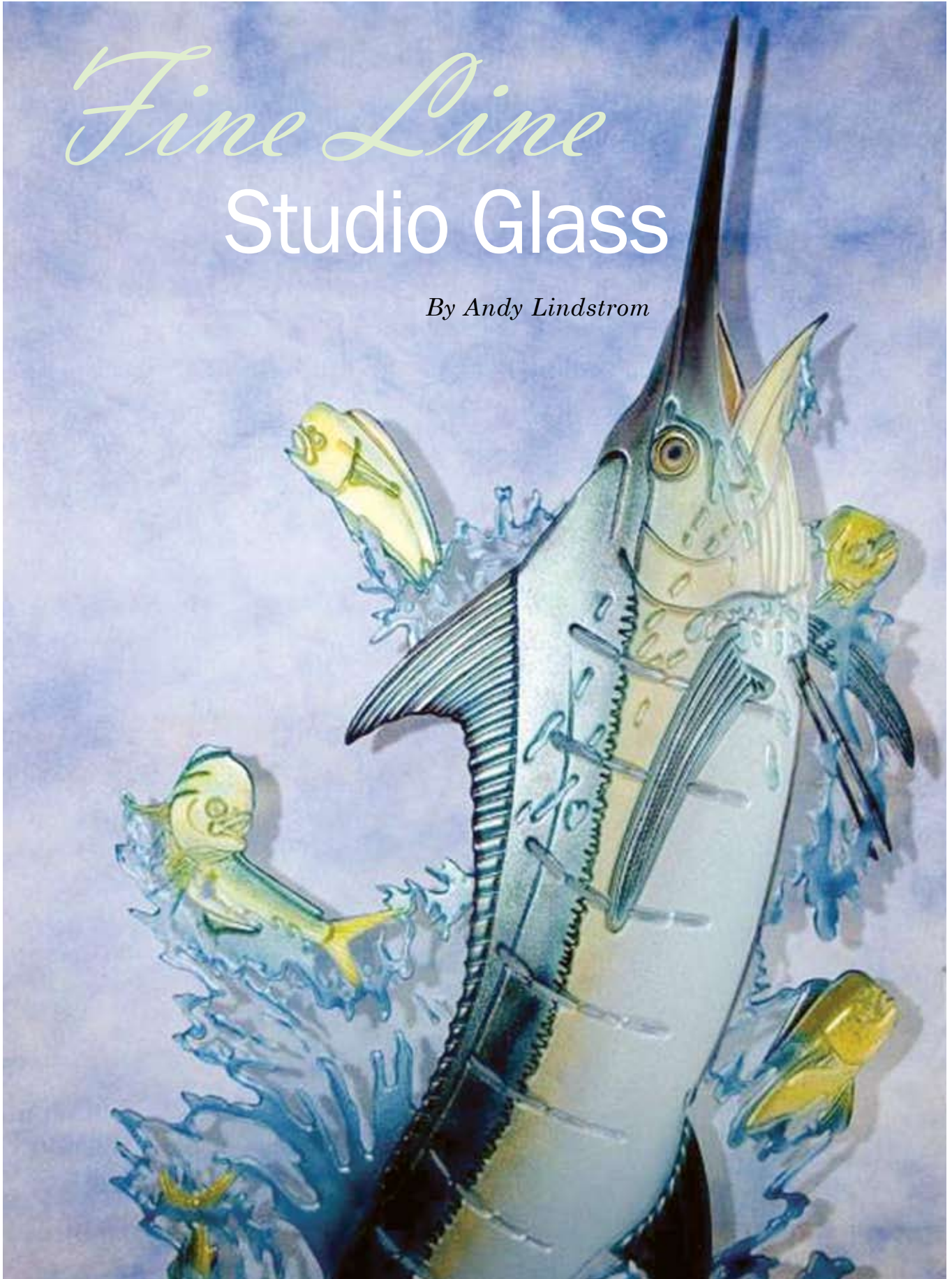


# *Fine Line* Studio Glass

*By Andy Lindstrom*





ship clients. He also helped create and develop a number of new techniques for hand-carving and air-brush painting glass and mirrors, as well as developing ways to inlay precious and semi-precious stones into his work.

Tammy began her design career at the age of 16. After a number of years doing commercial logos and sets for stage productions, she switched to furniture design for several major manufacturers. In 1991, she joined Bob as his designer. Fourteen years ago, they married and shortly afterward moved their Fine Line Studio Glass from Miramar to rural Leon County.

“We have two sons now – Ethan, 12, and Miles, 13,” Tammy said. “We decided on the Tallahassee area to get back into the woods and the nature we lost to overpopulation in South Florida.”

*Left: The Derwicks created this award for the Florida Wildlife Federation, which presented it to Gov. Charlie Crist on Jan. 18, when he became the 16th inductee into the Conservation Hall of Fame. Below: This wood and glass bookcase features a blue heron and red drum. Facing page: A freestanding glass sculpture of a marlin and dolphin.*

Bob Derwick calls his sandblasted artwork “custom designs carved in glass.” Tammy Derwick, Bob’s wife and design partner, describes their collaborations as “glass with class,” a combination of art and industrial technology that produces glass etchings of wildlife and other subjects that are at once functional, creative and unique.

