



## AT HOME

**F**or some people, their home is all about the house. For Michael Foster, it's all about the art. An exquisite Chinese porcelain collection, beautifully refinished antique furniture and more than 1400 paintings from established and upcoming artists are just a few of the treasures that fill his refurbished 18-room Victorian home. But his collections go far beyond this sampling and are so well selected and cared for that his home has essentially become a private museum.



# It's All About the Art

By Cyndi Mudge

**M**ichael Foster is a fourth generation Astorian whose love of art, antiques and collectibles was imbued in him at an early age. At five, he received a lead toy soldier that touched off his first collection. At 15, he purchased his first painting, an oil titled Ghost Shi, that still hangs in his home today. This acquisition has led to his growing collection, now including more than 1400 paintings, many of which are sought by museums and cultural institutions for exhibits. Cataloguing the paintings has become necessary to accommodate the numerous inquiries from collectors and museums. Michael generously agrees to approve many requests as it nurtures his core philosophy about art. "You don't own anything," he explains. "You don't 'own' a Picasso, for example, but if you're lucky, you become a guardian for awhile and enjoy the privilege of caring for it."

The renovation of this 1890 Victorian home is also a work of art. Set into the hillside overlooking the Columbia River, his home boasts a bathroom that offers a 17-mile view of the river as it stretches out over the bar. The shimmering silver wallpaper in the entry way gives the illusion that the walls are covered in pewter, offering an elegant backdrop for a stunning display of paintings arranged from floor to ceiling. "The wallpaper is imbedded with real silver and is no longer made," explained Michael, which makes it as much a collectible as the paintings that are nested against the wall.

Michael's unwavering support of Oregon's arts and culture includes a 17-year tenure as an Oregon State Arts Commissioner where he served under three different governors. He has had a long association with Fort Clatsop, where he first worked in 1958 and has been a constant and vigilant presence over the years, serving several terms on the board and as President of the Fort Clatsop Historical Association. Easing comfortably back in one of the many antique chairs, Michael offers up an immense collection of stories that fill conversation much like his artwork fills his home. His home and his life are filled with a collection of memories without ever seeming cluttered or astray. ☐

## Going Underground for Art & Antiques

**M**ichael Foster reopened his antique store, Michael's Antiques, in August following nearly a decade hiatus. Locals still fondly recall his first store which operated from 1970 to 1996 in Astoria. His new shop is located in the Astoria Underground at 10th and Marine Drive, a building he owns and has meticulously renovated in a unique style designed to give visitors a flavor of Astoria and its history.

At Michael's Antiques you'll find an eclectic mix of antique furniture, glass, porcelain, lamps and more. Everything in Michael's is selected with the same careful eye he uses for his personal collection. The store is open Thursday through Sunday from 11 to 5 or by appointment.

Michael also owns and operates The Sovereign Gallery by the River in Underground Astoria, featuring the artwork of Eric Jacobsen, considered in America's top tier of emerging artists by Art and Antiques Magazine. The Sovereign is the only gallery on the coast to offer his artwork. This is the sister gallery to The Sovereign Collection in Portland, featuring fine art and offering a carefully selected inventory of paintings, original prints, sculptures and objets d'art. ☐