

the legacy of faboergé

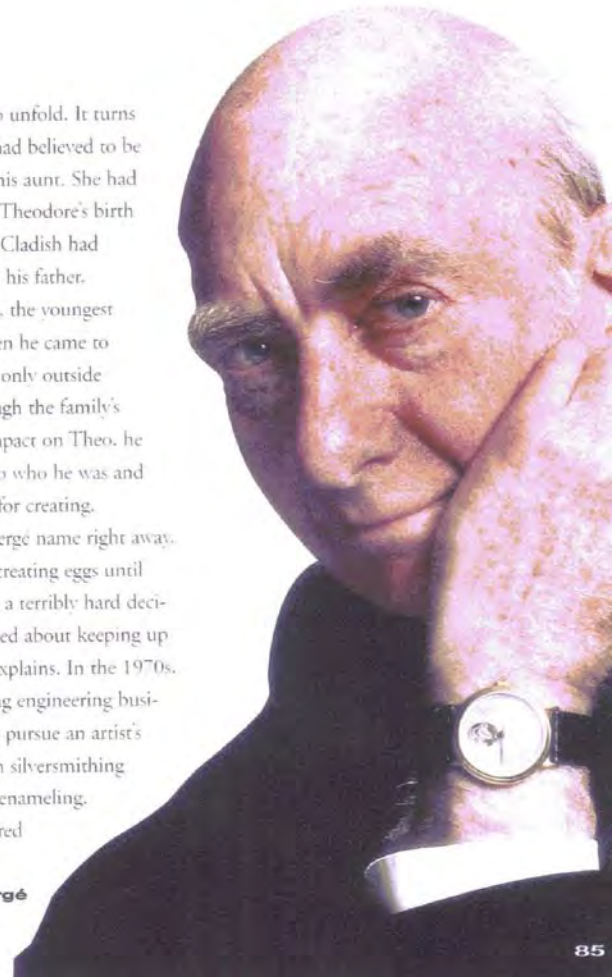
Thirty-three years ago, when 47-year-old English engineer Theodore Woodall learned he was actually Theodore Fabergé, the only living grandson of the legendary Peter Carl Fabergé, it explained a few things. One was that from a very young age he had enjoyed creating things, and the other was that he had never felt truly happy in his technical career. This month some lucky Neapolitans will meet the master himself and view his latest collection.

The first thing the now 80-year-old Fabergé remembers making was a little wooden boat when he was about four years old. "If you slam your finger with a hammer, it's something you always remember," he laughs. As a young man he also remembers turning objects of ivory and metal and carving pairs of spiral candlesticks. He was once hired to make a special box for the town of Hastings, England, to hold an important scroll. While he was still working as an engineer, he was a founding member of the Worshipful Company of Turners and was recognized with the highest accolades in competitions. "I was even given the 'Freedom of the City' in London, which means I can drive my sheep through the city without paying taxes—something I haven't yet taken advantage of yet," Fabergé says.

The middle-aged Theodore Woodall learned of his famous moniker from an elderly aunt who suggested he obtain a copy of his birth certificate. It was then that the story of

his true identity began to unfold. It turns out that the woman he had believed to be his mother was actually his aunt. She had raised him for her sister, Theodore's birth mother, Dorise Cladish. Cladish had met and spent time with his father, Nicolai Leopold Fabergé, the youngest son of Carl Fabergé, when he came to England to establish the only outside branch of Fabergé. Though the family's deception had a great impact on Theo, he also felt enlightened as to who he was and why he had a penchant for creating.

He adopted the Fabergé name right away, but would not attempt creating eggs until many years later. "It was a terribly hard decision because I was worried about keeping up the Fabergé name," he explains. In the 1970s, in addition to his existing engineering business, Fabergé decided to pursue an artist's path. He took courses in silversmithing and experimented with enameling. He purchased and restored



Theo Fabergé