are acquiring other companies that can round out their product mix...so that they can sell a total look.”<sup>80</sup> Sweed noted that many in the industry might mourn the passing of “honored firms into the melting pot of the giant corporation” but the potential for streamlining of manufacturing and merchandising

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, April 8, 1969, 6.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Phyllis Sweed, “Editorial: All Together Now,” *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 70, no. 2 (February 1969): 27.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. Ellipsis original to text.

would lead to greater profits for both the firms individually and the industry generally.<sup>81</sup> Ernest Sohn's firm Etco Industries entered into just such a merger in 1970 when it became a division of Baltimore-based American Trading and Production Corporation.<sup>82</sup> American Trading was a diversified corporation with interests in oil, shipping, banking and real estate. In 1964 American Trading entered the household accessories field with the purchase of Cleveland-based Kromex Corporation, a producer of kitchen and serving ware.<sup>83</sup> Etco Industries provided American Trading with a considerably more upmarket brand than that of Kromex and allowed the company to capture a larger segment of the housewares market.

Ernest Sohn's experience after his business came under the American Trading corporate umbrella was a mixed one.<sup>84</sup> On one hand Sohn had potential access to greater capital and improved manufacturing. However, Sohn experienced less and less control over the business. The Etco division and he as a designer were expected to produce and design for the bottom line in a company where this was the overwhelmingly important consideration. Sohn was less able to experiment and less able to design collections or pieces that might appeal to his sense of good design or to the ideals of simplicity and utility. Over the next few years with this increasing lack of design freedom and upon reaching his sixties Sohn slowly extracted himself from the business until his retirement

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, "American Buys Etco Ind.," 71, no. 6 (June 1970): 14.

<sup>83</sup> See New York Times, "Kromex Corp. and American Trading," August 4, 1964, 40.

<sup>84</sup> The information in this section is based on interviews by the author with Ernest Sohn on October 18 and November 21, 2005.

in 1978. While the Ernest Sohn Creations brand continued to be quite successful, this final period of design work was not his most remarkable.

What Ernest Sohn Creations offered during this late period was mostly additional designs in lines that had already been quite successful for the firm. One major important grouping was serving and other accessories made of wood. Teak continued to be an important line for Sohn. In later years Sohn recalled with happiness time spent working with artisans in Hong Kong where the firm's teak items were produced.<sup>85</sup> Sohn still relished this hands-on method of design and of exploring design possibilities in the factory with those who did the manufacturing. A July 1972 advertisement by Etco shows a range of teak items on offer by the firm, figure 3.34.<sup>86</sup> Here Sohn has used the inherent beauty of the teak to create functional pieces for serving food and drink. Perhaps most notable are the cutting boards which are composed of small blocks of teak bound together and then sanded and polished to expose a unique mix of side- and end-graining. This was a technique Sohn used to create subtle visual interest in many of his teak pieces. Late in his design career Sohn also explored other woods such as the *Syobi* collection advertised in March 1976, figure 3.35.<sup>87</sup> According to the firm, *Syobi* was an "Exotic hardwood with the rich beauty and fine quality of teak, but a color like wheat warmed in the summer sun."<sup>88</sup> Sohn used this light colored wood to create elegant and shapely designs

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 73, no. 7 (July 1972): 51.

<sup>87</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 77, no. 3 (March 1976): 124.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. *Syobi* seems to have been a name created by the firm.

that the firm claimed would be “something different” for customers and would “blend easily with today’s natural mood.”<sup>89</sup>

Metal decorative, cooking and serving items also continued to be mainstays for the Ernest Sohn Creations brand. A February 1971 firm advertisement showed a quartette of chafing and fondue dishes, figure 3.36.<sup>90</sup> Sohn’s earliest *Wittcrosse* version was still in production and was joined by another more conservatively styled example in the foreground which recalls Sohn’s *Rubel* chafing dishes. The two in the background were updated for the ‘70s with lucite handles and finials. Another collection that was introduced in 1974 also utilized metal as a primary material. *Seafare*, advertised in August of that year, figure 3.37, was geared to cook and serve “delectable gourmet seafood...with the Ernest Sohn flair.”<sup>91</sup> This flair included a reincarnation of a mid 1950s shape from his *Sonium* line as well as the reuse of a finial first applied to the *Contessa* ceramic group of the early 1960s (in the three part relish server.) One of Sohn’s final metal collections was the *De La Cuisine* group that was introduced in late 1977, figure 3.38.<sup>92</sup> In *De La Cuisine* Sohn combined copper, brass and wood in fairly traditional forms that appealed to the gourmet market and its affinity for all things French.

The Ernest Sohn division under American Trading continued to utilize plastics to create ranges of serving ware and other gift items. In January 1973 Etco advertised a grouping of *Patio Partyware*, figure 3.39, in which “Cheerful Gingham patterns and

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 72, no. 2 (February 1971): 151.

<sup>91</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 75, no. 8 (August 1974): 55.

<sup>92</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 78, no. 11 (November 1977): 46.

bright floral prints are combined with white adding sunshine to the party mood.”<sup>93</sup> In these designs Sohn made use of various plastics to create serviceable, although not terribly compelling serving items which were also highly decorative. Plastics were also used by the firm during this period to create some of the most questionable designs ever connected to the Sohn name. In December 1972 the firm advertised *Hydro Planters*, figure 3.40.<sup>94</sup> One assumes that they are examples of Sohn’s increasing lack of control under the new corporate structure occupied with the bottom line (here attempting to cash in on the strong interest in cultivating houseplants during the 1970s.) They certainly lack the elegance or wit found in the best Sohn designs.

Glass and ceramic items seemed to become even more infrequent in the offerings of Ernest Sohn Creations under the American Trading period. Most likely this was because of the increasingly high cost of manufacturing such items, especially as the American china and glass industries virtually disappeared. The company introduced two notable exceptions however. In 1975 Ernest Sohn Creations featured the *Buffet Basket* collection, figure 3.41.<sup>95</sup> *Buffet Basket* was typical of Ernest Sohn’s ceramic serving collections featuring straightforward shapes that were multi-use and durable. The firm’s advertisements stated “Because elegance isn’t enough, Ernest Sohn’s new ‘Buffet Basket’ is chip-resistant, dishwasher-safe, and goes from refrigerator direct to oven to table.”<sup>96</sup> The basket-weave design combined with the simple shapes and white glaze

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<sup>93</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 74, no. 1 (January 1973): 91.

<sup>94</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 73, no. 12 (December 1972): 69.

<sup>95</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 76, no. 4 (April 1975): 113.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

recalls Sohn's historically inspired ceramic buffet collections of the early 1960s. This juxtaposition between the modern and the traditional was also noted in the trade press when *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* said "The line represents a return to old-fashioned craftsmanship with emphasis on modern durability and sophistication."<sup>97</sup>

One of the final Ernest Sohn designed collections presented by the firm was one in glass which was introduced in 1977. Etco advertised the *Baqara* collection, a group of serving items, barware and storage jars, in January 1977, figure 3.42.<sup>98</sup> The glass was hand blown and exhibited a deliberately handmade quality with slight variations in finish and proportion.<sup>99</sup> The line was marketed with a heavy reliance on a connection to the past and the handmade.<sup>100</sup> Promotional tags attached to *Baqara* informed the buyer that each piece was a "One-of-a-kind collector's item of handblown glass..." which was "In the tradition of the sixteenth century Venetian masters..."<sup>101</sup> The customer was encouraged to note the handmade qualities, to inspect the base to see where the pontil mark had been ground away, to note the floral prunt decoration which was, according to the firm, "the craftsman's personal signature and marks your piece as one-of-a-kind."<sup>102</sup> Despite the emphasis on the handmade, the simple, largely unornamented shapes were in some ways quite modern and were among the better late designs by Sohn. Sohn later

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<sup>97</sup> *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, "New York Market News," 76, no. 12 (December 1975): 210.

<sup>98</sup> Etco Industries, Advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories* 78, no. 1 (January 1977): 148.

<sup>99</sup> These observations are based on an example in a private collection examined by the author.

<sup>100</sup> This section draws upon an original Ernest Sohn Creations tag attached to the example in a private collection examined by the author.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

recalled with relish his time in the factory in Mexico to create *Baqara*.<sup>103</sup> It was fitting that Ernest Sohn returned to glass and working in the factory with the blowers at the end of his career as he had at the beginning.<sup>104</sup>

American Trading and Production Corporation used the Ernest Sohn Creations brand and continued to produce Sohn designs for several years after his retirement in 1978. Some of his designs or design elements were adapted for use with other collections and also were retailed under the firm's Kromex brand. It is not absolutely clear when Ernest Sohn Creations ceased to exist but it was probably sometime before 1985.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> This was recorded in an interview by the author with Ernest Sohn on October 15, 2005.

<sup>104</sup> The author refers back here to Ernest Sohn's first work in the factory on a trip to glasshouses in Czechoslovakia with Warren Kessler in the late 1930s.

<sup>105</sup> The final retail advertisement mentioning Ernest Sohn discovered by this author ran in December 1983, see Marshall Field and Company, Advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, December 15, 1983, D30.

## Conclusion

After his retirement in 1978 Ernest Sohn continued to lead a busy life. With his wife Grete, he enjoyed activities such as travel, skiing and tennis which Sohn continued to play into his late eighties. Painting, another of Ernest Sohn's great passions, became an even more important activity in his retirement, almost to the end of his life. In recent years Ernest Sohn learned of a renewed interest in his designs and the products of his company. As interest in mid-twentieth-century design developed, collectors from across the United States contacted Sohn to learn more about his work. Although the fact that individuals across the country were amassing collections of Ernest Sohn Creations seemed a bit odd to Sohn, he was flattered and pleased at the same time. After a full life of 92 years Ernest Sohn died in May 2006.

Ernest Sohn's long life encompassed an extraordinary amount of creativity focused on making "useful and decorative" items for the home. It is difficult to sum up Ernest Sohn's design style; in fact, his versatility as a designer was probably one of his greatest strengths. Sohn created items that ranged from very modern, sleek and unornamented to much more historically reminiscent objects with applied decoration. Sohn's method of design, grounded in hands-on work with materials and with factory processes, resulted in products that explored the possibilities of those materials. Sohn's designs frequently combined different and sometimes unexpected materials within one object. Metal, wood, glass, ceramic, and plastic might be combined together to create visually interesting items that were unique expressions of Sohn's taste.

In Ernest Sohn's work we also find a reflection of American home-life and entertaining in the mid-twentieth century. Sohn's objects were often exuberantly

oversized, perfect for use on the buffet table that became an increasingly common part of middle class life. Sohn's pieces were usually utilitarian: often ovenproof, able to cook and serve, often with multiple uses. Sohn's design focus and the style he brought to these utilitarian objects were suited to the informal entertaining and casual lifestyle that became mainstays in the post-war period and led to much of his success.

In Ernest Sohn's career as a commercial designer we may also see how the gift industry evolved over the twentieth century. Sohn was able to begin his design career in an industry that was relatively small and close knit, an industry that welcomed those with little training but a good amount of talent and dedication. Ernest Sohn founded his own business and became a quick success, an active part of the industry expansion that came with the explosion of middle class wealth at mid-century. With leaders like Ernest Sohn guiding the way, the gift industry was able to grow and expand greatly by keying into lifestyle changes and home-life trends. But as the industry continued to grow it began to lose the feel of an extended family. Outside corporations sought mergers with gift houses in order to diversify their portfolios and grow this profitable sector further. Thus businesses like Sohn's were swallowed up in larger corporations and frequently lost some of the uniqueness that made them successes in the first place.

Ernest Sohn's designs will continue to delight and inspire collectors and users alike with their beauty, wit, charm and utility. Sohn's work and career and the gift industry and culture in which he became a success will increasingly fade from American collective memory as his generation passes away and as merchandising and life-styles undergo major changes. Through this study of the career of Ernest Sohn I have sought to record and preserve a small part of this collective history. Through considering the life

and work of Ernest Sohn we may gain insight into the decorative arts and the lifestyles and aspirations of everyday Americans during the twentieth century.

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*Washington Post* (1950-1985)

## Appendix A: Good Design, A Brief Discussion

Among the new products highlighted by the *Gift and Art Buyer* in the July 1952 issue was a *Fold-A-Way* table designed by Ernest Sohn, figure 2.26.<sup>1</sup> This table combined black iron legs and a wood top in a sleek and simple design. The Sohn *Fold-A-Way* table was selected for inclusion in the Good Design exhibition that opened in January 1953 at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago.<sup>2</sup> The Good Design exhibitions, cosponsored by the Merchandise Mart and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, were perhaps the most prominent and influential events in what can be called the Good Design movement in the United States.

While the Museum of Modern Art in New York and other institutions sponsored exhibitions of furniture, glass, ceramics and other household objects prior to World War II, it was after the war that the movement became truly strong and influential.<sup>3</sup> After the war the Museum of Modern Art resumed annual exhibitions in November and December which featured “Useful Objects” as they had done in the 1930s. These exhibitions highlighted household objects that the museum deemed to be both useful, beautiful and well designed. During this period other museums and institutions began to hold similar exhibitions and give similar honors. Even the titles of these exhibitions are indicative of the movement. One example was the 1949 show at the Detroit Institute of Arts, “An

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<sup>1</sup> *Gift and Art Buyer*, “Nice to Have Around the House,” 48, no. 7 (July 1952): 182.

<sup>2</sup> Museum of Modern Art, *Good Design, January 1953*, ([New York?]: Museum of Modern Art, 1953), item A10.

<sup>3</sup> The Museum of Modern Art’s exhibition and promotion of household objects began with the Machine Art exhibition in 1934 and continued with yearly exhibitions of “Useful Objects” through the second half of the 1930s. See Museum of Modern Art, *Machine Art, March 6 to April 30, 1934*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1934).

Exhibition for Modern Living.”<sup>4</sup> Museums and institutions using these exhibitions and honors sought to influence American taste, and to push Americans to purchase items for their home that were modern and well-designed in the eyes of curators and museum directors.

Museums and institutions were joined in their efforts by members of the press and other tastemakers. Writers and editors at leading magazines and newspapers focused on well-designed objects and endorsed them as most suitable to a modern home. Often the press and the museums worked hand in hand. In December 1947 the influential interiors magazine *House Beautiful* devoted eighteen copiously illustrated pages to a feature on the items selected by the Museum of Modern Art in their latest good design show.<sup>5</sup> One museum even began to publish its own small magazine devoted to good design. In the summer of 1946 the Walker Art Center of Minneapolis published the first edition of its *Everyday Art Quarterly* focusing on well designed household objects and the designers and artisans who created them.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the most influential figure in the Good Design movement was the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a role that was reinforced with its “Good Design” exhibitions held between 1950 and 1955.<sup>7</sup> The Good Design exhibitions were a joint

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<sup>4</sup> See Alexander Girard and W. D. Laurie, Jr., eds., *An Exhibition for Modern Living*, (Detroit, MI: Detroit Institute of Arts.)

<sup>5</sup> See *House Beautiful*, “Museum Pieces Belong at Home,” December 1947, 122-139.

<sup>6</sup> See Walker Art Center, *Everyday Art Quarterly*, no. 1 (Summer 1946.)

<sup>7</sup> This section is based on the author’s extensive perusal of period trade and popular press accounts of the Good Design exhibitions and study of the Good Design materials held by the Museum of Modern Art’s library. For a good summary of the Good Design program at the Museum of Modern Art see Terrence Riley and Edward Eigen, “Between the Museum and the Marketplace: Selling Good Design” in John Elderfield, ed., *The Museum of Modern Art at Mid-Century, At Home and Abroad*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994.)

project between the museum and the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, the largest wholesale building in the United States at the time. The Good Design program was directed by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., a leading force in the museum's Department of Industrial Design. Kaufmann came from a merchandising family, his father having founded Kaufmann's department store in Pittsburgh. Kaufmann spearheaded the museum's efforts to endorse and, in the end, sell "Good Design" to the American public. The Museum of Modern Art partnered with the Merchandise Mart to exhibit items selected for "Good Design," with exhibitions beginning in January and June at the Mart in Chicago. These exhibitions coincided with major home furnishings market periods when buyers from across the country would be visiting the Mart to make selections for their stores. Kaufmann and two other judges from the museum and design worlds choose two hundred to three hundred items to be honored for "Good Design" from thousands of items submitted by manufacturers for each show. Kaufmann and the other panelists tended to choose items that exhibited the most modern, paired down and sleek aesthetic—extraneous decoration was frowned upon. Ernest Sohn recalled that Kaufmann was fond of his *Wittcrosse* chafing dish but did not like the extra "schmaltz" in the decorative detailing on the knob and at the end of the handle.<sup>8</sup>

As the Museum of Modern Art and Kaufmann had hoped, the Good Design exhibitions became a force for promoting and selling what was deemed well-designed and pleasing by these tastemakers. Items selected for Good Design were highlighted in both the trade and popular press. *Giftwares* in its March 1953 issue reported on the selections in the January 1953 Good Design show. The magazine characterized the exhibition as an effort to "bring before the public the best in contemporary design" and

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<sup>8</sup> Interview by the author with Ernest Sohn on November 21, 2005.

pictured those items, including Sohn's *Fold-A-Way* table, that were particularly marketable for gift buyers.<sup>9</sup> Sohn was honored for Good Design again in June 1953 when a beverage-server-and-stand was selected, figure 2.12. This design was an updated version of Sohn's previous Pyrex carafes and combined copper or stainless steel with wrought iron in a sleek form. Sohn's selection was again noted in the trade press, being highlighted in *Giftwares'* coverage of the summer selections for Good Design.<sup>10</sup> Good Design also brought recognition in the popular press for Sohn's carafe with both the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Times* highlighting it.<sup>11</sup> In the *Times* article the carafe even warranted illustration. In addition to this sort of recognition in the press, Good Design items were often marketed with the Good Design seal to both the trade and in retail displays across the country. Orenstein and Sohn were not shy about employing the Good Design honor in marketing their coffee carafe as can be seen in an August 1953 advertisement, figure 2.12.<sup>12</sup> Good Design seemed good for sales of the carafe; it was listed in the 1954 Good Design exhibition in a section devoted to "Popular Sellers from Good Design 1950-1954."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Giftwares*, "Good Design: Selections for January 1953," 11, no. 3 (March 1953): 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Giftwares*, "Good Design: Summer Selections Emphasize Shiny Surfaces, Bold Colors," 12, no. 2 (August 1953): 48-49.

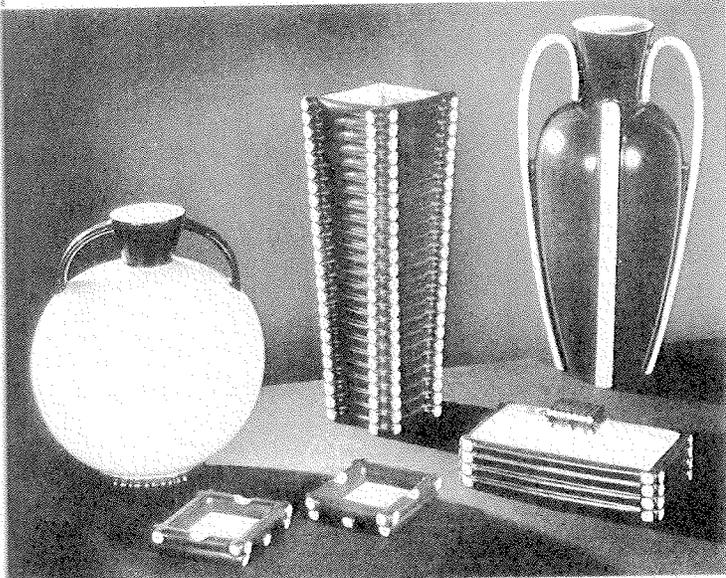
<sup>11</sup> Betty Pepis, "Home Furnishings Shown at Museum," *New York Times*, September 23, 1953, 38 and *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "'Good Design' Items Offered to Grace Home," April 25, 1954, F8.

<sup>12</sup> See Jack Orenstein Associates, Advertisement, *Giftwares*, 12, no. 2 (August 1953): 77.

<sup>13</sup> Museum of Modern Art, *Good Design, Fifth Anniversary*, ([New York?]: Museum of Modern Art, 1954), item 71.

## Illustrations Chapter 1

**NEW CREATIONS by ERNEST SOHN!**



The acknowledged skill of this artist in graceful curve, style, and beauty of form is strikingly demonstrated in this group of smart accessories.

Vases: Left to right, \$15, \$24, and \$30, per dozen, minimum one pair any number. The cigarette box \$1 each, minimum three boxes; the trays \$3 dozen, minimum one dozen.

**THE COLOR COMBINATION is AUTUMN BROWN and LIGHT IVORY! ORDER NOW**

**EBELING & REUSS, INC.**

NEW YORK  
225 FIFTH AVE.

Main Office and Warehouse  
707 CHESTNUT STREET  
PHILADELPHIA

CHICAGO  
1557 MERCHANDISE MART

Figure 1.1. Ebeling and Reuss advertisement for Ernest Sohn designed items in *Gift and Art Buyer*, October 1938.



Figure 1.2. Mary Ryan pictured in *Gift and Art Buyer*, April 1937.

