

FINE ART

Glass Art Shines in Biltmore Village

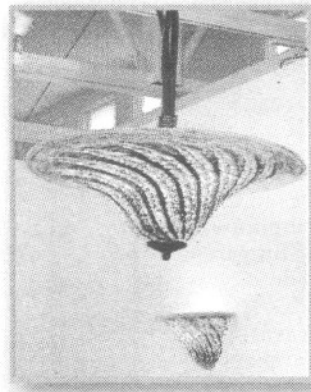
BY SARAH MEAD

Today Biltmore village has several galleries that feature glass art. The first All-Glass Gallery in Asheville, Vitrum Glass Gallery, was founded by Priscilla Hope and was located in Biltmore Village; unfortunately it was destroyed in the 2004 Biltmore Village flood. David Ross, one of the last owners of Vitrum Gallery, says that they carried about 80 to 100 glass artists, with many of them from Western North Carolina.

There are presently three galleries in Biltmore village that feature glass artists. New Morning Gallery has the biggest selection of Glass art in Biltmore Village; their focus is functional art. They carry between 85 and 95 glass artists, from all over North America, who create pieces that can be used decorate homes and living spaces. Bella Vista Art Gallery's focus is on original artwork rather than functional art. Blue Gallery, known for their custom gold jewelry, has glass pieces for home décor.

New Morning Gallery's impressive selection of glass includes a large variety of Menorahs, used during the Jewish holiday of Hanukah, perfume bottles, earrings, glass oil lamps, goblets, vases, and a delightful collection of hand-blown Christmas ornaments. They even have a line of functional dinnerware that is made from recycled glass.

Lynette Ressler, the interior designer at New Morning Gallery, says that the gallery has been working over the last 7 years to bring unique glass lighting pieces to their gallery. They have gathered together sconces, pendant lights, chandeliers and lamps from North American glass artists. Once they leave New Morning Gallery, many of their one-of-a-kind lighting fixtures go to beautiful homes all over the Southeast United States. People buy their Pendant glass lighting fixtures to put over their kitchen islands and Dining Rooms, and the unique sconces find their way into foyers and dining rooms.



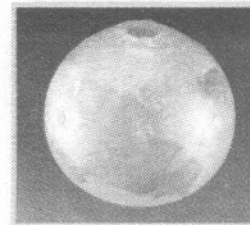
**New Morning Gallery,
Pendant Light and Sconce**

Bella Vista Art Gallery is located where Vitrum Glass Gallery was located before the 2004 flood. Bella Vista's represents two glass artists, Riley Art Glass Studio and Western North Carolina artist Judson Guerard. Christin Zelenka, the Gallery Director, says that when they were designing the gallery they put in a section of hollow glass block on the north-facing wall specifically to use for highlighting their glass artists. "Glass art is about light, and you need good lighting to make the glass glow" says Christin. The demand for their glass art has been so strong that Bella Vista Art is talking with three more national artists about representing them exclusively here in Asheville.

"We are very lucky to have Judson,

I just worry that he will stop answering my phone calls because I am constantly calling him to say another piece of his has sold and we need more new pieces" says Christin. Judson Guerard was the coordinator for the Penland School of Craft Glass studio from 1989 to 1993. His style is distinctive, and glass collectors who visit recognize his work. Judson is a master of many glass art techniques and he has several distinctive series in his body of work, they include the "Chaos" series, the "River Rock" series and his fragile but elegant "Shinyata" series. In addition, at Christmas time he produces a huge variety of hand-blown Christmas ornaments that Christin displays on two white Christmas trees in the front windows during the holiday season.

While some glass artists control their glass piece's shapes very tightly and precisely producing pieces of engineering, Judson's confidence with the media lets him create loose organic archetypal shaped pieces, which he often imbues with a warm glow by masterfully sandblasting selected parts of the exterior. His popular "Chaos" series is blown, hammered, and fused into orb-like



**Judson Guerard,
Chaos Orb**

shapes, some completely round, others partially flattened like vases. They often include colored and transparent regions. The whole Chaos series has a



New Morning Gallery, Pendant Lights

characteristic mouth that is both raw and primitive looking but also smooth from sandblasting.

Roddy Capers is one of the glass artists represented by Blue Gallery. The distinguishing characteristics of many pieces that Roddy produces are the bright colors splashed on the outside of the thick walls and smooth sensuous lips of his vessels. His vessels originate as blown glass but he uses hot glass techniques as well as sandblasting to bring the shapes and colors out of the glass. His single colored pieces using jewel tones such as sapphire, garnet and emerald are striking because of their elegant simplicity and frosty elegance.

Many national glass Artists have been attracted to Western North Carolina by the Penland School of Craft's strong glass program. The galleries in Biltmore Village represent many of those artists. In addition, the galleries in Biltmore village have gathered together unique glass art from all over the country. Original fine glass art as well as unique pieces of glass art for you home can be found in the village.