

Baskets That Are Objets d'Art

By RUTH ROBINSON

When Diane Love opened her Madison Avenue shop four years ago elegant fabric flowers were her stock in trade. They're still there in the off-colors the designer prefers to prime reds and yellows, but the emphasis has shifted to other things, such as the antique Japanese baskets that are her pride and joy.

"Of all the countries that make baskets the Japanese are the most underrated and they really make some of the finest," said Mrs. Love, who has a predilection for things oriental in general and Japanese in particular.

The baskets are actually complementary to the flowers since they were mostly designed for ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement, rather than for anything so pedestrian as carrying produce home from market. However, they stand on their own, too, as objets d'art.

A particularly effective gourd-shaped one is designed to fit into the curve of a gnarled branch of driftwood, the whole creating a sculptural effect. Bamboo is the basic material used, but with an infinite variety in the

end results—from coarse open-work to a fine tight weave with intricate ornamentation. Sometimes several woven schemes are combined or vines and roots are worked in to provide a contrast.

Prices go from \$45 to \$350 or \$400 for particularly fine signed specimens such as a nest of flat-bottomed baskets, but most are \$85 and \$95.

Besides flowers, baskets and such home accessories as ceramic plates and lacquered rattan and bamboo furniture in delectable colors—cinnebar, celadon, aubergine and lavender—there are envelope handbags of Japanese brocade in a multitude of colors and designs (\$40).

Also available here is "Flowers Are Fabulous," the handsomely illustrated book in which Mrs. Love shares her decorating expertise. (Macmillan, \$14.50 cloth, \$7.50 paper.)

Hours at Diane (pronounced Deeanne) Love, 851 Madison Avenue, Near 71st Street, are 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Monday through Saturday. Telephone 879-6997.



The New York Times

Antique, one of a kind baskets from Japan, at Diane Love shop. Many are signed, one has poem inscribed on bottom.

The New York Times

Published: November 18, 1975

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