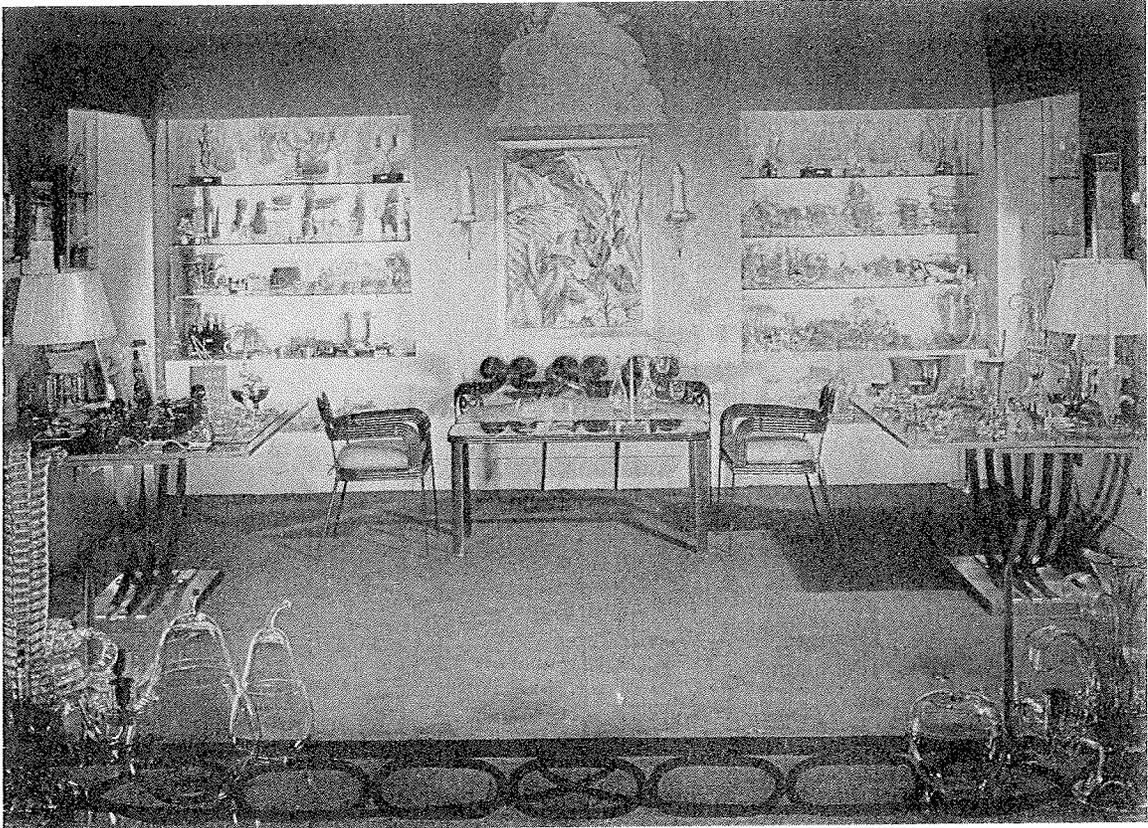
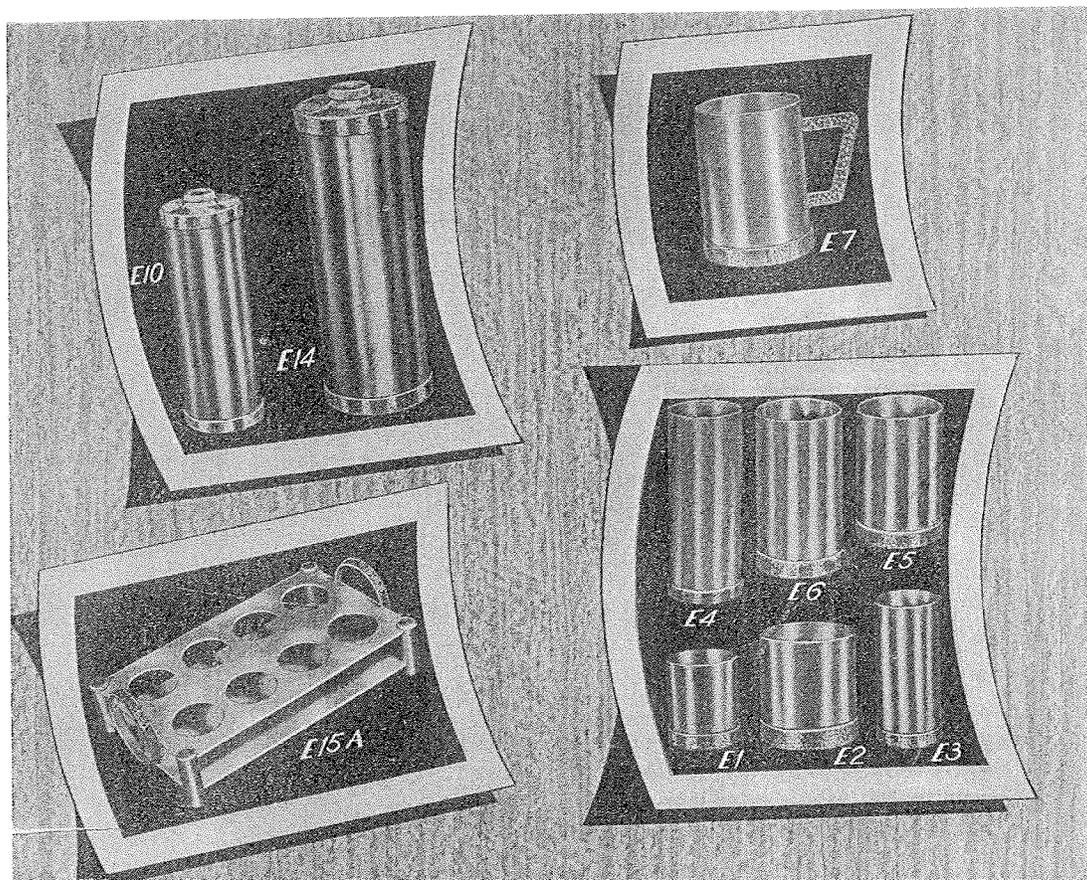


Figure 1.3. Mary Ryan showrooms illustrated in company advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, May 1939.



Figure 1.4. Edmund Rubel (center) in his company's booth at a trade show in August 1946. The pitcher held by the woman at the right is an Ernest Sohn design.



## NEW STARS TO SHINE FOR YOU

Cocktail shakers and drinking accessories in a superbly styled, sensationally new combination. All cylinders are of spun aluminum with tops and bottoms of shakers, bottoms of drinking glasses, handles of mug and tray, in Hand Hammered Cast Aluminum. All shakers with cork-lined cap and top with strainer for pouring. Another new and important feature is a lining achieved by firing a colorless plastic vinylite in the metal which completely eliminates any metallic taste!

E10	Cocktail Shaker, 1 qt., 9" high	\$2.00 ea.
E13	Cocktail Shaker (not shown), 1½ qts., 12" high	2.50 ea.
E14	Cocktail Shaker, 2½ qts., 12½" high	3.75 ea.
E1	Cocktail, 3½ oz., 2¾" high	7.20 doz.
E2	Old Fash., 8 oz., 3½" high	9.00 doz.
E3	Scotch Hiball, 8 oz., 5" high	7.80 doz.
E4	Chimney Hiball, 16 oz., 6¾" high	10.80 doz.
E5	Hiball, 14 oz., 4¾" high	9.00 doz.
E6	Large Hiball, 16 oz., 5¾" high	10.80 doz.
E7	Beer Mug w/handle, 16 oz., 4¾" high	12.00 doz.
E15A	Tray (for 8 hiballs), 9" x 12"	5.00 ea.
E16B	Tray (not shown, similar to 15A, for shaker and 8 cocktails), 9" x 12"	5.00 ea.

Net Prices. F.O.B. Conn. Terms: 2/10—30 net  
FOR 1946 DELIVERY

*Rubel & Company*

225 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Figure 1.5. Sohn designed spun aluminum advertised in *Gift and Art Buyer*, October 1945.

## SMOOTH AS SATIN

Hand spun aluminum with various bright colored plastic bands. Drinking items scientifically treated to eliminate metallic taste.

### TOP ROW

Pretzel bowl No. 210, 8" diam., 21.00 doz.  
Club Highball No. 201, 16 oz. 10.80 doz., Min. 4 doz.  
Pitcher with ice guard No. 207, 7" high, 2.75

### SECOND ROW

Handled beer mug, No. 203, 16 oz.  
12.00 doz., 4 doz. min.  
Salad bowl with servers, No.  
209F.S., 10" diam., 3.75 set.



F. O. B. N. Y. C.

### THIRD ROW

Cocktail shaker (with strainer) No.  
206, 12" high, 3.25 ea.  
Ice Bucket No. 208, insulated with  
fine spun glass, 8 1/2" high, 6.25 ea.  
Martini mixer with stirrer, No. 205,  
9 1/2" high, 3.75 complete.

### BOTTOM

Mint Julep cups, No. 202, 16 oz.,  
10.80 doz. Min. 4 doz.

*Rubel  
& Company*

225 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Designed by:  
Ernest Sohn

Figure 1.6. Sohn designed spun aluminum illustrated in *Gift and Art Buyer*, January 1946.

**HANDCRAFTED**  
*Silverbrite*  
BY  
*Leumas*

208-P

202-P

201-P

212-P

203-P

211-P

205-P

210-P

207-P

206-P

Copper trimmed aluminum, hand polished to a brilliant silverlike and permanent lustre. Also available in hammered finish. Minimum initial order 30.00.

208P— 6.85 ea.	202P—12.00 doz.	203P—13.20 doz.
207P— 3.50 ea.	201P—12.00 doz.	205P— 4.25 ea.
206P— 3.75 ea.	212P— 7.20 doz.	211P—13.20 doz.
210P—8"—2.25 ea.	10"—3.25 ea.	

*Rubel & Company* AT THE CHICAGO GIFT SHOW  
PALMER HOUSE, ROOM 836  
225 5th Ave., N. Y. City

Figure 1.7. Silverbrite by Leumas advertisement in *Gift and Art Buyer*, December 1946.

**Spunray**  
by "CELLINI STUDIOS"

Gleaming high-polished aluminum is combined with contrasting bow-knot handles of rich copper.

This "DUO-THERM" ICE BUCKET contains not one, but two insulating elements. Fibre glass lined, unbreakable, it is sealed with rubber to retain heat or cold for lengthy periods. Super size — 10" x 10" over-all. Holds 4 trays of ice cubes. \$7.50 each

We invite your inspection of this new line, together with our other new originally designed lines at all Principal Gift Shows and at our New York Showrooms.

**LIPPER & MANN**  
Associated with ERNESTINE TROSTLER  
225 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

MINT JULEP — \$12.00 a dozen



Figure 1.8. Spunray advertised by Lipper & Mann in the June 1946 *Gift and Art Buyer*.



Figure 1.9. Canape plates with the *Circus* pattern designed for Glidden Pottery by Ernest Sohn with a *Plume* divided platter in the background. Private collection.



Figure 1.10. Sohn designed *Plume* pattern on Glidden pottery illustrated in *Crockery and Glass Journal*, June 1946.

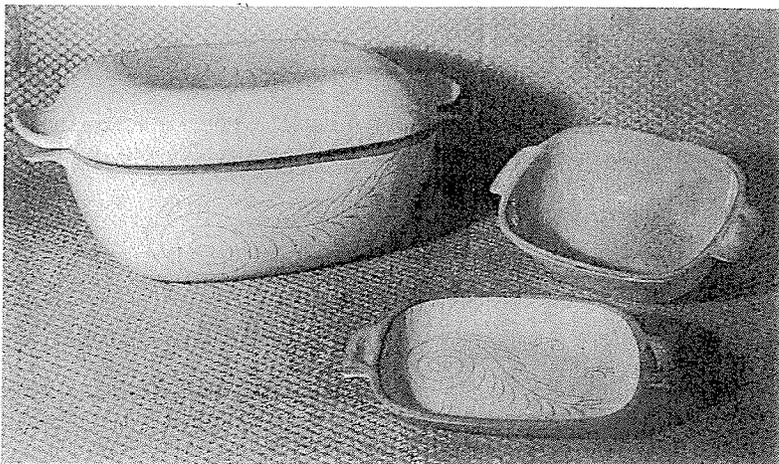
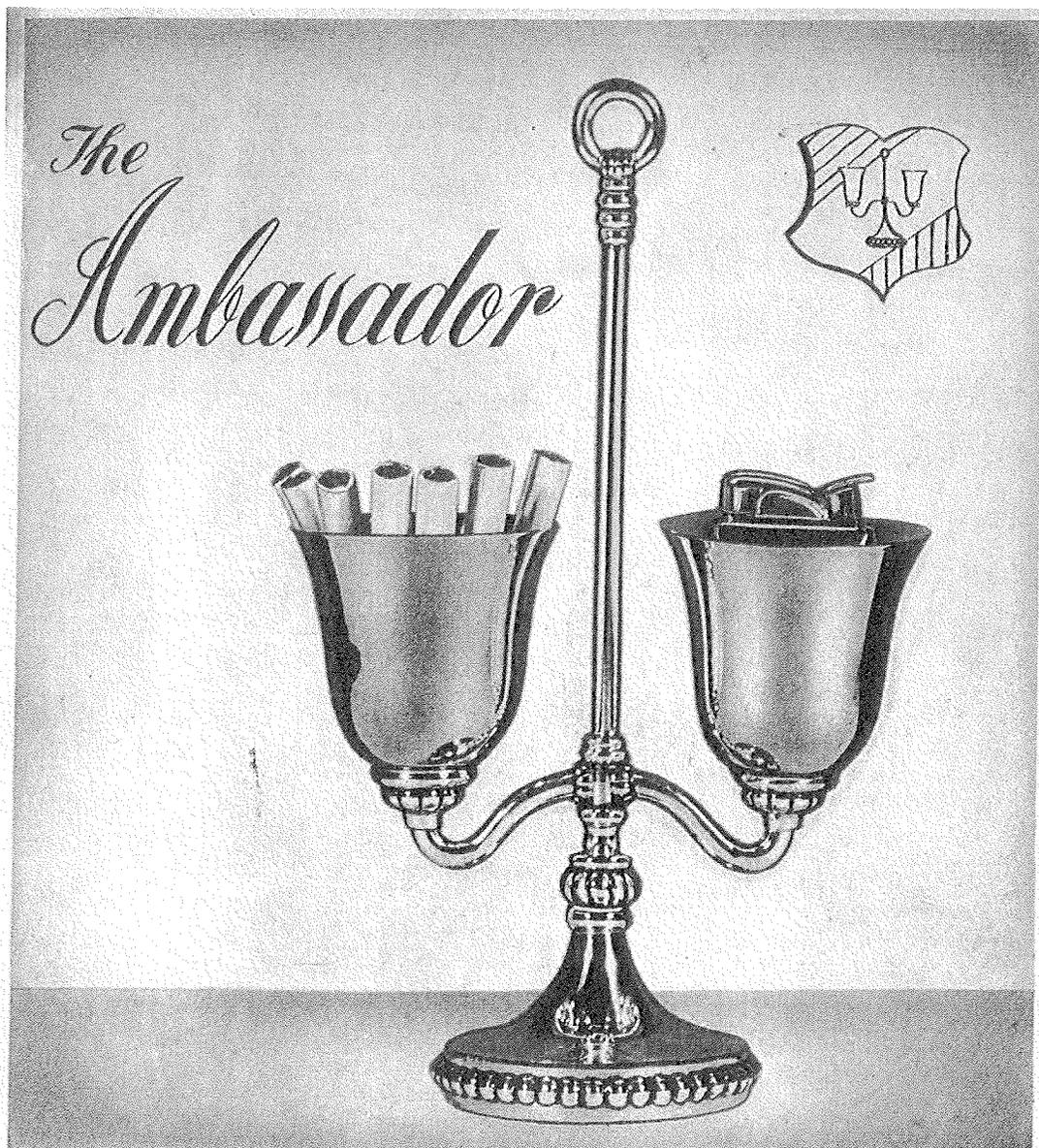


Figure 1.11. Award winning Glidden casseroles decorated with the *Plume* pattern exhibited at the twelfth National Ceramic Exhibition at the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts in 1947.



Designed by Ernest Sohnsohn

U. S. Pat. Pend. D147138

**RIDGEFIELD SILVERSMITHS** present

a combination silver plated cigarette server and lighter (Evans unit) 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " high.  
Urn with lighter removable for better serving. Protected by tarnish proof lacquer.  
Gift Boxed. 3 minimum. F.O.B. Connecticut

**\$7.50** complete

Established Retail Price \$12.50 Plus 20% Federal Tax

**DURING THE N. Y. GIFT SHOW VISIT OUR PERMANENT AIR COOLED SHOWROOMS**

NEW YORK  
Room 700  
225 Fifth Ave.

*Rubel  
& Company*  
**DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.**

CHICAGO  
1554  
Merchandise Mart

Figure 1.12. The *Ambassador* designed by Ernest Sohn and advertised in *Gift and Art Buyer*, August 1948.



Highly polished tin lined Copper (C) or Aluminum (A) with natural finish wood handles. Minimum order 25.00 F.O.B. N. Y. City. Shown left to right:

Top row: 3 pc. nesting sugar and creamer set 326A \$3.75, 426C \$4.50  
Syrup jug and tray set 327A \$2.75, 427C \$3.75

Center Row: Sauce dish and Tray set 329A \$2.25, 429C \$3.00

Open Mayonnaise set with tray and ladle 331A \$1.75, 431C, \$2.50

4pc. covered jam set and spoon 330A \$2.25, 430C \$3.00

Bottom Row: 5 pc. double jam set, 332A \$3.50, 432C \$5.00

Gravy boat and tray set 328A \$1.75, 428C \$2.50

**DURING THE N. Y. GIFT SHOW VISIT OUR PERMANENT AIR COOLED SHOWROOMS**

NEW YORK:  
Room 700  
225 5th Ave.

*Rubel  
& Company*

CHICAGO:  
Room 1554  
Merchandise Mart

**DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.**

Figure 1.13. *Early American* advertised by Rubel, *Gift and Art Buyer*, August 1948.

INDOOR PLANTER      GARDENER'S PLATES

709

715

701

714

717

700

702

716

726

705

711

BACK VIEW

712

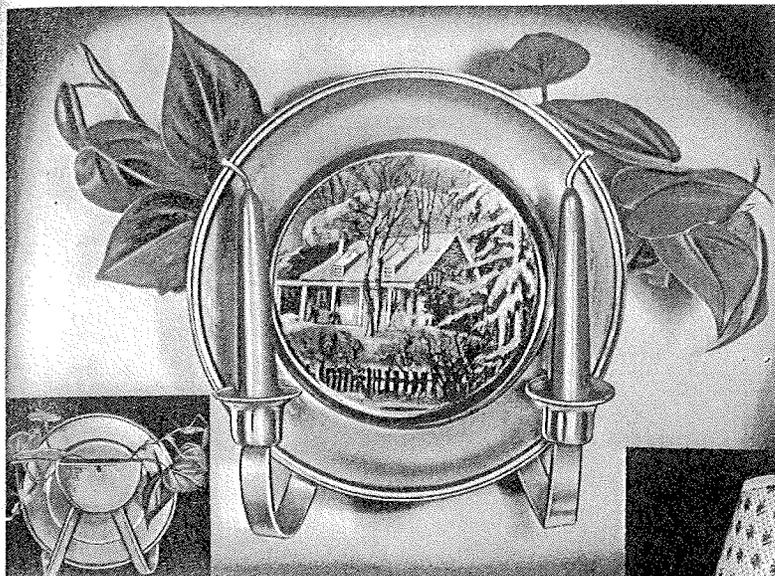
NEW YORK:  
Room 700  
225 5th Ave.

*Rubel & Company*

CHICAGO  
Room 1554  
Merch. Mart

Figure 1.14. Planter Plates advertised by Rubel in *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1950.

# Pin up New Sales with these Pin-Ups



Something new in planters, these plates are made in brass. They are 8" in diameter and are ready to hang. The hand colored prints include: Carrier & Ives, Florals, Birds, Chinese, Fruits, Locomotives, Riders and Jumpers, Carriage. A special pocket in back (see insert above left) provides place for earth or water.

## WALL SCONCE

Complete with 2 candles

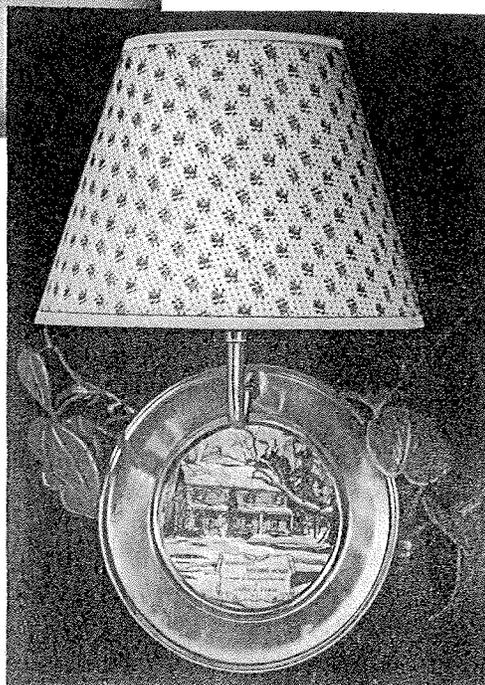
\$1.50 each

## PIN UP LAMP

Completely wired. Shade in plain Maroon or Green or in Chintz (as shown).

\$2.50

*Minimum 6 of a style. Catalog on request.*



by  
 INDOOR GARDENER  
 —  
 NEW IN CONCEPTION  
 —  
 SMART IN APPEARANCE  
 —  
 LOW IN PRICE

AT THE CHICAGO GIFT SHOW: PALMER HOUSE ROOM 836; MERCHANDISE MART, ROOM 1554

NEW YORK:  
 Room 700  
 225 5th Ave.

*Rubel & Company*

CHICAGO:  
 Room 1554  
 Merch. Mart

DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.

Figure 1.15. Further embellished *Planter Plates* advertised in *Gift and Art Buyer*, July 1950.

The "Original"  
*Ham & Egg* OVEN TO TABLE *Server*

Almost  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick, highly polished aluminum with solid bronze hammered handles.  
**SET OF 4 IN DISPLAY BOX**  
 6 sets to master carton **\$3.00 per set** F.O.B. New York  
 During the Chicago Show - at the MERCHANDISE MART and the PALMER HOUSE Room 836

**Rubel & Company**  
 DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.

NEW YORK:  
 Room 700  
 225 5th Ave.

CHICAGO:  
 Room 1554  
 Merch. Mart

Figure 1.16. Rubel advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, January 1948.



*French Provincial Tableware—by Leumas* To delight the taste of the epicure.

A combination of deep glazed brown pottery and gleaming copper, lacquer protected.

No. 500 Buffet Burner, solid brass and copper, (permanent glass wick)	6.25 ea.	No. 505 French Tea Pot	2.50 ea.
No. 417 Frying Pan (Tin Lined)	3.25 ea.	No. 503 8" Casserole with serving tray	4.00 ea.
No. 504 French Coffee Maker	3.50 ea.	No. 502 7" Casserole with serving tray	3.75 ea.
		No. 501 5" Casserole (without tray)	12.00 doz.

MINIMUM SAMPLE ORDER 25.00 F.O.B. NEW YORK

During the N. Y. Gift Show Visit Our Permanent Showrooms

NEW YORK:  
Room 700  
225 5th Ave.

*Rubel & Company*  
DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.

CHICAGO:  
Room 1554  
Merch. Mart

Figure 1.17. *French Provincial Tableware* advertised in *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1949.

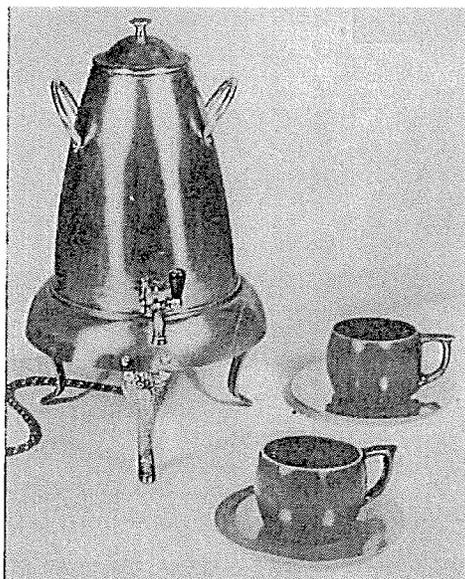


Figure 1.18. Rubel coffee urn illustrated in *Giftwares*, February 1950.

*For the Home Chef—  
A Gourmet's Delight*

520 2 quart 8" diameter heat-proof belling casserole with copper cover, chafing stand and alcohol burner made of copper. .... \$7.50 each

521 2 quart chafing dish, all copper and brass, tin lined, 12" diameter. .... \$10.00 each

523 10 1/4" skillet for crepe suzettes in solid copper, tin lined, wooden handle. .... \$4.00 each

522 Giant 4 quart chafing dish, solid copper and brass, tin lined, 18" diameter. .... \$25.00 each

524 14 1/4" skillet for crepe suzettes—each in solid copper, tin lined, wooden handle. .... \$6.00 each

**FRYING PANS (Not Shown)**

No. 417C	8 1/2" diam.	3.25 each
No. 418C	11" diam.	4.75 each

**INDIVIDUAL HAM & EGGERS (Not Shown)**

No. 416C	6 1/2" diameter	5.00 set of 4
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F.O.B. New York

Be sure to visit our permanent air cooled showrooms during the N. Y. Gift Show

All items are hand spun and hand polished to a mirror finish.

NEW YORK: Room 700, 225 5th Ave.

