

Business Spotlight

Beautifying the Shore One Mural at a Time

Artists Dawn von Suskil and Danielle Acerra-Ball are leaving their mark in this world- literally.

Through their artistic murals, the two women have traveled to 1920s Spain, visited jazz greats like Ella Fitzgerald, and spent picturesque days on white, sandy beaches. These scenes come alive through the simple stroke of a paint brush.

As trained artists von Suskil and Acerra-Ball are building a reputation in towns like Long Branch, Neptune, and Asbury Park by creating fine art murals for businesses.

"Our murals rely on depth, colors, layering, perspective, and scale," said von Suskil, who is also part owner of Be Green Organic Juice Bar and Cafe in Asbury Park.

In May 2003, von Suskil and Acerra-Ball became official entrepreneurs launching The Muralists Painting Studio based

in Bradley Beach.

"We met through a mutual friend and found common ground out of our conceived desire to create public art," von Suskil said.

After designing a beach-themed mural in the interior of Busy B Launderette in Neptune's West Grove Square, the muralists decided they could make a business venture out of their artistic talents.

"We received positive feedback, both from clients and surrounding communities which feature our work," Acerra-Ball said. "Combined with our passion for art, it seemed like a perfect fit to open a studio and break into an untapped marketplace."

The muralists will celebrate two years of beautifying local New Jersey sites. Their residential and commercial mural arts projects have included: Giannos Ristorante, Bradley



Dawn von Suskil and Danielle Acerra-Ball have painted murals in Asbury Park and Neptune.

Beach; Bistro Ole, Asbury Park; Circus Food Town, Ocean Township; and the Ronald McDonald House, Long Branch.

Currently, the muralists are collaborating with the Asbury Park Arts Coalition to establish a city-wide Mural Arts Project. The Arts Coalition, through its professional affiliations, will serve as a "think tank" organization helping facilitate the development of an Arts District and Arts Plan for Asbury Park. This effort would afford stylized works from local artists and com-

munity mural arts initiatives.

"We are constructing a website that will serve as a call to local muralists to participate in the Asbury Park Mural Arts Project," von Suskil said. "We want to see the community murals reflect the people who live here. Integrating both local artists and the community in this way will give a voice to Asbury Park."

Most recently, the duo were commissioned by Bill Meish, owner of retro furniture store House of Modern Living, to paint interior wall panels within

Asbury Park's Bistro Ole Restaurant. Each panel depicts a 1920s vintage-style matador and flamenco dancer, a theme to complement the restaurant's Spanish and Portuguese cuisine.

"We went there [Bistro Ole], researched the interior, listened to the owner's needs, and took pictures," von Suskil said. "Overall we love Asbury Park and we want to celebrate its diversity."

Will Vivas, chef and co-owner of Bistro Ole said, "The muralists captured the feeling, warmth, and flair of Bistro Ole through their use of amazing colors to create a masterful piece of art."

Rico Rivera, co-owner of Bistro Ole agrees.

"I hope to see more of the muralists' impressive work around the city to help maintain Asbury Park's unique character. They certainly capture an essence that is representative of all who work and live here."

Von Suskil earned her degree in Interior Design at New York City's (F.I.T.) Fashion Institute of Technology. Beginning June 25 she will showcase fine art oil paintings in a two-week group artist show at APex Gallery, Asbury Park.

Acerra-Ball received a B.F.A. in Crafts from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where she studied oil painting, photography, printmaking and jewelry and metalsmithing.

