

STELLA'S

at Russian River Vineyards
Restaurant • Grappa & Wine Bar

Come for
**SUNDAY
BRUNCH**
11~2

887-1562

Lunch 11:30 - 2:30
Dinner 5:00 - 10:00
Closed Tuesday

5700 Gravenstein Hwy 116 North, Forestville

His Art Lamps Delight

By Patricia Roland-James

Howard Dernberger's lamps are unique and elegant. Made out of household objects, he's been constructing them since he was 12 years old and in 47 years he's created 250 original pieces. He uses household objects that no longer work and he finds them at yard and estate sales as well as antique stores.

When I asked him what prompted him to make a lamp out of a food mixer, an old taxi meter, a Kodak bellows camera, and a brass trumpet, he said, "I've always found everyday objects not only useful but beautiful. There comes a time when things are no longer functional, but that doesn't diminish their beauty. I've found a way to give them new life, retaining their beauty but with a new function."

Howard has always loved lighting and as a child insisted on being the one to turn on the lights in the house. He was born in Santa Rosa and grew up in Van Nuys, California. He had artistic ambitions early on and at 6 started copying comics in the Sunday newspapers. He won awards for his art in high school and took every art class he could at Pierce and Valley Jr. Colleges.

Before moving out to West County, Howard and his partner lived in San Francisco. He loves living in Rio Nido now and his home is lighted by many of his original pieces. He also re-cycles old lamps and re-wires them to use in his home.



Besides making lamps, Howard still does remodeling, advising his customers on lighting, of course. He even worked the light board for three plays performed at Pegasus Theater in Monte Rio.

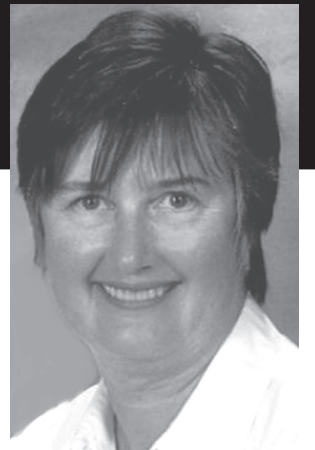
He sells his lamps at Verdigris, a charming garden and antique shop in Occidental and at the Christiansen-Heller Gallery in Oakland. You can see more of his works of art at his website, lightartlamps.com.

Howard will be displaying and selling his lamps at the Fourth Annual Rio Nido Arts and Crafts Festival on Sunday, August 12th.

Admission is free and he'll be joining other Russian River artists and crafts people in the Rio Nido Park from 10 AM to 2 PM. At the same time the Rio Nido Homeowners Association will be serving a \$4 breakfast (\$2 for children) from 9 AM to 12 PM.

Artist Profile

By Barbara Shula



Michael Menius

On Saturday, July 7, a special event was held at 7300 Healdsburg Avenue in Sebastopol. Mike Menius put forth his art to further the eradication of hunger for those with AIDS. I go to a lot of art openings. Believe me, there are many reasons to attend. Sometimes it is that I adore the artist or I am curious about the art or I think that there will be great food (not!). There was some expectation to attend this event as it was held at the real estate office that we recently joined. I didn't know the artist; I knew nothing of the art; my expectation of the food was low. However, I do support Food For Thought and I wanted to know more about Project Africa. All sound reasons to spend an afternoon "at the office."

In support of my fellow agents, I must state that the food was fabulous. Most importantly, however, the art was very popular and by Saturday evening thirteen paintings were sold. Half of the proceeds were donated to Food For Thought and Project Africa. And I met Mike Menius both for the benefit of those who read this article and myself.

Mike began his life and learned his passion of paintings on a farm in the center of North Carolina. You can still pick up that Southern accent if you listen closely to his story. He no longer looks like he milks cows and helps with Thursday butchering but my guess is that he could still be an asset on a farm. All his papers at school were lined with sketches. In support of his passion, his parents provided a mail order course on illustration while he was in high school. To many this may seem a minor thing but in a farmer's view, art is a true luxury that must be allowed only when the chores are complete. Following the push for advancement, Mike attended the university in Chapel Hill and like many of his age found himself on a battle ship off the coast of Vietnam. History has shown that active duty in Vietnam

was a life changing experience—some for the good and some for the not so good. Mike decided that his future would be well served by getting a law degree. Upon his return to the US, Mike entered Georgetown Law School. He spent his law career working in Washington, D. C. within the telecommunications industry. In the early 1990's, Mike was introduced to Sonoma County. He was won over by the beauty of the landscape and the breadth of the people. When it was time for him to retire from his law career, Northern California was his destination.

After brief forays into San Francisco and East Sonoma County, Mike settled in Forestville in 2001. He has found endless inspiration in the local

environment and the home he purchased in Speer's Ranch. His emphasis is on light and shadows, both landscape and interior architecture. Upon looking at his paintings and sketches, it is no surprise that his proclaimed influences are Giovanni Piranesi (1729-1778) with his detailed caverns of stairways and J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851) known as the first "painter of light". Piranesi used etchings to render his images and Turner was prolific with water color. Mike chooses oils and colored pencils to capture his interpretation of reality. Plein air painting is his preferred mode and he can be found around Sonoma County with his easel, umbrella and bag of supplies. The home Mike selected is full of windows, stairs and alcoves that provide a constant source of image and inspiration. As part of his communal nature, Mike is very active in many art organizations including Monday Morning Plein Air Painters, Sebastopol Center for the Arts and Arts Council of Sonoma County. His formal training began with a correspondence course and has continued at Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D. C., the Torpedo Factory School in Alexandria,



VA and, most recently, the Sebastopol Center for the Arts with Michael Coy and Armand Cabrera.

The AIDS effort has been an ongoing outlet for Mike's community service. His first one man show was a fund raiser in San Francisco for the AIDS Friends of the Quilt. Friends made through his board activity at Food For Thought suggested the exhibit at the Prudential office this quarter. Stop by 7300 Healdsburg Avenue in the next couple of months and see what Mike has to offer both you and the AIDS effort. But come soon as the count of sold paintings is now up to fifteen!

You can email your comments to bshula@comcast.net.

ZEN BRUSH WORKSHOP - Featuring KAZUAKI TANAHASHI, Sensei with Christine Rendon Haggarty. **September 15 & 16** from 9-4:30. Internationally reknown Tanahashi, Sensei is a calligrapher, writer and peace activist. The workshop will focus on calligraphy and meditation as a means for transformation. For on line info: www.geocities.com/zenbrush/index.html or call Christine at 887-2933.