

## Passing the Convention Torch to Our New Host

Welcome Terry Traw!  
*(2010 Head Hunters Newsletter Reprint)*

As time draws near for the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Head Hunters Convention, we're both excited and honored that our own Head Vase creator, Terry Traw, has taken the torch from Maddy and will assume the responsibility of putting together another fun convention! We all want to thank Terry for helping us continue this incredible tradition we all enjoy.

After establishing, organizing and hosting the annual Head Hunters Convention in Florida for the past seventeen years, Maddy Gordon stepped back from this huge responsibility. She is now spending her leisurely time enjoying her travels and spending more time with her family.

For the first time ever, Maddy is looking forward to enjoying the convention as a spectator and getting to shop along with other crazed head hunters.



Many of you have met Terry and his wife Jodie at past conventions. Although this is Terry's first year as the organizer of this event, he has been instrumental in past years assisting Maddy with the creation and production of the more recent annual Special Edition Convention Head Vases.

In addition to having a new host, this year's Head Vase Convention brings us a new centralized location in Branson, Missouri.

To add a new dimension to the event, this year's convention will also include dealers from around the country offering a wide assortment of rare collectibles for sale. With so many different collectibles, it's going to be a great opportunity to "show, tell and learn" and there's sure to be something of interest for everyone!

For those of you who have never been to Branson, there are a number of attractions you can visit while you're in town. Be sure to check out [www.branson.com](http://www.branson.com) to find out everything that's happening and reserve your show or special event tickets now!

Terry Traw is certainly no novice when it comes to bringing collectors together for a convention. He has been involved with arranging Jim Beam Decanter Conventions since 1994 through his own company, Strafford Porcelain Merchants.

It's always interesting to learn about other collectors, their vast and varied collections and their special areas of interest. Since Terry will be hosting our next convention, what a perfect time to learn more about him.

Terry has lived in Green County Missouri all his life where he graduated from Central High School. During his senior year, he began working at a Safeway store bagging groceries. Remember when training classes were required to learn how to properly sack groceries using paper bags?

It wasn't long before Terry was climbing the ladder and became a cashier/checker and was also stocking shelves. With increased experience, Terry was soon promoted to head clerk and entered the Safeway Management training program.

It was during these early years that Terry started collecting Jim Beam decanters. Since he also worked in the liquor department, he was in charge of ordering the liquor. Terry became very interested in the eye-catching assortment of decanters, each one styled in unique and whimsical ways.

Terry began his first collection of decanters through his contacts with liquor distributors. At that time it was not possible to ship "combustible" fluids, so the contents were "emptied." As times changed, fluids were kept in tact and of course, today's collectors want decanters full of alcohol with the original seal in tact.

By 1981 almost all the Safeway locations in the Springfield market closed their doors. Terry accepted the opportunity to join a local food brokerage firm that represented 70 food manufacturers in over 400 grocery stores in Springfield. They were one of the largest representatives for Dole and ConAgra foods.

In 1984, Terry became a Field Sales Manager then later, an Account Manager. It was in 1990 when Terry became one of the owners of the local family business. When Terry left the grocery business in 1990, he had a two-year non-compete clause against working in the grocery business. This led Terry to resume his favorite hobby of collecting decanters and antique bottles. He always enjoyed shopping at area flea markets and scouring old barns for lightning rod balls, weather vanes, antique bottles and glass insulators since he was a teenager.

Some of you may wonder, what is a glass insulator? Glass insulators were used to insulate electrical current and often were found on old telephone poles.



Luckily, Terry had a friend who was a telephone lineman near his grandmother's home in Pennsylvania. As his lineman friend took down the old telephone lines, Terry bought the glass insulators.

With the profits Terry made from buying and reselling glass insulators, weather vanes, antique bottles and other collectible items, he was able to order a custom made, shiny new 1973 Camero for \$2,800.

Long before Terry had an interest in collecting decanters, he was always on the search for rare antique bottles. You can still find some very rare and unusual antique bottles available for sale at this website: [www.antiquebottle.com](http://www.antiquebottle.com)

Terry currently has this whiskey bottle listed for auction on eBay. It's a Glob Top G.O Blakes 1/6 Kentucky Whiskey Adams Taylor A 10 valued at over \$1,000.



