

Unique Zoitiques

By Cindy Michalak

With the end of summer comes peace and tranquility, unless you have a 6-month-old puppy that terrorizes the older dogs wanting them to play nonstop. Bless their hearts; they keep up with that little redheaded monster! Rather than always writing about figurines, I thought I'd switch gears and show some of the less-common playing cards that were produced over the years. While I had an overabundance in my collection to choose from, I tried to keep it interesting. All of the deck covers came with a playing card attached so you could easily determine what the cards looked like. Anyone can have a deck of cards made up with their own picture but all of these are from original artwork and not photographs



Many of the playing cards were produced in sets of two, using any given picture and changing the color of the background. This first duo shows a lady with two art deco Borzoi with extremely long tails walking in a park-like setting. The main background is silver and the secondary background was blue and then red. This set has the original card with Bridge instructions and is dated Nov. 1, 1932. They were produced by the Russell Playing Card Co., New York, NY.

Most sets of playing cards average \$15 or more, depending on the condition and rarity.

Here is a single deck that was a gift attached to a pack of Turret Cigarettes and is titled Good Companions. Turret Cigarettes were produced by Ogden's of Liverpool; a division of Imperial Tobacco Canada. Notice. This deck also has the original Bridge instructions and is dated March 31, 1935. These Borzoi sure have long legs and curvy toplines!



With this deck you get the artwork of two Borzoi; one head-study and one full side view. As with the previous two decks, this was also made by the Russell Playing Card Co. of New York. Unlike the other decks, however, these being pinochle cards, there weren't any instructions showing the date they were made. I believe them to be from the 1950s, but I've been known to be wrong about things before, so don't quote me on it! Sadly, none of the cards show who



the actual artist was. This deck came in a few different colors as another deck I have, the background is dark tan.

A pretty lady with a very full dress adorns the covers of the cards in two different colors of green and orange. What is different about the case is rather than using one of the playing cards, they made a lovely silhouette lithographed directly onto it and titled the cards Lady Fair. This deck does have the original gaming instructions but it is not dated, nor does it state what company made them. It is still lovely artwork and quite uncommon, especially with having the original box.



Not all playing cards came with identical pictures where the background color was changed, as with this set. A playing card company of recent years is Platnik. These cards were produced in Austria. If I remember correctly, since I bought these at a gift shop in the early 1990s, there were 4 decks to the set and they were of the four seasons. One deck is artwork of a lady walking with a gift in the winter (perhaps Christmas) and the other deck shows a

woman strolling along a path with fall colors around her as well as leaves falling in the background. I apologize I don't remember what the spring and summer cards pertained to as it didn't interest me at the time without a Borzoi present. I cannot accurately date these as they are in their original cellophane packaging. This set is the only one that did not have a card or picture attached to the cover, but the lid was off for display when I found them.

Another set of cards where the picture differs from the second deck. A beautiful Southern Belle all dressed in pink, carrying a bouquet of flowers. Her white Borzoi, with a very long neck rough, looks up at her for reassurance as the lady gazes down. Maybe her Borzoi was about to jump up on her and she's gesturing not to do so. Or perhaps she was about to pluck a flower and give it to the dog. As for the other deck, I'm not sure why she'd be dating a man that has



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sporting dogs. Although Paul and Diane Spohn do have Borzoi and Sporting Dogs so I suppose it is allowable! None of the cards, including the Joker, are dated. There is a handwritten price tag on the outside of the box stating \$20, so I must have paid that much for them. I've had this set at least 15 years.



Last is not necessarily “best for last” as many of you have probably seen this set before. However, the set does not always include the scorepad such as this. One deck shows a svelte lady walking a greyhound, while the other has a healthier looking woman walking her white and black Borzoi. Perhaps they came upon each other while walking thru the forest on a

crisp fall day. The lady with Greyhound design is titled “On Leash” while the lady and Borzoi is titled Promenade. I have a Lladro figurine of a lady walking a Borzoi and Afghan titled Elegant Promenade. This set appeared around the mid 1990s and I have painstakingly kept it sealed in its original packaging.

That about sums it up for this issue. Hopefully everyone had a good summer filled with lots of Borzoi hugs and kisses, and maybe a few wins here and there as well! Perhaps I'll jump back to some figurines for next time. If you have something you would like to share, as always, drop me a line at borzoi@mc.net.