

Close-up of a torte.



became keenly aware of the miniature drought in her country.

"I decided I wanted to build Victoria a little room box to hang in her nursery and I searched all around France for supplies, but in 1993 there were only two miniature shops in Paris, no Internet to order from, and here in Provence it was impossible to find a single miniature-related item," Nathalie recalls. So she made her own.

A dream come true

In the mid 90's whilst in London on a business trip as a computer engineer, Nathalie strolled into a bookshop and on the magazine rack picked up a copy of *Dolls House & Miniature Scene* magazine. Through its pages she discovered just how popular the hobby was outside France. Not only magazines but also shops, fairs, books, and

clubs were dedicated to the hobby. It was a dream come true!

"As soon as I arrived home I subscribed and ordered all the back copies!" Nathalie laughs. She is now the proud owner of every issue ever published! In 1997 she made plans to attend the Ally Pally Dolls House Fair where she spent two whole days in awe, roaming from table to table taking in all the brilliant details. She was the last visitor to claim her coat from the cloakroom Saturday afternoon when the fair ended.

She went home laden with how-to books, supplies, and miniatures, and set about forming and sculpting items in Fimo. She particularly loved Sue Heaser's books on miniature food and started there, but soon moved on to items where she could incorporate leather, fabric, and beads. As she began receiving positive feedback from family and friends, Nathalie decided to return to Alexandra Palace, but this time as an exhibitor, not a visitor, high goals for someone who had just recently discovered her heart's desire!

First show a huge success

Involving her sister in the adventure, the goal was to just cover the cost of her table for the weekend, perhaps making a bit extra to cover travel expenses. The doors opened Saturday morning at 10am and by noon three quarters of their stock were gone and their profits far exceeded their output. The two sisters were thrilled! They went on to collaborate in London, Birmingham, Paris Creation and other shows throughout Europe, eventually going their separate ways with Nathalie adopting her personal moniker, *Provence Miniatures*.

As her miniature line grew, Nathalie experimented with a number of genres: French food, pastries, cheese, wine, toys, leather bags, hats, dolls, tiny vignettes, and DIY kits. With a limited number of French miniature fairs available to collectors, her broad range of offerings ensures one-stop-shopping for many at her tables.

"I love trying several different techniques and materials and my customers like to take in every detail of my table at the shows." With a ready-to-assemble display of tiered

Three-tiered fantasy castle cake.



Patisserie counter.