

Exquisite Finishes brings design to new vistas in time honored ways

by Grace DeGregorio



Scott Johnson working on a wall mural he designed. The piece is installed on his home studio wall; when completed, he will transport it to the client for final approval.

Can you use some "vision" with your "space?" Maybe you are tired of looking at the paint and pictures in your living room. Has your child outgrown the teddy bears in the bedroom décor? Or do you need to make a new space - such as a vacation condo - come alive and be yours alone?

A consultation with Scott Johnson of Exquisite Finishes Limited may be what you need to get your project on the move. Scott has blended his eclectic design and artistic talents, along with 20 years in the interior design industry, to create a business focusing on quality decorative design.

Raised in Hyde Park (his family still lives there), Scott attended Hyde Park Elementary and Walnut Hills before graduating from the School for Creating and Performing Arts, where he majored in set design, fine art and creative writing. At U.C. he studied interior design, then changed his major and graduated in 1992 with a degree in set design and painting.

Earlier on, in 1984, he had started working part-time at Greiwe, "behind the scenes," but absorbing well the world of design. Later, he honed his technical and artistic skills with such top names as Paul Dorsett (with a 12 year association) and Billy Francis (in New York City). He worked for Greiwe, Closson's, Spaces, Meg Fiora, Paul Dorsett and Beau Bolce as a designer; as an artisan he worked with Closson's, Greiwe, Paul Dorsett, Beau Bolce, Federation, Bittners, Celadon Homes, Chuck Bolton, Dale Schaefer and Brian Gibson.

With Exquisite Finishes, Scott has found the perfect milieu for his love of decorative art in the form of murals, wall

upholstering, marbling, wood graining and gold leafing. "I offer the whole spectrum, vs. the specialty," says Scott.

"I create decorative finishes - what's different is I give them more of a European treatment. What I do is a 'lost art' - there are very few people left who do classic decorative painting."

continues on page 78

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Exquisite - continued from page 77

Because the techniques Scott uses require knowledge, experience and mastery, he has enjoyed numerous referrals from decorators and satisfied clients. He also is sought out by people who see his work and want to know who created it.

His client list is impressive: Cincinnati Opera and Playhouse in the Park; businesses such as Mt. Lookout Sprouts (Mt. Lookout), Bella Donna (Hyde Park) and the Latin Quarter (Mariemont); and private homes, including that of Xavier University President Fr. Graham, Charles and Libby Scripps, Procter & Gamble CFO Clayton Daley and rock legend Peter Frampton.

"Since I've been a designer, I know what people want. I also know it's a personal relationship with the client that's important - that the person is absolutely

satisfied. The client wants someone professional, who shows up on time and honors the contract. And clients seem surprised when I give them a work start date - generally I can get to a project within four to six weeks. At the start of each project I meet with and discuss the ideas and plans. Then I sketch out or create a scale architectural drawing. The project is not for me, but for the client.

"It's like a piece of art I'm doing for them."

Looking at Scott's portfolio of finished projects, one is taken with the scope of his creativity. One might be swept away to a Tuscan hillside while dining; or provided the illusion of brilliant lighting coming through painted windows on the walls of an interior room. Family members are cleverly incorporated into favorite painted background scenes, such as on a beach.



From a local home: This beautiful room features painted trellises - combined with the large windows, the effect is bright and cheerful.



"Homage to Botticelli" is found in another local home. Capturing the essence of period art is part of the unique service of Exquisite Finishes.

Scott also paints and decorates furniture. He has photos of bargain chairs in their sorry "before" states, transformed into furnishings you might expect to see in a fine historical home, as shown in the "after" photos. Columns and edgings to fireplaces are painted - but look like the real thing.

One technique very popular with Scott's clients is "murals on canvas." Scott can prepare a drawing, then a mock-up to show the client, then paint the entire piece at his home studio before installing the approved piece in the desired area. Unlike a wall mural, "You can frame it or take it with you when you move."

Scott emphasizes, "I have helpers, but I do almost all the work myself. The quality of what I do is absolutely most important. I have to know when I leave a job the quality I expected is there. I have to want quality for my own satisfaction as well as the client's."

Exquisite Finishes Limited executes residential and commercial projects both locally and out of town. For more information, call 310-1128.

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