

## Strong regional selection brings good results at Guyette & Schmidt's annual Ohio sale

By Decoy Magazine  
Photos courtesy Guyette & Schmidt

**E**ACH YEAR Guyette & Schmidt holds a one-day decoy auction in conjunction with the Ohio Decoy Show at the Westlake Holiday Inn. It's somewhat of an informal affair, with the birds previewed around the center pool, and offers a more affordable selection of birds. There's a catalog, although it's not illustrated, and they now offer Internet bidding, yet it still has the feel of a discovery sale.

In year's past this auction was greatly weighted in Midwest decoys, but this year there was a stronger regional selection, with a good number of East Coast decoys and Southern birds adding greatly to the totals. The top seller was a yellowlegs by George Boyd of Seabrook, New Hampshire that flew by estimate to a Minnesota dealer for \$5175. The other New England decoy on the top ten list was an eider by an unidentified Maine carver that fell well short at \$2013.

Three lots by the Ward brothers of Crisfield, Maryland were in the top ten: decorative blue-winged teal pair at \$4025, seagull at \$2588 and pair of 1/2-sized mallards at \$2243, all short of estimate. A



*Yellowlegs by George Boyd of Seabrook, New Hampshire (est. \$2588/3163) sold for \$5175, the top lot in the auction.*

balsa mallard and cedar canvasback brought \$1150 and \$1093. South Carolina dealer and collector Dick McIntyre bought a lot of eight New Jersey shorebirds, five of which were made in North Carolina, for \$1610.

A canvasback by Gus Moak of Tustin, Wisconsin was the best of the Midwest decoys, making estimate at \$3738. Decoys by Ben Schmidt of Centerline, Michigan have a strong following at this show, and three

lots of significance included a pair of wigeon at \$3450, two black ducks at \$1898 and a pair of canvasbacks at \$1035, all at or above estimate.

A pair of canvasbacks by the Dodge Company of Detroit was the top factory lot at \$1610, a hollow-carved mallard by Charles Perdue of Henry was the top Illinois River bird at \$1265 and a canvasback by Fred Harris of Port Clinton, Ohio brought \$1035, all beating estimate. Our



*Pair of blue-winged teal by the Ward brothers of Crisfield, Maryland (est. \$4600/6900) sold to a Maryland collector for \$4025.*



*Pair of wigeon by Ben Schmidt of Centerline, Michigan (est. \$2300/2875) sold to a Michigan collector for \$3450.*



*Hollow-carved canvasback by Gus Moak of Tustin, Wisconsin (est. \$2875/4025) sold for \$3738.*

favorite lot was two folksy canvasbacks by the Ducharme family of St. Ambrose, Manitoba that soared well above estimate to a Michigan collector for \$3163.

For contemporary collectors, a decorative hooded merganser by Jim Schmiedlin of Bradfordwoods, Pennsylvania, signed and dated 1981, sold over estimate to a Tennessee collector for \$3450. A curlew by Mark McNair of Craddockville, Virginia also topped estimate at \$1150. A nicely done pair of miniature buffleheads by Tan Brunet of Galliano, Louisiana, signed and dated 1993, made its low estimate \$1150. An American merganser by Ohio's own "Buckeye Joe" Wooster of Ashley fell short of estimate at \$748; it had a bill replacement after being "wounded in Alaska campaign," per the inscription on the underside.

All in all the totals were a big improvement over last year with more than a 50% increase in the gross sales and over a 30% increase in the average price per lot. In



*Decorative hooded merganser by Jim Schmiedlin of Bradfordwoods, Pennsylvania (est. \$1725/2875) sold to a Tennessee collector for \$3450.*

summary, of 142 lots offered, six failed to sell, leaving 136 lots that sold for \$86,754 for an average of \$638 per lot and were 3.6% below their total low estimate after deducting the low estimate of the unsold lots. All prices include a 15% buyer's premium. Zac Cote coordinated the auction for Guyette & Schmidt and Larry Carter served as the auctioneer.



*Two folksy canvasbacks by the Ducharme family of St. Ambrose, Manitoba, Canada (est. \$805/1035) sold to a Michigan collector for \$3163.*

## "Veteran" Internet bidder "anxious to collect more"

We're all aware that the participation of Internet bidders at decoy auctions is now a given. Every one of the major decoy firms has someone working the computer accepting bids online, and they've contributed positively to the bottom line. So it's not surprising that a fair number of lots at the recent Ohio auction were sold in this manner. However, Guyette & Schmidt notified us that one of the lots, a contemporary hollow-carved swan by Francis Gregory, was sold to a rather unexpected bidder, a woman presently deployed with the military in Iraq.

We were intrigued and decided to find out if this was a "veteran" collector or a neophyte, if she had in the past purchased a decoy at auction in person or over the Internet, and what attracted her to this auction and this decoy. Since her position requires some anonymity, she requested to be described as "a female from Virginia presently deployed supporting Special Operations in Iraq."

She told us that she grew up along the Mississippi River in a family of duck hunters and was "always fascinated with decoys." Her aunt was active in Ducks Unlimited and during her college summers she was "personally involved with a conservation effort for Whistler Swans. Ever since then I have been fascinated with the species," she said.

"I have always wanted to collect decoys, but was a bit intimidated with the prices...The Internet auction forum enabled me to study all the decoys...even though I was deployed overseas...Because I am a neophyte collector, I decided to go with my "eye" and choose for my first decoy one I really loved, rather than try to choose an important or investment-quality decoy. The Francis Gregory swan really attracted me from the beginning; it has such beautiful lines, and the preening pose is both elegant and realistic.

"The whole Internet auction experience was very positive for me, and I was really surprised at how supportive the personnel at Guyette & Schmidt were. I came away from the sale thrilled with my first decoy, and anxious to collect more." But she'll have to wait to get her hands on this one, as it's been shipped to her home in Virginia.

