



Sister's old west charm brings thousands of visitors to its streets every year.

By Diane Mettler

SMALL

Don't let the size of Sisters, Oregon fool you. This little town east of Bend, dressed up like the Old West, with a population of under 1,500, has a bigger art scene than most towns ten times its size—with over a dozen galleries, a new art center and a full calendar of events.

The Western theme runs deep. Besides the annual June rodeo that's been drawing crowds for over 65 years, a number of the galleries carry Western-inspired art. Soda Creek Gallery owner Paul Nichamoff carries 160 such artists—25 of them local—working a variety of media. Whether it's classic Native American prints or less figurative wildlife sculptures, Paul feels strongly about every piece: "Art is not a product. I get pieces because I like them and I wait for someone to come in who cares. If it takes six to seven years to sell a piece, that's what it takes."

The Lorenzo Ghiglieri gallery is just a couple doors down from Paul's. The two-year-old gallery features nationally recognized artist Ghiglieri's paintings and bronze sculptures, many of which capture the feel of the West. The gallery is warm and inviting with big leather sofas, and in addition to the art you'll often find Lorenzo working on a new piece.

Or there is the cozy Clearwater Gallery, featuring wildlife and Western art as well as fine craft. "Right now we represent 18 artists from the Northwest, mainly Sisters, Bend or Redmond," says owner Julia Rickards, whose husband Dan

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Rickards is one of the featured artists. “We’ve set up our gallery to be more like a home. We think it’s important for people to see firsthand how they could decorate their home with art.”

But the Western element is just one aspect of Sisters. The June rodeo is followed by an outdoor quilt show in July with over 1,200 quilts on display and the Summer Faire with over 125 vendors. The Antique Faire in August is followed by the Western & Native American Arts Festival, the Folks Festival and the Jazz Festival in September. The Harvest Jazz Festival and Harvest Faire are held in October. This doesn’t even take into account the town’s art strolls, concert series and Christmas parade. This is one busy place.

Many of the galleries in Sisters reflect the variety of events and tastes. One of the more contemporary galleries is the High Desert Gallery owned by Myrna and Todd Dow. Of the 16 gallery artists they have on display, 12 are from



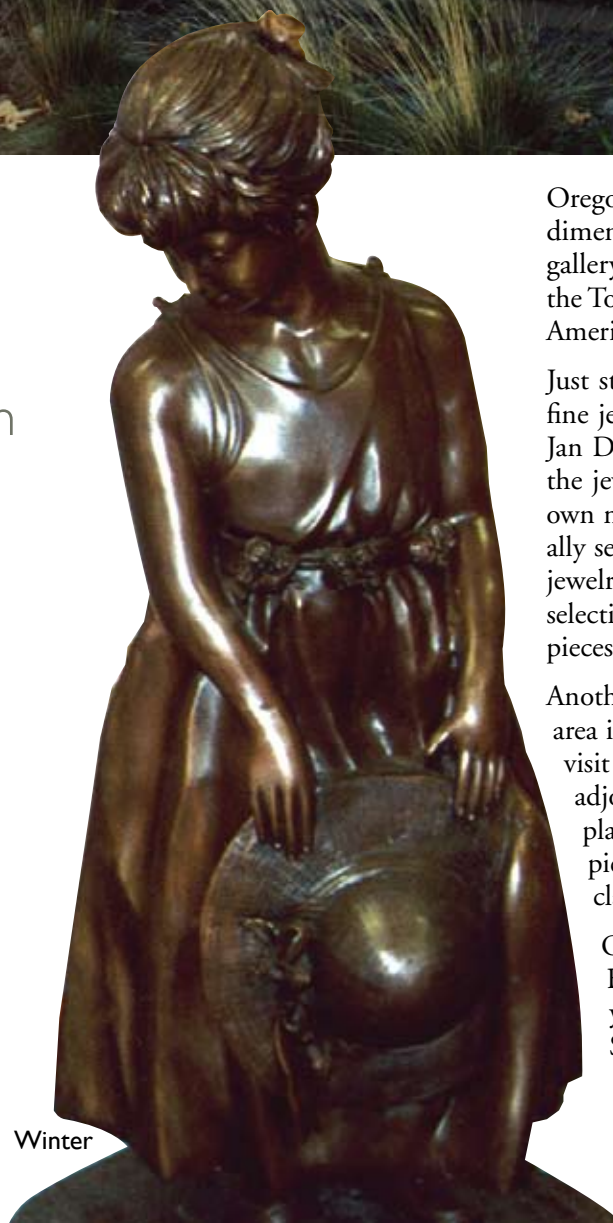
A fused glass piece by Katy Adamson hangs in the window of the High Desert Gallery.

