

Holiday Gift Guide 2017

Orient & Flume Art Glass: World-Renowned Treasures Made in the Heart of Chico

Orient & Flume Art Glass
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By Alice M. Patterson

With the holiday season here, finding a unique gift for those you love is easy, thanks to Orient & Flume Art Glass. Orient & Flume offers fine art glass for the collector, with price ranges to fit every budget. Nationally acclaimed for its excellence in design since 1972, the glass of Orient & Flume utilizes both traditional and contemporary motifs and can be found in the permanent collections of the most prestigious museums in the world. These signed pieces capture nature's inspiration in both iridescent and crystal clear glass.

Under the leadership of Ronda Davis and Bruce Sillars, Orient and Flume continues to carry on the legacy of its original founders. Both Davis and Sillars were long-term employees of the company, with Davis having worked there for the last 32 years, and Sillars, the last 45 years before taking ownership of the store in late 2016 after the passing of Doug Boyd, one of the original founders. Their passion for their work and commitment to the community is strong.

"The company is extremely important to us, and to the Chico community as well," Davis said.

For anyone who has never visited the store, Davis said watching the artists work is a must-see. "Once you see the artist work, you



have a greater appreciation for the art, and for what they do."

Watching Sillars and his assistant Brent Sheehan work is a gift in and of itself. With the ease and grace only true professionals could have after years of practice, they make the process look effortless. Sillars is a prolific designer considered by other glass blowers to be a true master of glass technique. Since 1973, as Orient & Flume's first employee, he has been responsible for many of the store's most successful designs including the Tulip vase, which was featured on the cover of Gump's catalogue. He holds a BA in Art from California State University, Chico.

Continued on page D2

Orient & Flume

continued from page D1

Davis encourages the public to come watch the art-making process. She said the best hours to view the glass-making process is Monday-Friday from 10-11 and 12-2, she said, but encourages visitors to call first.

About Orient & Flume's history (from www.orientandflume.com): In the early 1800s, Chico was an important center for gold mining, railroad construction and ranching. By the late 1800s, Chico had grown into a charming Victorian community. The quaint atmosphere soon created one of the most distinctive valley towns in California. Around 1893, one characteristic home with a carriage house was built in the historic Oriental section of town. Located between Orient Street and Flume Street, this site was destined to play an important role in the Orient & Flume story. In 1972, the house was purchased by Douglas Boyd and was transformed into an art glass studio.



Early work of the studio was directed toward recreating the silver-luster of iridescent glass of such turn-of-the-century artists as Tiffany, Steuben and Loetz. In time, this led to their current creations of intricate, three dimensional designs encased in clear glass.



Co-Owner Bruce Sillars was Orient & Flume's first employee and has grown into a one-of-a-kind glass artist respected across the globe.

In 1973, the carriage house proved to be too small for a rapidly growing business, and was relocated to 2161 Park Avenue. Now, the work of Orient & Flume can be found in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the Smithsonian Museum, the Chicago Art Institute, the Chrysler Museum, the Corning Glass Museum and fine stores and galleries throughout the world. Inside Orient & Flume headquarters in Chico, visitors will enjoy viewing their Museum collection, which features unique pieces from throughout the store's history.

"We have a real Chico treasure," said Davis. For more information, visit the company website at orientandflume.com or call 530-893-0373.



Co-Owner Ronda Davis has spent more than three decades with Orient & Flume.