

NEW CARPETS IN THE MEMBERS' LOUNGE

Club members may have noticed that two Iranian carpets made their appearance in the Members' Lounge this past summer. These two fine, near-antique examples of the carpet maker's art have been chosen to replace the single antique carpet that was placed there when the Berkeley Women's Club first opened its doors. Unfortunately, that carpet disappeared when sent out for cleaning some years ago. Years passed as funds were raised and carpets suitable to the grace and size of our Members' Lounge were selected, purchased and laid.

These new carpets come from the region of Malayer in Hamedan, a mountainous area of Iran, long known for the quality of its hand-knotted carpets. Numerous villages surrounding Hamedan make rugs today, but Malayer remains one of the best known.

Almost 50 years ago in the mountainous area of Iran, surrounding the town of Malayer, the wool was gathered and dyed for our carpets, using the same techniques employed for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. Much of the area was then and still is nomadic in nature. As spring arrives each year, the Qashghai and Khamseh tribes migrate with their sheep hundreds of miles from their winter camps to their green summer pastures high in the Zagros Mountains. In these areas, sheep wool develops its particular qualities of sheen, strength, flexibility, and softness, and its ability to absorb natural colors. From each 1000 kilograms of highland sheep wool, only 150-200 kilograms are selected to go into a final product. After shearing, short fibres are removed and the wool is sorted. Only the long wool is spun by hand – and then, only the wool of even length is chosen. This wool produced in remote areas as it is, is what gives Mayaler carpets their suppleness, and tactile appeal.

As rug collectors everywhere realize, natural dyes are incomparably superior to chemical dyes. Indigo, madder roots, berries, walnut shells and many other basic natural materials were used to make the dyes that produced the rich blues and deep rose hues of our new carpets. These rugs, already almost 50 year old, will retain their brilliance and, if protected from the sun, will not fade over generations of use. Most important, with usage and the passing of time, they will continue to acquire a natural patina, as is still evident today in the antique masterworks that made use of such dyes many hundreds of years ago.

Like more than 90% of Malayer carpets, ours have been woven in the single weft technique using wool on a cotton foundation employing a tight weave of approximately 120 knots per square inch. The rugs measure 11 by 17 and 10.6 by 14 feet and took months to several years to weave-on large vertical wood looms, with each knot tied and cut by hand to form an even, dense pile. Unlike most rugs from this region however, ours have an overall center design primarily in an unusual indigo design and rose border, rather than the more commonly used single center medallion. Viewed from their backs the rugs look like fine tapestries. The next time you are in the Members' Lounge take a minute to study these new additions. After you have walked around them to view their color, design variations and the play of light on their pile from several vantage points, flip over a corner and take a moment to appreciate the detail and craftsmanship that went into weaving these fine carpets. They are little worn after almost fifty years and will only grow more beautiful with time. ✱

