



E-NEWS FROM TILE HERITAGE



January and February



2009

(Available each month to Tile Heritage members who e-mail the Foundation from the address they would like E-News sent to. Contact: foundation@tileheritage.org)

Here's What's Below:

[Tile Walk in Martinez](#)

[HTA Directory 2009](#)

[Tiffany's Mosaics](#)

[Glazed Expressions](#)

[Sizemore's Priceless](#)

[Tile Heritage Prix Primo](#)

[Tiles on the I-5, Part II](#)

[Illahe Tileworks](#)

[Encore Ceramics](#)

[Marzi Sinks](#)

[Pratt & Larson](#)



We all know that tiles are reputed to be durable, but just how durable are they? The owners of the [Mfuwe Lodge](#) in the South Luangwa National Park in Zambia found out when they built their hotel adjacent to a large mango tree that one family of elephants relied on for tasty treats. The open-air construction has accommodated the heavy beasts for the last ten years as they freely pass through the tiled lobby to reach their desired destination! We inquired to find out the maker of this mighty floor covering and have been reliably informed that they are “baked clay ceramic tiles from Malawi.” Special thanks to: Dave Cooperberg, MA, MFT, CGP, San Francisco, CA
davecooperberg@yahoo.com <http://TruthAndCompassion.com>

APRIL 21-24, 2009 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA
coverings
THE ULTIMATE TILE + STONE EXPERIENCE SM

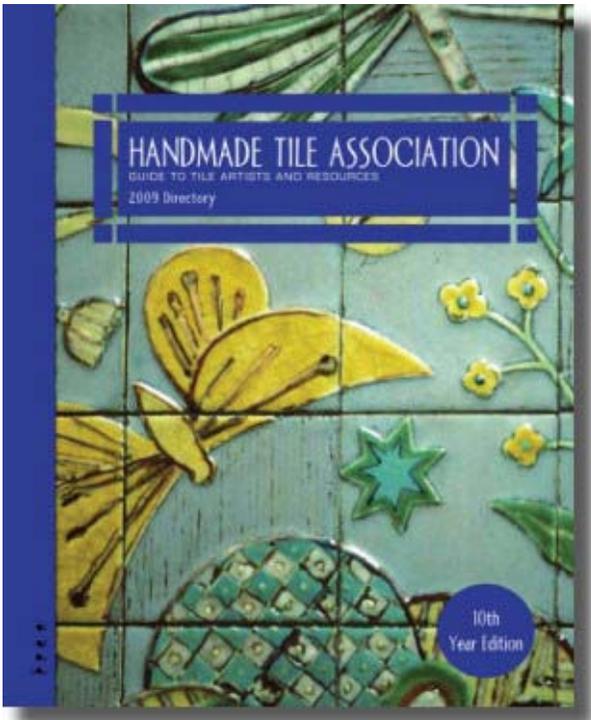
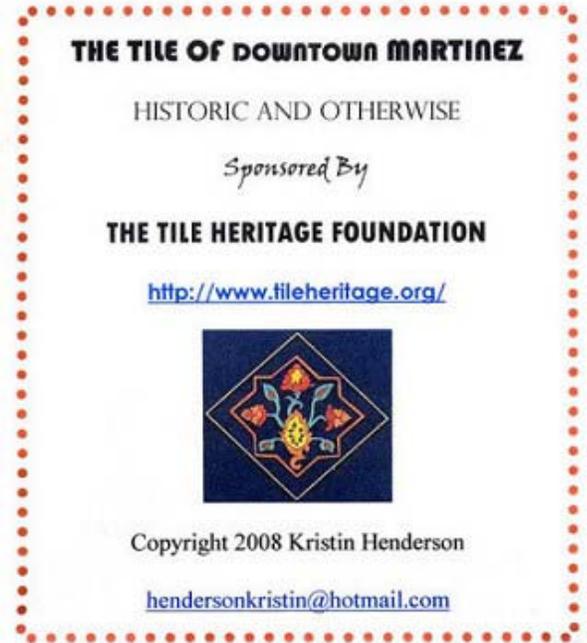
Again this year Tile Heritage will be presenting a video, “A World of Tile in Architecture II,” sponsored by Coverings. Details forthcoming.