*Rubel & Company*

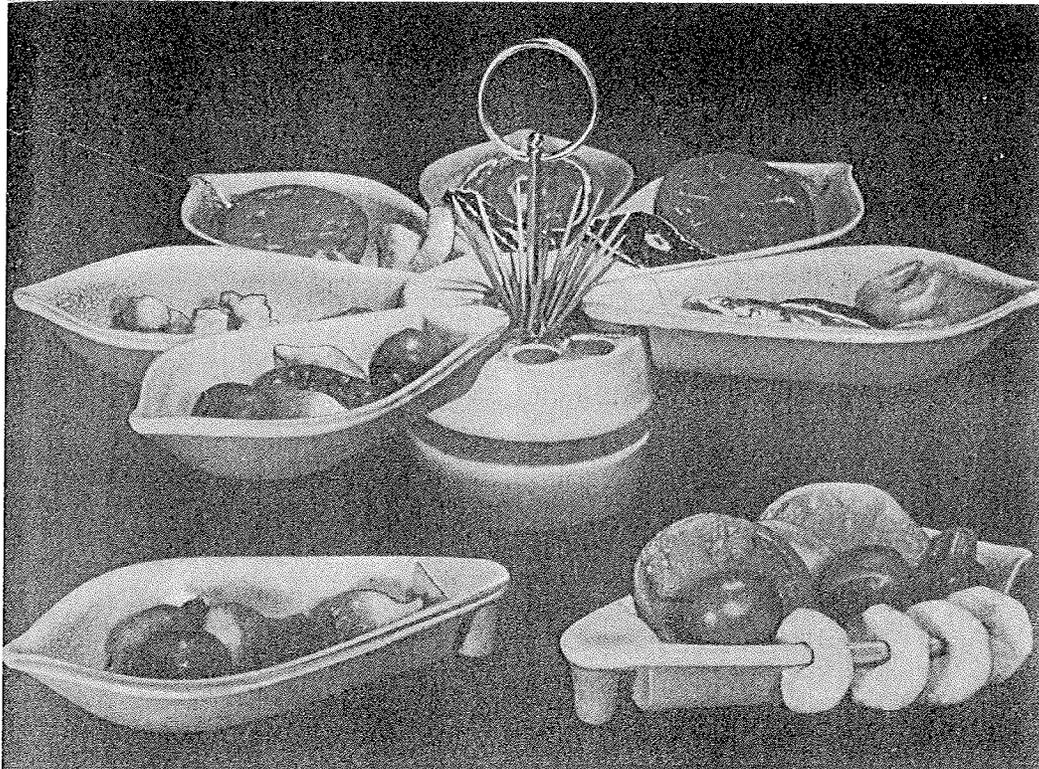
CHICAGO: Room 1554, Merch. Mart

DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.



Figure 1.20. Rubel chafing dish, private collection.

*"Lazy Daisy"*  
Trade Mark



IT'S NEW! — IT'S UNIQUE! — IT'S SMART! —

Every hostess will immediately be enchanted with this new, smart, gay conversation piece. Turning smoothly and easily on ball bearings it contains eight individual, easily removed over-proof dishes. Will serve many purposes, such as desert and salad dishes, ash trays, baking dishes, etc. 17" diameter. In forest green, yellow, white or grey. Individually cartoned.

Complete **7.50** each retail (Fair traded)  
Minimum 6 sets — F.O.B. Alfred, N. Y.

Patent Pending No. D9762

Be sure to visit our permanent air-cooled showrooms during the N. Y. Gift Show

<p>NEW YORK: Room 700 225 5th Ave.</p>	<p><i>Rubel &amp; Company</i></p> <p>DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.</p>	<p>CHICAGO Room 1554 Merch. Mart</p>
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Figure 1.21. *Lazy Daisy* advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer* August 1950.

**Laizy Daizy**  
Trade Mark

Patent Pending No. D-9742

A serving piece which rotates freely on precision ball bearings.  
In four colors — Forest green, Yellow, White and Grey.

Each petal is removable and made of oven-proof pottery, and can be used for individual service of hot or cold dishes.

Complete, it can be used as an hors d'oeuvres dish; singly, the pieces make attractive ash-trays, dessert dishes, etc.

Individually packed one color to a box, in attractive reshipping carton.

Ash Tray

Baked Sea Food

Ice Cream and Dessert Dish

Canapes, Potato Chips  
Nuts or Candy

Figure 1.22. *Laizy Daizy* brochure, private collection.

**RUBEL Remarkables**

As exciting as a county fair —  
**THE FERRIS WHEEL**  
designed by Ernst Sohn

Green and yellow dishes alternate on a black iron stand.  
Height: 15 inches

**\$5.50** each wholesale  
Individually cartoned,  
F.O.B. **PHOENIX**  
& Minimum.

Terms 1/10/30

**RUBEL Remarkables**  
*Rubel & Company*  
DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.  
New York: 225 Fifth Avenue Chicago: Merchandise Mart

Figure 1.23. *Ferris Wheel* advertised in *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1951.

## Illustrations Chapter 2



Figure 2.1 Ernest Sohn pictured in *Gift and Art Buyer*, June 1951.

*The Finest Chafing Dish  
ever created*

*Designed by Ernest Sohn*

Milwaukee 2,  
P.O. Box 17600,  
June 17/18 21, 1951

Introducing the first item of our *Wittcrasse* line. Made of stainless steel, polished to a silver bright lustre, non-tarnishable; — legs and handles of hardwood finished in ebony black, rubber tipped legs to insure non-scratching. Features finger tip heat control, allowing increase or decrease of flame or complete snuffing. 3 quart capacity. Individually boxed.

**\$11.00 complete**

You are cordially invited to see our complete line of new creations in stainless steel and other media for informal entertainment.

CREATORS OF USEFUL AND DECORATIVE HOME ACCESSORIES.

**ERNEST SOHN ASSOCIATES**  
INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

John  
CREATION

Figure 2.2. Ernest Sohn Associates advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, July 1951.



Figure 2.3. Photo of Sohn showroom opening party, Grete and Ernest Sohn are second and third from the left, Joe Giarrocco is fifth from left.

**B. ALTMAN & CO. FIFTH AVENUE**

**a toast to the men . . .**

five Christmas gifts to highlight their entertaining

Merlin pitcher . . . from our exclusive Stanelain collection . . .  
designed by Francis Serber in heavy ceramic, 60-oz. capacity; rich  
oxblood red. **15.00**

Caraf tray . . . light and durable black plastic inlaid with foreign  
coins; heat- and alcohol-resistant; 17½ x 12½ in. **18.00**

Canape plate . . . to match the Stanelain pitcher . . . for serving or as  
a handsome gift-size ashtray, 8½-in. diameter. **9.50**

Chafing dish . . . made of gleaming stainless steel with ebony-black  
leg; stereo heat-control burner; 3 qt. capacity. **19.95**

The Heavy lead crystal cocktail glass. **dozen 24.00**

Altman gifts, fourth floor

Figure 2.4. B. Altman advertisement featuring Sohn chafing dish in the *New Yorker* magazine, December 8, 1951.



Figure 2.5. Jack Orenstein pictured in *Crockery and Glass Journal*, December 1951.



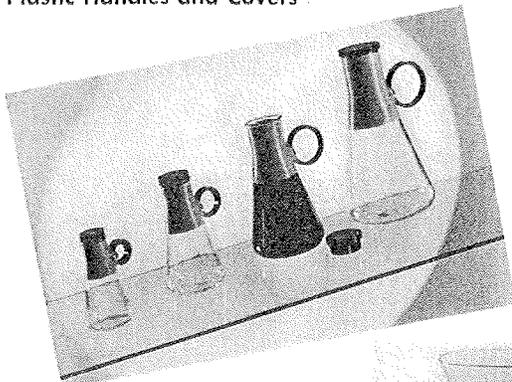
Figure 2.6. Sohn designed Pyrex serving items, private collection. Notice original foil *Ernest Sohn Creations* labels on “cafferole” at front and martini pitcher at right. Most pieces are also marked “Ernest Sohn Associates” on underside.

## Hand Wrapped "PYREX" Beverage and Food Servers

Flame and Heat Resistant

Plastic Handles and Covers

Designed by Ernest Sohn

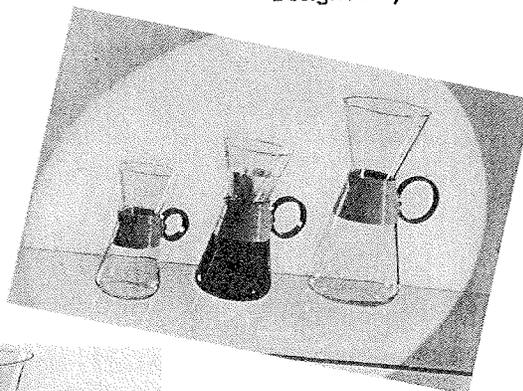


### CARAFES

For serving hot and cold drinks, large opening to accommodate ice cubes.

- H2—2 cups, \$1.65 a pair, min.—12 pairs.  
 H4—4 cups, \$1.25 ea., min.—6.  
 H8—8 cups, \$2.00 ea., min.—6.  
 H16—16 cups, \$2.50 ea., min.—6.

All items individually boxed. Colors: black — white — green — chartreuse — brown — red. F.O.B.: N.Y.C.—2/10 net 30.



### COFFEE MAKERS

- CM4—4 cups, \$2.50 ea., min.—6.  
 CM8—8 cups, \$3.00 ea., min.—6.  
 CM14—14 cups, \$3.90 ea., min.—6.

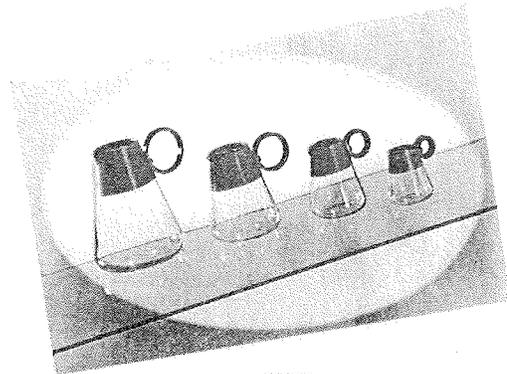
Filter paper for above: 100 pcs. 10" disks for CM14—\$1.10 per pkg.; 100 pcs. 8" disks for CM4 and CM8—\$.75 per pkg.

Instructions with each piece.



### SUGAR AND CREAMER

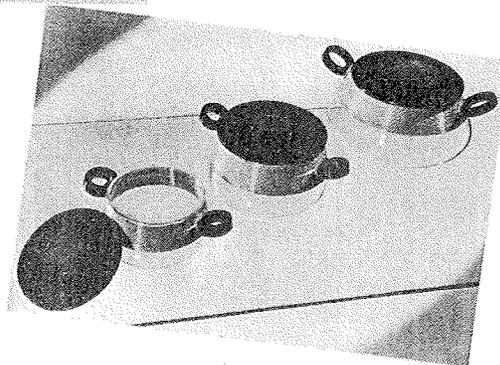
- HSC—\$1.75 set, min.—12 sets.  
 Sugar and creamer with tray—\$2.50 set, min.—6 sets.



### LIPPED PITCHERS

Martini mixer or for hot drinks. Tapered design holds back ice cubes.

- HP4—16 oz., \$1.25 ea., min.—6.  
 HP8—32 oz., \$2.00 ea., min.—6.  
 HP16—72 oz., \$2.50 ea., min.—6.  
 Martini stirrers—\$1.20 per doz.



### CAFFEROLES

- H42—1/2 qt., \$2.50 ea., min.—4.  
 H41—1/2 qt., \$3.25 ea., min.—4.  
 H40—2 qt., \$4.00 ea., min.—4.

For cooking directly over flame—not in oven.



225 FIFTH AVENUE

AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

*Jack Orenstein*  
 Associates Inc.

EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVES FOR ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS

NEW YORK 10, N. Y.



Figure 2.7. Firm advertisement for Pyrex collection, *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1952.

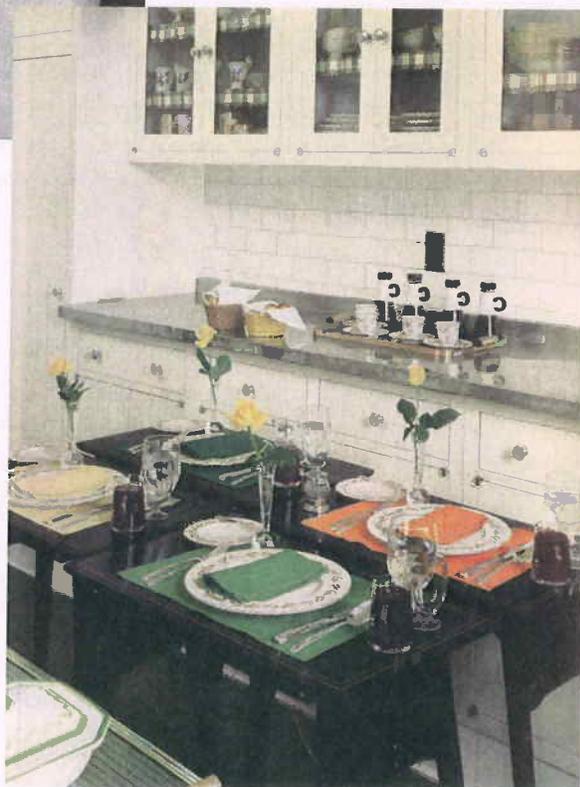
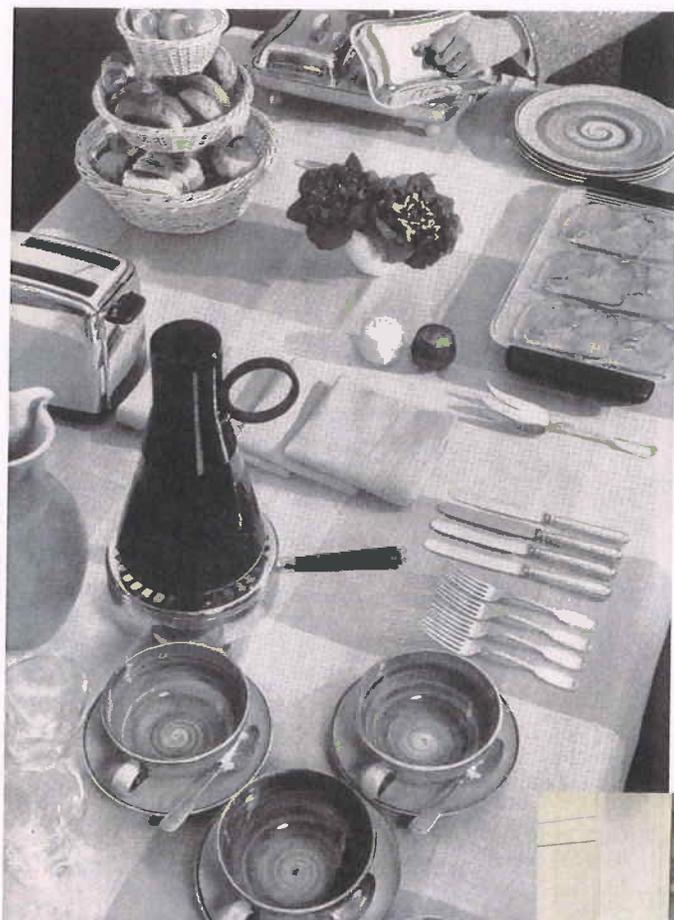


Figure 2.8. Sohn Pyrex carafes illustrated in *House and Garden's* "The American Idea in Entertaining," February 1952.

**Telephone** gift set, including desk set, rotary phone, timer, and 50¢ gift. Made in U.S.A. by Western Electric Co. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Christmas Tree card rack** sets Christmas cards into downy folds. Holds 100 cards. Green metal. 10 1/2" high. 10 1/2" wide. 10 1/2" deep. Made in U.S.A. by Western Electric Co. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Buddha lamps**, decorative pair in white china. Presented with tiny Buddha from Special Number 1000. White ceramic. Made in U.S.A. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Mechanical card shuffler**, for games and family fun. Redwood by Calligrapher. Holds up to 3 decks. Solid construction. Shuffles cards thoroughly. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Folding table**, extra-long, extra-wide. For extra apartments. 28" high. 10 1/2" in diameter. Made in U.S.A. by Western Electric Co. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**"Pop and Moon" glass**, for the bathroom by M. W. Hill & Co. The "Kissing couple" white glass. Black, white and orange by George Hill. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Black Pottery** Chaffin' dish, modern in design with an exceptional white center. For the square. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Plate**, extra-long, extra-wide. For the dining room. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Danish Pottery** bowl, brown and blue. 10 1/2" in diameter. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Murano Glass**, heavy in look. 10 1/2" high. 10 1/2" wide. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Jumbo Pyrex Cerufe**, bowl in black. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

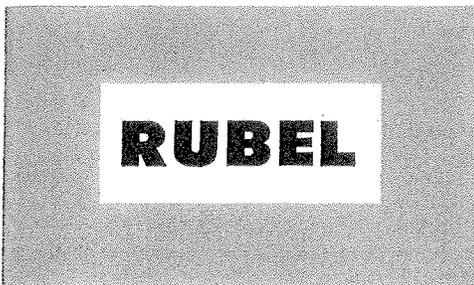
**Copper Warmer**, copper with enamel. Price, \$12.95. At Lord & Taylor.

**Christmas magic at home—Lord & Taylor**

Figure 2.9. Lord and Taylor advertisement in *House and Garden*, November 1952. Sohn Pyrex is featured at bottom right, the folding table at center is also a Sohn design.



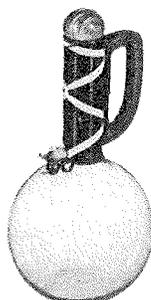
Figure 2.10. Sohn Pyrex is featured at lower left at Long Beach, California shop Victor's in 1952.



*hostess servers  
... for coffee*



**Plastic wrapped**  
#104 4 cup . . . 1.75 ea.  
#108 8 cup . . . 2.25 ea.  
#112 12 cup . . . 2.75 ea.  
#116 16 cup . . . 3.25 ea.



**Plastic wrapped with handle**  
#H204 4 cup . . . 2.75 ea.  
#H208 8 cup . . . 3.25 ea.  
#H212 12 cup . . . 3.75 ea.  
#H216 16 cup . . . 4.25 ea.



**Platinum plated with handle**  
#HP8 8 cup . . . 3.25 ea.  
#HP12 12 cup . . . 3.75 ea.  
#HP16 16 cup . . . 4.25 ea.



**Plastic wrapped with handle**  
#H220 20 cup . . . . . 5.60 ea.  
Open neck to accommodate cubes for iced tea or iced coffee. Min. 6 pieces.

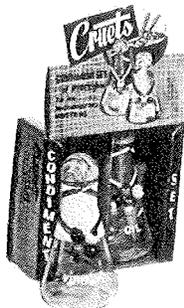
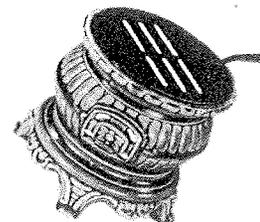
**MINIMUM 2 DOZEN ASSORTED (not less than 6 of a number)**



**Plastic wrapped**  
#H202 2 cup . . . . . 2.75 pair  
(boxed). Min. 6 pair.

*and have you met Pot Belly?  
the stove with a  
personality*

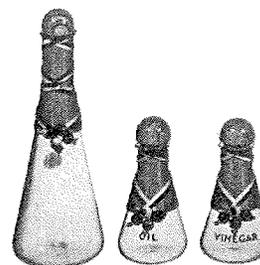
green, yellow or black pottery with 8 hour candle for keeping coffee server hot.  
2.50 each, individually boxed, min. 1 dozen.



*... for condiments*

#101-Oil & Vinegar  
1.75 pair  
(boxed set)

#100-101-3 pc. set  
Oil & Vinegar  
with Ketchup  
3.50 set  
Minimum 6 sets



**ALL PRICES ARE RETAIL**

coffee bottles and condiment sets less 40%  
(additional 10% in 6 dozen lots assid.)  
F.O.B. Brooklyn, N. Y.  
Stove warmer less 50%  
F.O.B. New York City  
Terms 1/10/30

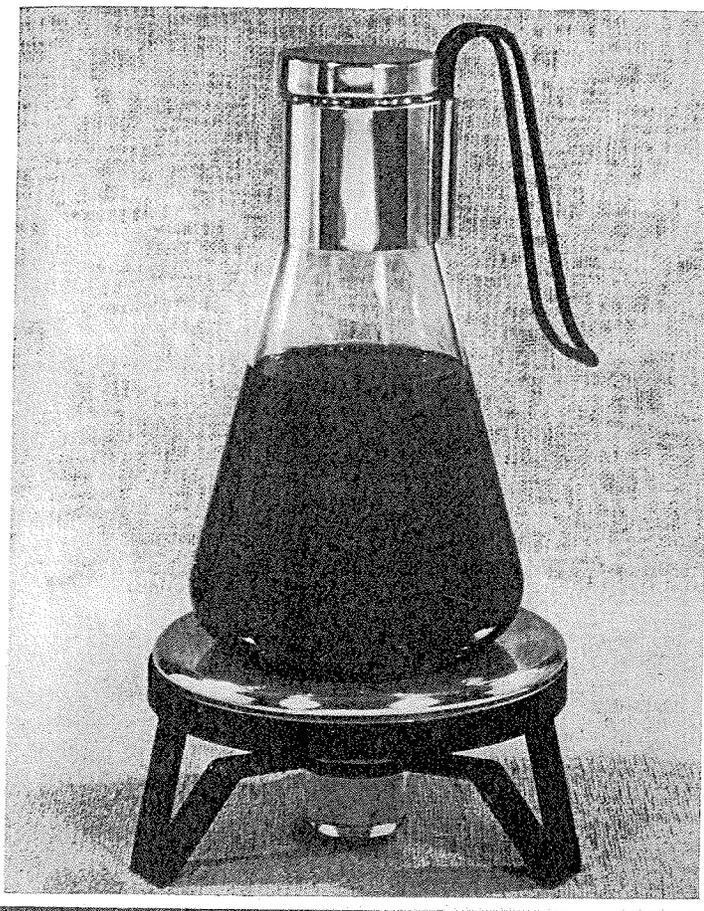
**RUBEL & COMPANY**  
DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.  
New York: 225 Fifth Avenue  
Chicago: Merchandise Mart

Figure 2.11. Rubel and Company ad for coffee servers, *Crockery and Glass Journal*, December 1951.

PRACTICAL AND BEAUTIFUL  
CARAFE AND WARMER

DESIGNED BY

*Ernest Sohn*



Pyrex Beverage Server  
trimmed with solid copper or stainless steel\*,  
black wrought iron  
handle.

**W-8 \$2.25** each, 8-cup size

**W-12 \$2.75** each, 12 cup

**W-16 \$3.00** each, 16 cup

\*please specify

Minimum order each size: 6  
pieces

**D616** Candle warmer: **\$2.25**  
each; solid copper and heavy  
wrought iron.  
Minimum order: 12 pieces.

*F.O.B. Factory La Crosse,  
Wisconsin. All prices are  
wholesale.*

*Terms: 2/10/N30*



**SEE** our new showrooms and new items during your visit to the  
Fall market.

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE

527 WEST 7th STREET

NEW YORK Exclusive Representatives of LOS ANGELES  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 2.12. Firm advertisement for Good Design award winning carafe in *Giftwares*,  
August 1953.

*Carafe*  
*Coffee Server*  
*and Warmer*

- Pyrex flame proof Carafe has black stopper and handle combined with colorfully trimmed heat resistant wrapping in white, black, tan or red.
- Also usable as Martini Mixer. (Large opening for ice cubes).
- 24 cup (4 minimum). \$36.00 doz.  
16 " 6 " ... 30.00 "  
8 " 6 " ... 24.00 "  
4 " 6 " ... 16.20 "  
2 " 12 pr. " ... 1.65 pair
- Individually boxed in restipping carton, complete with cork mat. F.O.B. Bklyn, N. Y. Terms: 1/10 Net 30.
- Martini stirrers, separately, \$1.20 doz.
- Our "WITTCROSSE" WARMER is of stainless steel with fingertip heat control.
- Packed individually boxed, minimum six. Complete \$5.50 each.
- F.O.B. Wisc. Terms: 1/10 Net 30.



