

## European “Tyroyalty” Chess Set *Tribute to Kirk Schwartz*

by Israel Raphaelli

Over the past few years, the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting all aspects of our lives. One of the impacts of staying and spending significantly more time at home was the significant time people had cleaning, digging, arranging and disposing all sort of “stuff”, accumulated and stored for years and generations. Included were chess sets that people rediscovered and offered to sell. Collectors are always on the lookout and, one day when I was browsing a favorite social media web site this interesting, beautiful and unique chess set below caught my attention. I contacted the seller and after learning more about it and a followup brief negotiations, we agreed on a price. Under COVID protocols and safety, we agreed to meet in a public location in Queens, New York and I was looking forward to this one-and-a-half hour drive.



The pieces are hand made and then heavily painted. The base material is an unknown composite (clay/plaster?) and each piece is decorated and embellished with art and craft/jewelry components made of metal, gemstones and other material the artist could find. The figures resemble European royalty (French/German?) and have a flavor of Tyrolean style, specifically the pawns. Both Kings are signed by the artist “Mullin”.



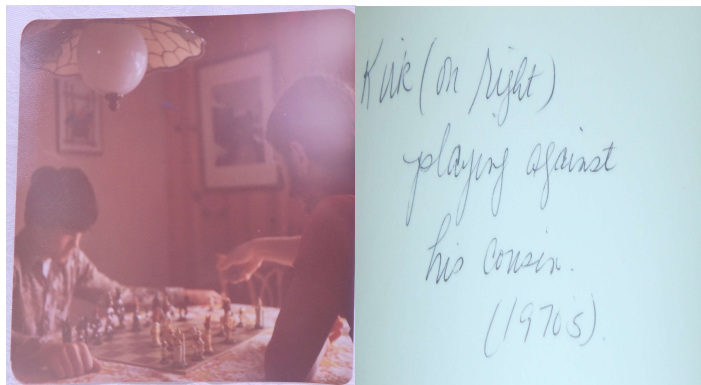
Back to the quest. A few days later I loaded the rendezvous address into my GPS and headed to the city, driving on the highway and listening to music. However, when I was in the vicinity of Newark Airport, the GPS received confusing signals and eventually lost the destination. Well, speeding on the highway with no directions is not great but I had only a few miles to go until next stop and I was trying frantically to reset the GPS but it stubbornly refused because I must stop first, which is impossible; There was no place to stop. I tried plan B to reload the destination address and resorted to this great technology called “voice commands”. Did you ever try that? I can tell you now that it is almost “Mission Impossible”. At first the GPS refused to obey or even accept my commands and then, the wonders of technology kicked in. Why is it that when I ask the GPS to navigate to an address in “New York”, it asks me if I mean “Minnesota”. There was no way win with this A.I. technology – it refused to take me to 280-15 Main street but I was able to convince it to take me to 15 Main street. Sounded like success.

By that time, I was already crossing the George Washington Bridge, one of the most beautiful and impressive cross ways to New York. Half an hour later we arrived to destination but I realized that there is still a little way to and make my way up the road to my final meeting place. Not as easy at it sounds - if you ever drove around New York City you probably know what a HUGE mistake I made!

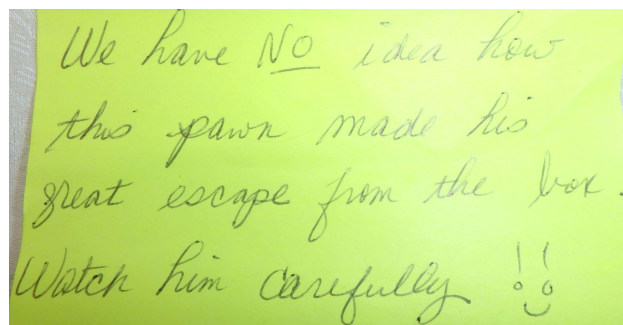
You must be asking “why?” Well, 280-15 means block 280, building 15 and I arrived to block 1! If you think “so what?” then you don't know New York because it means crawling traffic through busy neighborhoods and several thousands traffic lights. Took me another hour but finally arrived and met with the sellers. They handed me a box and we unwrapped a few pieces – all looked superb, They told me that



the set belonged to their cousin Kirk Schwartz, who used it to play at a resort in the Catskills during summer vacations in the 1970s. Then, years later they inherited the set. I hopped directly on the highway and headed home in record time. You may think the story of the quest end here. Not that quickly!



I arrived home and, respectfully, unwrapped and set up the entire set but, to my disappointment, one pawn is missing. I searched around the house, all over the car, everywhere possible and it was not there. Called the seller who searched around their house but to no avail – the little pawn was not to be found. Early the following morning I get a comforting phone call that the little escapee was found hiding in the seller car and a few days later it joined the rest of the “family” and they are all living happily after.







In conclusion, a great, creating chess set, made and played with love and a lot of imagination. Please write to me at [chess@ogdir.com](mailto:chess@ogdir.com). Please visit my collection at [www.eosef.com/gsc](http://www.eosef.com/gsc) (no log-in required) where you can also find more photos of this and many other sets.

**Israel Raphaelli**