Some antique whiskey bottles have been known to sell for over \$10,000. But hold onto your hats, some very rare, excellent condition bottles have been known to sell for over \$100,000!!!! Boy, if our great grand daddy's only knew!!!!

While Terry still kept his interest in antique bottles, his interest in decanters continued to grow and it wasn't long before he found other decanter collectors.

It was 1978 when Terry discovered the Jim Beam Club in Missouri. He became a member and also attended his first International Jim Beam Convention that same year which was held in Chicago, Illinois. The "International Jim Beam Bottles and Specialty Club" had been formed in 1971. By the late 1970's, the International club had accumulated over 25,000 members.

Terry's Missouri branch, located right in Terry's neighborhood, was called the "Show Me Jim Beam Bottle Club". It had about 60 members and they met every month.

It wasn't long before Terry became the Director of District #4 covering Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Wyoming.

The annual conventions are rotated through the various states each year, with each district taking a turn. There is also a district for Australia and New Zealand.

Much like the annual head vase convention, the International Jim Beam Conventions also sparked the creation of unique, annual decanters to commemorate the occasion. There were four different decanters made for each convention. The traditional decanter was called the general issue decanter and sold to members attending the convention.

Specialty decanters, one for women and one for men, were also designed for each convention. These decanters, along with the general issue decanters, were priced at \$69 each, but only women could purchase the decanters made for women and men could only purchase the decanters designed for men. (Hey Terry, what do you think of the next Jim Beam decanter designed for women happened to look like a lady head vase?)

In addition to offering several annual decanters there was also a "one-of-a-kind decanter" that could only be obtained by holding the winning raffle ticket. These tickets were made available through the national network of Jim Beam Sales Representatives and sold for \$5 each and sold exclusively to liquor store owners,

bartenders, bar owners and members of the Jim Beam Clubs. Each ticket owner had a chance of winning the much-coveted annual one-of-a-kind convention decanter. What collector doesn't LOVE those one of a kind pieces!!!!

For those of you that may be interested in attending one of the international Jim Beam conventions, they're always held during the summer months in late July or August and we're sure Terry would provide you with the details of upcoming events.

And, if you thought the photo on this page was a map of the US, you're correct, but it's also so much more: it's the original, one of a kind decanter that was offered at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual International Jim Beam Convention.



This wonderful, rare United States decanter shows where each of the International Jim Beam Conventions had been held since its formation in 1971. It still works great with all the cities lighting up (except Houston) with having only a small hairline crack at the tip of Michigan.

The original owner won this decanter at the 1984 International Jim Beam Convention in Hollywood, FL. It was truly a rare find and Terry was excited to add it to his collection by being the high bidder for this one of a kind piece!

Through Terry's email exchanges with the seller, he learned the decanter was located amongst the belongings of the seller's father's estate in Minnesota. This decanter is valued at appx. \$3,800.



- 1971 Denver
- 1972 Anaheim
- 1973 Detroit
- 1974 Lancaster
- 1975 Sacramento
- 1976 Hartford
- 1977 Lewisville
- 1978 Chicago
- 1979 Houston
- 1980 Norfolk
- 1981 Las Vegas
- 1982 New Orleans
- 1983 St. Louis
- 1984 Hollywood

Along a different line and at a time prior to sports licensing agreements, many manufacturers duplicated sport mascots and placed them on items such as hats, shirts and other memorabilia. This assortment of sports inspired souvenirs that were sold to the public at games and other events.

One of these items is this rare California Bear Mascot decanter. This decanter is one of two samples that were produced in 1974. This California Bear Mascot is valued at appx. \$3,500.

Terry was fortunate to purchase this California Bear Mascot decanter directly from the designer.



Another rare decanter is named after Seattle Slew. Only twelve of these decanters were produced and one of them can be found in Terry's collection.

Seattle Slew remains the only undefeated Triple Crown winner in racing history. To learn more about the legacy of Seattle Slew, you can visit the web site at [www.seattleslew.com](http://www.seattleslew.com)

Seattle Slew was foaled in 1974. He was born a beautiful dark brown colt with a small patch of white hair by his left rear hoof. These details were specifically incorporated in the production of this unique and rare decanter.