New York Gift Show—Room 954 and 955, Hotel New Yorker — Boston Gift Show, Hotel Statler  
CREATORS OF USEFUL AND DECORATIVE HOME ACCESSORIES



**ERNEST SOHN ASSOCIATES**

INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE • NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Figure 2.13. Advertisement highlighting a Pyrex carafe with a *Wittcrosse* warmer from *Gift and Art Buyer*, August 1951.



Figure 2.14. *Wittcrosse* chafing dish, private collection.



No. W114—"Genuine Vacuum" ICE BUCKET  
4 qt., \$12.50 each.  
W117—"Genuine Vacuum" ICE BUCKET,  
2 qt., \$7.50 each.  
Keeps cubes 18 hours. For Hot or Cold  
Liquids.

No. W101—CHAFING DISH, 9½" diam.,  
3 qt. capacity, fingertip heat control,  
\$11.00 each.

No. W115 — CHARCOAL CHAFER, 12"  
diam. Specially constructed heating ele-  
ment ignites charcoal under grill, permit-  
ting charcoal broiling at the table. With-  
out charcoal, ideal bun or food warmer.  
\$12.50 each.



No. W110—CASSEROLE with 2 side handles. Pyrex  
Oven Baker liner and cover. 8½" diam., 2 qt.  
capacity, \$5.00 each.  
All stainless steel items: non-tarnishable—ebony-finish  
hardwood trim with rubber-tipped legs—individually  
boxed—FOB Wisconsin.  
Sample order of stainless steel items —  
Minimum assortment — \$50.00

**WITTROSSE**

*Buffet  
and  
Serving  
Accessories  
in*

**STAINLESS STEEL**

Designed by

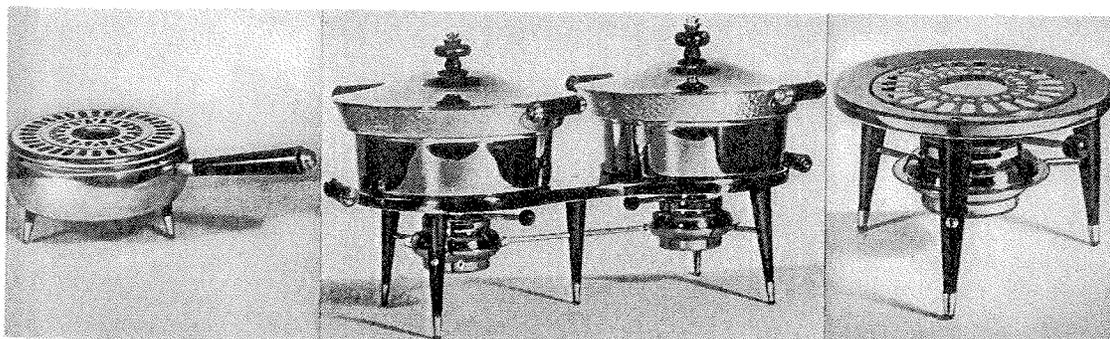
**Ernest Sohn**



No. W107—TRAY, stainless steel and ebony-finish hard-  
wood, 16" diam., \$5.00 ea.

No. HM20—MARTINI SET, 8 pieces, plastic raffia trim  
in black, white, forest green, chartreuse, nouveau  
brown or cherry red, \$3.50 set. (Min. order—6 sets).

No. HM3½—COCKTAIL GLASSES, 3½ oz., F.O.B.  
N. Y., Min. order—3 doz., \$3.00 doz.



No. 105—CANDLEWARMER with long  
handle (includes 10-hour candle),  
\$4.50 each.

No. 104—DOUBLE CHAFING DISH with fingertip heat  
control. Each has 3 qt. capacity. \$25.00 each.

No. 106—SINGLE STERNO WARMER  
with fingertip heat control. \$5.50 each.



225 FIFTH AVENUE

AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS  
**Jack Orenstein**  
*Associates Inc.*

EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVES FOR ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS



NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Figure 2.15. Wittcrosse collection advertised in *Gift and Art Buyer*, March 1952.



Figure 2.16. *Wittrosse* double chafing dish featured in a *House and Garden* illustration for a buffet setting in December 1951.

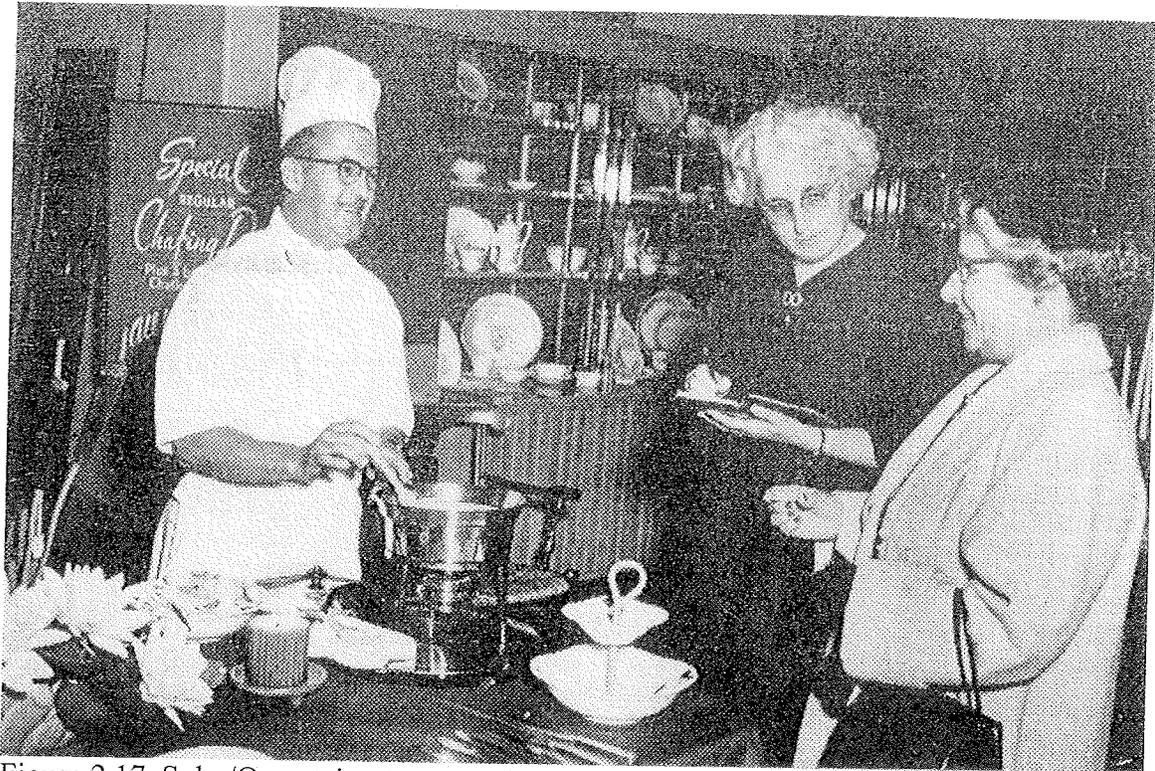


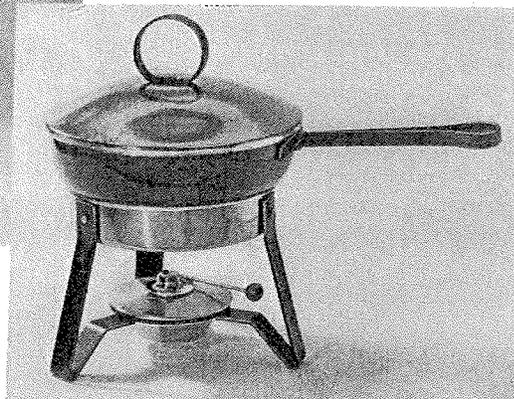
Figure 2.17. Sohn/Orenstein representative Arnold Adler acting as chafing dish chef at the McCurdy's American Design Show in 1952.

## COMPANION CASUALS IN COPPER AND COLOR

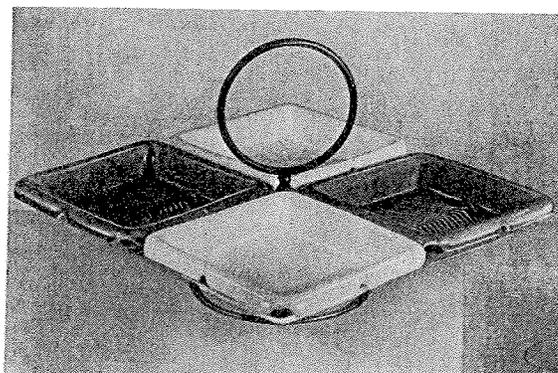
*Combining Gleaming Copper, wrought iron and Colorful Ceramics.*



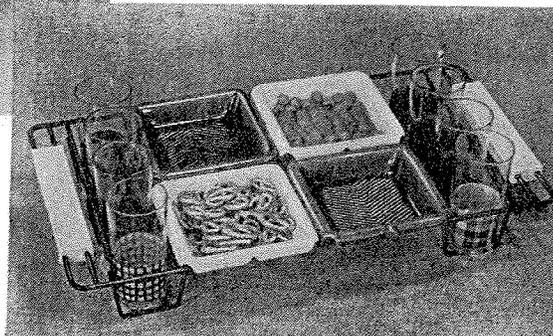
Left: D611. Casserole with black wrought iron candle warmer. Copper cover. 2 quart ovenproof baker. High fired china in white, gray, chartreuse, forest green. Individually boxed. Min. 6, F.O.B. Factory L. I., N. Y. \$4.00 each complete.



Right: D610. Chafing Dish, high fired ovenproof china in white, gray, chartreuse, forest green, (2 qt. capacity). Copper cover and water pan. Sturdy black handle and legs. Finger tip controlled alcohol snuffer. Individually boxed. Min. 4, F.O.B. Factory L. I., N. Y. \$7.50 each.



Left: R354. 13" square lazy susan with four compartments in gray, white, chartreuse, forest green, each 6 1/2" square. Black wrought iron stand and ring carrying handle. Individually boxed. Min. 6. F.O.B. Factory, N. Y. \$4.00 each.



Right: R353. Black wrought iron refreshment tray, (23 1/2" x 13") with white bar handles and place for 8 glasses. Vitrified china ovenproof 6 1/2" sq. hors d'oeuvre trays in gray, white, chartreuse, forest green. Individually boxed. Min 6. F.O.B. Factory, N. Y. \$5.00 each complete (with-out glasses).

*Terms 2/10—net 30 days*

*All Prices Wholesale*



225 FIFTH AVENUE

AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

**Jack Orenstein**  
Associates Inc.

NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVES FOR ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS

LOS ANGELES SHOWROOM: BRACK SHOPS, 727 W. 7TH ST.



Figure 2.18. *Copper and Color* advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, July 1952.

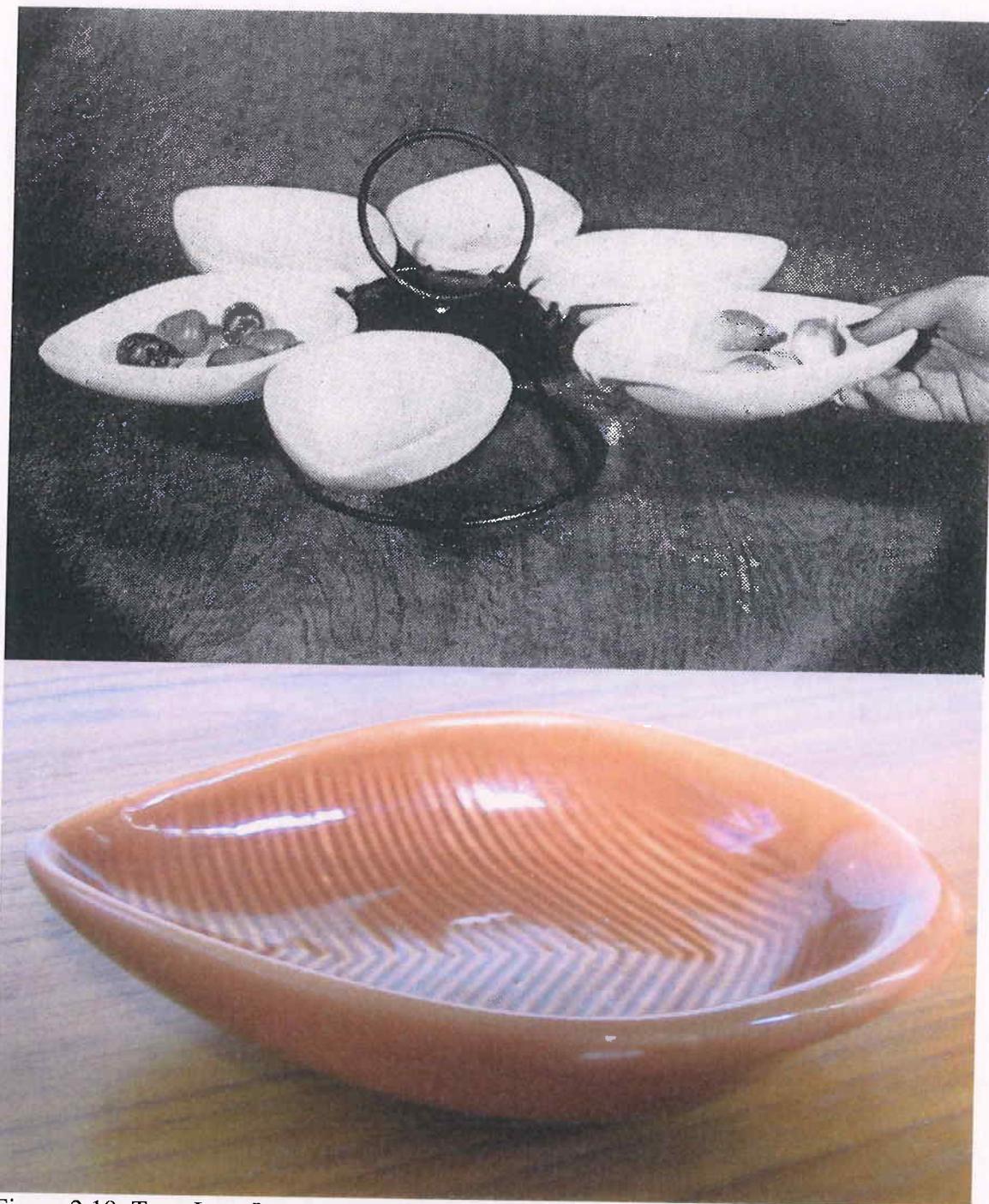


Figure 2.19. Top: *Lazy Leaves* server illustrated in *Crockery and Glass Journal*, May 1952. Bottom: Individual *Lazy Leaves* dish, private collection.



Figure 2.20. *Copper and Color* coffee pot on stand and creamer, private collection. Notice original *Ernest Sohn Creations* foil label, pieces are otherwise unmarked.

# COPPER & COLOR

Designed by

*Ernest Sohn*

## BUFFET ACCESSORIES

A combination of copper, wrought iron and Snow White, vitrified, oven-proof china. (China also available in Hunter Green & Chartreuse.)



#617 — Buffet Set with 20 cup coffee server, 2 qt. casserole on copper and wrought iron stand with double alcohol burners. \$13.50, complete. Individually boxed. Min. 2.

#620 — Party Pail for hot soups, beans, spaghetti or cold drinks, ice-cubes, etc. 5½ qt. capacity. \$7.50. Min. 4. Individually boxed.

#621 — Jumbo Casserole with easy to carry handle, also an attractive salad server, 3½ qt. capacity. \$4.00. Individually boxed. Min. 6.

Terms 2/10 net/30 F.O.B. WISC.

See our complete new lines at the following gift shows:

DALLAS — Hotel Adolphus

PORTLAND — Auditorium

NEW YORK — Hotel New Yorker

DENVER — Albany Hotel

BOSTON — Statler Hotel

PHILADELPHIA — Benj. Franklin

SEATTLE — New Washington Hotel



225 FIFTH AVENUE

*Jack Orenstein*  
Associates Inc.

EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVES FOR ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS

LOS ANGELES SHOWROOM: BRACK SHOPS, 527 W. 7th STREET

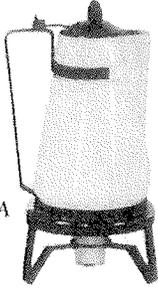
NEW YORK 10, N. Y.



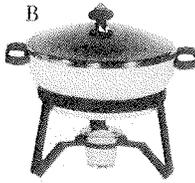
Figure 2.21. Copper and Color advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1953.

## For Today's Living

Designer Ernest Sohn bows to America's growing taste for casual entertaining in this inspired group of buffet accessories. Of ovenproof white vitreous china with lacquered copper lids and black iron stands. Each piece with individual heating unit. Prices prepaid.

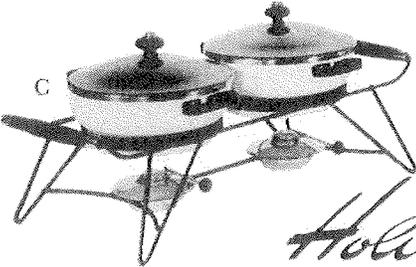


A

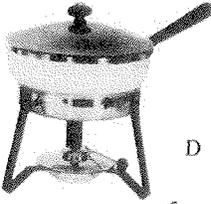


B

A. 24 cup coffee pot, candle-warmer	\$15.95
B. Two quart casserole, candle-warmer	\$ 8.50
C. Pair, two-quart casseroles, twin alcohol burners	\$21.00
D. Two-quart chafing dish, alcohol burner	\$15.95



C



D

## Holiday House

No C.O.D.'s please      26 Bellevue Theatre Bldg., Upper Montclair, N. J.

Figure 2.22. Holiday House shop advertisement, *House and Garden*, June 1953.

**ERNEST SOHN'S DESIGN  
FOR CASUAL DINING!**

### Piping hot servers in copper 'n' color

Room to the outdoor hostess who's bored with barbecues — these handsome servers are the most practical and most decorative pieces of their kind we have seen. Of ovenproof vitreous pottery with lacquered copper lids and trim, each has its own heating unit in a graceful black iron stand.

24-cup coffee pot, **14.95**  
2-quart chafing dish, **14.95**  
Large platter, 10x20 overall, **14.95**

A&S Gift Shop—  
Fourth Floor



**ABRAHAM & STRAUS**  
FULTON ST. at HOYT  
BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Figure 2.23. Abraham and Straus advertisement, *New York Times*, June 15, 1953.



Figure 2.24. *House and Garden* illustration for a buffet in November 1952 article "New Directions in Dining." A *Copper and Color* chafing dish, creamer and sugar bowl are featured with other manufacturer's items.

**R15-SINGLE HURRICANE**-7" tall. Verdigreen or black finish with white enamel and clear glass. \$13.00 det. det. With liquid or aluminum handle. \$14.00 det. det. Based on 12" dia. Minimum 12" dia.

**R16-TRIVET WARMER**-14" x 8". Blacksmith black. Based on 12" dia. Minimum 12" dia. \$18.00 det.

**R23-MAGAZINE RACK**-Ribbon design. 18" x 12" x 18" in blacksmith black finish. Based on 12" dia. Minimum 12" dia. \$4.00 ea.

**R24-BIRD CAGE PLANTER**-18" tall. 7" dia. 1/2" dia. 4 1/2" dia. Verdigreen or blacksmith black finish. Based on 12" dia. Minimum 12" dia. \$12.00 det.

**R34-THREE-ARM LOW CANDELABRA**-16" tall. 16" dia. Verdigreen or blacksmith black finish. Based on 12" dia. Minimum 12" dia. \$13.00 det.

**R29-LANTERN PLANTER**-18" tall. 18" dia. Verdigreen or blacksmith black finish. Based on 12" dia. Minimum 12" dia. \$18.00 det.

*Wrought Iron Accessories*  
*Designed by Ernest Sohn*

**R31-FOUR-ARM CANDELABRA**-21" high. Verdigreen or blacksmith black finish. Minimum 12" dia. \$14.00 det.

**R33-FOLDING STAND & TRAY**-21" high. 18" dia. 18" dia. Based on blacksmith black finish. Tray in blacksmith black. \$48.00 det. Stand only with tray cap. \$39.00 det.

AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

*Jack Orenstein*  
*Associates Inc.*

225 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK 10, N. Y.  
EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVES FOR ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS

Figure 2.25. Wrought iron advertisement, *Giftwares*, March 1952.

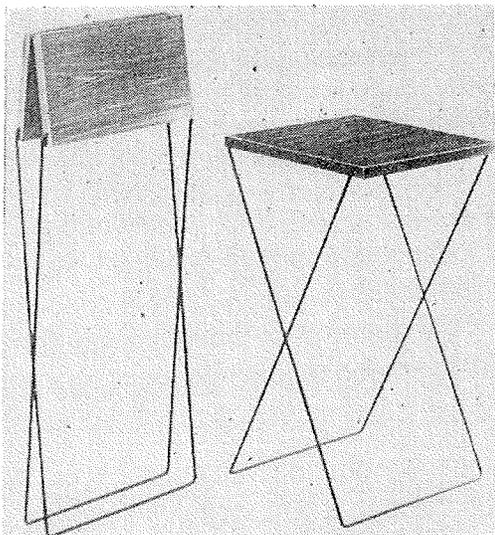


Figure 2.26. *Fold-A-Way* table introduced in the summer of 1952.

# FOR THE LIVING ROOM COOK

Newest designs by ERNEST SOHN



Combination of heavy aluminum with solid copper and black iron. Adaptable for either alcohol or sterno heat—fingertip heat control.

**Practical—**  
with a thousand uses.

All Prices Quoted Are Retail  
Dealers' cost: less 40% and 10%

W501—Chafing Dish—2 qt.  
\$14 each, Min. 4

W502—Casserole—2 qt.  
Candle heat only \$8 each, Min. 6

W505—Crepe Suzette Dish with  
warmer. Stainless Steel pan,  
11" diameter \$10 each, Min. 4

W503—Warmer. 6½" high.  
Solid copper perforated trivet.  
\$6 each, Min. 6

W504—Double Casserole,  
each dish 2 qt.  
\$24 each, Min. 2

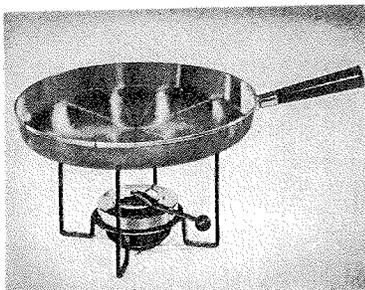
W507—Hostess Set—  
2 qt. Casserole and 16 cup Pyrex  
copper-trimmed beverage server,  
on double warmer.  
\$25 complete, Min. 2



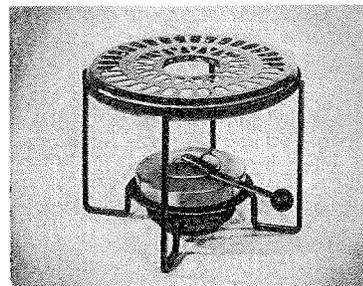
W501



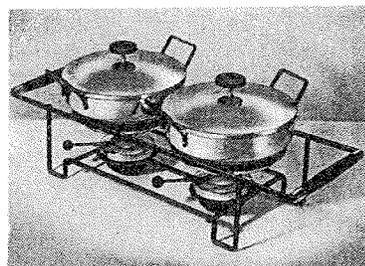
W502



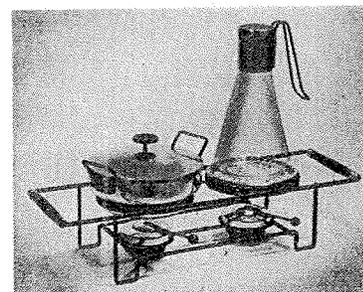
W505



W503



W504



W507

ALL ITEMS INDIVIDUALLY BOXED.  
TERMS 2%, 10 DAYS, NET 30,  
FOB FACTORY, LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN.

