

Stella Luna Art Gallery

Stella Luna Art Gallery is a star quality gallery that one would expect to find in New York City or Los Angeles, not Smithville, Tennessee. The love of the mountains, memories of Louis' Granddad fishing and hunting in the Catskills of New York, and their love of the simple life brought the Colombarinis to the Upper Cumberland thirty years ago. While working with clay at a ceramic class in Florida during their college years, the couple fell in love. They were both passionate about clay and had similar visions of the life that they would have. Louis and Christine set out on a journey to find their perfect home during the late seventies. They wanted a home that would also serve as their art studio and give them the right energy and creativity. Traveling over 10,000 miles on a camping trip on a shoestring budget, they discovered and took in the wonders of Northern California, Oregon and states in between before falling in love with Tennessee. Settling in the Upper Cumberland, they purchased a gorgeous 30 acre plot of land with all the cash that they could get together. Then they proceeded to learn the life of a sharecropper. They quickly became educated as to what chiggers are, learned about the life of a tobacco farmer, how to smoke ham, and grow a garden. They were self sufficient, but realized that farming was not for them full-time. Although they gained a great deal of experience and learned from the adventure, this is not what they had in mind long term. They settled for a wonderful piece of property and home just outside of Smithville in the early 1980's, which has also become their studio. About eight years ago, Louis' dream of having a gallery was realized when he found the perfect house which could be transformed into such a space; a place where their master work and that of other artists from the region could be displayed. The Stella Luna Art Gallery was born. There's an interesting explanation behind the choosing of the name "Stella Luna". Louis and Christine would love to share with you. When you stop in, be sure to ask them about it.

For some time, Christine and Louis averaged doing about 12-15 festivals a year and also wholesaled their work to different galleries around the country. Today they limit their festival participation, sell online, and still wholesale their work. They pride themselves in crafting rare vessels in clay through processes that no one else is using. Christine has been working with a process of creating clay vessels and sculpted forms by working with a primitive pit firing method using straw and sawdust. This method creates grass patterns, fire clouds, and rich sepia tones. Her work has brought her several awards. Louis started out with a "Raku" style of work, but is currently working with a primitive pit firing method using a copper wash. The results are fabulous. This dynamic duo strives to bring the simplicity of clay to life creating a perfect form with texture and color. Their methods and techniques allow them to best highlight their artistry. This has brought the honor of being designated as some of the top potters in the United States. Their design and sculpting have allowed them to fine tune their processes. Their passion is apparent through the many objects on display in their gallery - especially during one of their favorite events of the year, the "Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour". This fall tour spotlights several artists in the Middle Tennessee area and winds along the scenic roads, across creeks, and showcases some of the best artists and craftspeople "at home" in their studios. Many of them are not only displaying their work, but demonstrate during the event. If you love art, this tour through the countryside is a must. Stella Luna Art Gallery is the beginning point for the tour, and hosts Louis and Christine will be happy to show you around, talk lovingly about their work, and give you a map to enjoy the tour. Stella Luna Art Gallery hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm or by appointment and they can be contacted at (615) 597-4004 or visit them online at www.cosmic-clay.com.



412 South College Street
Smithville, TN 37166
(615) 597-4004

www.stellalunaartgallery.com



Open Tuesday – Saturday
10:00 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Louis & Christine
Colombarini, owners
www.cosmic-clay.com



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"Where Art-Felt Memories Begin"



The **Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour** is one of those hip, cool, fall events that “Annie” discovered in the Center Hill Lake area while visiting the Stella Luna Art Gallery. The 11th Annual Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour will be at the end of October - a perfect time of the year to marvel at the blanket of color draped across the mountains surrounding the deep blue azure of Center Hill Lake. (Please see the www.OffTheBeatenPathTour.com website for downloadable maps and brochures, and additional information on the artists.) The Hospitality and Art Exhibit Center takes place at the Stella Luna Art Gallery in Smithville, TN where you will find light refreshments, maps and directions available if needed. I had the great pleasure of meeting with sculptor William Kooienga and wife, Sharon, one beautiful Saturday morning (picture on right). Sharon is a very accomplished fiber artist weaving with angora and mohair fibers, just to name a few. Her tapestry work and rugs adorn their rustic home and bring color to their living area. The Kooienga’s moved from Asheville, NC several years ago and fell in love with the area, buying 100 plus acres. They live simply on their expansive acreage, and have lovingly built their log home of the trees from the forest around them. They have a solar powered home with water from the creek that lines their sprawling tree-lined gravel road. William’s expansive studio where he sculpts wood and stone masterpieces overlooks the home place. He has been commissioned to sculpt some fine pieces and loves the creativity that he feels in his lovely environment. William also creates custom furniture, art pieces made out of interesting lengths of wood that are found in their forest, and other custom pieces which display his talent. The Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour covers a wide realm of artists from potters, glass blowers, furniture makers, quilters, jewelers, and wood turners. The tour takes you through the beautiful back roads of Tennessee and allows you to see the countryside at its best; showcasing the vibrant autumn colors and wonderful aromas of the season. Being able to see the artists at work in their studio is so interesting and one can learn so much about their particular style of work and wonderful personalities along the way. One artist, Tim Hintz, has been constructing ladder-back chairs for many years and is a former Tennessee Arts Commission fellow. Tim’s award winning work has been showcased at many festivals and events across the country. Folks from all over have ordered these top quality chairs. He starts with the highest quality middle Tennessee red oak and collects his own hickory bark for the woven seats. You could say that his chairs are ergonomically designed, as the back posts are steam-bent to give a supportive curve. If you have a

love of the arts, want to be inspired, enjoy adventure and want to drive down some of the most scenic roads in Tennessee or are vacationing at Center Hill Lake and are looking for something to do, this is a perfect day or weekend trip. For more information about this year’s Off the Beaten Path Studio Tour, studio stops, and profiles of the artists, visit their website for up-to-date information, www.OffTheBeatenPathTour.com or call Stella Luna Art Gallery at (615) 597-4004 for information and map/brochure.