Tile Walk in Martinez

Sounds great, but where's Martinez? Purported to be the birthplace of the martini, today this city of 35,000 rests on the southern side of the Carquinez Strait, where the Sacramento River joins San Francisco Bay. The town served as a weigh station for folks traveling upriver during the Gold Rush in the mid-19th century. In 1915 Shell Oil built a refinery nearby, which sparked a building boom.

The downtown area is notable for its large number of historic buildings, many of which are adorned with architectural terra cotta, ceramic veneer, and decorative tiles. Preservationist and tile enthusiast **Kristin Henderson**, a Martinez resident and THF member, has captured these features in "**The Tile of Downtown Martinez: Historic and Otherwise**," a pocket-sized walking tour of the city printed in full color. There are eighteen sites pictured, each with its own description, plus a map. Kristin reports, "People have actually come from San Francisco to take the tile tour!"

The project was partially funded by a **Doty Research Grant**. Copies are available for **FREE** from Tile Heritage or from Kristin at hendersonkristin@hotmail.com who says, "Everyone I know is very taken by the tile concept and how it was presented in that map."



2009 Directory from HTA

The **Handmade Tile Association**, headquartered in Minneapolis, has issued its tenth annual directory, the only **full color directory** of tile and mosaic artists and resources in the United States. The directory constitutes a comprehensive resource guide to tile artists, tile setters, tile showrooms and galleries as well as historical information and a listing of tile-related organizations.

This year **38 national handmade tile and mosaic artists** are featured in the directory along with articles by tile professionals and national writers. There's a calendar of major tile events around the country and information on the 2009 regional conference in Minneapolis, *Handmade Tiles and Mosaics*, presented by Potters Council and HTA in mid-September.

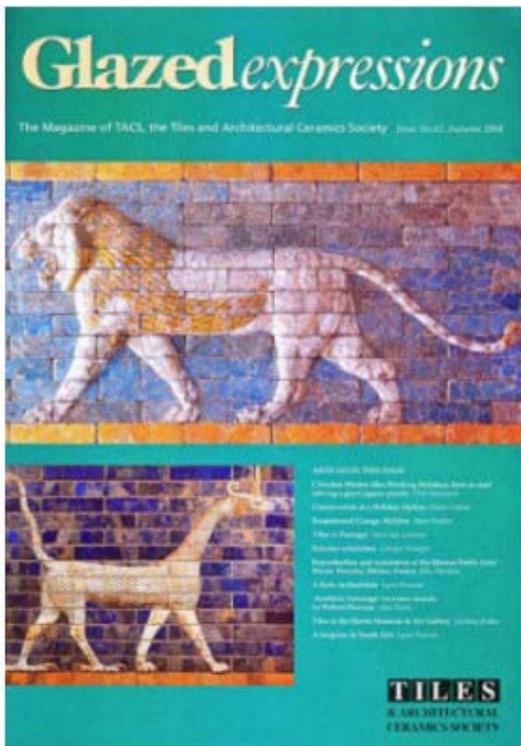
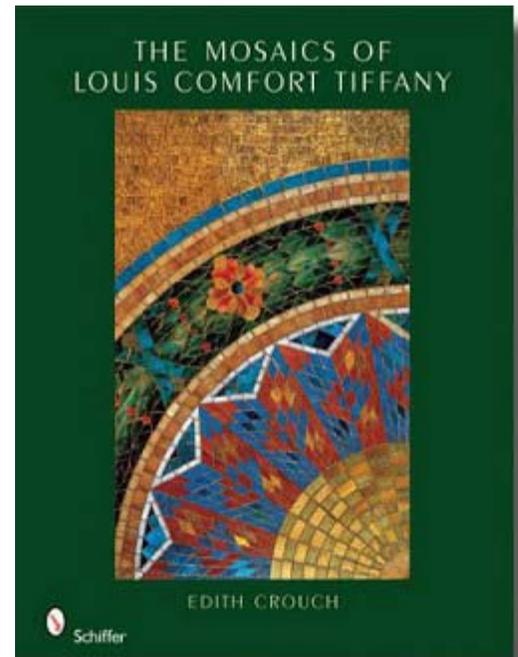
The 44-page **Handmade Tile Association 2009 Directory** is FREE! Email Tile Heritage (foundation@tileheritage.org) or HTA (info@handmadetileassociation.org) for a complimentary copy.

