



May 1, 2009

ISSUE 3



### "It's Not Easy Being Green..."

*OK...so "Green" we all hear it every where we go, is it just a buzz word? Or is it really a movement that will change the course of our future? Our children are bombarded daily with how to go green, how take care of their earth, how to be green.*

*On Earth Day my children ran around the house and turned out all the lights, because a TV station told them too. I was actually tickled to watch out my daughters bedroom window and see other houses in the neighborhood go black.....just for a minute.*

*So yes, green is more than just a word. It is a way of life that can mean more than turning out the lights, and using recycled bags at the grocery store. Kermit the frog says, "its not easy being green"...no, its not as easy as throwing things away needlessly, but worth the effort in my opinion, as we reach out say recycle, renew and reuse. ~Elaine*

#### Tips on How to Prep a Wall

#### In this issue:

##### Applause

Look what THEY can do!

##### Getting to Know Us

a HANDful of questions answered by one of our members

##### Get a Grip

Business Advice

##### From our Hands

FREE Recipe!

##### Get your Hands on THIS

Product Review

**Sisters Hands,  
Decorative Artists  
Consortium,**

[www.sistershands.com](http://www.sistershands.com)

Susan Bickford  
Marti Carroll  
Elaine Castronovo  
Cindy Everett  
Renee Holder  
Judy Norman  
Krista Vind  
Cait Whitson  
Julie Young

## APPLAUSE!



Erik Nielsen graduated from The University of Kentucky with a BFA in fine arts. After fighting an injury he realized that Football was not going to be his future and although depressed at the thought he felt fortunate to have some skills as an artist to fall back on. He began his unplanned career by getting mural jobs from his professors in college. He says that he "took the referrals and ran with it. I would have people ask me about faux finishing and I would work up samples and get photos to land jobs."

Erik was working with one of the best painting companies in Kentucky. The owner recognizing Erik's obvious skills recommended that he attend professional faux finish classes. Since that time Erik has studied under Martin Alan Hirsch, Krista Vind and Leonard Pardon.

Erik has been on the wall now for about 12 years. Erik states- "I do hate when people pick finishes that are nice, but you feel there is something that would look much better. I guess it's like a tattoo? You pick it, I stick it!" He loves to work with the many faux artists he has met along the way. He also gives a great deal of credit to some interior designers that have really been great to team up with. Stating- "it's good to butt heads sometimes but come to an agreement on a finish."

Currently Erik is trying to slowly drift into canvas and other art projects, and loves working in trompe l'oeil and murals more than anything.

These were Erik's closing words, which describe the man behind the brush... "I take pride in being humble. I think confidence is good but I get a chuckle from people in the industry that are constantly blowing their own horns. I enjoy an "at-a-boy" or a pat on the back the most. The benefit of being 6'7", 285lbs... It helps to be able to reach nine foot ceilings without a ladder."

### *Congratulations*

Jennifer Allwood The Magic Brush, Inc. for winning our Going Green contest!

Jennifer won a set of cabinet blanks for displaying her finishes.

[Jennifer's Site](#)  
[Jennifer's Blog](#)

*Just for fun:*  
[Green Music!](#)

### **Sites to help you stay green:**

[ecobydesign](#) [envirobrush](#) [ecogeek](#)  
[treehugger](#)  
[lowimpact](#)  
[fifediet](#)  
[eatlocalchallenge](#)  
[slowfood](#)  
[avaliving / article1](#)  
[avaliving / article2](#)  
[greenandsave](#) [greenlivingtips](#)

On a more personal note with Erik, he said. "I have suffered some trying times lately. I was divorced about 2 weeks after losing my 2 best friends, my Dad and my Jack Russell Buddy. All the friends I have made through this industry really helped me out in troubled times. That is an advantage that is not spoken of much in our field. People are willing to help you out with not only finishing, but life in general. I've really fallen in love with some of my faux buddies and feel I've made some life long friends."

