

*Editor's Note: This year, The Faux Finisher was fortunate enough to have two accomplished artists provide reports from the 10th Annual Salon Gathering of International Decorative Artists. Cynthia Borman provides her perspective here. Victor DeMasi's report follows.*

After the last item is removed from the travel bag and all goods accounted for (hopefully nothing was lost or left), new brushes (correct total...thank goodness), city maps and points of interests filed for future reference (why did I feel the need to carry all this weight home...do I not carry enough paint cans on an everyday basis?), what begins to emerge and remain are memories.

I have come to the conclusion that every Salon attended becomes unique within itself. London had formal structure. Paris had sights and sensuality (being known as city of light is an understatement). Texas had Tex-Mex cuisine and margaritas that could reinforce both demonstrating and lecturing skills. Bruges' Old World charm and history brought the Northern Renaissance to life.

As could be predicted, it was no different for the gathering of the 10th



Monsieur Pierre Lefumat of France works his magic at Salon.

# Friendship & Passion at Salon 2005



Artists gather in Philadelphia for the 10th annual Salon, hosted by Ross O'Neil.

Annual International Decorative Painters' Salon, hosted by Ross O'Neil. Salon was held this year in Philadelphia, the birthplace to our American democracy and home to the famous Liberty Bell. I can state for a fact that the Bell is located there because history books carry photos that document this claim. Also, our bus driver pointed it out to our European friends as he sped past the building.

I must admit the location of the 10th Annual Salon limited freedom of adventure outside the hotel. Without access to public or private transportation, most of the attendees stayed in the hotel during the day. Once sightseeing was no longer an option, the extra time was devoted exclusively to Salon activities along with perhaps deciding what brushes would be good to purchase, if that were a consideration.

My friend assured me that scheduling a pre-dawn plane flight into Philly would guarantee us a great exhibition space. He was correct. After registration was completed and we received the neat complimentary commuter briefcase, the early arrival allowed us to smartly meander amongst fellow comrades offering our assistance. However, I did notice that no one was as red-eyed as the both of us.

The first day of Salon was spent renewing acquaintances, helping other members get organized, checking and coordinating the demonstrating schedules as to who, where and what. Later that evening and for the duration of our stay, members met in the hospitality room of the hotel. This break gave us time for refreshments and relaxation. And for those of us who might not have had the chance to become reacquainted on the exhibition floor,





Leonard Pardon paints pine at the Salon event.

this was the place and time to catch up on news, refresh and renew.

Good behavior has its rewards. Like well-behaved children, we were treated to a road trip on Thursday afternoon. One of the major stops of the tour was the magnificent Masonic Temple in the heart of Philadelphia. This Temple is a testimony to the artistic dedication of the members who belong and to the craftsman who all contributed unselfishly their talented trades. Once inside, we would get a chance to view the magnificent accurately recreated historical rooms that lay beyond the entry doors. One room in particular had an Egyptian theme and held my interest. This room transported you back to the 18th Dynasty, 1500 B.C. But for now we had to be content to wait to take the tour.

During this time, our group had the opportunity to visit the Reading Terminal Market. This was a chance discovery. Formerly a train station that has undergone a conversion, it had most of our group ready to abandon the day plans and declare a mutiny just so we could explore the endless array of vast shops. There were specialty foods, designer beverages, clothes, unique jewelry, deli delights along with every tasty treat you could imagine for as far as the eye could see. While making a mad dash to the ladies' room, I needed all of my self-discipline not

to stop and explore the thousands of discounted art books lined up against the wall. As my eyes quickly skimmed the numerous signs above the shops, I could not help but notice that several declared with pride that they were known to be Oprah's favorites.

After a delightful trolley tour of Philadelphia, we headed for our last stop of the day. The Opening Dinner for Salon was held in the Joseph Huston House, architect of Pennsylvania's State Capital. This Historical Mansion has been most tastefully and exquisitely restored to perfection and currently occupied by Dr. Harris. Welcoming us to this grandeur was our most gracious host. The evening was spent mingling, eating and exploring the many levels of this impressive estate.

Most of my Friday was spent contributing to one of the community projects. I had the privilege of painting alongside Jean-Luc Sable, who had been awarded Best Craftsman of France 2000. Jean-Luc and Lisa Staniforth-Gourdon lay claim to the E'cole Sable School, located in the heart of Versailles, Paris. If there ever was a time to make my dream of studying in Paris, it is now. Having a limited number of students attend each class ensures sufficient supervision from these instructors. Also, attendees would have access to the Palace of Versailles for further study. Ahhh, let me count the days!

In the demonstration area, observing the Masters at their craft is always an informative delight. Watching their movements, the ease in which the flick of their wrists take command of the stroke, noticing their

brushes loaded with scoops of paint and observing a particular color choice is truly a learning experience. Any member of the demonstration team will stop and take time to answer you, no matter what the question might be. Inquiries about color, brushes, techniques and where to buy the products are welcomed. The area is a dazzling array of talent, craftsmanship and fellowship.

Masters work in their specific areas, demonstrating on various-sized samples. In one area, Leonard Pardon paints a faux bois pine mock family room, while in another, Albert Woodcock-Dowling, from Kent, England, uses acrylics for the first time to render an Italian Style marble. Albert is careful to remind us, the observers, that the marble he is currently render-



Above: Albert Woodcock-Dowling of England gives a demonstration. Left: Robert Woodland of England shows the brushes that he and Albert were using.



ing does not exist in nature. For now, he explains, his current focus is on the paint and learning to adapting to the nature of his selected medium. Accuracy, we are told, with the marble rendition will come later.

Finally, the time arrived for our last gathering together, for yet another Salon was coming to a close. With sad anticipation, all Salon members met





Salon participants made a field trip to the Masonic Temple. Top left: the Renaissance Room. Bottom left: The Egyptian Room.



in the exhibition hall. With pageantry and flair, we all marched into the banquet hall of the hotel for the closing dinner. Music for the evening was supplied by one of our very own, Michael Hearn and his band. We all cheered as Albert Woodcock-Dowling received his much-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award for both his talent as master craftsman and contribution to the decorative arts. Congratulations again, Albert!

There is always anticipation and a sense of adven-

ture upon arrival for Salon. Once the events begin the hours and days simply merge into one delicious exciting happening. Then, just as fast as it all begins it is over until next year. The new discoveries, old and new friendships, social intrigue and the painting with passion are pearls and the hours the silk thread that strings all of these treasured jewels together allowing me to add to my collection of priceless memories. *SALON FOREVER!* TFF



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She founded Classical Decorative Arts in 1992 and has had commissions in both the United States and Europe, including ceiling murals in the style of Tiepolo, marbleizing in the French and Italian styles, atmosphere/decorative finishes and period/custom stenciling. Visit her Web site at [www.classicalbycynthia.com](http://www.classicalbycynthia.com). You may email her at [classicalbycynthia@comcast.com](mailto:classicalbycynthia@comcast.com).