

## BUSINESS

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## Gerri Dibiasse finds inspiration in the Cape Region

*Hand-painted ornaments feature local scenes*

By Kara Nuzback

Local photographer Gerri Dibiasse draws inspiration from nature, finding local images to express the visual poetry of everyday scenes in the Cape Region.

“Even if I’m not shooting, walking by the ocean calms and settles me, so when I come back I have room to create,” Dibiasse said.

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For the holidays, the artist is featuring art on glass ornaments, transferring regional images into handcrafted holiday trinkets.

The ornaments are manufactured in China using eglomise, a centuries-old art form where artists recreate an image onto a glass ornament using a small, curved brush. The artists must translate the image backwards in their minds to paint it freehand on the inside of the blown glass. Dibiasse said it takes about five years of training before an artist can do it successfully.

“They are considered masters there,” Dibiasse said. The similarity between the Lewes resident’s delightfully color-saturated photographs and the paintings that appear on the ornaments is astounding.

“I think giving them my business really helps to fund the arts in China,” she said.

Dibiasse owned a gallery in Manayunk, a suburb of Philadelphia, for 15 years. She began buying the ornaments to sell in her studio, but the images, she said, were generic. One day, the artist said, she decided to use her photography skills to incorporate images of Manayunk onto the ornaments.

“That’s really what sustained the business for many years,” Dibiasse said. Residents would buy glass ornaments and candleholders with pictures of local landmarks and schools delicately painted on the inside.

“I’m told they make the brushes out of the hair on their heads, but I don’t know if that’s true,” she laughed.

Images from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia can be found on these small baubles, as well as local images of Lewes Harbor, Cape Henlopen Lighthouse, the Zwaanendael Museum in Lewes and Dolle’s on the Rehoboth Beach Boardwalk to name a few.

Dibiasse said she draws inspiration from the Cape Region, but predominantly from the beach. This is reflected in most of her photography, which is considerably larger scale than the dainty adornments meant for Christmas trees. She specializes in giclee prints, where ink is sprayed rather than rolled onto the canvas.

“The ornaments are great fun, but the photography is my passion,” Dibiasse said. The Philadelphia native said she got serious about the medium more than 30 years ago. She was working as a claims adjuster for an insurance company when she participated in her first art show.

“I sold three pieces and quit my job,” Dibiasse said. She has enjoyed a successful career as a professional photographer ever since.

Dibiasse spent one week every year vacationing on Delaware’s coast, and in 2005 she decided to make the move from Philadelphia for good.

“I’ve never looked back,” she said.

“There’s nothing like the Delaware beach. It was always my goal to move here someday.”

Dibiasse said the calming aspect of the ocean and the beach is a welcome change from the hustle and bustle of the city.

“It gives you time to be able to think and dream,” she said.

Dibiasse’s hand-painted, blown glass ornaments are available at the Wooden Indian on Baltimore Avenue in Rehoboth and Cattail’s on Route 1 at Marketplace at Sea Colony in Bethany Beach, where she will be signing her work from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday,

Dec. 15.

Dibiase's original photography is available at Saketumi on Route 1 in Rehoboth and Mixx on Baltimore Avenue in Rehoboth.

A 2011 calendar of Dibiase's photography is available through Lana Warfield at Prudential Gallo Realtors.

For information on the calendar, call 800-321-2268.

All of Dibiase's ornaments and photography are available through her website at [www.geriscamera.com](http://www.geriscamera.com)

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