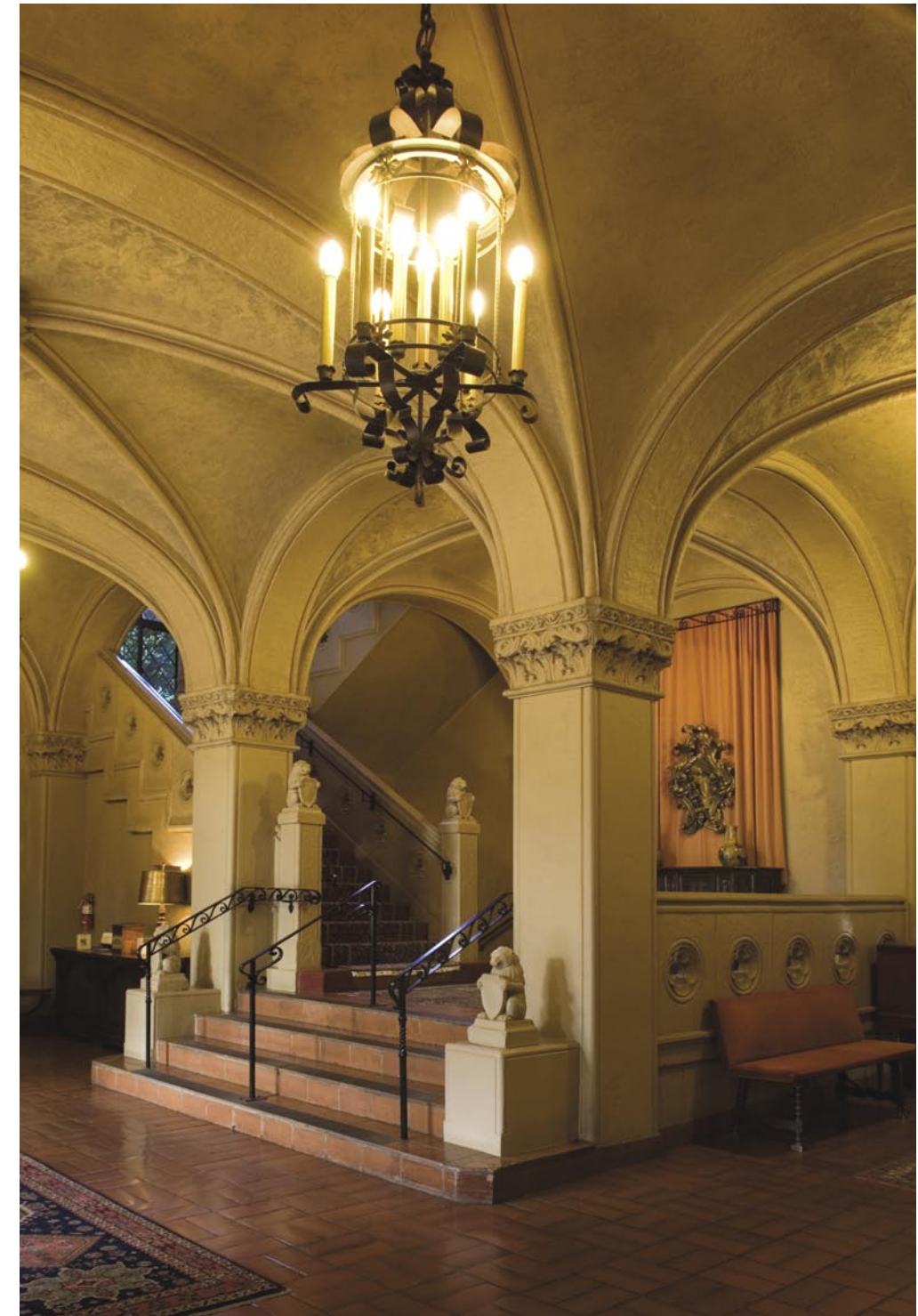
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NEWS FROM THE CASTLE
Winter 2007

“CABARET CASTLE” RAISES \$8,500 FOR ELEVATOR II

In a festive Cabaret setting in the BCC ballroom, more than 170 guests enjoyed music, food, beverage and dancing while participating in live and silent auctions to support the Elevator II campaign, Sunday September 16.

Seated at tables gayly arrayed with masks, peacock feathers, candles, and colored tablecloths, these Julia Morgan affecianados learned that Sather Gate on the Berkeley campus was designed by Miss Morgan from a talk by Karen McNeill, PhD. Ms McNeill will soon publish a book based on her thesis “Julia Morgan....”

“Mark Gilbert and Friends” provided lively music throughout the afternoon. An array of Cabaret costumes adorned by many attendees brightened the setting. Dancers on the Terrace enjoyed the warm Indian summer weather.

The auctions – silent and live – were enlivened by Damien , from Charity Benefits Auctions. Silver jewelry, a large assortment of spirits, Italian dinner baskets, theatre or music tickets and dinner at the BCC, books, art work,

bottles of wine in baskets, and a variety of gift certificates were bid on by silent auction bargain hunters. A very fast paced and enthusiastic auctioneer chant elicited competition from bidders on items that included a B&B stay in Italy, up to a week’s stay in a home in Arizona, an 1885 Weber piano, dinner for six at the BCC, Native American design quilts, and framed prints of early BCC photographs. An especially fine antique photograph of *The Duomo* in Milan, Italy, framed in an Arts & Crafts faux grain wood, was of

special interest to the architectural history community, one member of which cherishes its purchase.

In addition, a drawing including a B&B in northern California, an “Outing in Elmwood” package, BCC hotel accommodations, books, wine, and gift certificates surprised the lucky purchasers of drawing tickets.

“Cabaret in the Castle”, enjoyed by all, was a great success for the Elevator II campaign. The \$8,500 helps to push the fundraising “thermometer” up a notch towards the \$500,000 estimated project goal. Please watch the “Elevator II thermometer” rise – presently at \$78,000 – on the two campaign notices near the elevator on the first and second floors. The LHF is extremely grateful to all donors of auction and drawing items. Without this generosity from those who support the work of the LHF, the Julia Morgan Preservation fund’s enrichment would not be possible.