## Jack Orenstein Associates

INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE

527 WEST 7th STREET

NEW YORK

Exclusive Representatives of LOS ANGELES  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 2.27. 1954 aluminum collection, *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1954.

**BULLOCKS  
DOWNTOWN**

**Smart Ernest Sohn patio serving accessories**

Handsome aluminum and copper accessories to make your informal patio serving more attractive and practical. Designed by Ernest Sohn, these unusually attractive serving pieces will be a fine addition to your own home entertaining as well as much appreciated gifts.

Double casseroles, Copper lid, frame and warmer. Regularly priced \$2.95, now only..... **1.49**

16 cup coffee server with copper warmer, dark green or champagne, regularly 14.95, now priced only **7.95**

9.55. 10" copper skillet with detachable handle. **4.95**

Figure 2.28. Bullocks advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1957.

**Sonium**

—A NEW FASHION IN OVEN TO TABLE SERVICE

SEE THE COMPLETE LINE AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK

527 WEST 7th STREET  
LOS ANGELES

Exclusive Representatives of  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

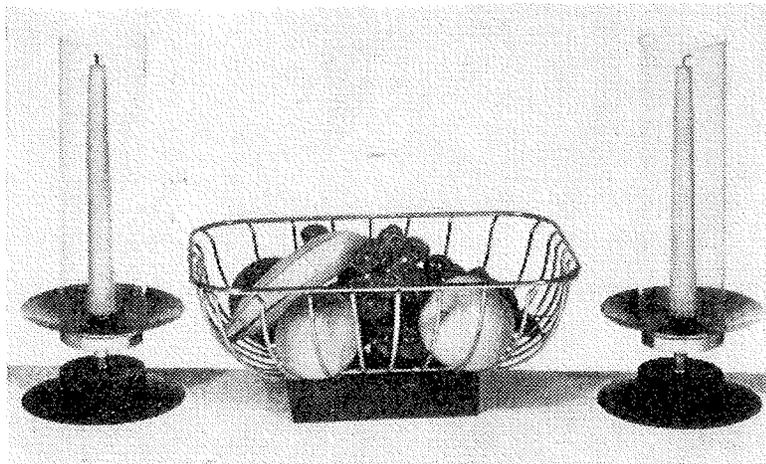
Figure 2.29. *Sonium* advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, August 1954.

**ELEGANCE  
IN BRASS**

Designed by  
**ERNEST  
SOHN**

**B802** — Oblong  
Fruit Bowl \$5.00  
each, Min. 4

**B807** — Reversi-  
ble Candlesticks  
\$2.25 each,  
Min. 6



All items individually boxed.

FOB Factory, New York City      Terms: 2%, 10 days, Net 30.

**JACK ORENSTEIN ASSOCIATES, INC.**

225 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK 10, NEW YORK

*Exclusive representatives for* **ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.**

Figure 2.30. Firm advertisement, *Giftwares*, October 1953.

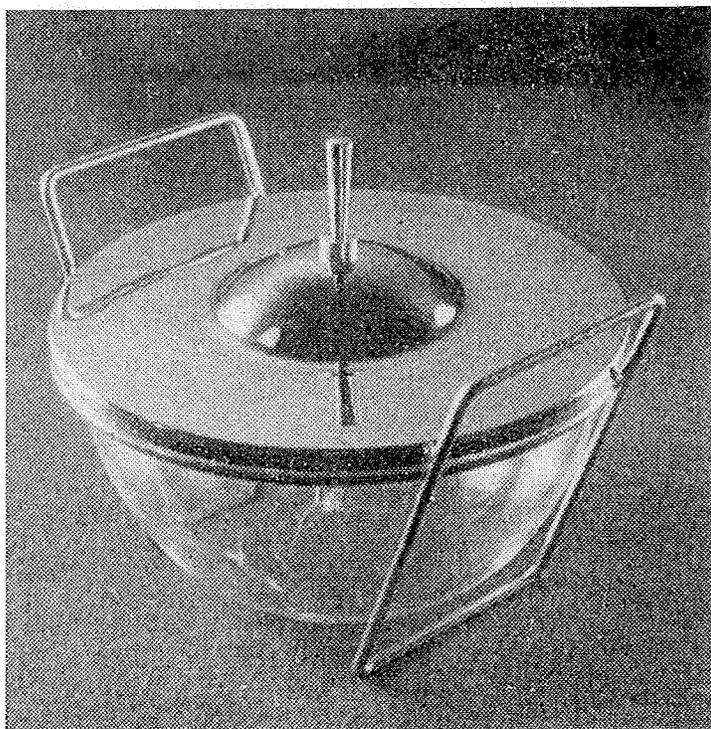


Figure 2.31. Brass and Crystal server illustrated in *Crockery and Glass Journal*, February 1954.

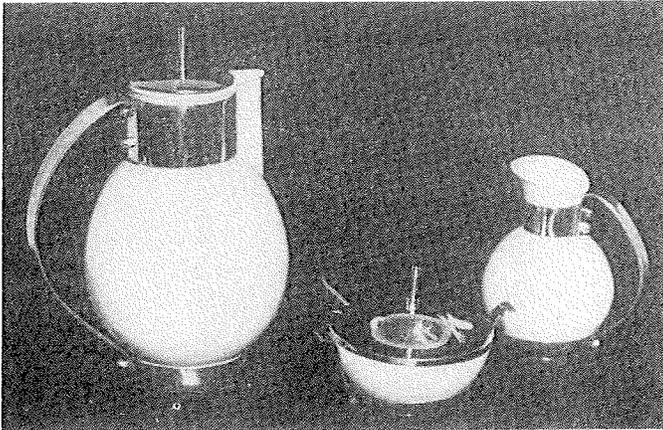
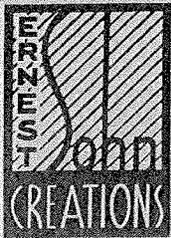
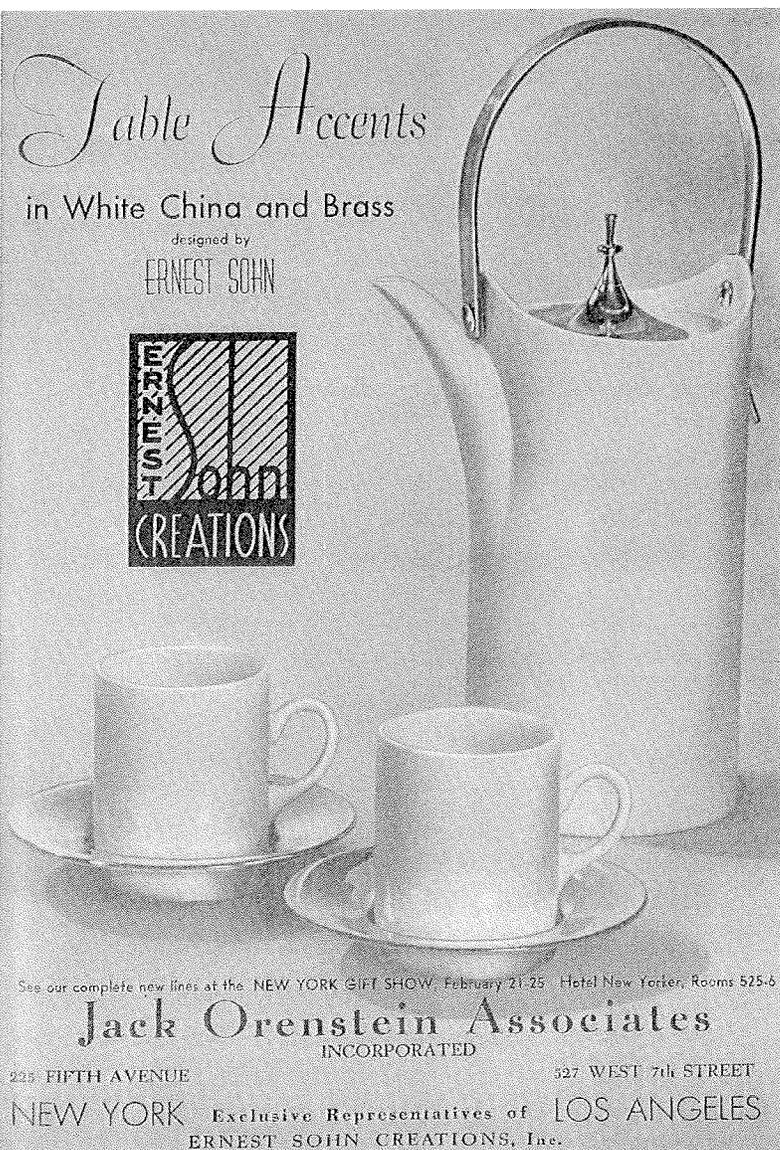


Figure 2.32. Early brass and china coffee set illustrated in *Giftwares*, March 1954.

*Table Accents*  
in White China and Brass  
designed by  
ERNEST SOHN

See our complete new lines at the NEW YORK GIFT SHOW, February 21-25, Hotel New Yorker, Rooms 525-6

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED

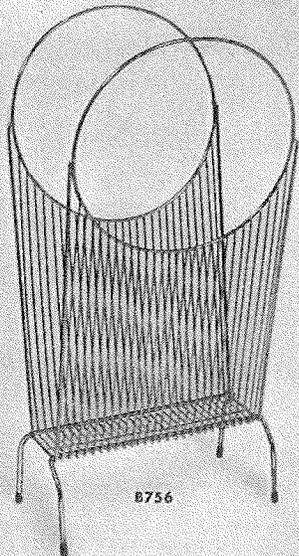
235 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK

527 WEST 7th STREET  
LOS ANGELES

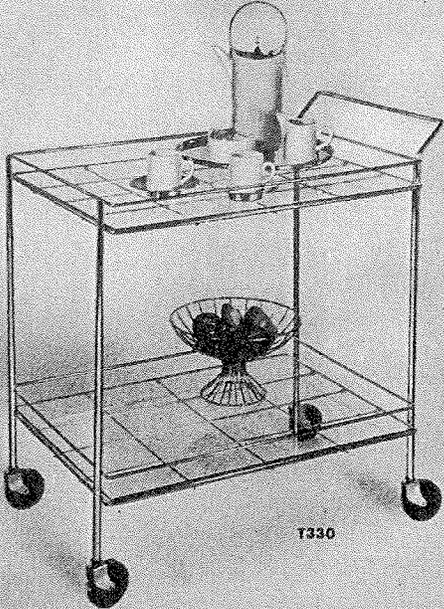
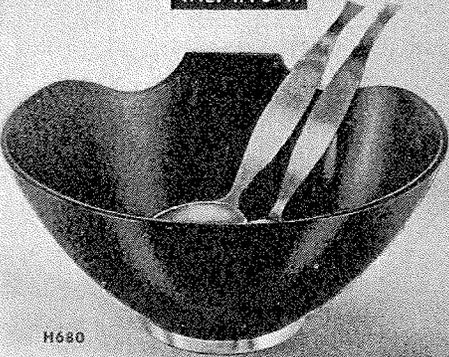
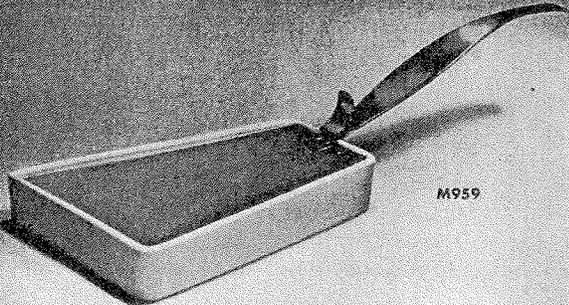
Exclusive Representatives of  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 2.33. Firm advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1955.

*Some of the Newest  
Designs  
by  
ERNEST SOHN*



ERNEST SOHN  
CREATIONS

See the complete line at the NEW YORK GIFT SHOW, Rooms 525-526, HOTEL NEW YORKER.

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK

Sole Agents for  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

527 WEST 7th STREET  
LOS ANGELES

Figure 2.34. August 1955 advertisement in *Gift and Art Buyer*.

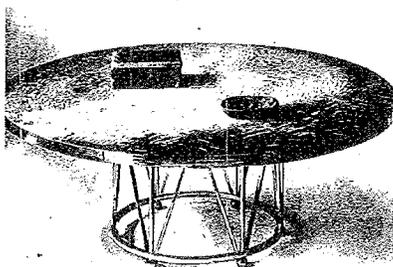


Figure 2.35. Ernest Sohn designs including brass and china items in the Holiday Gift Shop in Penn Yan, New York in 1955. Nearly all items on the central shelving unit are Sohn designs excluding the second shelf above the floor and large charger at top.

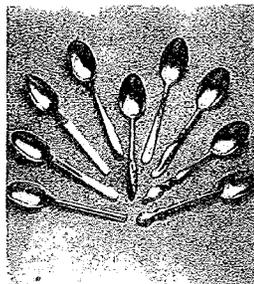
## Fresh Accents For the Home

By BETTY DEPOS

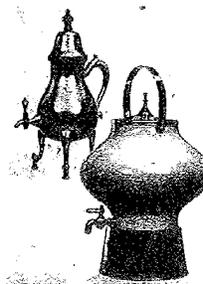
FALL is the season for refurbishing the home, and even those who do not plan an all-out redecorating job may feel the need to inject some new style into their homes. They might consider a new coffee table, an object that because of its importance can change the whole look of a room. Or a lamp, or accent rug, or even just a grouping of vases in a prominent place. Pictured here are some suggestions, all newly introduced by stores in the past month. They have in common a look of individuality and, properly added, can give the impression of having been designed for a specific room. They have in common, too, a polished, rich quality very much in keeping with today's trend toward elegance. And in accordance with current decorating practice, any of these objects would be equally suitable in a modern or in a traditional room.



**MAGPAC** table top has a jewel-like quality that might grace up an entire living room. Temporary decorations in this pattern. Brass base. Home planned, this table is \$450 at Italian Marble Mart.



**EPERLING** silverware to enhance winter entertaining. See new Swedish cutlery, sets are all \$4.95. The seven new American designs are all from W. H. Macy.



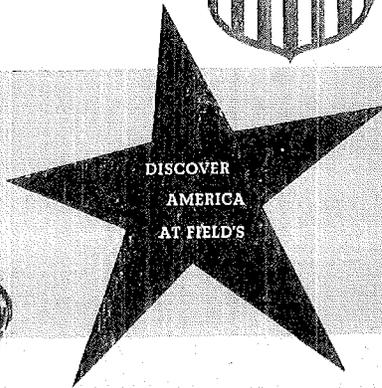
**SAMOVARS** for spectacular evening. Traditional silver set at W. H. Macy is \$200. Choose one at Saks Fifth Avenue, \$225.

Figure 2.36. *New York Times* feature including Sohn samovar at right, October 16, 1955.

Store Hours, Downtown, 9:15 to 5:45

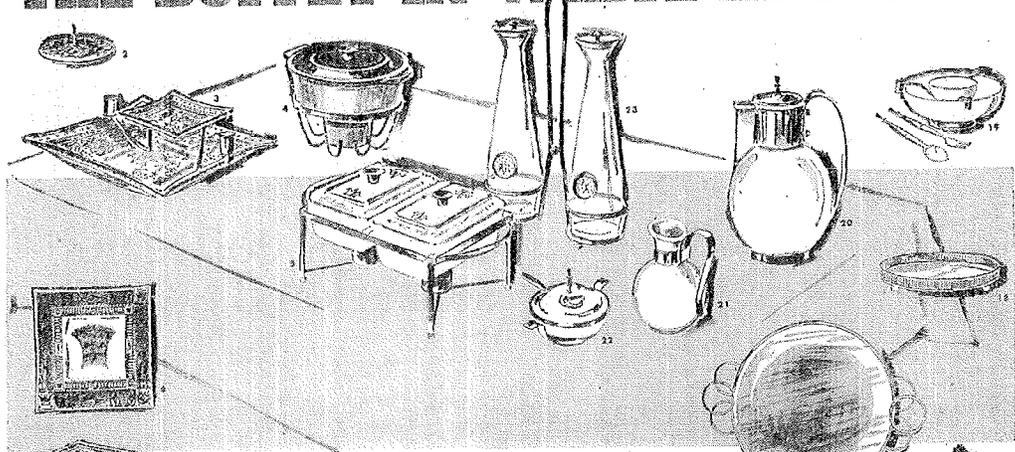
*Marshall Field & Company* One Eleven North State Street

AMERICAN UNLIMITED



a party-loving country where informality keynotes all the best parties . . . and what more informal, more American than the gay and easy buffet? our contribution—

THE BUFFET IN WHITE AND GILT



As American as the buffet . . . the easy elegance of accessories in bright white, gilt touched. Nice for a moonlight barbecue . . . a candlelight supper. Our choice—**Georges Briard** of Glass Guild, who lends glass to its his bidding—does oven-to-table easiness in the same dashing vein. **Ernest Sohn**, who does a slightly more formal glass with 14.4. gold decor . . . to go with white china, moodily teamed with brass: All yours to mix and match (and what's more American than the freedom of choice?). *Glassware and Casual Living Accessories—Second Floor, North and Middle Wabash, Alto Evanston, Oak Park, Park Forest*

**Georges Briard—**

1. Royal Crest 12-cup coffee with warmer, \$12.50
2. Avea French pick-up-dish, \$1.50
3. Persia Garden shiny cooler, \$10
4. Persia Garden 2-qt. casseroles with tin cover, \$10
5. Royal Crest 1 1/2-qt. double casseroles, \$12.50
6. Golden Harvest 12" cake plate \$9
7. Persia Garden refill tray, \$5.75
8. Avea 7x17 wooden tray, 4-cupped top, \$10
11. Ambrosia 2-qt. teakettle, \$5.50
14. Ambrosia 12-cup percolator, \$11.50
15. Ambrosia 1-qt. saucepan with lid, \$5
16. Ambrosia 4-qt. casserole, \$11

**Ernest Sohn—**

9. essential set, \$12
10. cocktail set, \$16.95
11. bready set, \$12
12. 2-qt. casseroles, \$11.05
17. walnut veneer tray, \$10.95
18. brass tray, \$10
19. shining salad set, \$16.95
20. 12-cup coffee pot, \$16.95
21. cruet set, \$6.95
22. sugar bowl, \$5.95
23. Tantara set, \$16.95

If you can't come in, call Personal Shopping Monday through Saturday 9:30 to 5:45—in Chicago, STate 1-1059; Enterprises 4242 toll free from most suburbs. In the following communities call: Geneva 2034; Joliet 3-0374; Elgin, Shilwood 1-720; Aurora 2-4311; Waukegan, Monday through Friday, 9 to 5, Ouhart 2-5543. Minimum C.O.D. order \$2.95. Service charge of 7% on C.O.D.'s within our delivery area.

Figure 2.37. Marshall Field advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, May 21, 1956. Sohn items are numbers 9 through 12 and 17 through 23.

**Correlated Serving Accessories**

**PLUS**

**THE BIGGEST PROMOTION IN RUBEL HISTORY TO HELP YOU TELL YOUR CUSTOMERS ABOUT THE HOTTEST SERVICE ITEMS OF 1955 — for year 'round sales**

- FULL PAGE COLOR AD IN LIVING FOR YOUNG HOMEMAKERS, September, 1955
- ADS IN HOUSE BEAUTIFUL and HOUSE & GARDEN, October and November, 1955
- FREE NEWSPAPER AD MATS . . . themed for year 'round promotion
- FREE DISPLAY CARDS
- ADVERTISING ALLOWANCE OF 25¢ FOR EVERY ITEM YOU ORDER — upon presentation of tear sheet

*\*When ordering, add B or C to Style No. to specify brass or copper.  
F.O.B. FACTORY, BROOKLYN, N. Y., TERMS 1/10/30*

nationally sold by **RUBEL & COMPANY** NEW YORK—225 Fifth Avenue  
 During Market Weeks, visit Rubel's permanent showrooms in:  
**DECORATIVE ACCESSORIES, INC.** CHICAGO—1554 Merchandise Mart

**RUBEL**  
*service with a style*

Figure 2.38. Rubel advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, June 1955.

*Everlast*  
*Pridefully*  
*Presents*

**"PRIMAVERA"**

The smooth modern lines of white ceramic complemented by gleaming brass gives you a complete line of hostess accessories in the modern manner.

Casserole Warmer (1/2 qt. cap.)	No. 1500	\$4.75
Sugar & Creamer	No. 1504	3.50 set
Salt & Pepper	No. 1507	2.00 set
Coffee Server (6 cups)	No. 1505	3.50
Salad Set w/fork & spoon	No. 1502	5.00 set
Demi-Tasse cups and saucers	No. 1513	.75 each

Prices are wholesale. Minimum order to new accounts, \$25.00. Minimum re-orders, \$25.00

Everlast—the A. B. C. of metal giftwares—Aluminum—Brass—Copper

Figure 2.39. Everlast advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, July 1956.

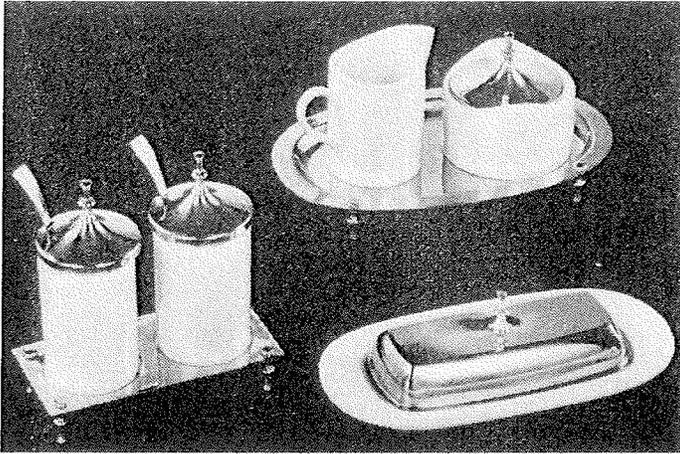


Figure 2.40. Quon Quon Co. copies of Sohn designs featured in *Gift and Art Buyer*, October 1956.

**PIRACY  
OF  
DESIGN**

is a  
**grossly unethical practice**

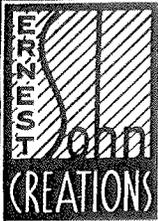
As John Ruskin put it:

*"There is hardly anything in the world that someone cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper and the people who consider price alone are this man's lawful prey."*

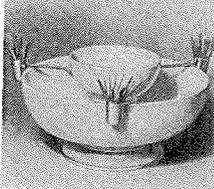
The three items we illustrate here have been openly copied, although they have been made a little worse to sell a little cheaper.

However, we feel obligated to offer you these items, at their original high level of quality, at reduced prices to meet this unfair competition.

All three, formerly at \$6.00 wholesale to retail at \$11.95, now at \$4.00 wholesale to retail at \$7.95.




M943  
White China and Brass Salad Set



M929  
White China and Brass Shrimp Server



M931  
White China and Brass Casserole

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED

295 FIFTH AVENUE
527 WEST 7th STREET

NEW YORK Exclusive Representatives of LOS ANGELES  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 2.41. Firm advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, June 1956.