In 1955, Jim Beam bought Regal China and together they produced decanters under the guidance of Mr. Martin Lewin. Mr. Lewin was Beam's Vice President and was the designer and original developer of these wonderful decanters.

Thousands of assorted decanters, using different themes and designs, were produced throughout the years and each decanter was hand filled. No decanter was allowed to be filled by a machine.

When Martin Lewin passed away in the early 90's, the International Association of Jim Beam Bottle & Specialties Clubs closed the "Jim Beam Ceramic Company, Regal China" and began using "Wade Ceramics" to produce decanters for their conventions and district meetings.

The items that Wade produced were a limited issue and used as part of convention or district meeting packages. These decanters may be available to collectors on the secondary market and are recognized by the Jim Beam Bottle International logo on them and are back stamped "Wade".

Wade Ceramics sold the decanters at the Jim Beam conventions along with their own well-known pottery. Three years later, Wade's Collector's Club continued to grow and their pottery became even more popular. Wade Ceramics has since

removed themselves from creating Jim Beam decanters and have concentrated on having their own Wade Ceramics Collector conventions. Jim Beam then contracted with Unique Pottery in Australia to produce their decanters.

Around the year 2000, Terry noticed that the quality of the decanters that were being produced out of Australia was not up to the traditional standard.

One of Terry's friends had an overseas contact that he had been using for over 30 years. Terry contacted that company and also the China Trade Council. They provided Terry a list of companies that produced porcelain items.

Terry wrote to each company on the list and received samples from them so he could check the quality detail and workmanship. Terry chose the company his friend recommended because of the quality products they produced.

The first decanter Terry produced was "Wally Gator" in honor of Florida Gator football fans.

Following "Wally Gator," Terry designed these fine decanters and also had them produced overseas. The decanter below on the left is titled "Cowboy on Horse" and the one on the right is the very popular "Dogs Golfing."

Who knew that decanters could be so much fun???



Terry also designed several other fanciful decanters, some of which also include using the Jim Beam Fox Mascot.



This salt and pepper shaker set was created after the Jim Beam Fox Mascots.

These shakers were made in assorted colors, but the story behind these particular shakers wearing the blue and green jackets can be found on the last page of this article titled "The Beam Foxes Fox Legend."

Below you'll also find a wonderful Support our Troops theme decanter and the Jim Beam Fox Mascot wearing the St. Louis Cardinals baseball colors.



Terry also produced several licensed General Motors decorative car decanters.



Here is a limited edition red 1956 SR2 Corvette decanter.  
VROOOOOOOOOOM!!!!!!!

You may be trying to remember if you ever noticed any unusual decanters at flea markets, thrift stores or even yard sales. Decanters come in so many fun shapes and sizes and they are so highly prized by collectors!

This is just half of the fun being a collector. We each share a part of ourselves by telling others about the collectibles that brighten our days. With all this new

information, you may want to start a collection of your own, and you never know what treasures you might find along the way.

This photo shows one of Terry's favorite rooms. Next to the tiger skin rug, a corner display unit holds a fantastic array of decanters.

Each decanter is boldly unique with many various shapes, styles, colors and sizes.

This fantastic room is capped off with the most amazing ceiling.

The colorful wild life ceiling mural was hand painted by Susan Sommer. Each of the four walls on the ceiling represents a different season: spring, summer, fall and winter

Terry's keen eye took notice of Susan's talent long before she became well known.



In addition to Susan's art gallery in Springfield, Missouri, she was honored to be selected as an Olympic Artist out of the many artists around the world. She was commissioned by the United States Olympic Committee to portray athletes in their moment of triumph for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China.

Here are the four seasons with wild life displayed on the ceiling in the room above. For more information on this talented and prolific artist, take a look at her website [www.sslworldwide.com](http://www.sslworldwide.com)



Now who wouldn't love to sink into this blissful retreat with its oversized bathtub, to lay back, enjoy the scenery, and ponder the next addition to your fabulous collection?