That area is walled by a brick wall on the west and by the rear kitchen windows and wall of the City Club on the east. ✱

TRADITION CONTINUES

The Camelia Courtyard has been a memorial garden from the earliest days of the Berkeley Women’s Club when the marble statue of *Youth* by Clara Huntington was purchased by Mr. Wilbur Morton Wallace as a memorial to his late mother, a pioneer member of the Club. Immediately beneath the statue is inscribed “*Love Keeps the Light of Memory Burning-1927.*” A planter box at the foot of the statute is inscribed “*Helen Williams Wallace-a Tribute from her Son Morton.*” Three memorial plaques bearing names of members of the Berkeley City Club are hung on the west wall of the portico. It is fitting that this long-standing tradition should be continued with completion of the Robert Irish Brower (July 6, 1946 - October 11, 2004) Memorial Corner in the recently completed expansion of the Camelia Courtyard into the open space beyond the Portico. Mrs. Robert Brower, a long-time resident of the Berkeley City Club, and the

Brower family have dedicated a bench and two chairs to the memory of Robert.

The restored garden is a beautiful spot for a quiet moment of meditation or a short respite from a busy day.

Gated off until recently and overgrown with bamboo and a large Bay Laurel tree, the existing bones of the rear portion of the Camelia Courtyard have been uncovered and restored and the area has been cleared, planted, and paved with flagstone pavers that harmonize with the originals laid in 1930 in the Camelia Courtyard. Removal of the Bay Laurel tree that shaded much of the available

garden space now allows the existing Jacaranda and Magnolia trees to bloom more freely and has freed up space for a succulent garden and a variety of ground covers – including baby tears, creeping thyme and blue star creeper – all of which are thriving. The space is edged with ferns, orchids, hydrangeas, violas, princess plants, cymbidiums, and cynerarias. Whites, pinks purples yellows and blues dominate the planting scheme. The wrought-iron gate that separated the front of the garden from the rear is now propped against the west wall of the portico-making an attractive piece of ‘found art.’ Wicker and wrought iron chairs have also been placed at various locations. The restored garden is a beautiful spot for a quiet moment of meditation or a short respite from a busy day. ✱



THE EMPRESS THEODORA

We began the last issue of *News from the Castle* with a visit to Napoleon’s Sister Pauline who resides in the interior of the Club in the area to the right of the front offices. In this issue of the *News from the Castle* we continue our visit with our “women of the Club,” as we plan to do in each edition until we have visited all of the women in our small but representative collection of artistic representations of women through history. In the drawing room, left (west) of the front entry, above the fireplace hangs a small oil reproduction of the Byzantine mosaic of Theodora and Her Attendants (Church of S. Vitale, Ravenna, Italy-c.547 A.D.).

The capital of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, Ravenna became the center of late Roman mosaic art. Neither the Emperor Justinian nor the Empress Theodora were actually ever present in Ravenna, but she is nevertheless represented in larger than life size mosaic, as part of an imperial court group on the side of the apse opposite her husband. So this scene must be understood symbolically rather than literally. The Empress, accompanied by seven ladies of the court and two men, is placed slightly off center in the mosaic, but as she is haloed and set against a shell niche, her face is still the focal point of the image. Her attire is richly embellished with jewels and strings of iridescent pearls (at that time believed to have power in preventing sickness) drip from her extravagant crown. The Three Magi appear as three small figures in



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centuries past was absent as the Allied Forces pushed north through Italy in 1943 and 1944. Unlike many other beautiful and historic Italian cities, Ravenna escaped the bombings which leveled others and destroyed their priceless historic buildings. Go to <http://paradoxplace.com/Perspectives/Venice%20&%20N%20Italy/Ravenna/Ravenna%202004.htm> for beautiful images of the Ravenna Mosaics. ✱

the hem of Theodora’s robes. The group is standing in the anteroom of a church – perhaps St. Vitale itself – and one of the men is drawing back a curtain leading into the sacred area. Theodora extends her offering, a large chalice, to another man who will take it into the sanctuary.

In a fortunate twist of fate, Ravenna, Italy and its wealth of 5th & 6th century artwork and architecture, was spared destruction during World War II. The military significance which fueled its growth