

A Beefed-Up Art Collection

Whimsical art brings a smile to the face of this Nashville voice coach.

Let's call it the library instead of the cheeseburger room," says Renee Grant-Williams, a renowned voice coach in Nashville. The space in question actually serves as a passageway between the entrance and the main office of this dual home and business on Second Avenue North, across from the Wild Horse Saloon and above The Drunken Fish restaurant.



When clients (past ones include famed performers such as Huey Lewis, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, the Dixie Chicks, and Martina McBride) visit, they're greeted by Renee's visual ode to the cheeseburger and her sense of humor. At any given time, her antique shelves display about 300 of the 500 "objet d'burgers" in her collection.

Cheesy Business

When someone drops by, she explains in a feigned haughty tone, "One is really struck by the awesome majesty of cheeseburgers." Then she laughs at her pompous statement about something so sublimely silly. Renee may be a classically trained coloratura soprano, but there is nothing snooty about her. Her joy of living—and vocal expertise—prompt some of the biggest names in country and rock 'n' roll to come, bearing cheeseburgers, and asking for help to strengthen and train their vocal cords. Perhaps they've read her book, *Voice Power: Using Your Voice To Captivate, Persuade, and Command Attention* (AMACOM, \$17.95), in which she quotes McDonald's founder Ray Kroc: "Work is the meat in the hamburger of life."



Vocal coach Renee Grant-Williams never craved a cheeseburger art collection. But once it began, friends and clients only helped to feed the frenzy.

"One is really struck by the awesome majesty of cheeseburgers."

Renee Grant-Williams

Hold the Onions

The cheeseburger caper began when a friend gave her a lapel pin, which prompted another gift of earrings, which led to a wristwatch, and so on. "A cheeseburger collection is not something you decide to start; it's something that's thrust upon you," Renee deadpans. Cookie jars, tea sets, cream-and-sugar sets, and salt-and-pepper shakers sit by cheeseburger-shaped telephones, mousetraps, and toys. Some are valuable, and some are simply precious to her.

"I have one that sat on Jimmy Buffett's desk for 15 years. It was given to me by his manager," says Renee. Is the "Cheeseburger in Para-



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dise" singer aware that she has it? "Well," she says, "he probably is now."

Sometimes, she admits, the collection "doesn't amuse me as much as it does at other times, especially when I'm looking for a place to store something else." Will she ever put a stop to this cholesterol-laden collection? "You mean I can just end it?" she asks, exaggerating surprise. She ponders this revelation for a moment and then sighs. "I would have to declare myself a vegetarian for it to stop," she decides. **NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON**

For more information about Renee Grant-Williams's business, visit www.myvoicecoach.com.