You can learn more about Erik and view his website at [www.mrwonderfaux.com](http://www.mrwonderfaux.com)

## Getting to Know Us...

### Meet Cait Whitson: Our Featured "Sister"



Cait at work



I landed in the world of decorative painting more by dint of chance than by design. At 17 I found myself with a much sought after place at Edinburgh University's Fine Art course which adds studio practice of art to art history in collaboration with Edinburgh Art College. My ambition was to be a corporate art buyer, a position which as far as I knew, I had made up. I failed 1st year which wasn't the best way to achieve my ambition.

Leonard Pardon's School of Specialist Decoration in London was a discovery made one summer following my expulsion from Edinburgh's academia. Fascinated by magical tools such as floggers and feathers I persuaded disillusioned parents to pay for a 3 month class, convinced that the skills of marbling and graining would be my ticket to fame and fortune. In 1986, aged 20, I established my first business in London.

London was a wonderful place to start my career with lots of other painters to share my enthusiasm, however returning home to Scotland, my experience was very different. It became a lonely business in the Northern climes of the United Kingdom where

**At your Fingertips...**  
Handy resources to help along your way!

[Altered Provisions](#)  
[FabulousFinishes Blog](#)  
[My Notting Hill Blog](#)  
[Design Inspiration](#)  
[Snapdragon Garden](#)  
[Patricia Gray Blog](#)  
[Fresh Palette Blog](#)  
[Meanwhile Here in France Blog](#)  
[Indexed](#)  
[Design Amour](#)  
[Faces in Places Blog](#)  
[Fauxology](#)

decorative painters were few and far between.

In 2000 I got my first computer and that changed my world. Suddenly there were painters to talk to from all over the world on message boards. This was the start of a love affair with America and the grand world of Faux. Since then I have met many wonderful people in this industry. I have been inspired and instructed, helped and supported. On-line relationships flourished into real live relationships and I've been lucky to teach in various venues in the USA.

The whole American "faux finishing" world is very different from the world of the painter in UK. Initially alien I learned to embrace it and see real potential to use what I saw in America to help expand our business in the UK. Teaching at the inspiring Southern Institute of Faux Finishing, my vision was made complete...I could SEE how it should be in Scotland.

The first faux finishing school in Scotland will be launched as we open Carte Blanche Maison, school, showroom and retail space, in May 2009. We are more than delighted to announce that in June we will welcome The Southern Institute of Faux Finishing for a summer school in graining and marbling taught in FE products. There are still a few places available . . .

<http://www.sistershands.com/classes.html>

Contact Cait at [cait@decoratescotland.com](mailto:cait@decoratescotland.com) for more information

## Get A Grip!

**Our Business Tips and Advice-**

*From the pen of Cait Whitson*

### **Green Marketing for More Greenbacks**

Here in Scotland we are comfortable with anything "Green". Not surprising - it's a colour that our temperate climate brings us in abundance, but I think even those living in the most arid environments will enjoy green if it brings in business. Green is the buzz word that is selling everything worldwide and it is definitely a concept that we can apply to many parts of our business even if you aren't sure about eco-paints and how to use them.

My favourite Faux fields are wood graining and marbling and I have always thought these to be the ultimate eco-finishes. Replacing trim with real wood is likely to fill landfill, may use a timber that is not from a renewable source, wasteful of energy and resources and has a high environmental impact. How much gentler on the environment it is just to paint it to look like wood.

How many years does it take for marble to form? Marble isn't a renewable source and some of the most famous marbles are mined out making them of huge value. Painting pillars, mantles and other architectural features in marble finishes means

your client can have all the beauty of a marble without depleting the earth's resources.

Repainting of cabinetry is recycling and if your prospective client hasn't thought of it that way then, congratulate them on their environmentally sound choice; it will make them feel good about hiring you. Hand painting faded or ugly pieces of furniture and making something new and exciting from them is now considered "upcycling", making an existing unwanted item better than it was originally and can be considered the ultimate in Eco-chic.