And in case you're wondering if Terry has a sea side tropical hot tub hidden away in Missouri, the answer is "actually, uh...no"..... Surrounding Terry's luxurious bath is another fine example Susan Sommer's hand painted murals.

Here are examples of other Jim Beam pieces. These two are known by collectors as the "Jim Beam Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Piano Man" and were created as "back bar pieces".



While they may look like decanters, these "back bar" creations are extremely rare with only three of these back bar pieces ever being produced. Terry has two of the three pieces displayed in his wall cabinet.

Since Terry knew there was a third piano man back bar piece still to be found, it peaked his curiosity to try and find out where the third piece was located. It took Terry several years and a lot of research, but he finally tracked down the third Piano Man back bar piece. It's sort of a bittersweet story: The back bar piece was located in Washington and was still in somewhat "good condition".

However, photo's sent by the grandson (who had inherited this Piano Man back bar piece) showed that unfortunately it had been altered over the years. The original base had been removed and another base plate and clock had been added.



While it survived the years, this third long sought after piece has lost a lot of its original value due to the alterations. Despite this, Terry's search was a success and he was happy to finally locate the last Piano Man.

While the current owners state they will never sell the piece, we suspect Terry spends some long leisurely hours in his tropical hot tub contemplating the day when the three pieces can be reunited and all will be proudly displayed in his vast and wonderful collection.

Pictured below is one of Terry's display curios. The top shelf holds an incredible collection of eagles and atop the case, sits two rare horse race decanters produced by Lionstone.

One of the racehorse decanters depicts the famous Secretariat, a Triple Crown Winner from 1973.

The second horse decanter, also known as Cannonade, is best known as the winner of the Kentucky Derby in 1974. Terry enjoys watching the horse races and includes several horse decanters as part of his collection.

Inside Terry's curio cabinets, you'll find that Terry has carefully positioned each of his treasures by their theme.

In addition to Eagles, you will also find brightly colored clowns and a veritable Noah's Arc of animal decanters. Terry has gathered all sizes and shapes of deer, fox, moose, rhinoceros, and elk combined with several other assorted wildlife decanters.



There's also a shelf that holds owl decanters, various birds, geese, ducks, panda and koala bears. Colorful finches, blue jays and cardinals also fill the shelves.

The bottom shelf of the curio cabinet holds a gorgeously detailed collection of Native American Indian decanters. Representing a wide variety of the most noble and majestic tribes, each is complete with vividly colorful traditional dress, some shown in dance poses and some on horseback.

Terry's decanter collection displays perfectly on this incredible wall unit which holds even more of his fantastic treasures. The entire cabinet has a distinctive "Old West" theme throughout. The top of this cabinet also shows an array of his extensive collection of Native American Indian decanters.

Shown on the second shelf of the cabinet, beginning on the far left, you'll see a four-piece decanter set called Custer's Last Stand. Next is a three piece decanter set called "Shoot Out at the OK Corral" and to the right is a four piece decanter set called "The Bar Scene" and of course, you can see the back bar "Piano Man" pieces.



To give you an idea of the magnitude of this collection and size of this wall unit, each shelf measures appx. 30" wide.

Now wouldn't this make a great display unit for a head vase collection as well? Can you just imagine the possibilities?

Another rare find is this unique Crockery Wine Cask with two mischievous gnomes sitting together on the top of it.

This was produced in the early 1800's and was found at an estate in Monticello, Kentucky.

Terry hasn't seen another Crockery Wine Cask like it since he purchased this one many years ago.

While going through identification books and guides on steins and tankards, Terry was able to compare the material used on this wine cask.

With the help of these guides, he was able to put an approximate date on the time period of this rare and unusual wine cask.



By now, most of us have figured out that the key to sustainability in any collector's happy home is that both partners share a passion for collecting. We know how our collections begin to take over the house, especially when you have more than one collector in the household.

Thankfully Terry and his wife, Jodie, both have the "collector gene" and been happily collecting together for many years. It was in 2005 when Jodie discovered head vases and started her own collection.

Here's how that happened: Following a Jim Beam convention, Terry and Jodie planned to meet one of Terry's buyers for lunch on their way to New Mexico. This particular buyer specialized in Western decanters.

