

Art

Cork & Canvas

By LAURA JEAN WHITCOMB

There's a painting on display in the center of the room. There's a blank canvas on the table in front of you. Sometime over the course of three hours, you will be duplicating the displayed painting on your canvas.

Nervous? Don't be. It's a fun night of art, guided by experienced instructors, at Tip Top Pottery in White River Junction, Vt. A little food, a little wine, and your inner artist will be revealed.

"Wine & Design, Paint & Pour, Merlot & Matisse — art classes like this are being held in major cities like Chicago, Tampa and Boston," says Amy Robb, owner of Tip Top Pottery. "I thought it would be nice to have something like that here in the Upper Valley."

"Cork & Canvas is set up as accessible, fun and easy to do. Anyone can paint," says Amy Robb.

Robb — with the help of Tip Top Artists Kathy Detzer and Paula Dorr — held the first evening class in June 2013. For \$40, participants can experience art



photos courtesy of Tip Top Pottery

Everyone is an artist at Cork & Canvas. And sometimes a little wine helps the creative process.

for three hours. Tip Top supplies the paint, brushes, canvas, aprons, instructors — and wine glasses if you want to bring your own wine. You can bring some snacks, or order from the Tip Top Café next door. Each three-hour class covers one easy-to-follow project: such as a trio of eggplants (perfect for a kitchen), a robin's nest with three delicate blue eggs,

or an elephant on a Savannah landscape. **FUN ART, NOT FINE ART**

In February, Artist Kathy Detzer is helping 12 participants work on a painting of peacock feathers. It's a Detzer original, a painting she provided just for the class. "Artists use their own images," says Robb. "You can't get them anywhere else."



Everyone starts off with three colors: violet, dark blue and turquoise blue. But along the way, participants add their own creative touches. Instead of having a round edge, one student feathers the end of her peacock feathers. Another student opts for glowing pinks and oranges, giving the feathers a glow-in-the-dark effect. A third student uses the peacock template as a base — but paints daisies.

One participant wants to add “something extra” and asks Detzer for help. Detzer shows her, on the brown paper covering the table, how to use a small brush to make thin edges. She suggests practicing there before trying it on the canvas.

Shelby Frye puts the finishing touches on her painting. “I work at a local police dept where I’ve been a dispatcher for 11 years. It’s a wonderful job but certainly does not have any creative element to it,” the Canaan, N.H., resident says. “I



took graphic design in high school and college, and art was my favorite subject. The Cork & Canvas classes are relaxing to take alone or fun to go with friends. The atmosphere is conducive to allowing students to be creative while still learning techniques.”

At the other end of the table, some of the regulars are asking each other for ad-

vice — how to make the swirls, what color looks best, and can I borrow that brush when you’re done?

COMMUNITY PAINTING

“It’s community painting,” says Detzer. People come from all over to paint; Robb mentions that a group drove down from Burlington, Vt., to paint. Tonight’s group has two birthday girls (each celebrating with a friend), a team from a local business, and a few people who come every month.

“Community is important. Team building is a part, too,” says Robb. “Art is a wonderful outlet of expression and painting either on canvas or pottery is relaxing.”

And you don’t have to be an artist to enjoy the class. In fact, you don’t have to have any artistic talent whatsoever. “I took one art class in college,” says Robb. “I’ve never done this before. Cork & Canvas is set up as accessible, fun and easy to do. Anyone can paint.”

It’s true. Twelve people have created 12 different — yet beautiful — works of art. “People who never felt like they could create leave feeling like they are an artist,” says Detzer. “I like to hold up a person’s painting and have them look at it — and watch their face change. They light up because they are artists.”

Cork & Canvas is held Wednesday nights from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoons from 3 to 6 p.m. It is \$40 for supplies and instruction. Robb offers a “frequent painter card” — come five times and get a free session on the fifth visit. Register online in advance at www.tiptoppottery.com UVL



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