shake it up

Vintage salt and pepper shakers can bring any table to life

PHOTO BY GEORGE ROSS

COLLECTOR: Lisa G. Westheimer of West Orange
WHAT SHE COLLECTS: Salt and pepper shakers
WHERE SHE FINDS THEM: Her first pair at a tourist shop in Galveston, Texas, on her way to the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans. After that, flea markets, thrift shops, and rummage sales. "My husband has put a moratorium on buying them," she says, "but that doesn't preclude receiving them as gifts."
THE ALLURE: "Growing up I was entranced by cartoons of produce in the grocery store coming to life and partying after the store closed. My hope is that mine have a ball when I'm asleep. I especially like vegetables with faces, hands, and feet, and elves in chef's hats. My absolute favorite pair are nodding skulls that my mother-in-law haggled for at a flea market. Now, that's love."

CLAIM TO FAME: "I once sent a set of wooden tombstone salt and peppers to the macabre cartoonist Edward Gorey, my hero. One said 'Here Lies Salt,' and the other 'Here Lies Pepper.' He sent me one of those Figbash creatures that he made himself. I have it enshrined along with the envelope it came in."
PRICE OF NOSTALGIA: "I used to be able to score a great pair for a few bucks or even a quarter. Now I can't get anything decent for less than $5. I once paid $60 for John F. Kennedy in a rocking chair."
THE BONUS: "I have many friends who are under the age of 12. I am the lady with the salt and pepper shakers. People may forget what I look like or my cooking, but they never forget my salt and pepper shakers." —*K.N.W.*