

ART ● CRAFT ● TRAVEL ● INTERIOR DESIGN

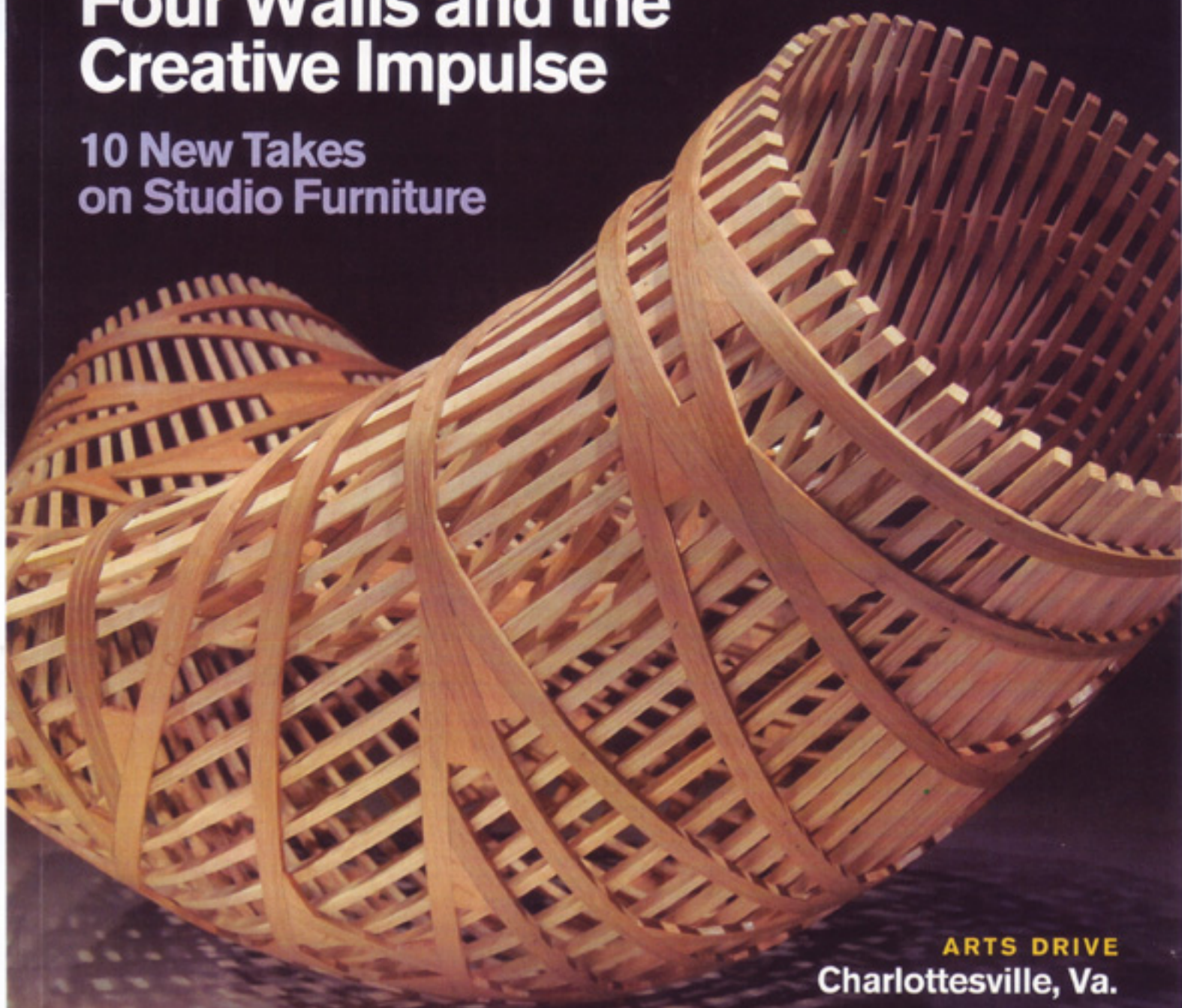
AMERICAN **Style**

APRIL 2008

2008 ART & DESIGN

Four Walls and the Creative Impulse

10 New Takes
on Studio Furniture



ARTS DRIVE
Charlottesville, Va.

