



October 2009
ISSUE 5



Gathering Together

"For man, autumn is a time of harvest, of gathering together. For nature, it is a time of sowing, of scattering abroad." ~Edwin Way Teale.

As Fall gathers pace many will start to enjoy cozy evenings, softer more mellow light, and of course as artists, we love the colors of fall, particularly the startling colors as the leaves change. Nature is a wonderful thing. So we're gathering together and taking a cue from nature, getting inspired and taking time to sow...

Gathering Together... for a Great Cause

This November several members of Sistershands plan to assist with the Artists4Others Habitat Project in New Orleans. We invite you to join with us to support this worthy cause. If you cannot come to New Orleans, not to worry...you can volunteer by painting a birdhouse that will be auctioned off for the annual Howling for Success SPCA auction. Four years ago over 100 artists worked together on "The House That Faux Built" to fund a house to be built for Habitat for Humanity and Katrina victims. The proceeds from the subsequent book of the same name were donated to the current New Orleans Habitat project. In addition to the house itself, volunteer decorative artists will be painting murals in the new SPCA. If you are interested in more information, please go to Artists4Others on Facebook or visit www.fauxhouse.com

Gathering Together... for Fun and Learning

Our Scottish Sister Cait Whitson is arriving in America to teach marbling and woodgraining with her own inimitable style once more. Restricted to only 8 students, Cait prides herself in providing personal one to one teaching, sharing her commercial techniques that can be taken straight to market. Virginia Weathersby at the Southern Institute of Faux Finishing in Brandon, Mississippi, provides a fabulous venue for this class which is scheduled for the week of October 26-30. Virginia and her staff have planned a week of fun, starting with a Scottish Ceilidh, a

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Look what THEY can do!

Getting to Know Us

a HANDful of questions answered by one of our members

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Product Review



Sisters Hands, Decorative Artists Consortium,
www.sistershands.com

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

traditional Scottish party with music and dancing. The Ceilidh, Saturday evening October 24, will be attended by a number of the Sisters.

This is also a great opportunity to combine Cait's class with Susan Bickford's class, "The Art of Making a Profit" which is scheduled for Friday and Saturday October 23-24 also at SIFF. Come party and learn with the sisters. There are only a few spaces left in each class, so please call Virginia at 601-919-3289 for more information; or visit www.fauxfinishbiz.com/c_marbeling for Cait's class and www.fauxfinishbiz.com/TheArtofMakingaProfit for Susan's class. Financing options are available for Cait's class.

Krista Vind and Cindy Everett have upcoming classes at The Faux Finish School in Louisville, Kentucky. Their RS Crete "Tough Enough" class is next scheduled for November 18-20 with only a few spaces available. Call 800-598-FAUX and visit www.fauxfinish.com for more information. Krista teaches The RS Series - the Next Level and Contemporary Flair classes; Cindy teaches European Cabinetry and Furniture Finishes. Be sure and check the schedule for available class dates.

**[click here](#) to view a schedule
of our upcoming classes in 2009 - 2010!**

Gathering Together... for Inspirational Fall Contest!



This photograph by Michael Mulberry* has inspired the Sisters and we want to challenge you to create a gorgeous finish from this inspirational photograph.

Your challenge is to create an "Autumn Leaves" finish in your choice of mediums. **First prize is a very nice assortment of stencils from Laser Excel.****

Deadline for submissions is November 20. Winner, photo, and recipe will be presented in the Winter issue in early 2010.

*View more of Michael Mulberry's work at www.nistudios.com

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**Our very own
"Cabinet Queen"
shares a bit of
herself with us this
issue:**

SH: Do you ever get bored of painting cabinets?

Cindy: Now that is an excellent question...and since I strongly believe in Karma...I will say NO! NEVER! Bring them on! I will finish them ALL!

SH: You specialize in the big ticket areas of the home, kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and libraries; we are all aware that many people are remodeling these areas but keeping their existing fitted furniture. Where else do you see gaps in the market, for instance - do you expect a big growth in counter tops or flooring products, are there areas we should be seeking training?

Cindy: I definitely think that anyway we can expand our portfolio, we should! People are definitely watching their spending dollars more these days. By expanding our portfolios and marketing effectively, we can save our clients money by providing them with more cost effective solutions for countertops, cabinets, furniture, floors, light fixtures, etc.

SH: What do you see as the most innovative product in your field in the

APPLAUSE!

Regina Garay of Garay Artisans
and Fauxology



This month, Sisters Hands had the great pleasure of interviewing one of the most internet-active members of the faux industry; one who is also a fantastic artist and an inspiring business woman. We hope that she will inspire you as much as she has inspired us.

