

A BARREL OF FUN

*Souvenir float pens
keep the ocean
at your fingertips.*

A flick of the wrist sends a surfer toward a sandy shore. A tilt in the opposite direction returns the tanned figure to the wave's crest. Tiny scenes, encased in a pen's barrel, evoke memories of a childhood trip or favorite destination. "As a traveler, I am convinced that float pens are simply the



perfect collectible," says Diana Andra. "They are fun, small, unique, and at \$3 to \$5 each, always affordable."

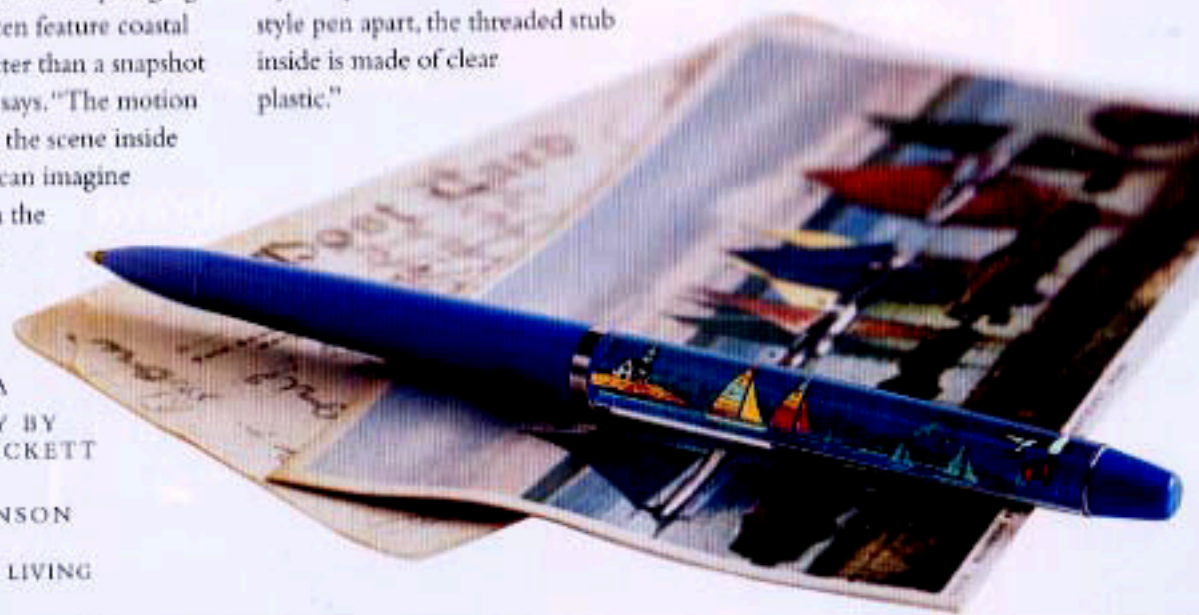
From gliding sailboats to plunging divers, float pens often feature coastal motifs. "They're better than a snapshot or postcard," Diana says. "The motion of the image brings the scene inside the pen to life. You can imagine yourself sunning on the beach, smelling the ocean breeze."

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Diana's impressive collection exceeds 6,000 pens. "I can't seem to get enough of them," she says. "I am just as excited to find a new design today as I was in 1994, when I began actively collecting."

Created by Eskesen, a Denmark-based company, float pens surfaced in the late '40s. Owner Peder Eskesen perfected the sealing process that keeps the mineral oil in and the air out. Now, thousands of whimsical designs permeate the market. But not all bear the Eskesen markings "E MADE IN DENMARK."

Even avid collectors struggle to identify true Eskesens. "Since 'E' now makes several styles of pens, identification is becoming more difficult," Diana says. "If you take an Eskesen classic-style pen apart, the threaded stub inside is made of clear plastic."



wrong! I **only** offer Eskesen!

Nancy Nerenberg's custom-designed pens, though not Eskesens, offer the same nostalgic quality. Endless options exist for the client who desires a one-of-a-kind item. "The pens are kitschy but practical," says Nancy. "Even though a pen is a pen, you can really personalize them."

Diana prefers simple but romantic designs. Her favorite: "A fog cloud rolls over the Golden Gate Bridge with San Francisco as the backdrop. It's an old classic," she says.

The fun begins with the hunt. Float fans scour tourist traps, museums, cruise ships, airports, and souvenir shops. "I know someone who was visiting the Vatican," Diana says. "She had picked up a few pens for a dear friend. When the Pope made a public appearance, he asked that the crowd lift the items they would like to be blessed. In an instant, she had holy float pens!"

These quirky collectibles are indeed a blessing to kitch-lovers everywhere. 🍀

For more information, visit floatabout.com or floatart.com.

Floating-action pens, also called float or floaty pens, generally sell for less than \$5, while some cost a bit more.

"The earlier pens and pencils sport a tip that is more bullet-shaped than the current blunt top," says Diana. In 1989, Eskesen began stamping its pocket clips with a signature: "E MADE IN DENMARK."