PORTFOLIO
Fiber Artist Charissa Brock

PALETTE
Pastel Drawings by Mary Sprague

60

City Styles, Country Miles

Charlottesville, Va., is brimming with art and architecture

BY MARGARET LUCKE



Downtown Charlottesville, which features a large pedestrian Mall, opposite, is just a short ride from Skyline Drive and Shenandoah National Park. Second Street Gallery's cutting-edge architecture showcases large windows to create an airy space, above. Mata Ortiz pottery is a best seller at Les Yeux du Monde.



Charlottesville's most famous artist, Thomas Jefferson, expressed his creative genius on a grand scale. He designed his home, Monticello, and the campus of the University of Virginia, both of which are recognized architectural masterpieces. As the author of the Declaration of Independence, he crafted some of the enduring principles of American democracy.

Tourists may make pilgrimages to Jeffersonian sites, but Charlottesville and its environs offer many other lures. A compact city of 40,000 in a picturesque setting at the edge of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, Charlottesville combines historical charm and urban sophistication.

Local galleries provide a simi-

lar contrast. What they have in common is enthusiasm and excellent quality; this small city does art in a big way. To savor the area's artistic pleasures, plan on taking a walk in town and a drive or two into the countryside.

The university campus is a fine place to start. After paying tribute to Jefferson at the signature Rotunda and strolling the lawns of his "academical village," visit the University of Virginia Art Museum, whose extensive collections span nearly every continent and many centuries.

Then drive or hike to Water Street. In five short downtown blocks, it boasts three galleries that



JOHN LACOURRETTE

would be at home in any major city.

In a space as contemporary as the art on display, Les Yeux du Monde exhibits paintings and photographs by modern masters and regional artists, as well as handcrafted jewelry and furniture, and Mata Ortiz pottery from Mexico.

Nearby, in a modernistic metal-clad building, is Second Street Gallery, central Virginia's first artist-run alternative art space. It is committed to encouraging the public's appreciation of cutting-edge contemporary art. "We designed the space to welcome people into the 'white cube,'" says gallery director Leah Stoddard, "sacrificing wall space for windows to let daylight in."

At Migration: A Gallery, owners

Laura and Rob Jones have filled their airy space with a blend of two- and three-dimensional art by emerging and established artists. "I like to be a mix between the Smithsonian's Renwick and Hirshhorn," Laura says. The name Migration reflects



CHARLOTTEVILLE ALTERNATIVE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

This small city does art in a big way.



First Fridays are a popular draw for downtown galleries, including Sage Moon.

Touring the Area

We've compiled a sampling of museums, galleries and nonprofits to visit in the Charlottesville area. For the full list, and must-attend events, visit www.americanstyle.com.

BARBOURSVILLE
The Nichols Annex Gallery
5420 Governor Barbour St.
540-832-3585
www.frednichols.com

CHARLOTTESVILLE
The Art Upstairs Gallery
112 W. Main St.
434-923-3900
www.artupstairsgallery.com

The Barn Swallow
796 Gillums Ridge Road
434-979-4884
www.thebarnswallow.com

BozArt Gallery
211 W. Main St.
434-296-3919
www.bozartgallery.com

C'ville Arts:
A Cooperative Gallery
118 E. Main St.
434-972-9500
www.charlottesvillearts.com

John Ruseau Gallery
112 W. Main St.
800-515-9904
www.johnruseau.com

Les Yeux du Monde
115 S. First St., 434-973-5566
www.lesyeuxdumonde.com

McGuffey Art Center
201 Second St. NW
434-295-7973
www.mcguffeyartcenter.com

Migration: A Gallery
119 Fifth St. SE
434-293-2200
www.migrationgallery.com

Monticello
931 Thomas Jefferson
Parkway, 434-984-9822
www.monticello.org

Quilts Unlimited
118 W. Main St.
800-487-7230
www.quiltsunlimited.com

Sage Moon Gallery
420 E. Main St.
434-977-9997
www.sagemoongallery.com

Second Street Gallery
115 Second St. SE
434-977-7284
www.secondstreetgallery.org

University of Virginia
Art Museum
155 Rugby Road
434-924-3592
www.virginia.edu/artmuseum

Vivian's Art for Living
301 E. Main St.
434-977-8908
www.viviansartforliving.com

NELLYSFORD
Spruce Creek Gallery
1368 Rockfish Valley
Highway, 434-361-1859
<http://sprucecreekgallery.com>

ORANGE
The Arts Center in Orange
129 E. Main St.
540-672-7311
www.artscenterorange.org

WAYNESBORO
Artisans Center of Virginia
801 W. Broad St.
540-946-3294
www.artisanscenterofvirginia.org

their belief that beautiful, meaningful art takes one on a transformational journey.