SH: How has your internet presence; blogging, website, online videos, google listing, moderating Talk Faux, etc. impacted your personal decorative arts business? How much time does it take to keep up with all these? Which is the most effective in your opinion?

Regina: Each has impacted and evolved my business immeasurably. I won't lie – it takes an incredible amount of time to keep up with it all (and sometimes, I fail). However, it's not really "work" for me – it's fun time. That makes a big difference in the continual enthusiasm that I feel is required to keep it all up. In the end, I believe the most effective of all is our company website. I put the first version up in 2002 and I feel that she (yes, it's a she) started it all and the other efforts are the children she birthed. All the roads lead back to her.

SH: What are your best selling finishes?

Regina: Right now, the less labor & layer-intensive finishes are what's selling for us. If an involved finish is not in the budget, we've become pretty adept at finding a comparable finish that will get the job done beautifully at the price my client has to play with. Everyone deserves affordable beauty. Hopefully, we give that to them.

SH: We know you work with others/family....can you tell us more about the benefits of collaboration?

Regina: I can't place a price on the benefits of collaboration. I'm very lucky to work with my siblings and team members – I firmly believe they are all geniuses at what they do. It's important to collaborate with others and find a way to merge their strengths with yours to create something bigger than each individual. Ego has no place – just kindness, respect and a sense of "we". "We" is

last year?

Cindy: I think it is the expansion of our industry's product lines to include refinishing options for countertops! I have seen much creativity and growth in this area. Again, it's all about learning proper procedures and marketing effectively for your area. So get out there and FAUX!!

SH: What was your most interesting project this year?

Cindy: Earlier this year I worked on a large project in Tampa, FL for a repeat client. This was actually the 4th house that I have worked on for this client. I brought Krista Vind in to work with me and we repainted and faux finished nearly every room in this client's vacation home. It was a lot of work in a short time frame, but we accomplished our mission and created a lot of beautiful finishes including two ceilings, travertine columns and an added on a fireplace surround.

SH: What type of finishing work do you enjoy most.

Cindy: Anything colorful and non-typical! I live in the south where clients tend to be more traditional. So any time I am allowed use of bold colors and textures I am almost giddy with pleasure!

SH: If you could no longer be a faux finisher...what would you do?

Cindy: Ahh...this is something I think about often. If I could not physically faux finish, I would still love to be able to teach. I love teaching! The students bring out my creative flow!



At your
Fingertips...

a powerful word.

SH: What type of classes/finishes are you personally considering taking in the future? Where do you see the evolution of faux finishing going in this tough economy?

Regina: I like business courses and learning about different surfaces other than walls, cabinets and floors – those are classes I actively look for. But, there are some innovative classes that still pique my interest. Out of necessity, I do see a rise in the DIYer and some will find wonderful ways to tap that audience. A change in how classes are given is also taking hold – how easy is it to not pay for flight and hotel and take a class in your pajamas at your own pace? The rise of bidding against other finishers (as opposed to being the only company a client calls) sets a need for coming up with affordable yet spectacular options for a client and spending an effort making the best presentation you can. We have all lost a bit – heck, I lost a cabinet refinishing job to a painter who had never tackled cabinets before, but the trick is to put yourself in your client’s shoes, take that lesson and address that possibility the next time. The most successful decorative arts companies will be able to adapt quickly to changes and be involved with multiple services, not just the faux finishing.

SH: Regina you are one of the most organized people we know in the industry with work, family, shows, and especially your blog. We would all appreciate your sharing your thoughts, and any pointers you may have, on blogging.

Regina: Blogging is amazing. I really look forward to sharing all that I can – it’s not the ideas that are lacking, it’s the time. What I suggest is to sit down and think about who you are, who you are trying to reach and what you’d like to say. What subjects do you want to touch upon? What do you want to avoid talking about? Finding a voice sounds like it would be hard but just write as you speak – your personality and voice already exist. The right rhythm will come the more you write. I also find that keeping a calendar and planning out your blog topics in advance helps. It keeps your blog focused and you can plan a nice flow to your post subjects. Just keep it as a cool outlet for you and it will always be a pleasure to write and hopefully, for your readers to enjoy.

SH: With all the buzz about social networking; Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc., what do you think the end result is for people in our industry who participate in this online mania?