New! The Mosaics of Louis Comfort Tiffany

Edith Crouch has composed the first book devoted exclusively to the glass mosaic masterpieces of Louis Comfort Tiffany, created from 1880 to 1931 at the Tiffany Studios in New York City. The fascinating and well-researched text combines over 700 color photographs in 300 pages to showcase more than 70 luminous installations in private homes, public buildings and churches along with a complete listing of their locations. The author also explains Tiffany's technique of mosaic making, the unique glass he created and used in them, and lists the mosaic artists who worked with him.

Edith Crouch, herself a mosaic and stained glass artist and teacher, has studied glass mosaics and L.C. Tiffany's work for many years. She has included a short history of ancient mosaics, a useful glossary of mosaic and glass terms, and a chronology of events in Tiffany's life relating to his mosaic work.

The *Mosaics of Louis Comfort Tiffany*, a hard cover book, is published by Schiffer and sells for \$99.99. Copies are available from Tile Heritage with 7.75% sales tax for CA residents only plus \$6 to cover shipping/handling.



Glazed Expressions

Glazed Expressions is a well-illustrated magazine published twice a year by the **Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society** in England. It contains a wide range of national and international articles dealing with tiles and architectural ceramics, conservation issues, interviews, book reviews, tile identification, collectors' corner and up-to-the-minute news items.

The current edition, **Glazed Expressions Issue No. 62**, was published in the autumn of 2008 and is available now. Especially poignant is the cover story by **Carolyn Wraight**, reporting on the **Babylon exhibition** currently at **The British Museum**. Babylon, of course, was "the greatest city of ancient Iraq with spectacular architecture" featuring the decorative glazed brick installed during the reign of **King Nebuchadnezzar II** (605-562 BC), remnants of which appear in a select number of museums around the world. The exhibition remains open until **March 15, 2009**.

Wraight aptly reports the tragic news, barely if ever addressed in the media coverage there or here during the past six years, that an estimated **16,000 objects** from the **Iraq's Museum in Baghdad**,

priceless treasures from ancient **Mesopotamia**, had been looted when the occupying troops left the museum open and unguarded. Not to in any way diminish the horrific toll in human life, the loss of historic artifacts—tiles among them, no doubt—is too often an unreported, yet lamentable, consequence of war.

The contents of this and other back issues of Glazed Expressions are available at www.tilesoc.org.uk/glazed_expressions.htm.

Sizemore's "Priceless"

Lillian Sizemore wrote that her mandala, titled "**Priceless**," had been selected for a juried show at the O'Hanlon Center for the Arts in Mill Valley, California. The exhibition, "Invoking Spirit," included mixed media works that address the spiritual world, spiritual politics, and spiritual expression; the works were on display throughout December. "Priceless," one of many mandalas created by the artist, is made with gold and... credit cards.



"Priceless," a mandala of gold and plastic credit cards by Lillian Sizemore. Courtesy of the artist.



Lillian has been a professional artist for over 25 years, focusing on tiles and mosaics since the mid-1990s. Since that time she has designed and fabricated many commercial and fine art commissions and conducted mosaic workshops for both adults and children. In addition to being a frequent Visiting Artist at the [Institute of Mosaic Art](#) in Oakland, she is an invited instructor at the [Getty Villa](#) in Los Angeles where she holds public demonstrations and workshops featuring the ancient art of mosaic. See www.sfmosaic.com.

Among her many achievements, "[A Guide to Mosaic Sites: San Francisco](#)," is the most user friendly. Designed to fit comfortably in the back pocket of your jeans, this handy guidebook charts "the fabulous and diverse medium of mosaics found in San Francisco." Within its 36 pages are 57 sites, many illustrated in full color, combined with maps to aid one's navigation.

Normally on sale for \$10, the artist has generously donated a stash to [Tile Heritage](#) for distribution. While the supply lasts, we would be happy to mail you a copy for a donation of \$3 (or more) to cover first class postage, but don't delay. Thanks Lillian!