# Buffet Accents

DESIGNED BY  
ERNEST SOHN



COMPLETE CATALOGUE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

See the complete line at our permanent showrooms in New York and Los Angeles, also at the following gift shows:

**SAN FRANCISCO**

Sheraton Palace Hotel—Rooms 3111-5—August 3-6

**CHICAGO**

Palmer House—733-4-5—August 3-14

**SEATTLE**

Olympic Hotel—Rooms 354-6-8—August 17-20

**MINNEAPOLIS**

Radisson Hotel, August 24-27

**NEW YORK**

New York Trade Show Building—Rooms 333-5—August 24-29

**DALLAS**

Hotel Adolphus—Booths 44-45—August 31-Sept. 1st

**BOSTON**

Hotel Statler—Room 415—Sept. 1-5

**PHILADELPHIA**

Hotel Benjamin Franklin—Room 417—Sept. 28-Oct. 1st

## Jack Orenstein Associates

INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE

527 WEST 7th STREET

NEW YORK

Exclusive Representatives of

LOS ANGELES

ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 2.42. Firm advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, August 1958.

**ERNEST  
SOHN  
CREATIONS**

# GEORGIAN

IN CONTEMPORARY STYLING  
BY ERNEST SOHN



AT THE FOLLOWING SHOWS:

International Housewares Show, Rooms 501-502, New York Coliseum, New York  
 Southeastern China, Glass & Gift Show, Booth 57, Municipal Auditorium, Atlanta  
 Washington Gift Show, Room 439, Hotel Willard, Washington, D.C.  
 Chicago Gift Show, Rooms 733-734, Palmer House, Chicago  
 New York Gift Show, Rooms 333-335, New York Trade Show Building, New York  
 Allied Gift & Jewelry Show, Rooms 827-828, Hotel Adolphus, Dallas  
 Boston Gift Show, Room 415, Hotel Statler, Boston  
 Philadelphia Gift Show, Room 417, Hotel Benjamin Franklin, Philadelphia

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE 527 WEST 7th STREET

NEW YORK Exclusive Representatives of LOS ANGELES  
 ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 2.43. Georgian advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, July 1956.



Figure 2.44. Georgian teapots, left illustrated in *Giftwares*, December 1956, right private collection illustrated in Gary and Paula Barneby, *Hall China Tea and Coffee Pots*.

**Style Trends**  
INTRODUCES  
**MAHOGANY**  
Designed by  
Ernest Sohn

The complete **STYLE TRENDS** line may be seen at the following shows:

DALLAS—Adolphus Hotel, Rooms 827 & 828—Feb. 15-21	DENVER—Albany Hotel, Room 198—Mar. 1-5
SEATTLE—Olympic Hotel, Rooms 234, 235 & 236—Feb. 17-20	EVANSTON—Herald Hotel, Room 411—Mar. 1-5
NEW YORK—N. Y. Trade Show Bldg., Rooms 331 & 332—Feb. 24-Mar. 1	PHILADELPHIA—Hotel Bnai B'rith, Room 417—Mar. 17-20
	MINNEAPOLIS—Dyckman Hotel, Rooms 704-7—Mar. 17-20

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED  
235 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK  
Exclusive Representatives of  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.  
527 WEST 7th STREET  
LOS ANGELES  
STYLE TRENDS, INC.

Figure 2.45 *Style Trends* advertisement, *Giftwares*, February 1957.

**VESTAWARE**  
Designed by  
Ernest Sohn

The complete **VESTAWARE** line may be seen at the following shows:

DALLAS—Adolphus Hotel, Rooms 827 & 828—Feb. 15-21	DENVER—Albany Hotel, Room 198—Mar. 1-5
SEATTLE—Olympic Hotel, Rooms 234, 235 & 236—Feb. 17-20	BOSTON—Hotel Statler, Room 415—Mar. 4-8
NEW YORK—N. Y. Trade Show Bldg., Rooms 331 & 332—Feb. 24-Mar. 1	PHILADELPHIA—Hotel Bnai B'rith, Room 417—Mar. 17-20
	MINNEAPOLIS—Dyckman Hotel, Rooms 704-7—Mar. 17-20

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED  
235 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK  
Exclusive Representatives of  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.  
527 WEST 7th STREET  
LOS ANGELES

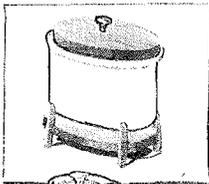
Figure 2.46. *Vestaware* advertisement *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1957.

# B. Altman & Co.

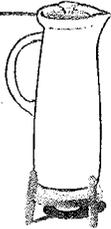
## new ideas for easy entertaining

From the studio of Ernest Sohn, Vesta Ware accessories in wood and white ceramic. For your own home; for hostess gifts. Casseroles with warmers and two lids each—one in wood for serving, one in ceramic for cooking—come in family and company sizes, in oval or round shape.

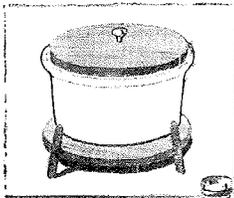
### Altman main floor gifts



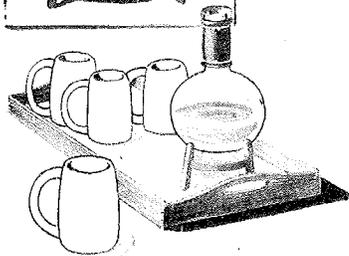
(a) oval casseroles  
on warmer,  
2 qt., 10.00  
2½ qt., 13.00  
3 qt., 15.00



(b) white pitcher on warmer, 9.00



(c) round casseroles  
on warmer,  
2 qt., 10.00  
2½ qt., 13.00  
3 qt., 15.00



(d) 4 mugs, 10.00  
carafe with warmer, 7.50  
tray, 10.00



(e) electric warmer, 8.00

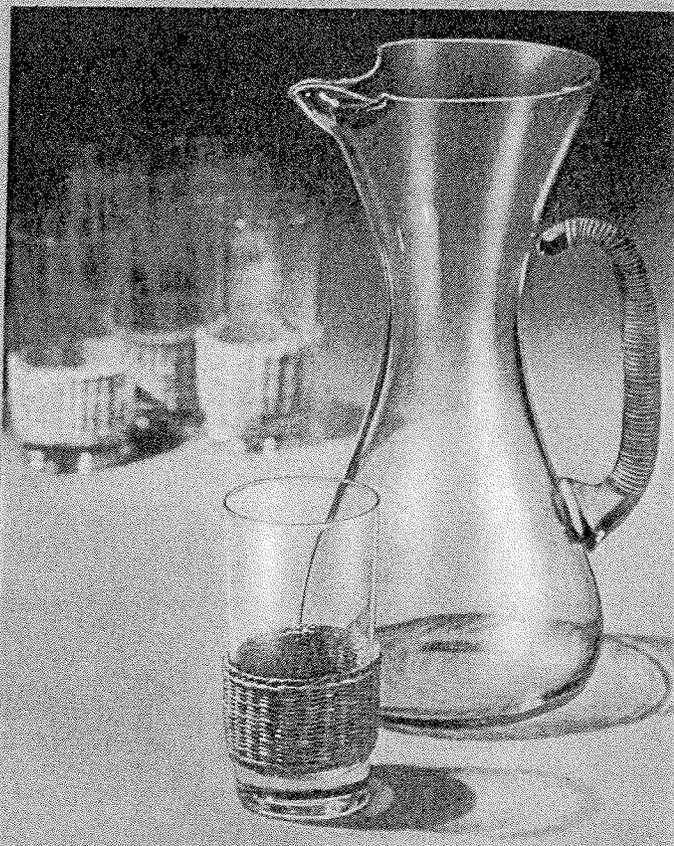
Figure 2.47. B. Altman advertisement, *New York Times*, April 21, 1957.

# CHINA AND GLASS SERVING ACCESSORIES

Designed by ERNEST SOHN

See the complete line at our permanent show-rooms in New York and Los Angeles—also at the following Gift Shows:

MIAMI	
Bayfront Auditorium, Booths 59-60	Jan. 4-7
ATLANTIC CITY	
Convention Hall, Booths 341, 343, 345	Jan. 4-9
NEW YORK	
225 Fifth Avenue, Room 1141	Jan. 12-16, 19-23
LOS ANGELES	
Brack Shops, 527 W. 7th St., Room 403	Jan. 18-23
ATLANTA	
Municipal Auditorium, Booths 111, 112	Jan. 18-21
CHICAGO	
Palmer House, Rooms 733, 734, 735	Feb. 1-12
SAN FRANCISCO	
Sheraton Palace Hotel	Feb. 1-4
SEATTLE	
Olympic Hotel, Rooms 354, 356, 358	Feb. 15-18
DALLAS	
Baker Hotel, the Baker Ballroom balcony	Feb. 22-26
NEW YORK	
New York Trade Show Building, Rooms 333, 335	Feb. 22-27
BOSTON	
Hotel Staller, Room 415	March 8-12
MINNEAPOLIS	
Radisson Hotel	March 15-18



## Jack Orenstein Associates

INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE

527 WEST 7th STREET

NEW YORK Exclusive Representatives of LOS ANGELES

ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 2.48. Firm advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, December 1958.



Figure 2.49. *Doric*, private collection. Coffee pot at right is the percolator model. The large beverage server (samovar), center, retains original foil label reading “Oven Proof China Designed by Ernest Sohn.”

# B. Altman & Co.

COFFEE SERVER of white fluted china on wood and brass-plated warmer, 12 cup capacity, 15.00

deck the holiday table  
with these  
charming gifts

all designed by Ernest Sohn for  
more gracious living.

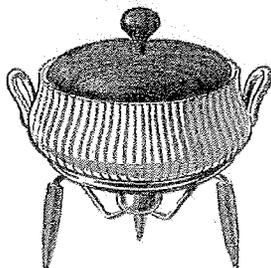


MATCHING SUGAR, CREAMER on walnut tray. Set, 10.00

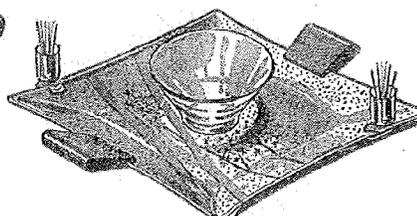
CHEESE BOARD with tile insert in "Inca gold" coloring, and cheese knife, 6.00



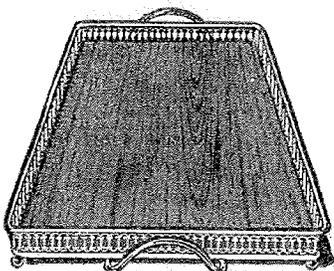
MARTINI SET with gill-trimmed mixer and glasses, gilt stirrer with walnut handle, 8 piece set, 10.00. Walnut tray with brass-plated gallery, 6.50



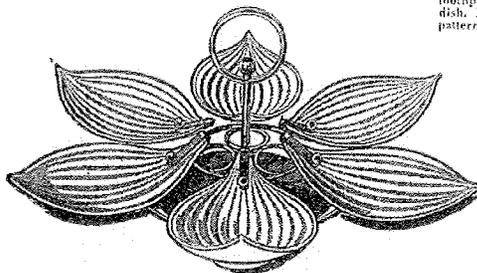
3-QUART CASSEROLE of white fluted china with walnut lid, set on candle warmer, 15.00



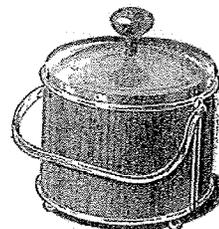
SHRIMP-OR-DIP SERVER in decorative glass platter with walnut handles, brass-plated toothpick holder and clear crystal glass sauce dish, 12" square platter with gilt bamboo pattern, 10.50



WALNUT TRAY with brass-plated gallery, 21 by 12 inches, 9.00



LAZY SUSAN with 6 serving sections of white fluted china on brass-plated base, 22" in diameter, 15.00



WALNUT ICE BUCKET with brass-plated handle and lid with wooden knob, 2 quart capacity, 10.00

ALTMAN MAIN FLOOR GIFTS

MURRAYHILL 9-7000—FIFTH AVENUE AT 34TH STREET AND AT WHITE PLAINS, MANHASSET AND SHORT HILLS

Figure 2.50. B. Altman advertisement, *New York Times*, December 18, 1959.

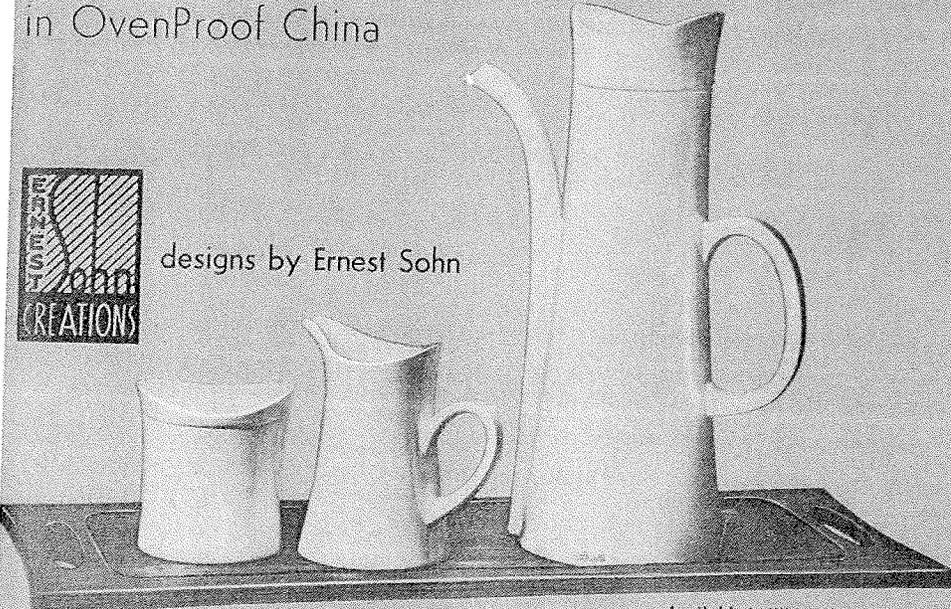


## Illustrations Chapter 3

Jack Orenstein *presents . . .*

*“Riviera”*

SOPHISTICATED BUFFET ACCESSORIES  
in OvenProof China



designs by Ernest Sohn

Available in White, Cast Iron  
Gray, Magenta, Yellow or Azure.

AT THE FOLLOWING SHOWS:

DALLAS, Dallas Trade Mart, Room 1034, February 21-25  
NEW YORK, Trade Show Building, Room 333-335, February 21-26  
SEATTLE, Olympic Hotel, Room 343, February 21-24  
BOSTON, Hotel Statler, Room 415, March 6-10

**Jack Orenstein Associates**  
INCORPORATED

225 FIFTH AVENUE      DALLAS TRADE MART      527 WEST 7th STREET  
NEW YORK      DALLAS      LOS ANGELES

Exclusive Representatives of  
ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, Inc.

Figure 3.1. *Riviera* advertisement from *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1960.



Figure 3.2. Riviera in private collection.

**BA**

**EVENT**  
for summer entertaining, for hostess gifts...  
over-proof china buffet accessories

Excellent values. These beautiful serving appointments by Ernest Sachs. Faint floral pattern on white ground blends with other china patterns, makes graceful addition to your own service. Some pieces are on brass-plated candle stands.

a. 8-cup coffee service on silver	4.95
b. 8-cup, 2-piece open coffee service (includes creamer, sugar and creamer)	9.95
c. sugar and creamer	3.95
d. 10-cup teapot with brass-plated handles and lid on candle stand	12.95
e. 2-compartment warmer, 12 x 14" with lid	3.95
f. 10" salad bowl, 8" plate, and other small pieces	4.95
g. salt and pepper set	3.50
h. sugar, 2 1/2 x 1 1/2" with lid	2.95
i. light creamer or sugar	6.95
j. 1-cup commode on stand	6.95
k. another 1-cup commode on stand	6.95
l. salt & pepper tray for coffee set-up	4.95

ALTMAN'S HOUSE FURNISHING DEPT. 500 N. 5TH ST. PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Figure 3.3. Riviera with Bouquet pattern advertised by B. Altman in the *New York Times* July 9, 1961.

# MARDI GRAS ASSORTMENTS

A new, practical and exciting pattern . . . functional . . . low-priced!

**ASSORTMENT A  
"PANTRYWARE"**

**ASSORTMENT B  
"KOFFEE-KLOTCH"**

**"Mardi Gras"  
SPOON REST**

**SNACK SERVERS**

**ASSORTMENT C  
"PARTYTIME"**

**ASSORTMENT A**  
"Pantryware" Your cost 20.25 per carton  
You get 1 doz. covered butter dish. No. 58-21. 6.75 doz.  
1 doz. cheese board w/ knife. No. 58-18. 6.75 doz.  
1 doz. instant coffee w/ chrome spoon. No. 58-19. 6.75 doz.

**ASSORTMENT B  
"KOFFEE-KLOTCH"**  
21.00 per carton  
You get 4 pieces jumbo coffee pot @ 2.00 ea. No. 58-13. 8.00  
3 doz. mugs @ 3.00 doz. No. 58-26. 9.00  
4 sets jumbo sugar & creamer @ 1.00 set. No. 58-15. 4.00

**ASSORTMENT C  
"PARTYTIME"**  
Incredibly priced 30.50 carton  
You get 2 pcs. 11" all-purpose bucket casserole @ 2.50 ea. No. 58-12. 5.00  
2 sets 7-pc. chariot condiment set @ 2.00 set. No. 58-20. 4.00  
2 sets 11" cheese board w/ knife @ 1.00 ea. No. 58-17. 2.00  
2 sets 12" chip 'n' dip @ 1.25 set. No. 58-16. 2.50  
2 sets jam and marmalade set w/ chrome spoons on stand @ 1.25 ea. No. 58-14. 2.50  
2 pcs. 13" x 11" 3-section relish w/ polished wood handles @ 2.00 ea. No. 58-27. 4.00  
Two 7-pc. salad sets including 4 bowls, ceramic handled fork & spoon, 12" salad bowl @ 2.50 set. No. 58-24. 5.00  
2 pcs. 14" 5-section cushion in "Madeira" basket @ 2.75 ea. No. 58-25. 5.50

**Mardi Gras  
SPOON REST**  
11" 3-section spoon rest with polished wood handle. Min. 2 doz. No. 58-23. 6.75 doz.  
8" snack servers. 3 ass't. Min. 2 doz. No. 58-22. 5.40 doz. ass't

See these and other outstanding imports at the

ATLANTA GIFT SHOW • Booths 208-209 • Municipal Auditorium • Jan. 15-18  
CALIFORNIA GIFT SHOW • Booths 67, 68, 69, 70 • Biltmore Hotel, Rex Room • Jan. 22-27  
CHICAGO GIFT SHOW • Rooms 833 & 834 • Palmer House • Feb. 5-12



**LIPPER & MANN, INC.**  
225 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

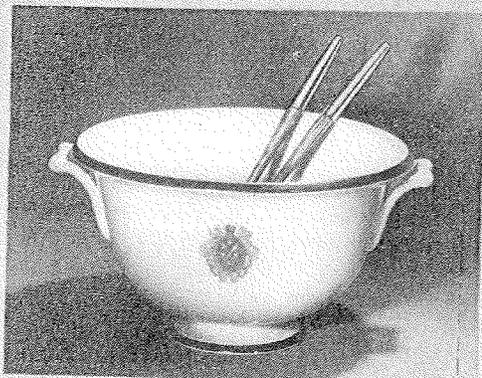
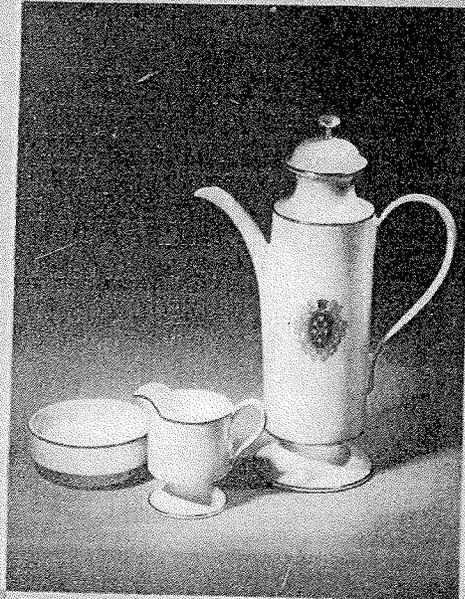
Sold only in carton assortments. No substitutions please.

Figure 3.4. Lipper and Mann advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, January 1961. Copies of Sohn's Riviera shape can be seen in the "Koffee-Klotch" group at left and casserole at top center.

Jack Orenstein *presents . . .*

*Contessa*<sup>👑</sup>

New Designs by  
ERNEST SOHN



At these Shows:

- CHICAGO, Palmer House, Room 733, 734, 735, July 31st-Aug. 11th
- SEATTLE, Olympic Hotel, Room 343, August 21st-24th
- NEW YORK, Trade Show Bldg., Room 333, 335, August 21st-26th
- NEW YORK, 225 Fifth Avenue, Room 1141, August 22nd-26th
- BOSTON, Hotel Statler, Room 404, September 11th-15th

Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.

225 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK

DALLAS TRADE MART  
DALLAS

Jack Orenstein of California, Inc.

527 WEST 7TH STREET  
LOS ANGELES

Exclusive Representatives of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.5. *Contessa* advertisement from *Gift and Art Buyer*, August 1960.



Figure 3.6. *Contessa* pieces in a private collection.

Jack Orenstein *presents* ...

FOR 1961

THE BUTTER MOULD LINE  
designed by *Ernest John*

Colors: Jade and Mahogany

AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.	Jack Orenstein of California, Inc.
225 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK	DALLAS TRADE MART DALLAS
	547 WEST 7TH STREET LOS ANGELES

Figure 3.7. *Butter Mould Line* advertisement from *Giftwares*, February 1961.



Figure 3.8. *Butter Mold* in a private collection. Bowls at left are part of the line's lazy susan and casserole cover is shown at right foreground.

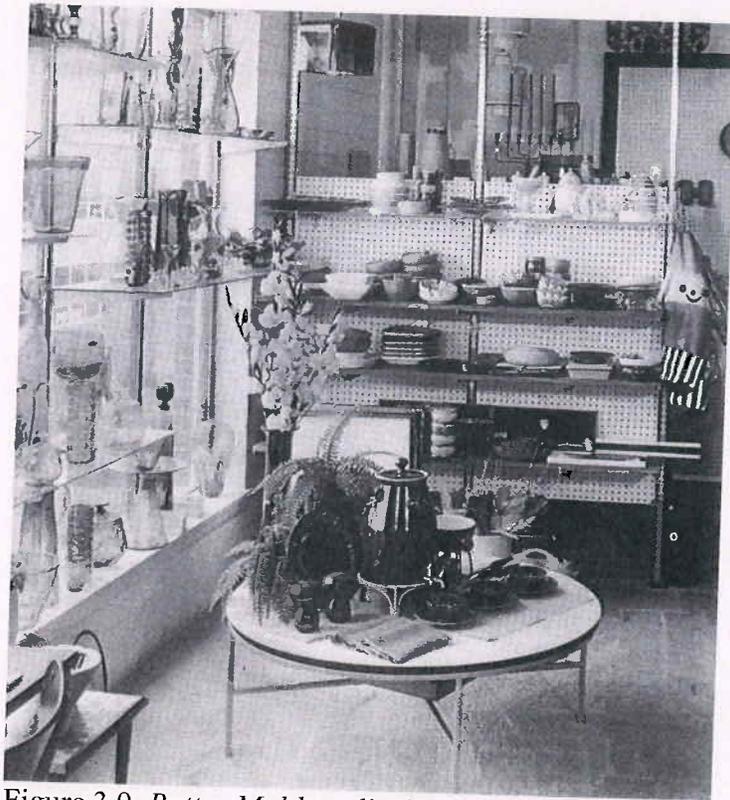


Figure 3.9. *Butter Mold* on display at Ramsey's Corner shop in Salt Lake City in 1961. Salt and pepper shakers, beverage server (samovar) and fondue pot are visible.

