

Community News

Knights Valley artist's barns featured in St. Helena gallery

Knights Valley resident Meredith Blau is currently exhibiting her oil paintings of Wine Valley Barns, many from Knights Valley, in a new cooperative art gallery.

Located in the St. Helena Premium Outlets, the new gallery recently opened in the space once occupied by designer Donna Karan. Presently the gallery, sponsored by the Napa Valley Art Association, features over 30 artists of the valley.

Before moving to the valley, Blau and her husband Bill owned a nationally-known design firm in Chicago creating new identities and focusing on solving marketing and design problems for nationally known clients like S.C. Johnson, Kraft and G.D. Searle

Leaving the design business, Blau chose to explore fine arts and to capture the

continuous drama of her surroundings through oils and pastels. Her studio is in the shadow of Mt. St. Helena in Knights Valley, just north of Calistoga. Here panoramic views often dramatically show the changing colors in the valley brought about by fog or sudden spring squalls, says Blau.

Her Wine Valley Barns collection currently on display features old barns mainly from Franz Valley, Knights Valley and Napa Valley.

"Barns are bits of our history that are slipping away," Blau said. "These once working barns are slowly being replaced by even more rows of vines. I wanted to feature them as I capture the rich colors and ever changing weather conditions."

Blau takes her cues from the impressionists where a local color dissolves into a

color impression or interpretation. "The challenge is to create the effects of changing light in the valley on these rich, old pieces of our history. White washed barns are not white. Rather, they reflect the lighting conditions of the day that surround the barn."

Three other Calistoga artists are showcasing* their work at the gallery.

Lauren Scot has her line of Chien Blanc art alongside of Victoria Serrao's necklace and earring designs.

Jocelyn Audette's contemporary paintings are featured upstairs. Her paintings often capture local landscape settings with a freshness of contemporary style.

Visit the art gallery Thursdays through Mondays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wine with the artists is offered Saturday afternoons between 2 and 5 p.m.