Some of these creatures include a 12-foot wide mirror of hoof-pounding wild horses. Matching glass door panels inscribed with life-sized blue marlins. A zebra-wood framed solar reflective piece featuring the African big-game hunter’s “big five” of lion, elephant, leopard, rhino and Cape buffalo.

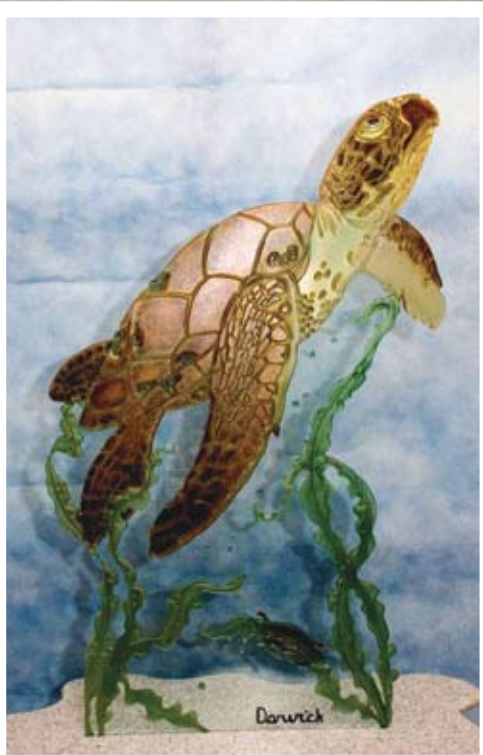
“Everything we do, from the early sketches to the finished product, is created by hand,” said Bob in his studio/workshop just east of Tallahassee. “No computer programs or any other technical assistance. This is hand-cut artwork by the sandblast method.”

Bob was only 10 when he began carving glass as an apprentice to the late Joan Hathaway in South Florida’s Hollywood. A native Floridian, he spent his free time fishing and surfing in and around the Everglades.

“I was always around wildlife,” he said. “But I grew up in the arts.”

Working for Hathaway at her Joan of Art Studios, Bob learned the specialized techniques of carving corporate logos and other glass etchings for a long list of hotel, restaurant, casino and cruise-





Transforming the mundane surface of hard glass from a transparent panel of silica mixed with soda ash into fine art requires several steps, the Derwicks explained. First, Tammy renders the design in scale for a client's approval. Then she draws it full scale on kraft paper that is transferred like a layer of silly putty onto an unheated glass panel.

After mounting the masked panel on a wall in his sandblasting room, Bob uses an X-ACTO knife to carve every line of the design onto the glass surface. Then he dons a welder's shoulder-length face mask, turns on an air-powered jet gun – much like a painter in an automotive shop but with far less room for error – and proceeds to etch the glass with a mix of silica-based aluminum oxide sand.

Unlike painting with oils or other correctable mediums, Derwick has only one shot to get

it right. There's no erasing mistakes with a glass sculpture.

"Fortunately," he said, "my style is one of the best in the business at getting a three-dimensional effect on a two-dimensional surface. Doing it right the first time is second-nature to me."

From start to finish, it might take Tammy and Bob six days to complete a typical piece. Its price tag might run to \$4,000 or more.

"Of course," he added, "for something like a free-standing alligator breaking through a table top, there's a lot of sculpting and deeper carving that adds days onto that."

The majority of the Derwicks' commissions, he said, are for etching custom designs on residential and commercial front doors. But he also finds a steady market among upscale customers worldwide looking for one-of-a-kind glass room dividers,

**Top:** Quail seem to burst from the confines of this glass sculpture. **Above:** A hawksbill turtle graces this piece. **Facing page, top to bottom:** A glass table with etched herons, dragonflies and mangroves with bait fish swimming between their roots; a mirror with dolphins; a piece featuring both glass and wood with a marlin jumping from the water towards a magnificent frigate bird; an egret stalks amongst cattails on a mirror.

shower enclosures, window panels, sculptures and mirrors.

“We do a lot of work for celebrity homeowners and their yachts from the Bahamas, New York and out west to a number of places overseas,” Bob said. “But our main outlet is the annual Miami boat show.”

Deep-sea fishing tournaments have proved to be a particularly profitable outlet for the Bob’s glass pieces, which he often donates as sponsors’ awards and trophies in return for the opportunity to show off his specialized talent to their well-heeled participants.

Museums, art galleries and public venues including the Fort Lauderdale Theatre of Performing Arts, Hollywood/Fort Lauderdale International Airport and Tallahassee Regional Airport are just a sampling of the locations where his pieces can be seen. Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation and Safari Club International also have used them in their promotions.

“I don’t really have a favorite piece,” Bob said of his work. “What I really like is to have a buyer that you know is going to appreciate it for years to come. That’s the ultimate compliment as far as I’m concerned.”

For more on the Derwicks and their glass creations, go to [www.finelinestudioglass.com](http://www.finelinestudioglass.com) or phone 850-309-1614. **FW**