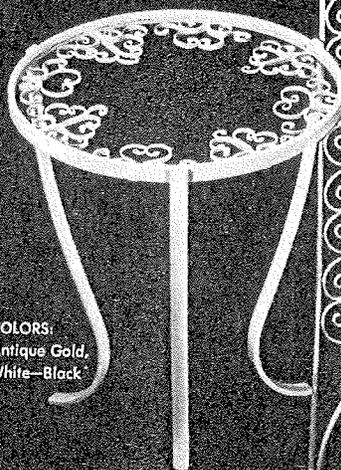
Jack Orenstein *presents...*

THE  
**PRADO**  
COLLECTION  
  
HAND  
FORGED

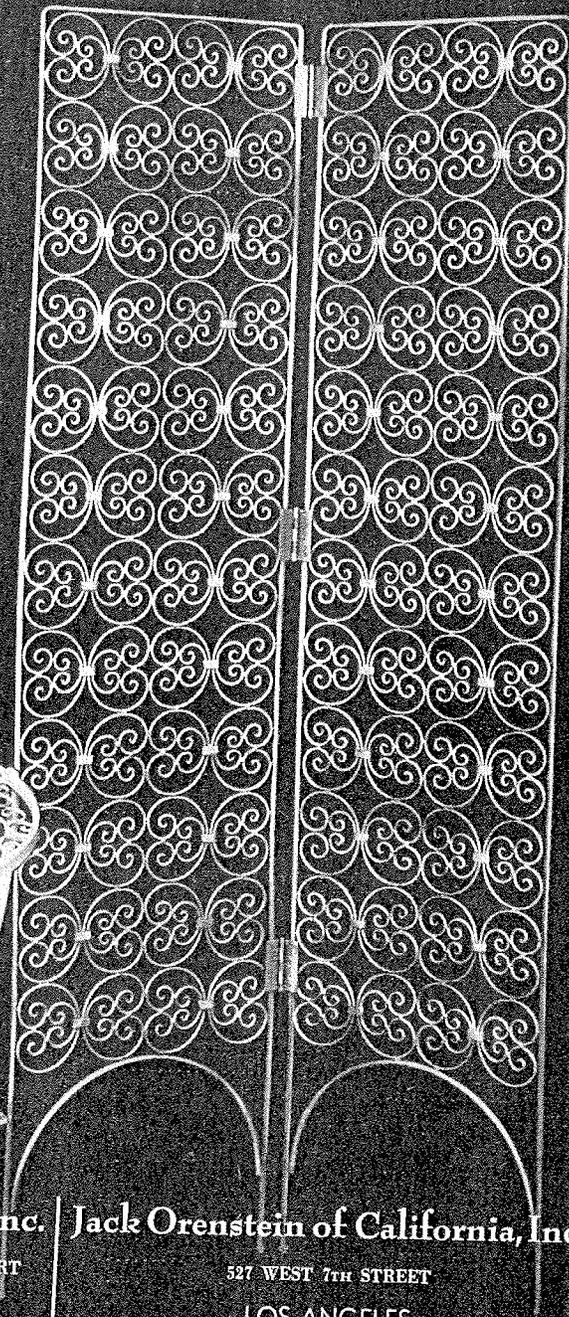
Designed by

*Ernest Sohn*

Made in U.S.A.



COLORS:  
Antique Gold,  
White—Black



Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.

225 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK

DALLAS TRADE MART  
DALLAS

Jack Orenstein of California, Inc.

527 WEST 7TH STREET  
LOS ANGELES

Exclusive Representatives of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.10. Prado collection advertisement in *Gift and Art Buyer*, March 1961.



Figure 3.11. Enamel and wood items in private collection including bookends, ashtrays and serving pieces. Private collection.

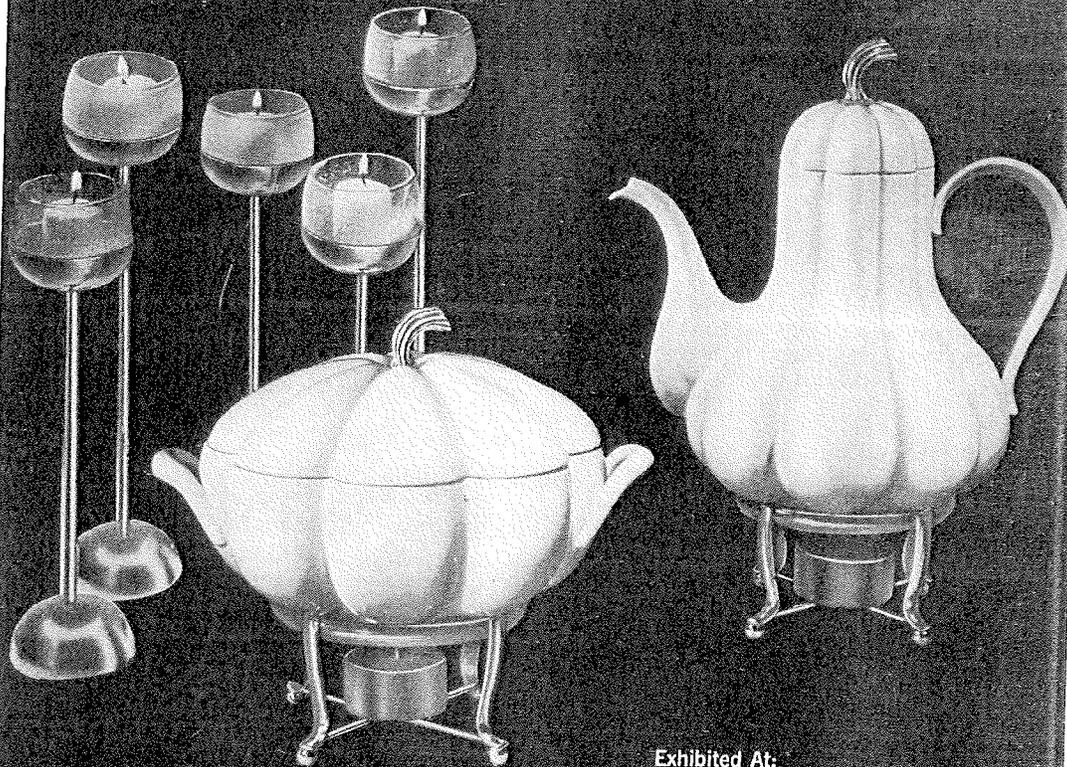


Figure 3.12. Casserole dish on stand combining wood, enamel on metal, brass plated metal. Private collection.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*

*Tuliptime*

DESIGNED BY *Ernest Sohn*



Exhibited At:

LOS ANGELES, Brack Shops  
DALLAS, Dallas Trade Mart

CHICAGO, Palmer House  
NEW YORK, 225 Fifth Avenue  
AND ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc. | Jack Orenstein of California, Inc.

225 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK

DALLAS TRADE MART  
DALLAS

527 WEST 7th STREET  
LOS ANGELES

Exclusive Representatives of **ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.**

Figure 3.13. *Tuliptime* advertisement from *Gift and Art Buyer*, January 1962.

*Original Designs*  
by ERNEST SOHN

7077 \$56.00

**GIFTS in GOLD**

7077 12" round \$15.00

7055 \$14.00

PRICES ARE SUGGESTED RETAIL SUBJECT TO USUAL TRADE DISCOUNTS  
F.O.B. FACTORY, ELMHURST, L. I., N. Y. MINIMUM ORDER: \$75.00

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.  
LOS ANGELES: 572 West 7th Street • CHICAGO: 700 West Wacker Drive • ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart  
Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

7052 \$7.50  
7053 \$7.00  
7076 \$20.00  
7079 \$17.50  
7078 \$17.50  
7881 \$15.00  
7078 \$40.00  
5854 \$20.00  
5859 \$16.00  
5863 \$35.00

*Original Designs*  
by ERNEST SOHN

5862 \$19.75

**Stainless Steel**

5857 \$30.00

also available in copper and brass

5858 \$25.00

PRICES ARE SUGGESTED RETAIL SUBJECT TO USUAL TRADE DISCOUNTS  
F.O.B. EITRICK, WISCONSIN MINIMUM ORDER: \$75.00

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.  
LOS ANGELES: 572 West 7th Street • CHICAGO: 700 West Wacker Drive • ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart  
Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.14. Sohn advertisement appearing in *Gift and Art Buyer* July 1962.

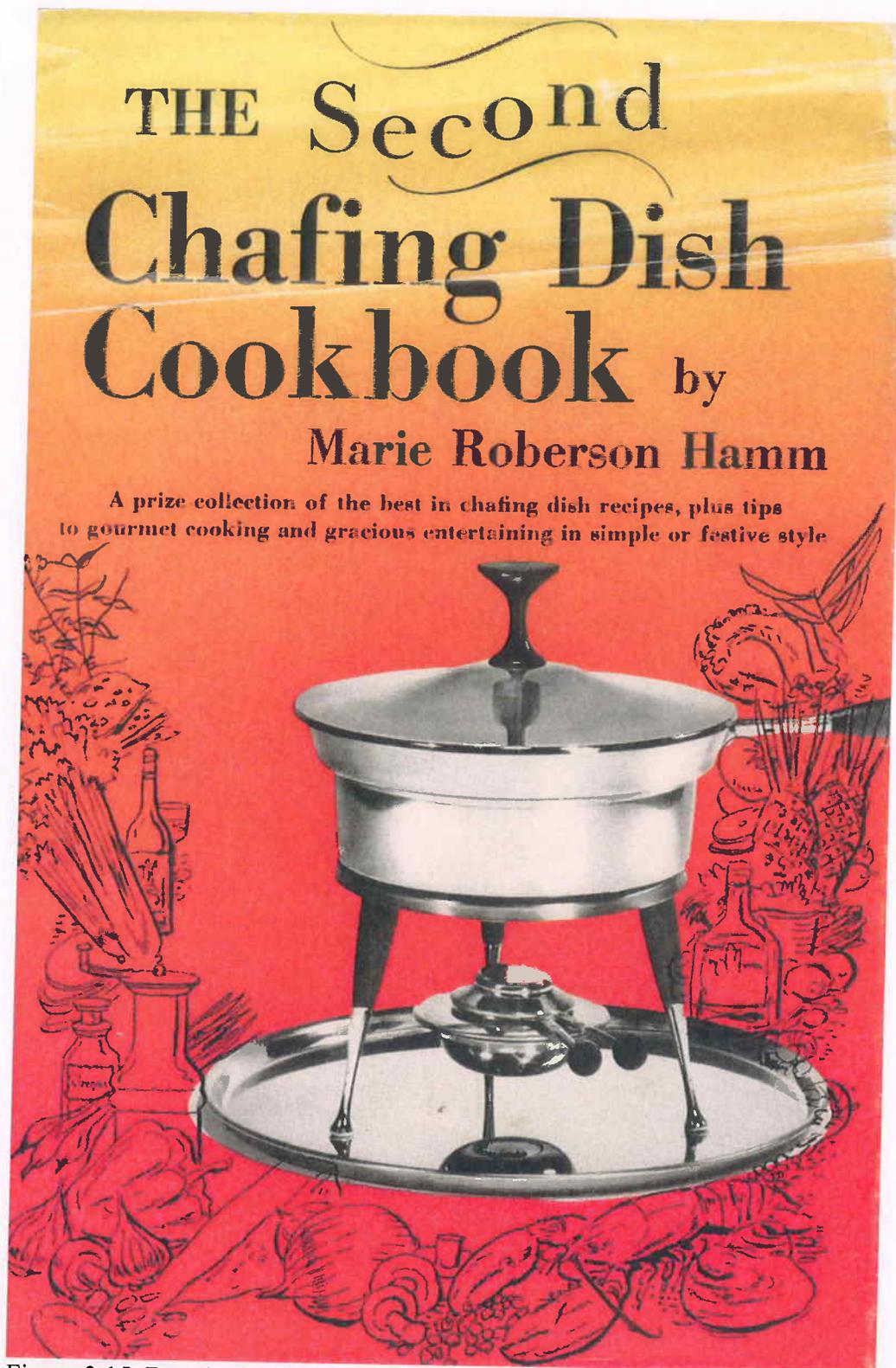


Figure 3.15. Dust jacket illustration from *The Second Chafing Dish Cookbook* by Marie Robertson Hamm.

Jack Orenstein presents...

ORIGINAL PROMOTIONS IN LIGHTS

DESIGNED BY Ernest Sohn

**Cathedral Lights**  
No. 2291 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2292 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2293 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2294 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95

**Ice Cream Soda Lights**  
No. 2295 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2296 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2297 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2298 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95

**Kerosene Lamps**  
No. 2299 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2300 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2301 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95  
No. 2302 - Covered glass, 2 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" (H x W x D) - \$2.95

AT ALL MAJOR SHOWS AND AT OUR PERMANENT SHOW ROOMS

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS: Trade Mart    ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart

Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Jack Orenstein presents...

*Potted Tulip Lights*

DESIGNS BY Ernest Sohn

No. 2202 - \$13.20 (Wholesale) - 3" (H) x 3" (W) x 3" (D)  
Potted Tulip Lights - Assorted Colors - White - Purple - Pink - Yellow - P.O. Box 1000, N.Y.

AT ALL MAJOR SHOWS AND AT OUR PERMANENT SHOW ROOMS

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS: Trade Mart    ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart

Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.16. Candleholder advertisements. Top: *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1963. Bottom: *Gift and Art Buyer*, February 1964.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*

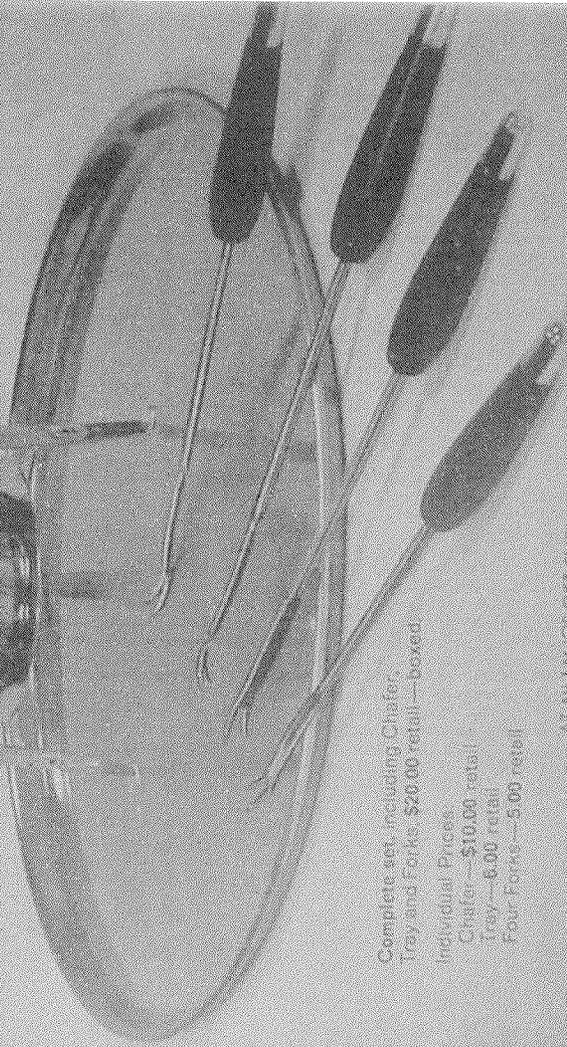
# FONDUE CHAFFER SET

(Chaffer, Tray Forks)

One quart combination Chaffing/  
Fondue Dish, available in cop-  
per, brass or stainless steel with  
stainless Food Pen. Alcohol or  
sterno. Burner. 14" tray in cop-  
per, brass or stainless and set of  
four stainless Fondue Forks with  
Walnut Handles.



DESIGNS BY  
ERNEST SOHN



Complete set, including Chaffer,  
Tray and Forks —\$20.00 retail —boxed

Individual Prices

Chaffer —\$10.00 retail

Tray —6.00 retail

Four Forks —5.00 retail

AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

## Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.

225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street

DALLAS: Trade Mart

ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart

Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

3.17. Fondue chaffer advertisement from *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, July 1964.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*

*Esquire*

DESIGNED BY  
*Ernest Sohn*



At all Major Shows and at our Permanent Showrooms

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS: Trade Mart    ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart

Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.18. *Esquire* advertisement, *Gift and Art Buyer*, January 1963.



Figure 3.19. *Esquire*, private collection.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*  
*Empire Group*  
 OVEN TO TABLE  
 Collection  
 In White and Gold  
 DESIGNS BY  
 ERNEST SOHN

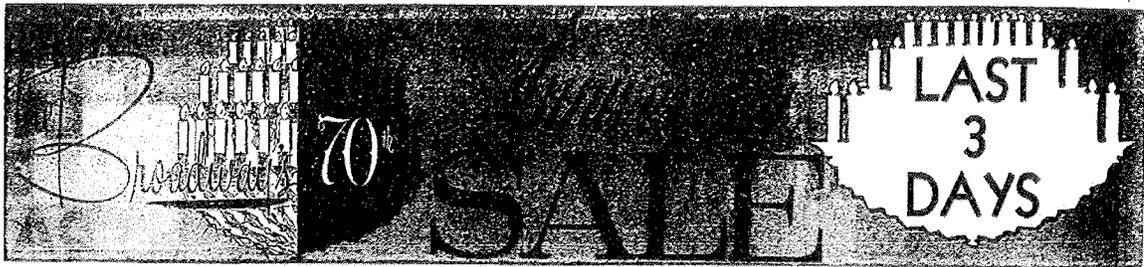
AT ALL MAJOR GIFT SHOWS

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
 225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.  
 LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS: Trade Mart    ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart  
 Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.20. *Empire* advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, July 1964.



Figure 3.21. *Empire* in private collection.



Reg. 9.00,  
sugar and creamer, set, 5.99

Reg. 12.00  
coffee pot, 8.99

NEVER BEFORE AT SALE  
PRICES... EMPIRE  
ACCESSORIES

BY ERNEST SOHN

**20% TO 33% OFF**

All serving pieces are beautifully coordinated—moonlight white, elegantly accented with a lustrous gold band. A gracious signature for the knowledgeable hostess. Now for the first time at sale prices—collect yours today and save!

mail and telephone orders accepted, MA 6-7411  
Gifts, 70—all stores



Reg. 3.00  
mug, each 1.99

Reg. 12.00, salad set with servers, set, 8.99

Reg. 13.00, casserole, 4 quart, 8.99

Reg. 12.00 cake stand with servers, 8.99

Figure 3.22. Broadway Stores advertisement for *Empire*, *Los Angeles Times*, April 28, 1966.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*

**"Early American"**

Interpreted by  
*Ernest Sohn*



COLORS: Burgundy, Gold, Delft Blue and Olive

At all Major Gift Shows

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS: Trade Mart    ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart

Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.23. *Early American* advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, January 1965.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*

*Designs from the 1789 Period in*  
*"Pennsylvania Pewter"*



at all major gift shows

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

LOS ANGELES 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS Trade Mart    ATLANTA Merchandse Mart  
Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.24. *Pennsylvania Pewter* advertisement from *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, July 1966.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*  
 NEW CREATIONS by Ernest Sohn

DESIGNS BY ERNEST SOHN

At all Major Gift Shows

**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
 225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.  
 LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS: Trade Mart    ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart

Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Figure 3.25. Firm advertisement in *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, January 1966.

Jack Orenstein *presents...*  
FALL CREATIONS 1965



Designs by Ernest Sohn.

Complete lines shown at all Major Shows  
**Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.**  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.  
LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street    DALLAS: Trade Mart    ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart  
Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

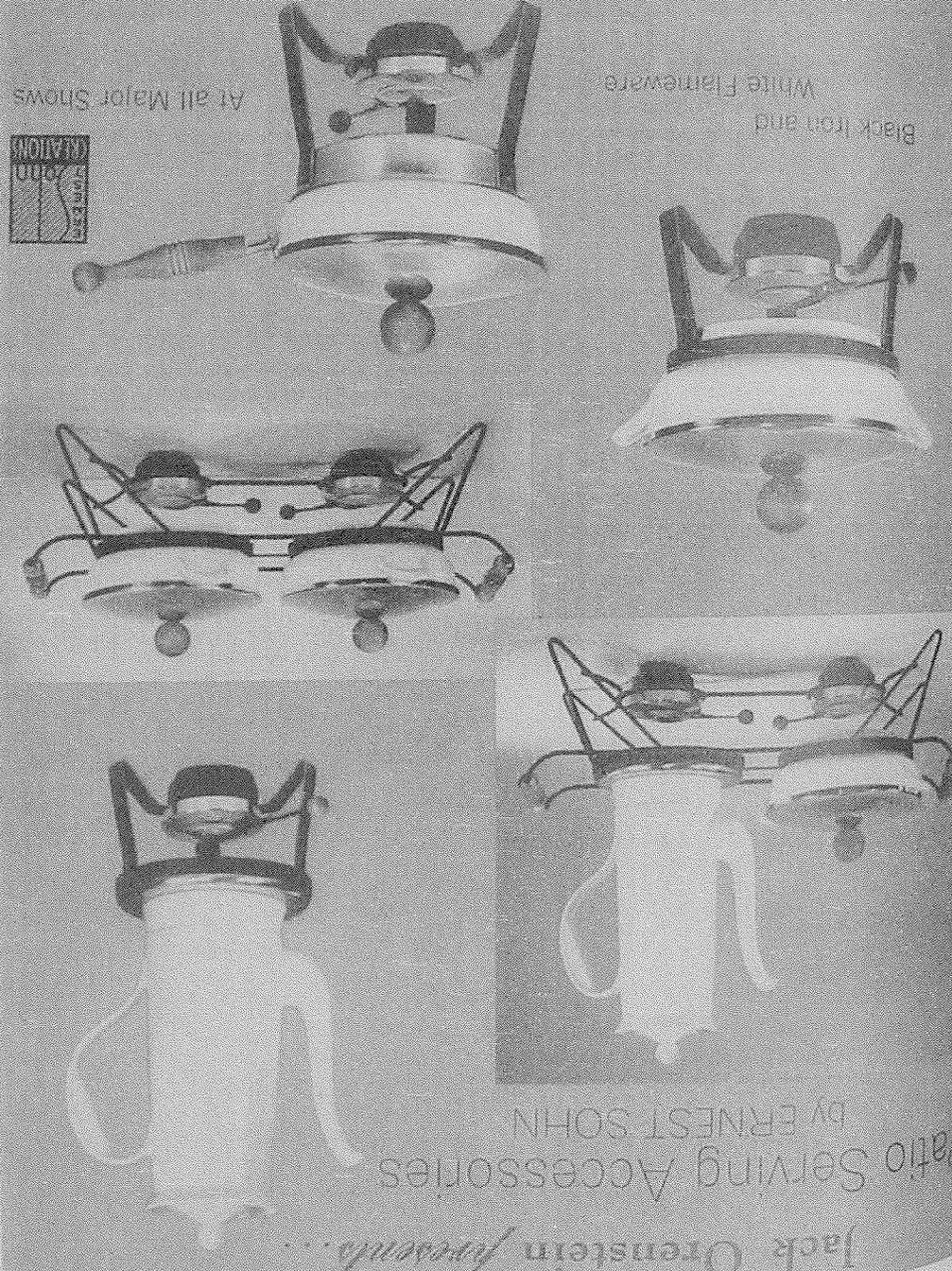
Figure 3.26. Fall collections advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, July 1965.

