

Surprise Packages

Collectors are going nuts over Jill Trenholm's designs for Maruri USA.

Every once in awhile you come across something that stands out from the norm. Jill Trenholm's new In A Nutshell collection from Maruri USA is just that. Comprising delightful scenes inside little hinged nutshell-shaped boxes, it was one of the hottest collections to debut at April's International Collectible Exposition.

The concept for the collection was twofold. "I had all these little critters, mostly beavers, that I'd carved and



Florence and Phillippi are the romantic pair in *Love's Serenade*. Under \$25, this piece, when open, is four inches high.



Open this acorn (top right) and you'll find *The Wedding Party* inside (above). About \$30, the 4¾-inch-high open piece features Rita and Ricky, the bride and groom, and little Sarah and Pip. Jill Trenholm's poem for this piece is: "Joy is for sharing, A new life has begun. The heart's deepest promise, When two become one."

sculpted out of clay, when I met people from Maruri through a friend of mine," says Trenholm. "Maruri's creative people had the idea for a collection of nutshells, but they didn't know what they were going to put in them. So we married the two ideas."

A dozen designs are now available, and additional pieces will be introduced



early in 2000. Many of the same characters will appear in the new pieces, Maruri's Kevin Kenny tells us, as Trenholm takes us into and through the lives of the animals that make up her charming community. For instance, the wedding couple (two beavers) may well have little ones in the new year.

While the artist has a special affinity for beavers, collectors will find a variety of woodland animals in the collection, including foxes, squirrels, rabbits and skunks. "I want to do some chipmunks in the future," says Trenholm, "because I think they're such cute animals." Expect more foxes, too, because the artist's favorite piece to date is *Love's Serenade*, which features a foxy Romeo, with guitar, rose and poem at hand, romancing his Juliet.

Trenholm was born in 1961 in Sheridan, Wyoming. She is a graduate of Utah State University, where she majored in art and got a minor in music. Although she isn't well known in the