

Bubble-gum art sweetens the air in Paris, a rare flask fattens coffers in New York, and an Audubon sale ruffles feathers in Rhode Island. For more, visit www.ArtandAntiques.net.

Buyers' Market

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA—As astute antiques collectors know, now is the time to shop and buy in Argentina. Due to continuing political and economic woes (at press time, the exchange rate for \$1 was 2.85 pesos), many Argentines are shedding luxuries—including collections of European-influenced treasures.

According to Julio Muñoz, a long-established Buenos Aires-based antiques buyer, quality furniture can start at \$150; paintings at \$100. Other varied antiques, including fine silver and exquisite smalls, abound.

Buenos Aires has more than 1,400 antiques

shops and warehouses. Key shopping districts include Palermo Viejo, Recoleta and San Telmo (interior, above, of a dealer's space in San Telmo). To shop quickly and negotiate well, buyers should ask a trusted source to arrange in advance for both a translator and a dedicated taxi driver accustomed to providing security.

While concerned about the economy, Argentines are also pragmatic about the ups and downs of capitalism. They greet all customers warmly, but as a group of Atlanta-based buyers recently learned in Buenos Aires, they're tough negotiators. "Everything was so easy—except the haggling," notes one buyer. "It was a good lesson to learn." —*A. Richard Langley*



Forgotten Faces

COLMA, CALIF.—Ron Horne's new book, *Forgotten Faces*, is the first record of porcelain photos displayed on tombstones in Colma's historic Holy Cross Cemetery. The photographer digitally captured some 500 striking portraits—dating from 1899 to 1945—of immigrants from 20 nations (Mina A. Maffei, right, died June 29, 1921, at age 19).

Gravestones have displayed photographs of the deceased since the daguerreotype era. In 1854, two French photographers patented a process for firing photos on enamel and porcelain. The custom of attaching these photos to tombstones spread throughout Southern and Eastern Europe and eventually became popular with Jews, Italians and other ethnic groups in the United States. "Anyone who encounters these images



knows how intimate and captivating they are," says Gary Collison, editor of *Markers*, the journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies. "They provide encounters with the living in the land of the dead." For more information, call (888) 557-7776 or visit www.ForgottenFaces.org. —*Lisa Montanarelli*

French Fracas

PARIS—FIAC, the renowned Parisian art fair now in its 30th year, began with a boom when a Perrier bottle filled with flammable chemicals exploded on opening day. Two people were injured (not seriously), and police are investigating, says the show's spokesman, Guillaume Piens.

The oblique message "Art pas mort; juste un cancer" ("Art not death, just a cancer") was written on one sack found containing an unexploded bomb. Police had already thrown out another group of protesters who, angry at cutbacks in France's version of Social Security, launched stink bombs on opening night. But the art crowd numbering 72,000 over the five-day fair poured in undeterred and ready to buy.

"The bombs are a mystery," says



Piens, who was pleased about a second, metaphorical boom—in sales. Success stories included Paris-based Galerie Nelson, which sold 15 large Thomas Ruff photographs for \$25,000 each; Gallery 1900–2000, which enjoyed a near sell-out with 38 completed transactions; and Berlin's Galerie Michael Schultz, which sold a work by German painter Georg Baselitz for \$74,000.

One of FIAC's biggest hits had the potential to "blow up" but didn't: Maurizio Savini's sculptures made of bubble gum, at Lyon's Olivier Houq Galleries, sweetened the air with their candy-store aroma. The artist's "Militaire," went for \$3,480. And chew on this: "Parsifal" (above) could be had for a lipsmacking \$10,440!

—*Matthew Rose*