Figure 3.27. *Flameware* advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, December 1965.

Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.  
225 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.  
LOS ANGELES, 527 West 7th Street  
DALLAS, Trade Mart  
ATLANTA, Merchandise Mart  
Exclusive Representative of ERNEST SOHN CREATIONS, INC.

Black Iron and  
White Flameware

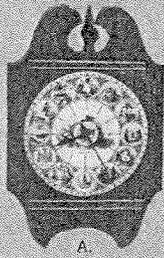
At all Major Shows



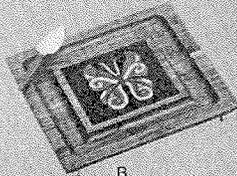
Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.  
Patio Serving Accessories  
by ERNEST SOHN

Jack Orenstein *presents...*  
*New Designs for Fall*

by ERNEST SOHN



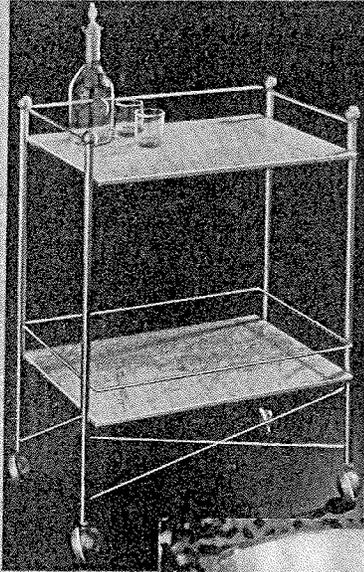
A



B



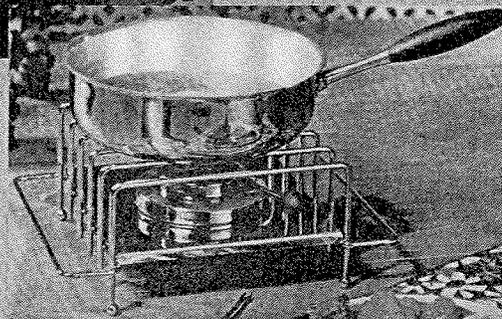
C



D



F



E



A. No. 25003—MARVELWOOD (the wonderwood) Transistor Battery Clock from a large collection of wall clocks, engravings and mirrors.

B. No. 13003—SOLID WALNUT CHEESE BOARD with butterfly pattern on enamel background.

C. No. 3633—9 PC. ON-THE-ROCKS SET—Royal Guard pattern. From our Bar Collection.

D. No. 8990—BAR CART—Italian carrara marble and brass.

7 PC. DECANTER SET

E. No. 5708—ORIENTAL FONDUE from a complete Fondue collection. Copper clad—stainless steel.

F. No. 3737—4 PC. CANNISTER SET—Tortoise pattern—from a large collection of tortoise serving accessories.

At all Major Gift Shows and our showrooms.

**ETCO INDUSTRIES, INC.**

(Successors to Jack Orenstein Associates, Inc.)

225 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10010

LOS ANGELES: 527 West 7th Street DALLAS: Trade Mart ATLANTA: Merchandise Mart

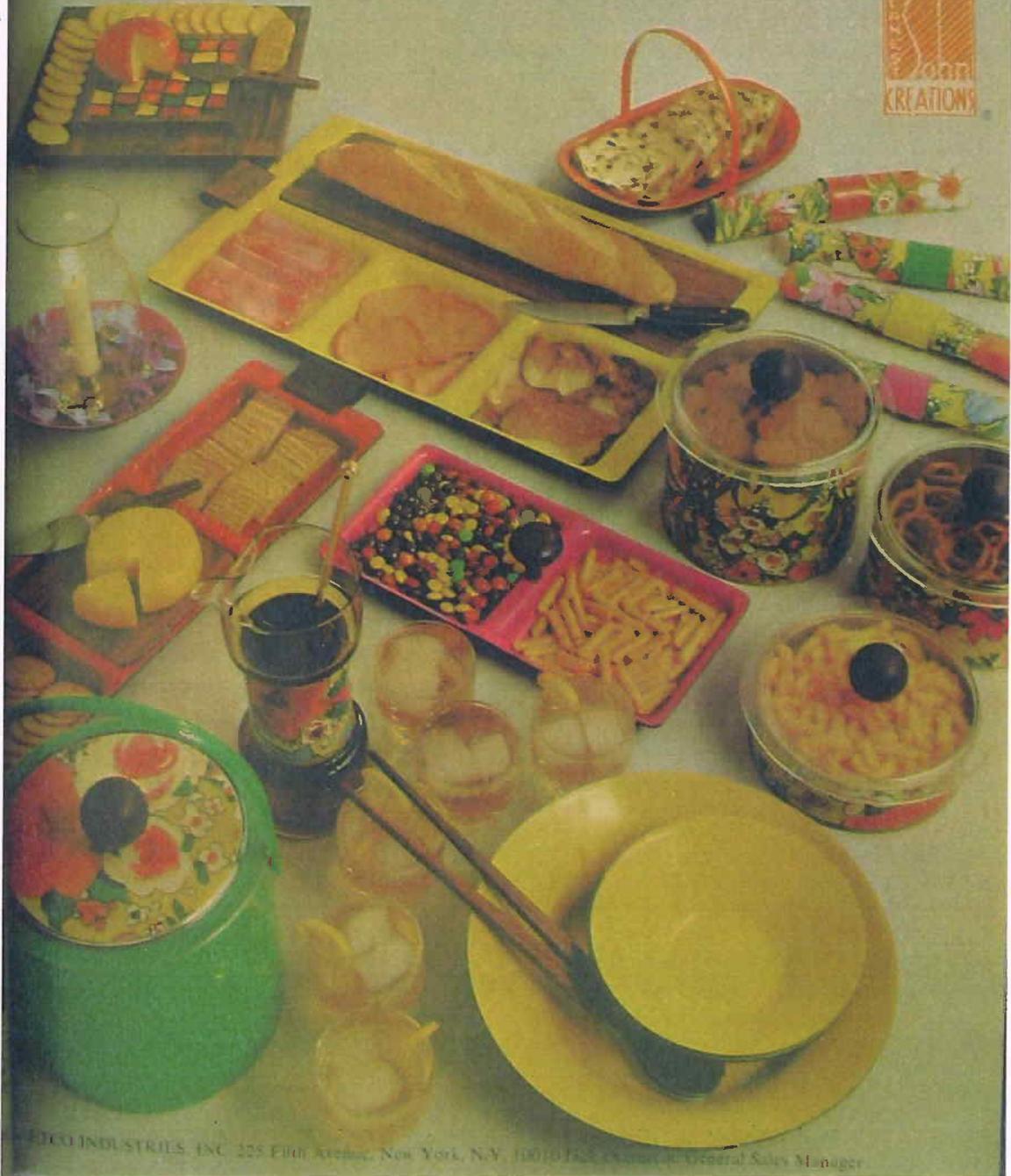
Figure 3.28 First Ectco advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, August 1967.

## a festival of color for spring '68

Etco blossoms out with a whole new line of informal party-serving ware in the gayest, most dazzling colors ever! Perfect for party, patio, or pool, this group is durable, completely washable, non-staining . . . stands up remarkably well to the

stress and strain of teen-age parties! A range of four sparkling colors: slicker yellow, patio orange, chlorophyll green, hot pink . . . mix them and match them with "Spring Garden", our exclusive coordinated florals. **etco industries, inc.**

designed by ERNEST SOGIN



ETCO INDUSTRIES, INC. 225 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010 P.S. Ernest Sogin, Creative Sales Manager

Figure 3.29. Etco advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, January 1968.



Figure 3.30. Teak advertised in *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, July 1969.

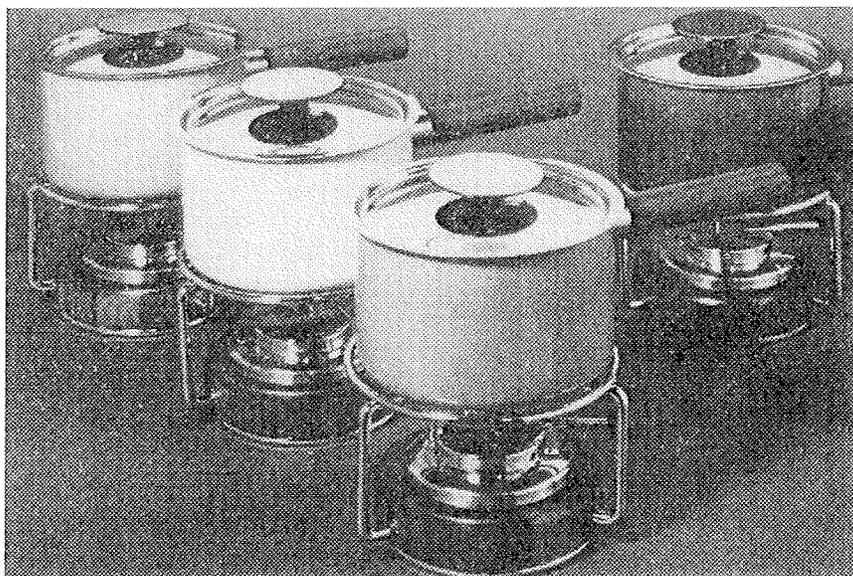


Figure 3.31. Nucerite fondues highlighted in *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, September 1969.

Store Hours Downtown: Monday and Thursday, 9:15 to 7:00;  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 9:15 to 5:45

*Marshall Field & Company*



**GLEAMING ACCESSORIES  
HIGHLIGHT  
FESTIVE OCCASIONS**

Ernest Sohn varies combinations of white marble, gleaming chrome, and teakwood, richly hued. Gay as bright accents on your table—delightful as gift ideas. The shimmer stems mainly from accessories like this cheese board of inlaid teakwood banded in chrome-plating; a sleek three-quart stainless steel chafing dish; a chrome-and-Lucite magazine rack. See these accessories and more in Casual Living Accessories—Second Floor, Middle Wabash; also Evanston, Oak Park, Park Forest, Old Orchard, Oakbrook, River Oaks, and Mayfair in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

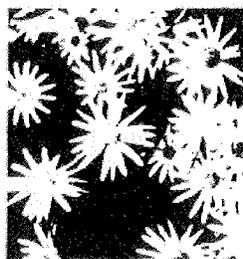
1. Magazine rack with chrome-plated frame and Lucite plastic panels, \$22
2. Plastic ice bucket with chrome-plated trim and ice tongs, \$25
3. Teakwood salad bowl, 9½x4 with 11-inch servers, 3-piece set, \$30
4. Individual teakwood salad bowl, 5x2½ deep, \$6.50
5. Stainless steel chafing dish with walnut trim, burns sterno, 3-quart capacity, \$27
6. Cutting cube of white Italian marble and stainless steel blade knife, 5x5x2½ deep, \$10
7. 12-inch bevel edged Italian marble cake stand with stainless steel server, \$26
8. Stainless steel fondue server with 8-inch tray, burns sterno, \$23
9. Cheese board of inlaid teakwood banded in chrome-plating with hanging rings, \$10
10. White china casserole with electric warmer, 2-quart capacity, \$15

Figure 3.32. Marshall Field and Company advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1968.

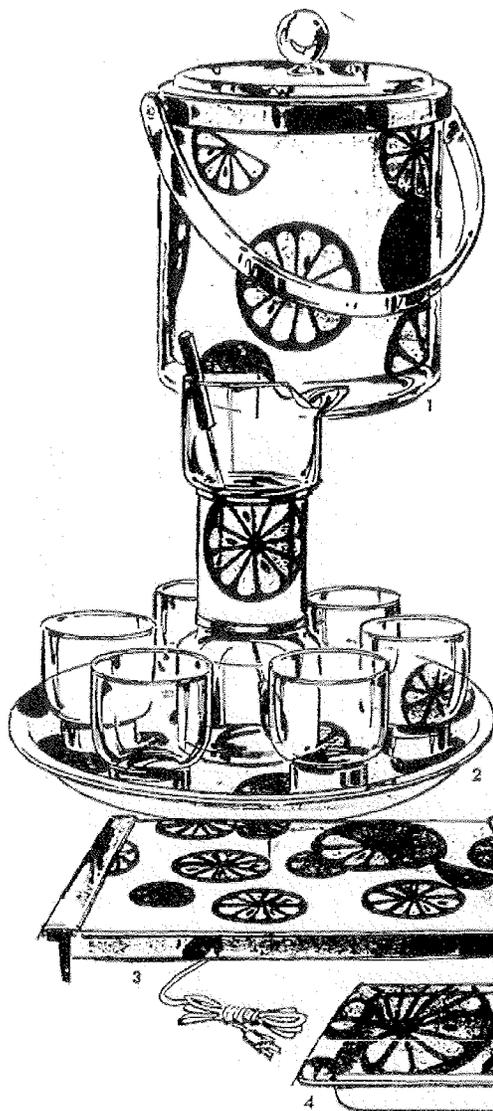
Store Hours Downtown: Monday and Thursday, 9:15 to 7:00;  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 9:15 to 7:45

*Marshall Field & Company*

# WELCOME SPRING



WITH COLOR-HAPPY  
BUFFETWARE



What could be more refreshing than the cool good looks of these new servers. Bold lemon yellow and zesty lime green paint a host of hostess helpers from a chip-dip tray to a cocktail set. From Ernest Sohn, they swing out in accents of smartly grained walnut and ceramic tile. Put on a happy new look for your spring and summer entertainments with a selection of these coordinates in Casual Living Accessories — Second Floor, Middle Wabash; in Evanston, Oak Park, Park Forest, Old Orchard, Oakbrook, River Oaks, and Mayfair in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin — \$8.50 to \$18

1. Plastic ice bucket with double wall, two-quart capacity, \$10.50
2. Round tray, 13 1/2-inch diameter, \$8.50. Cocktail mixer, chrome-plated mixing spoon with green plastic handle, six clear glass cocktail glasses with weighted bases, set, \$12
3. Electric warming tray with 11x15-inch glass surface and satin-finished, chrome-plated handles, \$18
4. Three-compartment server, 6x21, has 5 1/2-inch square walnut cutting board, knife with yellow plastic handle and steel blade, \$11
5. Chip-dip tray, 13 1/2-inch diameter, with glass bowl insert, \$13
6. Walnut cheeseboard, 12x12, with ceramic tile insert; knife with yellow plastic handle and steel blade, \$15
7. Walnut cheeseboard, 7x14, with ceramic tile; knife with yellow plastic handle and steel blade, \$11

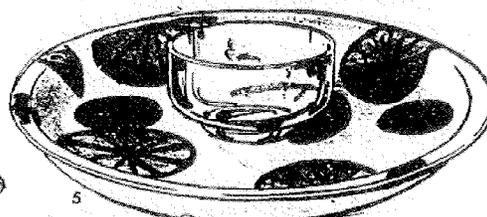
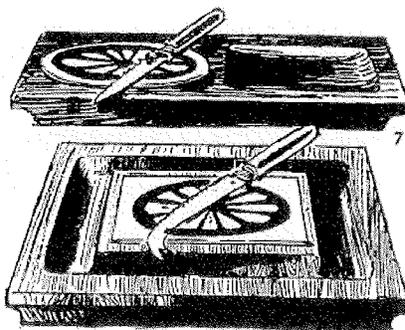


Figure 3.33. Marshall Field and Company advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, April 8, 1969.

**Teak**

Handcrafted Siamese teakwood  
invokes the mysteries  
of the Orient

ETCO INDUSTRIES  
CREATIONS

See us at all major shows

**ETCO** **ETCO INDUSTRIES**  
Division of American Trading and Production Corporation  
225 Fifth Avenue • New York, N. Y. 10010

NEW YORK  
225 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N. Y. 10010  
(212) 688-2281

LOS ANGELES  
1200 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, California  
(213) 552-2734

DALLAS  
7000 Lyndon B. Johnson  
Freeway, Suite 1214  
Dallas, Texas 75243  
(214) 344-4229

MIAMI  
3300 North Bayshore Meade  
Miami, Florida 33137  
(305) 575-2222

Figure 3.34. Etcò advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, July 1972.

**Introducing  
SYOBI  
the 'other' wood  
from  
Ernest Sohn**

SYOBI. Exotic hardwood with the rich beauty and fine quality of teak, but a color like wheat warmed in the summer sun. A bright, light-colored wood with the weight and feel of fine teak—to blend easily with today's natural mood. Each piece beautifully shaped and crafted. SYOBI is something different. For your customers. For you.

New SYOBI. Designed by Ernest Sohn, who brings you exotic woods from the world over. See the SYOBI COLLECTION at your nearest Ernest Sohn Creations Showroom—or write for complete information today.

**Ernest Sohn Creations**  
ETCO INDUSTRIES  
HOUSEWARES, RESTAURANT DIVISION  
AMERICAN TRADING AND PRODUCTION CORPORATION  
900 East 72nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44113

Figure 3.35. Syobi advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, March 1976.

**Chafing Dishes & Fondue Servers**

designed by  
**ERNEST SOHN**

**ETCO INDUSTRIES**  
KREATIONS

**etco**

INDUSTRIES DIVISION  
225 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10010  
AMERICAN TRADING and  
PRODUCTION CORPORATION

Tabletop Cookware  
& Serveware  
Made by  
skilled American craftsmen  
at our 225 Showroom only  
during the N.Y. Gift Show

Figure 3.36. Etco advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, February 1971.

**Seafare**

Serving and Cookware for delectable  
gourmet seafood—each  
designed with the  
Ernest Sohn flair.

**ERNEST SOHN  
CREATIONS**

**ETCO INDUSTRIES**

At all major shows

ETCO INDUSTRIES, INC. 1000 W. 10th Street, Dept. 100, Portland, Oregon 97201  
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 503/241-1199  
 503/241-1200

Figure 3.37. *Seafare* advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, August 1974.

**Ernest Sohn  
speaks French  
beautifully**

De la Cuisine.  
C'est magnifique.  
Nouveau de Ernest Sohn.

Copper and Brass. The gourmet standard for centuries in cookery and kitchenware. Newly and beautifully designed in the French tradition by Ernest Sohn. Heavy copper-clad cooking surfaces. Gleaming brass highlights. Polished wood handles. Even an engravable brass plaque highlighting each beautifully functional piece.

De la Cuisine. Magnifique.  
From Ernest Sohn.

**Ernest Sohn Creations**  
100015, France. Tel. 03 43 23 11 11. [www.ernestsohn.com](http://www.ernestsohn.com)

Figure 3.38. *De La Cuisine* advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, November 1977.

**PATIO PARTYWARE**  
 designed by ERNEST SOHN

...AND MORE... in all elegance in this collection of patio partyware and accessories. Colorful, functional, and long-lasting pieces are combined with white plastic materials to the party mood.

ETCO INDUSTRIES, 225 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010  
 Division of AMERICAN TRADING AND PRODUCTION CORPORATION  
 SEE US AT ALL MAJOR SHOWS

Figure 3.39. Etco advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, January 1973.

**HYDRO PLANTER**  
 designed by ERNEST SOHN

...THEY REMEMBER TO WATER THEMSELVES... Etco introduces a new collection of highly decorative planters with automatic water reservoir system—keeps plants moist for weeks at a time. Plants can go directly into the planter. 2 sizes available. The planter package top or a tall, large size for floor or patio. Includes complete plant & clay soil. Colors as shown. Send for color brochure.

ETCO INDUSTRIES, 225 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010  
 Division of AMERICAN TRADING AND PRODUCTION CORPORATION  
 SEE US AT ATLANTIC CITY AND ALL MAJOR SHOWS

Figure 3.40. Etco advertisement, *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, December 1972.

## Ernest Sohn's "Buffet Basket" Collection

The master returns to the potter's bench to create an elegant collection of sculptured high-fired porcelain serving pieces in classic white on white. Because elegance isn't enough, Ernest Sohn's new "Buffet Basket" is chip-resistant, dishwasher-safe, and goes from refrigerator direct to oven to table. See the entire collection at your nearest Ernest Sohn Creations Showroom. Made with pride in U.S.A. Write for complete information today.



**Ernest Sohn Creations**

**ETCO INDUSTRIES**

HOUSEWARES/GIFTWARES DIVISION

AMERICAN TRADING AND PRODUCTION CORPORATION

880 East 72nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44103



Figure 3.41. *Buffet Basket* collection advertised in *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, April 1975.

**Baqara.  
Glass  
handblown  
in the tradition  
of the  
Venetian  
masters.**

New from Ernest Sohn. Each piece a work of art, skillfully crafted by hand in translucent topaz-brown glass. Each piece with the craftsman's seal and ground bottom that mark Baqara as a collector's item. Baqara. Something new and rare for your customers in search of the unusual. See the entire Baqara Collection of servingware, barware and storage jars at your nearest Ernest Sohn Showroom or write for catalog.



**Ernest Sohn Creations  
ETCO INDUSTRIES**

HOUSEWARES/GIFTWARES DIVISION  
AMERICAN TRADING AND PRODUCTION CORPORATION  
880 East 22nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44103

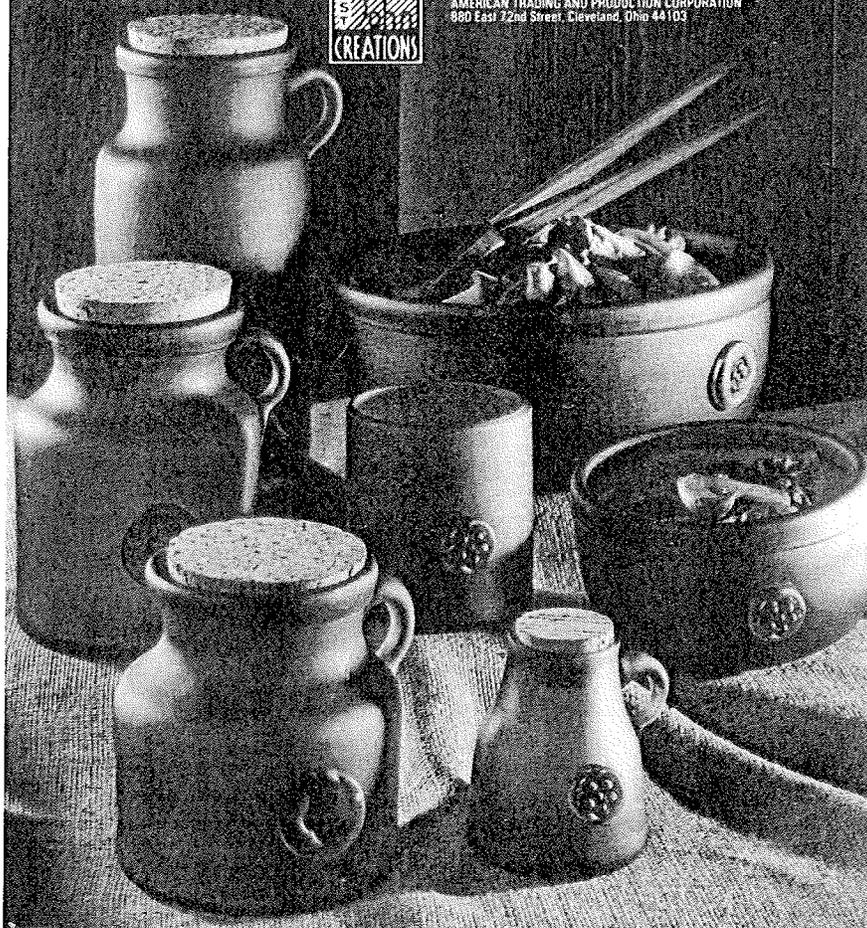


Figure 3.42. Baqara glass advertised in *Gifts and Decorative Accessories*, January 1977.