If you choose to use green products there are many benefits; consider that traditionally used lime based products have natural environmentally beneficial properties that save the use of chemical. Lime is anti-bacterial and insecticidal (woodworm and death-watch beetle hate it) - hence its wide usage on farm buildings. It also has fireproofing qualities - all the houses on the Thames were lime plastered and whitewashed after the great fire of 1212 as a precautionary measure. Traditional paints such as distempers are safer to use than lime and have no VOC's and no petrochemicals. We have recently completed an 8 bedroom house entirely in oil bound distemper and it is a truly lovely finish to live with.

So going green isn't just about what the paint manufacturers say about VOC's it's a buzz word that you can incorporate into your marketing in lots of ways that suit all sorts of finishers. Of course being green is about wasting less too and wasting less usually saves us money. So you save money and make money too and if you also put in place environmentally sound working practices you can know you are helping the earth. I can't see a down side to being Green

## From Our Hands

In each issue we will share a [FREE RECIPE](#) available for download from our website

Follow the link below to download our current free recipe!



["Oliva Antica"](#)

***Bonus Recipe from our Contest Winner Jennifer Allwood:***



**"Dirty Green Lusterstone"**

**Get Your HANDS On This!**

**Our most current THUMBS UP product review:**



**American Clay** is one of my favorite green plasters. It has a wonderful “zen” like feel to it. It is easy to put on. The only hard part was mixing the plaster with a high torque power drill so you may need the buddy system if you are not feeling strong.

Mix it up a day or two ahead of application day. Be sure to shrink wrap any carpet because I found the perfect consistency to apply the plaster also helped it to fly across the room while applying. The colors are gorgeous. You can purchase pretinted color paks or have custom colors made for you. The tints are clay pigments that are mixed into the plaster so it never fades. Only apply it like a thin

credit card thickness. Apply first coat, let dry, lightly mist with water then apply the second coat. Mist with water and compact clay to compress it to itself.

You must use sanding primer prior to applying the clay unless you go over unprimed sheetrock. Two coats of sanding primer for bull nose or inside corners. Unsealed clay is recommended for easy repairs. Sealed clay loses its inherent "green" properties. Although, it is recommended that you seal high traffic areas. On a 1-10 hardness scale, the American clay is a 5. You can lay out any left over plaster on plastic, dry it out then pack up in a container. Reconstitute it with water if you need to make repairs. From the American Clay website [www.AmericanClay.com](http://www.AmericanClay.com)

The clay plaster "breathes" – it takes in and gives off moisture. This means a steamy bathroom does not sweat and the mirror does not fog; the breathing process moderates the temperature in the room. Clay particles have a negative ionic charge – they repel dust, and you feel better. Computers and cell phones give off a positive ionic charges. Clay plaster has the lowest inherent energy of any plaster, and is one of the "greenest" and earth-friendly materials in construction.

American Clay comes in four types of plaster. Loma, Porcelina, Marittimo and Enjarre. Loma is always used as the base (first) coat for all of their plasters, and may also be used as the final (second) coat. Loma is the easiest plaster to apply. It is great for skip trowel looks.

No sanding is required to achieve the "honed marble" smoothness of Porcelina. Simply burnish with a plastic trowel. Apply Porcelina over a base coat of American Clay Loma. Marittimo is the strongest of our three plasters, Marittimo™ draws its beauty and charm from the crushed shell aggregate that gives it strength. Enjarre™ is designed with your commercial project, production housing development, condo project, and any other large scale application in mind. It is easily repaired (compared to other plasters), eliminates the need to schedule a painter, is 0 VOC, and will give your project a look unmatched by other wall finishes.

Contact information- American Clay: Carol Baumgartel  
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Carol Baumgartel <[carol@americanclay.com](mailto:carol@americanclay.com)>

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***All of us in Sisters Hands would like to thank everyone for your continued support and encouragement for our group and its efforts!***

***A special thank you to those who signed up for our mailing list and the email responses we have received! We appreciate all of your input!***

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**[Click here](#) to view a schedule  
of our upcoming classes in 2009!**

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Want to share something with the Sisters?  
Questions, ideas for a future Newsletter?  
Want to recommend someone for an Applause?

**Please do not reply to this message-**

**[Contact us here!!](#)**

**Forward-to-a-Friend**

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