Tile Heritage Prix Primo

Howard Taylor, director of the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, reports the museum opened its doors for the unveiling of the **17th National Ceramic Competition** on April 18, 2008, where over 1000 people attended the opening and related exhibitions in the West Texas city of San Angelo. **Anna Harris** of the [Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art](#) in Biloxi, Mississippi served as juror for the competition. She chose 121 works by 116 different artists representing 32 different states, Canada, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

Jonathan and Valerie Nicklow of Evergreen, Colorado won the **Tile Heritage Prix Primo** for their *Otis Orvis*, oil paint on a low relief, 12" x 16", ceramic slab. The cash prize, sponsored by the Tile Heritage Foundation in conjunction with the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, is given to the tile maker whose tile, in the juror's estimation, best reflects the ceramic traditions of America.

According to the tile makers, "*Otis Orvis* is part of a body of work which shows our interest in the modern use of combining human DNA with other animals and plants. This piece is part of our imaginings of a new bestiary that society intentionally or unintentionally could bring forth." The work is included in **500 Tiles** juried by **Angelica Pozo** from Lark Books, 2008.



"Otis Orvis," 12" x 16", oil paint on ceramic slab by Jonathan and Valeries Nicklow. Courtesy San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts.



Looking west from the I-5 north of Williams.

Tiles on the I-5 Part II – North through Oregon

As we related in December's E-News, [Tiles on the I-5 Part I](#), this corridor that bisects the westernmost states from Mexico to the Canadian border is a conduit of industry and commerce and tile making is an integral part of it. In Part I we shared a narrative of the trip south made by Joe Taylor and Sheila Menzies earlier in the year. Now in Part II we cover our

travels to the north through northern California to Oregon.

The impetus for the journey was an invitation from [Artisan Tile Northwest](#) in Seattle to participate in the group's third annual **Handmade Tile Festival** in early October. Having embraced the idea, knowing that we could use the drive to make oft-promised visits to tile making members and friends along the way, we headed north and east from Healdsburg on the back roads meeting up with I-5 well north of Sacramento.

Illahe: Home, the Place where I Live

Our first stop, a full day's journey away, was in Ashland, Oregon, known as the west's center for Shakespearian theater. It is a lovely little city nestled among rolling hills, home to both [Illahe Tileworks](#) and [Illahe Design Studio and Gallery](#), a unique combination of tile showroom and fine arts gallery, focusing on art and design for the home, both founded by **Sue Springer**, a longtime friend and tile maker.

Illahe Design Studio and Gallery, in conjunction with the tileworks, allows Sue to work directly with clients to create ceramic tile, murals and ceramic art, as well as custom glazes and designs. In addition to selling tile, the Gallery provides a changing display of functional-to-fanciful art for the home, including works in clay, marble, iron, glass and wood by a select group of artists. There's a marvelous array of products, and the building itself is an architectural gem from the late 19th century, beautifully restored. We spent several productive hours discussing with Sue her current and future visions for the gallery and Illahe Tileworks, which include community-engaging events that draw people to this historic neighborhood of Ashland where galleries and art abound. Illahe has a website, www.illahetile.com, where you can obtain more information and news about upcoming events.



Sue Springer (right) chats with Sheila Menzies at the Illahe Design Studio and Gallery.



A salmon pauses to deposit its eggs upon a stack of handsome Illahe tiles.

Encore “Green”

From Ashland we drove north to Grants Pass to visit **Encore Ceramics**. **Debbie and Barry Russell**, whom we have known for many years, are extraordinarily excited about making great tile, having started the company in a two-car garage a few years ago. To them tile is more than a surface, or a way to make a living, it is an ever-evolving art form. Shortly after they began, **Rita Bourdon** and **Michael Campbell**, who share their passion, joined them. They have all worked together on



Barry Russell explains that all raw materials brought into the factory are used in a finished product. There is no waste.

reprocessed back into their clay formula which has been designed from the start to use up the waste!

In our discussion with Barry in this spanking clean and innovative tile plant, where even the electric kilns are wind and solar powered, he said that their dedication to 100% ‘green practices’ does take more effort, more money, and a lot more commitment, but Encore’s methods have achieved the highest marks for environmentally sustainable tile in the marketplace. It’s impressive. In addition to a handcrafted ‘green tile’ **Encore** also recycles all other materials that come through its doors like wooden pallets, paper products and discarded electronics. They have formed enduring partnerships with other industry players for sustainability as well, and they conceive of an ever-broadening impact upon others to embrace the same practices that they have found viable. They are definitely in the vanguard and we applaud them.