Tanguy and his girlfriend Coreen Squires met Terry and Jodie for lunch. While Terry and Tanguy were discussing decanters, Coreen described her collection of head vases to Jodie. Jodie had never seen or heard of head vases, but was intrigued.

About two weeks after that lunch, Jodie and Terry found themselves on their way to purchase a collector's bottle collection when by sheer coincidence, they stopped at an antique shop in a small Kansas town. Waiting there for Jodie to discover was a collection of nearly 50 head vases! Jodie not only got to see her first head vase, but she also purchased a few 5" vases.

Once her collection began, Jodie discovered there were 7" head vases produced as well, so she jumped right into the head vase world and now Jodie primarily collects the larger heads.

Throughout the years, Jodie, Coreen, Terry and Tanguy have continued a great friendship. Many of you may know Coreen from past conventions. Coreen uses her creativity to dress up as a Cameo head vase winning many of the "Dress As A Head Vase" contests at the head vase conventions.

Thank you Jodie for sharing photos of your collection displayed in such gorgeous framed cabinets. Your head vases are just lovely and the bold red walls create a very striking appearance!



These display cabinets are the focal point of Terry and Jodie's dining room.



Pictured right in another lovely curio is Jodie's incredible collection of fine Murano Glass birds.

Skilled craftsmen create these fabulous birds in the world-renowned glass-making capital, Murano Italy. The Murano Glass factory is just a quick water-taxi ride from Venice. The world-famous island of Murano is home to the centuries-old art of Murano glass.

Furnaces line the picturesque walkways of the island. Visitors can watch as the glass makers, in seemingly choreographed rhythm, shape, blow & twirl their incredible creations in the dancing fires of the pulsating, growling ovens.

Reflective, dazzling, joyful & dramatic, the Murano collection of large glass animals & birds is guaranteed not to disappoint! And because they are all hand worked, no two pieces exactly alike!



Another exquisite display case holds even more of these head vase beauties!

Like most collectors, when we find something we love to collect, we are constantly hunting for fun ways to display our collection to it's full potential.

As you can see from the photo, this display cabinets is perfect for her 7" ladies.

Terry and Jodie have done a fantastic job of matching the collection to the cabinets.

Okay, at this point, how many of us are thinking how much fun it would be to move right in with Terry and Jodie????

Decanters and head vases, and lavish bubble baths! Oh my!!!

Always a favorite celebrity inspired head vase, Marilyn Monroe is clearly the most sought after head vase among avid collectors.

With Terry's experience, creativity and connections, he was able to license a new exciting Marilyn Monroe. The 7" head vase was unveiled in 2006 at the annual Head Hunters Convention in Florida and was hugely successful.

The licensing approval process alone for the new Marilyn Head Vase took approximately sixteen months to complete. One requirement was that Marilyn's signature lips had to be 99% accurate in order to be approved and licensed.



With the 7" Marilyn being such a huge success, the stunning 10" Marilyn Monroe head vase soon followed.

Not only did buyers have such a great choice of dress colors that were offered in black, red, pink or blue with a limited edition of Marilyn produced in gold, they could select their favorite size

Adding even more glamour to the line of Hollywood inspired celebrity vases, Terry licensed the lovely 7" Hedy Lamarr head vase in 2008.



Miss Lamarr's vase was also produced in various color choices. She could be ordered wearing a red dress with red hat; a black hat with black dress; a black hat with white dress; or wearing a lavender hat with lavender dress.



In addition to hosting the 2010 Head Vase & Collectibles Convention, Terry was recently reelected as the District #4 Director of Jim Beam Club for another two years. There's no doubt Terry keeps very busy, between adding to his collections, searching out that elusive rare bottle or decanter, fulfilling his Director duties with the Jim Beam Club and now as Organizer of the Head Vase & Collectibles Convention!

We're so thankful Terry has taken up the torch for hosting our next convention. Maybe one day Terry will create a head vase decanter. Hmm.....there couldn't be a more appropriate gift to present to Terry him than this lovely combination, introducing the lovely "Jane Beam"!!!

