

# Rossville lady is award-winning gourd artist



This tiger-faced gourd is one piece in a seven-piece gallery that won Best in Show for Delaina DeHaven in the Indiana Gourd Society state show.

Story and photos  
By Jennifer Archibald  
Staff writer

In rural Carroll County, near Rossville, is a place called Gourd Haven.

It's the home and business of gourd artist Delaina DeHaven.

She has gourds on display in every room of her house. Without counting them, she estimates she has between 200 and 250, not counting the ones that are packed away.

All these gourds are special, she said, because they are either the first of a particular design or they are pieces that have won awards.

Her latest grouping in the house is a collection of seven gourds, each painted with the face of an animal.

Delaina won Best in Show with this animal gallery at the recent Indiana Gourd Society state show in South Bend. There were more than 700 entries in the show.

This year was her first try at painting animals. The gallery included two tigers, two lions, a giraffe, frog, and eagle.

Delaina also paints houses and scenes on gourds. She has seasonal creations, like birdhouses and Christmas ornaments, and she does staining, carving, wood burning, and ink drawing – all on gourds. She has made some of her gourds into musical instruments.

She said she had to experiment with her gourd rainstick to get it just right. Rainsticks are ceremonial musical instruments, traditionally used to bring about a rainstorm. Things are put inside the rainstick to make it sound like a gentle rain when the stick is inverted.

Delaina said after trying different things, she found that 250 toothpicks and an ounce of size 11 glass beads worked best to imitate the sound.

Another example of her gourd musical instruments is a dulcimer.

"It's not tuned, but you can

play it," she said.

What she makes out of a gourd depends on its shape. She grows most of her own gourds, but also purchases some. Gourd shapes that she commonly uses are kettle, martin house, bottle, banana, basketball, tobacco box, African wine, and bushel basket.

She also adds embellishments to some of her cre-

ations. Examples are shells, rocks, banana tree fiber, sycamore branches, and sliced and baked hedge apples.

Delaina said she takes requests for custom creations, and she also designs gourds that have special meaning to her. She painted an eagle on one piece because one of her sons is soon to become an Eagle Scout. She painted an-

other gourd to look like a hornet's nest, and added the words, "Home of a Rossville Hornet."

"One gourd came to me as I was sitting at a festival," she said. "I had based a gourd black and was sitting there wondering what I was going to do with it. Before you know it, I had pink siding on the house, and before long it turned out to be 'the survivor gourd.' You don't have to be a cancer survivor to appreciate the message on the front door of the house painted on these gourds. It says 'A Survivor Lives Here.' This gourd has been purchased by spouse abuse victims, and one who survived a heart attack. It represents so many people."

The process of gourd painting, for Delaina, starts with covering the whole gourd with a base paint of one color. She then draws an image with chalk pencil, followed by acrylic paint, and then an overall finish to seal it.

Although all her gourds are decorative, some are also functional. She said she especially intends for her birdhouses to be used as such.

Birdhouses were the first of her gourd creations, and she branched out from there.

"I never held a paintbrush until 2000," Delaina said.

She thought she might like gourd art, so in 1995 she grew her first gourds.

"They sat in my garage for five years," she said.

She didn't know how to paint, so in 2000 she contacted someone in the Rossville area who taught her the basics. She entered her first gourd competition in 2001.

She said she sells most of



Delaina DeHaven has a comfortable nook in her home where she does her gourd designing and decorating.

her creations at shows and festivals, including the Chautauqua Art Fair in Madison and the Covered Bridge Festival in Bridgeton. In this area, her seasonal gourds are available at Skiles Market. She said people can also contact her by email, [jerdel@remconline.net](mailto:jerdel@remconline.net).

Delaina said there's no limit to the things that can be made with gourds. She finds it so fascinating that she decorates 300 to 400 gourds annually.

In her spare time, she is a bus driver for the Rossville schools.

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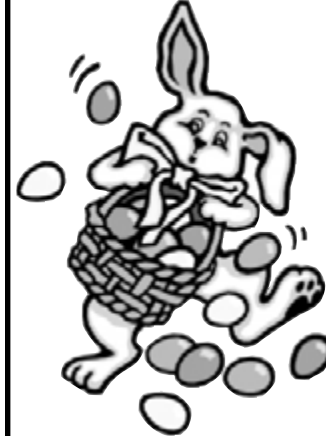
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The Dinner is an Easter Gift to the Community



Pictured above are some of the novelty items that Delaina DeHaven creates out of gourds. A rainstick is shown in the center.

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SUN. MEETING - 10:30AM

WED. PRAYER - 7:00PM