



A Piece-ful Proposition

Two moms who can make just about any kind of mosaic

By Duffy Kelly

Give Kay Evans and Christy Spoto a rare and gorgeous piece of colored glass and they'll shatter it into their dreams. Or your dreams, for that matter.

These two artsy Arden-area moms-turned-entrepreneurs make everything from mirrors to pots to candlesticks to picture frames—one tile, one glass fragment, one rock at a time. Their business, Splashed, turns out mosaic tiled pieces of every color, shape and size made from absolutely anything imaginable.

"We find something not so beautiful and make it gorgeous," Evans says.

Nodding in agreement, Spoto adds, "Basically, if it exists in real life, we can mosaic it. Tables, vases, garden pots, a mannequin body, garden snakes. You name it, we can do it."

It all started when Evans and Spoto, mere acquaintances who met through their daughters' Girl Scout outings, were just trying to play handy and fix a backyard barbecue tile job at Evans' home in 2000. Evans, a nurse with a master's degree in organizational development, knew she needed Spoto's artistic flair to dress up her barbecue. So Evans asked for a little help.

"I told her I didn't know the first thing about it," Spoto says. "We had such a great time doing this, we thought it would be fun to start a business, and we got our license and started doing shows. It's evolved and developed over time."

One project led to another, and now they're busy filling custom orders while showing and selling their wares at art shows.



Christy Spoto and Kay Evans collaborate on a project

"She's got a super-elegant style, a lot of attention to detail," Spoto says of Evans. "I'm more the one who says, 'That would be crazy to try; let's not be afraid.' But it's her precision and elegance and my whimsy, my willingness to try something new, inventive, breaking the rules, that really work well together."

Evans and Spoto both set up in-home studios, where they linger for hours over tiny pieces of ceramic, antique glass, river rock or any other hard medium that will lend itself to mosaic work. Their designs run the gamut from delicately running rivers of glass through native river rock embedded in an elegant serving tray to brilliantly colored butterfly platters to stately candlesticks dotted with diamondlike, precision-cut pieces of

vitreous glass. The pair make custom pieces such as vases, tables, murals and mirrors that can include native stones, grandma's favorite dishes, precious artifacts, key chains, buttons or beads. "Pretty much the sky is the limit," Spoto says.

Evans brings a grounded quality to that limitless sky, making sure that the materials will work well for the use of each particular piece. For example, an outdoor mosaic mural must withstand the elements, and a serving platter should not have too many nooks and crannies where crumbs can hide.

"We did a lot of experimenting. Some things worked and some things didn't, but it all made us better mosaicists," Evans says.

As their confidence grew, the pair began painting designs into their pieces, adding brighter and bolder materials and selling out at shows such as Jesuit High School's Christmas Tree Lane and St. John's Christmas. They have expanded to offer commissioned work, private parties and private mosaic lessons where students leave with a gorgeous one-of-a-kind piece of their own making.

Spoto and Evans agree that when they start making a piece, they often don't know what it will become. "It takes on its own form and shape. Sometimes it just happens," Spoto says.

And sometimes they will hunt the world over for something unusual, as Evans did for a single sheet of glass,

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that they can break into thousands of pieces and then rebuild one at a time into something magnificent. Evans recalls making the logo for the River Oak Center for Children, an 18-by-24-inch piece composed of tiny black glass. "It took about 100 hours of obsessive compulsion. Sometimes I'd work (until) 3 a.m. to make sure things got done," Evans says.

The Internet has helped the pair search for collectible materials and research products such as adhesives and ceramics. "We bid on two boxes of 10-pound shipments of vintage beads, but one box was being bid up," Evans says. Her husband came to the rescue and rigged the automatic bidder to facilitate the bead acquisition. "He ended up with that bead pot in the end."

Both women's husbands now have a wife who knows a thing or two about heavy equipment. "Stuart would see me with some big saw and say, 'You can't use that!'" Spoto says about her spouse. "We have pushed our husbands' comfort zones with our big tools. He used to be the worker bee person who put things together, so now he's seeing me with these big

tools and it makes him nervous." She laughs.

Spoto's home is filled with warmth, color and whimsy. Paintings, ceramics and pizzazz abound, many of the pieces products of Spoto's own hand.

While mosaics allow Evans a constant outlet for her creative juices, they serve up a nice break from the business aspects of her job. However, hearing Evans describe her artistic process, it's plain to see her attention to detail is the very thing that makes her so creative.

"In my job, I do more big-picture stuff, so this allows my brain to do different things—architectural and creative things," she says. "It's like putting together a puzzle backward. We draw the lines, then we have to fill them in with little pieces. It tells a story and has some movement, and at the same time it's very therapeutic and peaceful."

For more information about *Splashed*, call 488-8987 or go to splashedmosaic.com.

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