A block north, parallel to Water Street, is the heart of Charlottesville, the lively Downtown Mall. Thirty years ago this stretch of Main Street was converted to a pedestrians-only park—seven inviting tree-lined blocks whose historic brick buildings are filled with shops, restaurants, theatres, even an ice rink. Kids love the Virginia Discovery Museum, and the outdoor Charlottesville Pavilion is a popular venue for concerts and community celebrations.

As you amble along the Mall, you'll find several galleries to entice you. At Sage Moon, you can browse through three floors of art as classical music plays in the background. Watercolorist John Ruseau shows his work at the John Ruseau Gallery, and Vivian's Art for Living offers jewelry, leatherwork, pottery, glass and sculpture by many artists.



Three artist-run cooperative galleries attest to the wealth of local talent: Art Upstairs and BozArt emphasize paintings, while C'ville Arts features handcrafted objects in many mediums by more than 60 artists.

A quick walk from the Mall brings you to what local writer Laura Parsons calls a "big playground for local artists." Housed in a former elementary school, the nonprofit McGuffey Art Center has galleries, a gift shop, art classrooms and studios where you might catch a glimpse of a potter, sculptor or printmaker at work.

By now, Blue Ridge vistas are beckoning. As you drive toward the mountains, stop at The Barn Swallow at the western edge of Charlottesville. Ceramic artists Janice Arone and Mary Ann Burk have turned a barn built in the 1800s into a charming rustic gallery in a garden setting. They carry pottery, jewelry, glass, textiles and furniture by more than 20 artists, much of it with nature themes.

A detour south on Highway 151 brings you to a century-old building. Once the Wintergreen Coun-

Artist-run cooperative galleries attest to the wealth of local talent.



Migration: A Gallery mixes painting with fine craft in its inviting space, and Lotta Helleberg's Viburnum patchwork bag is one of the nature-inspired items at The Barn Swallow. Virginia Gardner created this permanently installed "Seat of Harmony" mosaic loveseat for C'ville Arts for its 10th anniversary in December 2007.



CHARLOTTESVILLE ALBERMARLE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



Farther afield, Spruce Creek Gallery in Nellysford shows a range of work, including furniture by Heath Matysek-Snyder and teapots by Noi Volkov, and the Artisans Center of Virginia, in Waynesboro, carries jewelry such as Dawn Estrin and George Wilson's "Dragonfly Earrings." Wrap up your trip back in Charlottesville with a visit to Jefferson's Monticello.

IF YOU GO

Situated 115 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., and 70 northwest of Richmond, Charlottesville is a pleasant drive from either city. It is also served by the Charlottesville-Albemarle Airport.

As a gateway to the Blue Ridge Mountains, the city has a beautiful natural setting to enhance its appeal. In 2007, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named Charlottesville as one of the country's Dozen Distinctive Destinations.

To plan your trip, contact the Charlottesville Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau at www.pursuecharlottesville.com. The bureau maintains two walk-in visitors centers, one near Monticello and another on the Downtown Mall. For more information on the city, check out its official website at www.charlottesville.org.



try Store, it has taken on new life as Spruce Creek Gallery, filled with pottery, paintings, wood and glass. "We started in 1997 when five Nelson County artists got together to have a showcase," says gallery manager Sue Bernard. "Now we show 70 to 80 artists at any time."

In Waynesboro there is an essential stop—the Artisans Center of Virginia. Designated the state's official center for fine crafts, the nonprofit membership organization encourages and promotes the state's 3,000 craft artists. A jury selects the artists who display work in the large retail and exhibition gallery, where the items range from elegant glass vases to fine furniture to offbeat quilted teapots. "What always excites me," says executive director Michael Dowell, "is hearing the 'aha' gasp when people come in for the first time and see the variety and quality of craft we have in Virginia."

When you return to Charlottesville, bring your visit to a fitting finale with a tour of Monticello, where Thomas Jefferson began the tradition of artistry that his hometown continues in elegant style. ●

MARGARET LUCKE writes about the arts and literature from her home in the San Francisco Bay area. Her novel, *House of Whispers* (Juno Books), is out now.