Regina: It’s hard for many to see beyond their comfort zone. But whether or not they embrace these tech innovations, the changes have and will continue to come. It’s inevitable and if you’d like your business to evolve, it’s imperative that you face them and become involved. I’m one who loves technology but I rarely understand it: It needs to be spoon-fed to me. (I should have stock in the Dummies books.) The result in participating is that it makes it easier to reach some of your target audience, it allows you to market in more “arenas” (most being absolutely free) and

Handy resources to help along your way!

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

learn more about this varied world.

We want to thank Regina for taking the time to chat with us, sharing her knowledge and experience. Join Regina online on her website <http://www.garayartisans.com> and her blog <http://www.fauxology.com> Look for her on Facebook and Twitter.

Get A Grip!

Our Business Tips and Advice-

From the pen of Susan Bickford

Gathering Together...in the Digital Age

Businesses today need a good understanding of how the digital communication age can serve their networking and marketing needs. "Social Media" has become the new buzzword in business networking and marketing. Blogging has become an important tool in communicating with potential and existing clients, as well as industry peers. A Blog is a website that provides personal insights by the author, as well as commentary and links to other information or websites. Blogging goes more in depth on a personal level than is appropriate on an informational website. Informational company websites should communicate a lot of information visually in a short amount of time; whereas blogs, usually updated daily, are more of a live journal detailing activities or a timely topic. Websites and blogsites can have a great symbiotic relationship, feeding traffic to each other.

Savvy business people are now recognizing and reaping the benefits of networking on sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Ning, and Twitter. Facebook and Twitter, in particular, are leaders in social media and are being accessed more and more for business purposes. All of these outlets provide a free way (with the exception of the time you invest in updating) to promote your business and drive traffic to your website and/or blog. Last spring, Facebook launched a new business format where users can create a page specifically for their business and register a business name to the Facebook site. A great resource for learning more about Facebook and how to use it for marketing is insidefacebook.com. Twitter, a micro-messaging service, also becoming known as "micro-blogging," is a relative newcomer to social networking. Twitter messages are limited to 140 characters or less. Originally known as "Twtr," the beta version was launched in March 2006, and has rapidly grown to become a moving force in real time information in the last two years and continues to grow exponentially. For those who have trouble maintaining a daily extended blog, using Twitter as a "micro-blog" is a time efficient way to keep your followers informed on current projects and an efficient way to share links to interesting



information you've discovered, to articles on your blog, or to photos of current projects. Several photo sharing sites have been developed specifically for sharing photos on Twitter, including TwitPic, YFrog, and SnapTweet. Twitter and Facebook have recently teamed up so that updates to either can be automatically cross-updated to the other. A great resource to learn more about Twitter is <http://www.lostartofblogging.com/twitter-guide>.

To learn more about today's social media visit www.mashable.com. For examples of how Facebook and Twitter have been put to great use in our industry, check out both Regina Garay and Melanie Royals on Facebook and Twitter. Regina is "Fauxology" and Melanie is "designamour" on Twitter; and "Regina Garay" and "Royal Design Studio Stencils/Modello Designs" on Facebook.

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!



"RHCaliente"

Get Your HANDS On This!

Tips And Tricks for Cabinet Finishing:

In light of our struggling economy, most decorative artists are adding cabinet and furniture refinishing to their already vast



portfolios. For those who are just beginning to conquer this area, we have put together a small list of tips and tricks to aid in your new adventure. Some of you experienced "wall dogs" may even find some new tricks!

*Faux Effects Venetian Gem is an excellent product for filling in the grain on oak cabinets and furniture. It goes on easily, doesn't dry up on you like wood fillers, sands easily, and dries smooth as glass!

*Remember to number your doors and drawers to make re-installation a MUCH easier task.

*While you are numbering your drawers - if you are removing the drawer faces, mark an arrow on the back of the drawer face to indicate which ways up...it does make a difference!

*If your projects requires you to fill the hardware holes (doors and drawer pulls/knobs) break off a thin piece of dowel into each hole to help fill space as you fill hole - Venetian Gem is a great product for this as well as it does not shrink up like most wood fillers.

*If the hinges on your cabinet refinishing project are old and dirty - try throwing them in a bucket of water with a 1/4 cup of vinegar. Let them soak overnight, rinse and let dry. This refreshes hinges and makes your cabinet job look even better!

*To obtain a smooth, brush stroke free finish...multiple thin layers of paint are much better than trying to achieve full coverage in one coat.

*Create your cabinet and furniture finishes on small sample blanks! Leave them in your vehicle and take them with you to every job, consultation etc. They are an excellent way to up sell your projects!

The Members of Sisters Hands thank everyone for their continued support and encouragement.

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

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



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Questions, ideas for a future Newsletter?
Want to recommend someone for an Applause?

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