

BUSINESS *Spotlight*

Discover your talent at fun, one-night painting parties

By Helen Wale Turner

Ever wished you had the talent to paint but you're no Van Gogh? Looking for a different and fun night out with friends? One of the newest entertainment events gives everyone the opportunity to try their hand at painting under the watchful and helpful eye of an instructor, enjoy a little wine and the company of other would-be artists and go home at the end of the evening with a finished painting.

No previous experience or training is required, and all supplies are provided, so all the participants need do is show up at their reserved time with their favorite bottle of wine or other beverage and lots of enthusiasm.

Two studios that are currently offering this experience are Brushfire in the Denham Springs Antiques Village and Ink Girl Studio at the southern end of Livingston Parish on Diversion Canal.

This is how it works: the studios choose a painting as the "model" for each class. You call or check the studios' websites for a schedule of classes and the paintings that will be used, and reserve a spot for the date and painting you prefer. The night of the class, everyone paints the same subject using the model as their guide - but that doesn't mean every painting looks exactly the same. Each artist is free to improvise by selecting their own colors, changing the background, etc., and there are always wide variations in the finished paintings.



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Jessica Stuntz takes a moment to pose with her recent Friday night class, Florence Scarle, Lauren Davis and front, Jennifer Perkin. Ink Girl Studio class modeled off the ever-so popular Tiger eye.



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Jessica Stuntz of Ink Girl Studio, an accomplished artist who accepts commissions for creating paintings for clients, said, "The classes are so much fun; I don't know why I didn't think of this 10 to 15 years ago. It feels more like a party than a class."

Some attendees paint regularly, but some have never painted and are reluctant to try. Ironically, Stuntz has found that the reluctant ones often prove to be the most naturally talented.

"I do a lot of hand-holding with those who need it, and everyone gets my personal attention," she said. "It's really neat to help people discover their creativity."

The paintings done in her classes are somewhat more ambitious than those offered at other similar events, and they are done completely freehand by each participant. At Brushfire, the paintings used as models are a bit simpler in composition, and the painters are offered stencils for outlining the elements of the painting if they want to use them. Both studios are open to suggestions for paintings that participants would like to use as the model for a class.

Stuntz limits the classes at her studio to 10 but can accommodate up to 25 at private parties at peoples' homes, at churches, etc. She has had one participant as young as 11 and

is in the process of choosing paintings specifically geared toward the younger crowd; she is also considering offering birthday parties.

She charges \$40 per person whether it's one person reserving a place in her studio classes or someone booking a private party (minimum of 10 people). The paintings are created on gallery-

quality canvas, and the party/class lasts about three hours.

Brushfire, which also operates a pottery studio, offers private sessions for 10 or more persons; their fee is \$45 per person.

Call the businesses or visit their websites to view their respective class schedules and the paintings that will be

used for each class, then reserve your space for an unforgettable evening of fun.

Contact Stuntz at Ink Girl Studio at 225-341-2465 or visit inkgirl.com. You can reach Brushfire at 225-664-4994 or brushfireonline.com, or drop by their studio at 204 North Range Avenue in the Denham Springs Antiques Village.

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