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A mural serves as a reminder of Sister's yearly quilt festival

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Oregon, with art ranging from two-dimensional work to fused glass. The gallery was named in 2005 as one of the Top 100 Art and Frame Galleries in America by *Decor Magazine*.

Just steps away is The Jewel, a unique fine jewelry gallery. Artisan and owner Jan Daggett not only designs much of the jewelry, but also does some of her own mining, too. One thing that visually sets this gallery off from other fine jewelry galleries is the phenomenal selection of fossils complementing the pieces.

Another established artist in the Sisters area is Kenneth G. Merrill. People can visit him at this working studio. In his adjoining pottery showroom, he displays not only his own work but also pieces from other artists working in clay, glass, wood and raku.

One of the newest galleries is the Barclay Gallery, which will be a year old in April. Owners Jeff and Sandra Mayernik have chosen

artists whose work they like—painters, bronze sculptors, glass artists and potters. They’ve added to the summer art activities by holding live demonstrations in the courtyard outside their gallery. “We are really enjoying Sisters and the small town feel,” says Sandra. “This town is so small—1,490 people—and so much is going on.”

The little town that seems to always have room for more when it comes to art just added a new 8,000 square foot art center. Owner and artist Kathy Deggendorfer and her husband Frank renovated the building, which now houses studios, offices and large meeting spaces. In addition to being a place for the eclectic art community—painters to printmakers and writers to filmmakers—it also has a healing arts section. Kathy envisions the artists not just leasing space, but also networking and coming together to build their businesses.

Whether it’s art events, music, talented artists, galleries or just that small town feel—Sisters has it all and more. It appears it’s true what they say. Good things do come in small packages.



Galleries

Antler Arts — 210 E. Cascade Ave. Rustic handmade furniture and lighting.

Barclay Gallery — 170 W. Cascade Ave #3. Paintings in oils and watercolor, bronze, pottery and ceramics and handblown glass.

Buffalo Horn Gallery — 103A E. Hood Ave. Western, Indian and wildlife art featuring painting, metal sculpture and custom-crafted furniture. By appointment at 541-549-WEST.

Canyon Creek Pottery — 310 N. Cedar. Working studio with handmade pottery by Kenneth G. Merrill. Also features work by other artists working in clay, glass, wood and raku.

Clearwater Gallery — 391 W. Cascade Ave. Western, wildlife and angling art. Features work by Pacific Northwest artists in a variety of media. Proprietor Dan Rickards is himself an award-winning wildlife artist.

Cliff Scharf Gallery — 431 E. Cascade Ave. Home to longtime Sisters silversmith Cliff Scharf who creates custom silver and gold jewelry.

Folk Arts & Company — 222 W. Hood Ave. Pottery and other functional art by Oregon artists.

Ghiglieri Gallery — 103 E. Hood Ave. Paintings and sculptures by artist Lorenzo Ghiglieri. Themes often reflect his passion for the American West.

High Desert Gallery & Custom Framing — 281 W. Cascade Ave. Artwork by local, national and international artists in a variety of media.

The Jewel — 221 W. Cascade Ave. Jewelry crafted by nationally recognized artists working in gold, mixed metals and sterling silver. Also features spectacular mineral and fossil specimens.

Kate Aspen Studios — 161 E. Cascade Ave. Original jewelry created from vintage beads, pottery, woodworking and more.

OutWest Designs — 103B E. Hood Ave. Handcrafted jewelry and supplies.

Sisters Gallery & Frame — 252 W. Hood Ave. Photography of proprietor Gary Albertson and other artists.

Sisters Stained Glass — Custom stained glass. By appointment only at 541-549-8021.

Soda Creek Gallery — 183 E. Hood Ave. Western theme, offers paintings, limited-edition prints, blown glass, bronze sculpture and original woodcarvings.

Wild Rivers Gallery — 141 E. Cascade Ave. Fine watercolors, jewelry, pottery and textiles.

Left: The Clearwater Gallery is just one of many in this picturesque town. Opposite: A lifesize bronze from the Barclay Gallery.