

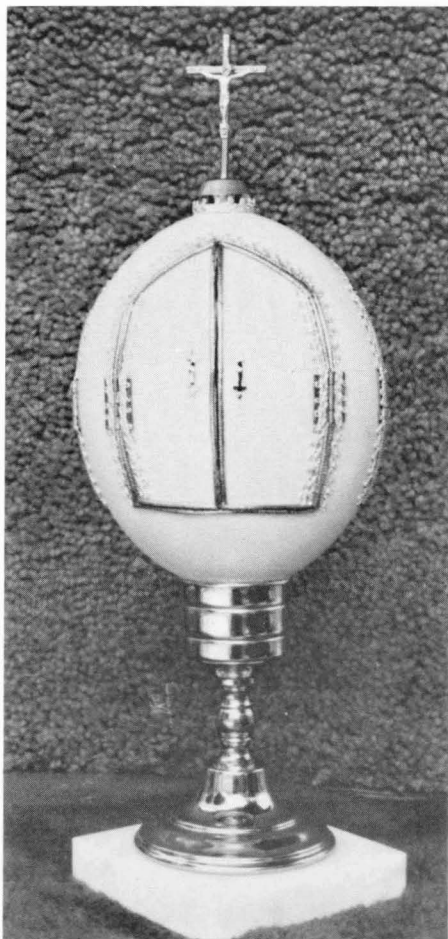
The Crossley Egg

by Mike Simmons,
AFA Florida State Coordinator

As spring blossoms forth heralding the rebirth of Earth. . . so the egg appearing in nest or nestbox foretells the happy eventuality of new life in the aviary. The bird breeder counts his eggs, dreaming all will hatch and produce the yearned for super birds who will grow and become top winners on the bench. Nature, the elements, and fate don't always agree. The end result.infertile eggs.

One young aviculturist, Mark Crossley, although disabled to an extent that he cannot be gainfully employed, views every egg as having a definite purpose. His love for his birds urges him to hope for fertile eggs, but an infertile egg is also precious to him. His alert mind, great imagination and skilled hands can transform this infertile egg into an ornament of such beauty that even the bird who

Photos by Jim Bloom



A Crossley masterpiece, an Ostrich egg converted into a "Sistine Chapel". The interior is completely detailed with ornamentation, including the ceiling, of course.



A wide variety of intricate work is displayed in these "Crossley Eggs"



Photos by Dave Martin



Mark Crossley

layed it would be proud.

The eggs of finches, doves, cockatiels, budgies and all types of parrots are fashioned into stunning necklaces by his talented hands. Decoupaged or hand painted scenes adorn these lovely ornaments. Some have minute doors which open, revealing scenes inside the delicate eggs. Finally, 20 or 21 coats of clear covering is painted on the eggs to strengthen the fragile walls. . one coat a day . . three weeks at the least just to preserve the delicate egg. Finally the caps, chains, and tassels are affixed. The final product is then offered for sale. The proceeds help him defray the expenses of buying his birds, seeds and supplies.

The ostrich egg pictured, all painted by hand in oils, transformed this oversized egg into a miniature Sistine Chapel. All the walls, ceilings and doors are painstakingly hand painted in great detail inside this small aperture. Tiny hinges were hand fashioned for the three sets of double doors. A grand total of five months went into this great endeavor.

The long hours, strained eyes and cramped fingers of this man are now a thing of the past, but the egg will remain forever a thing of great beauty, a tribute to his great patience and talent.



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