



Glassman

John Burchetta colors his world to share throughout the world

by Rich Stecher

Did you ever notice when you see an artist working at their craft how easy they make it look? Well, that's because they love what they do. For John Burchetta, he's an artist that is fascinating to watch as he goes to work in his glass studio in Carmel.

Burchetta starts his day off about 9 a.m. and creates masterpieces until 2 p.m., seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

Burchetta traded in his potential suit and tie along with all of his law books while in college studying to become an attorney. He relates his moment of revelation after taking a course in the arts, "I took a class in glass blowing, and right then I knew what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

Now, he only looks back with what must be the same glimmer of discovery - as he reflects upon his feelings of distant apprehension of selling some of his first creations.

"My first trade shows were pretty nerve wracking, waiting to see if the buyers were going to be interested in my work." That was 20 years ago, and today the first thing the buyers ask - "what's new?"

These days for Burchetta, the worries have changed from - are they going to like the new line to - filling the orders on schedule.

The studio employs a small number of workers performing all of the tasks needed to run a very successful worldwide business. After the glass blowing stops in mid-day, the work mode switches to marketing, paper work, wrapping, shipping, Internet maintenance, and answering e-mail.

The old barn - converted into the studio is self-contained; the oven room, inventory and shipping room, upstairs gallery and living quarters. Burchetta's college experience in business has really paid off and it shows in the order of which his studio is operated.

It's all about order, in a strange way - one would only have to watch this artist at work, to soon realize he is a master at arranging spatial order, literally! The studio follows the same order that Burchetta controls as an artisan.

"Every piece that I do has to feel right, I know as soon as I put the first glass in the furnace if it's going to turn out right - if not, I start over again," he said.

When asked if he would ever consider teaching his craft to others, (on the college level) Burchetta replied, "No, that would take me away from what I love to do - create."

The studio does embrace an excellent program in conjunction with Scarsdale High School and Putnam/North Westchester BOCES called *Walkabout*.

The program offers the opportunity for seniors to intern at the Burchetta studio in the fashion of hands on mentoring. Burchetta speaks of the programs results brimming with pride.

"We have students here every year and it always works out very well, they get to learn not only about the art of glass blowing, but also how business is run in the real world," he said.

World in his Hands

Numerous galleries, stores and museum



Photos by Richard J. Stecher

John Burchetta poses in his gallery in front of his display of a series called 'Eco'

shops distribute Burchetta's hand crafted glass worldwide. Dansk produces Burchetta design under a license from Burchetta.

Quality is a number one priority with Burchetta when it comes to his artwork, and you can be sure he keeps an eye on his pieces around the world.

For anyone looking for the hands-on experience of glass blowing, Burchetta offers a couple of different options. First a tour of the facility is the best start, and then for \$60 you can go to the studio and they will show you how to make your own custom paperweight or ornament. If that experience hooks you, the studio offers classes as well.

Burchetta gets a charge from the look on people's faces after they have created their first hand blown piece.

"That's part of what makes it all worth while," he said.

There are not too many studios around that will actually allow a person to go create with this kind of hands-on experience.

Breaking the Mold

Burchetta as a designer creates his own molds for particular pieces with similar tolerances. As one of the photos below shows, the wooden mold submerged in a bucket of water.

"The only time when we use molds is when we have to make several pieces, for let's say a restaurant, when all of the shades for the lights have to have the same size openings around the collar," he explained.

The molds are designed by Burchetta and sent to Virginia where a company custom makes the wooden mold (s) from his specifications.



Special Molds



Glass fish



The gallery



Incredible variety of design



Finishing a piece



Expanding the opening



Working on the basic shape



Shaping raw material



Shaping with assistant Chris



In the furnace