

Sketched in Stone

By Abella Carroll

An artisan captures architectural history and family memories on an unusual surface.

Every once in a while, someone comes along who demonstrates that old adage: If you can't find the profession of your dreams, sometimes the profession finds you. Meet Dawn Myers, a uniquely talented artist who paints onto one of Mother Nature's finest creations—stones.



Shortly after, she turned to her husband and said, "Don't laugh, but I'm going to start painting homes on rocks."

And so she did. Dawn's first art show was an eye-opener when she brought 40 pieces to sell just to see if

there was an interest in this type of artwork. Her stones sold out in ten minutes. "People came running," Dawn says. "One woman bought ten of them!" Her new business, *Sketched in Stone* was born.

Dawn had no idea that her artwork would evoke such deep emotions in homeowners. Reasons that people commission her to paint their homes vary. Many ask her to paint their home on a stone before they move onto their next house so they can have a permanent, three-dimensional piece of art that will become a family heirloom. A unique feature is that she paints the front and back of the house on either side of the stone while capturing the family's lifestyle as well.

"I paint in what most artists take out," Dawn says. "It could be pots in the window, toys on the ground or



Cost of paintings can range from \$750 (for one side of a stone) to \$1,450 (for both sides of the stone). Here, family members all pitched in to pay for this historic home in Pomona, California to be immortalized in stone.

even telephone wires. You'd be surprised at the details people associate with their homes. One woman actually cried when she saw the final piece."

Most stones are painted from photos that Dawn takes herself. She prefers to visit the house and photograph it from various angles. Then she interviews the homeowner and gets a feel for their likes, their personalities and what is meaningful to them. With her artistic eye and kindhearted ear, she listens carefully before ever putting a paintbrush to stone.

She often "unveils" her final piece at a special event, like a retirement celebration, city gala or even a Thanksgiving dinner. That's when emotions

After earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in Arts and Architecture from UCLA, Dawn was passionate about making a difference with what she had learned. Unexpectedly, her love for architecture took a turn about six years ago when she came across a field of rocks. She found one in particular that resembled a church with a rounded shape that looked like a steeple rising from its center.

"I brought it home," Dawn says, "and painted a church onto the rock including the steeple." All her life she has been creative, and she wanted to combine her education in architecture with hands-on art by painting on something other than a traditional canvas.

The first piece of artwork that she sketched on stone changed her life.



The owner of this cottage in Claremont, California proudly displays her stones outside her front door.



New Jersey homeowners were thrilled when their daughter, Mary Beth, surprised them at Christmas with Dawn's version of their Cinnaminson home.

arise, says Dawn. When she sees the homeowners' faces and reactions to her interpretation of their home, it's what makes all her efforts worthwhile.

Her stones have gained popularity by word of mouth, and commissions have come from all over the United States, spanning the Florida coast to Alaska. Dawn loves painting homes and cottages; however, that is only the beginning. Commissions include everything from architectural buildings to historical landmarks to a judge's chamber. Her favorite piece is of Los Angeles' Union Station, an icon representing the city's rich history, and she plans to create a series of railroad stations for an upcoming art show.

Dawn's goal is to not only touch the hearts and souls of those she meets, but to eventually paint a collection of historical buildings, especially architectural landmarks. "I would like to record history in this very special way," Dawn says. "One stone at a time."

See Shopping Guide, page 90.



Nestled between orange groves and a flower farm, this Victorian-inspired home was one of Dawn's first commissions after the homeowner saw one of her pieces at a friend's house.



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