Here Cory, tile maker at Encore, trims scrap from a set of decorative liners.



Encore Ceramics, built atop an old timber mill, uses its extensive roof area to collect energy from the sun.

previous tile ventures and came to this project with new vision and purpose.

Together they decided to push the envelope—to do things never before done in a tile factory.

Encore and its founders wanted to produce more than a ‘green’ product. They are dedicated to an elevated interpretation of ‘**green practices**,’ which from our tile travels around the country is unprecedented. They are committed to renewable energy with multiple solar paneled roofs on their factory, and they create no raw waste.

Astonishingly, every ounce of every raw material brought in for tile production finds a home in a finished product. Scrap clay, glaze splashes, rejected tiles, and even their cleanup water is collected and



John, an Encore artisan, carefully applies glaze to the decorative greenware.

Our guided tour took us through all aspects of the production facility where beautifully designed, hand-crafted, molded and glazed tiles take on form and color in a single-firing process from old style designs to innovative sparkling glass finishes. Any single tile is handled by artisans from 18-21 times during the process, from concept to magnificence! To get a broader understanding of the leading edge of **Encore Ceramics** practices check out the website: www.encoreceramics.com.

Marzi Sinks the Best Basins

Right next door to Encore, in another brand new building, we had the pleasure of visiting with long time colleague and ceramist **Duane Marzi** at the **Marzi Sink Factory**, a company that produces custom, handmade-to-order, decoratively glazed sinks and accessories in an endless variety of shapes and sizes.

Originating in central California and in continuous production now for 50 years, this family-owned business picked up stakes a few years ago and moved to this redeveloped industrial site (re-use of an old timber mill) next door to Encore! How so? The short version is that Duane and his wife **Belinda** are close friends of the Russells. On a visit to their friends in Grants Pass the couple became intrigued with the practicality of moving Marzi Sinks to Oregon, something that was applauded by Debbie and Barry, so here they are!



Duane Marzi relates the process of slip casting at Marzi Sinks.



Here are many of the molds used to produce Marzi sinks.

For us it was another highlight in a great day. Duane graciously toured us around the spacious and well-organized facility where the handmade sinks are designed, molded and slip cast, bisque-fired, hand-painted and then fired again. A myriad of decorative designs are available from sea life to wild flowers, geometric designs to sparkling inlay techniques. Sinks can be glaze-matched to, or coordinated with, practically any tile or complementary surface. They are quite wonderful! Take a virtual tour of **Marzi Sinks** at the website and dream on: www.marzisinks.com/index2.htm.

Design is Key at Pratt & Larson

Traveling further north, our next romp from the I-5 was in Portland, Oregon to visit the multistory studios, factory and showroom of **Pratt & Larson Ceramics** situated in the warehouse district on SE 3rd Street. Founded by **Reta Larson** and **Michael Pratt**, both experienced tile artists in Portland, the company was formed in 1980. Over the past 28 years the company has grown, changing locations more than once to accommodate their developing enterprise.

Michael was our host and led us on an informative tour from the basement to the top floor explaining each aspect of their meticulous and artistic process. Today





Jasmin Vick (left) and Jennifer Plaster, manager of the polychrome department at Pratt & Larson, apply glaze to decorative liners.

the company employs over 100 people in all phases of design, production and marketing as well as in the extensive showroom that features their own art tile as well as that of many other significant artisans from around the country.

Pratt & Larson tiles are distinctive in style, glaze and design and can be found all over the United States and Canada in discerning tile showrooms and dealerships. In fact, they are one of the most significant and prolific art tile makers in the west and probably the

country. For more details visit them at: www.prattandlarson.com.

Look forward to the completion of our journey in **Tiles on the I-5 Part III** coming in March to E-News!



Andy Balmer (right), one of the featured ceramists at Pratt & Larson, explains to Joe Taylor how employees benefit from submitting their own tile designs to the company.

[Click here to view past E-Newses!](#)