



AREA DOLLS

Often considered the "traditional" Russian dolls, area dolls are easily identifiable as coming from a particular village or workshop, where they have been made in the same style and coloration for decades. Carved by peasant men and painted by their wives, none of these area dolls are signed, dated, or otherwise marked by the artists; they are considered the production of the entire village or workshop and left unsigned according to tradition. Historically important, they are a must for any collection. Fantastically inexpensive, they make the perfect gift for children. No mystery why they are perennial best sellers! Widely assorted colors. All come with an informational brochure.

The Littlest Matryoshka

This simple adventure story about a young girl and her first nester, a traditional 6-piece Semenov doll, makes a great gift for young collectors. Quickly becoming a classic among nesting doll lovers.



Book & Nesting Doll Set #001400-S
Doll 6pc./5" #102061
Book #001400

THE CORNERSTONE COLLECTION

This set of three dolls offers a survey of Russian nesting doll history and tradition. Each doll is representative of a prominent center of Russian toy making: Semenov, Polkhovski Maidan, and Zagorsk. Together they form the perfect cornerstone upon which to build a great nesting doll collection. W/ brochure. (Display stand not included).

#102000



5pc./4" #102051

SEMENOV DOLLS

After drawing black outlines, the villagers use aniline dyes to dress their dolls in yellow and red, then adorn them with Semenov's signature red rose. The shawl is decorated with a distinctive pattern of spiraling dots. This primitive, graphic style, stemming from ancient Russian folk art, gained world renown as "THE" Russian matryoshka during the Stalin era, and remains the most familiar doll to us today.



9pc./9" #102094

3pc./3" #102031



10pc./10" #103104



5pc./6" #103054



7pc./8" #103074



ZAGORSK DOLLS

A great deal of early experimentation in design culminated in a style known as the Zagorsk matryoshka, after the Soviet name given to Sergiev Posad in 1930. The Zagorsk matryoshka wears a sarafan and shawl decorated with a simple dotted floral pattern, sometimes adorned with berries. Painted with gouache, her dominant colors are bright blue, red, and green. Her hair is often dark, her eyes blue, and her contours are drawn precisely with fine strokes of black. Her form tends to be elegant and slender. Overall, she appears quite refined in comparison to her country cousins from Semenov and Polkhovski Maidan.



Zagorsk Doll 5pc./5" #104052

Founded in 1947, Sergiev Posad's Factory of Toys and Souvenirs carries on the Zagorsk tradition and is the largest producer of the classic Zagorsk matryoshka today. There the oil-based lacquer is rubbed onto the dolls by hand, producing a lasting, high-gloss sheen.

Nolinsk Doll 6pc./5" #105061



NOLINSK DOLLS

Russia's northernmost nesting doll production area centers around the Kirov region and the Vyatka River. The Vyatskii Souvenir workshop in Nolinsk produces matryoshka dolls typical of the region: a simple red-haired, red-scarved peasant maiden wearing a green or natural wood-colored sarafan, painted with black outlines, aniline dyes, and finished with an oil-based lacquer. Decorative rye straw appliqué, a hallmark of the region, enhances the value and interest for the collector and admirer of this most unique folk art.



Nolinsk Straw Inlay Doll 6pc./5" #105062



Nolinsk Straw Inlay Doll 8pc./6" #105081

How Nesting Dolls Are Made

The journey every matryoshka makes is a long one, from Russian forest to collector's home and heart. The Upper Volga region is renowned for its woodcrafts and toy making.

In the spring each year, when the sap is rising, villagers venture out into the forest with an axe and a crosscut saw to harvest the linden trees that will become nesting dolls in the years to come. After the trees are felled, the arduous task of stripping off the bark begins.

Once the bark has been stripped, the nude poles are left lying in the open air for 2-6 years to cure. When ripe, they are sawed to length, stacked by size, and finally mounted on the lathe. Prior to the advent of electricity, one man had to crank a wheel to drive the lathe while a second man carved. Independent turners, who learned the craft from their fathers, teach their sons to turn tree into toy in the wink of an eye.

