

3 Gypsies Designs

Beautiful baubles in the Village of East Davenport

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

Artist Desiree Border discovered a passion for jewelry and design as an 8-year-old girl when her stepfather, an auctioneer, gave her a box of beads and shells that was left after an auction. After using its content to create her first lot of jewelry, a lifelong love ensued. Today Ms. Border owns 3 Gypsies Designs, a boutique in the Village of East Davenport, where she creates and sells her lovely handmade glass beads and her stunning jewelry.

After several years of selling her unique handcrafted beads to bead shops around the country and her jewelry at Quad-Cities venues such as the Freight House Farmers' Market and the Beaux Arts Fair, Ms. Border set up shop at Bucktown Center for the Arts where she maintained her studio and store for seven years. Last September she moved to the Village of East Davenport where she is enjoying the pleasant neighborhood and the steady foot traffic.

Photos by Leslie Klipsch
Desiree Border uses her torch to carefully melt glass in the small workspace at her shop.



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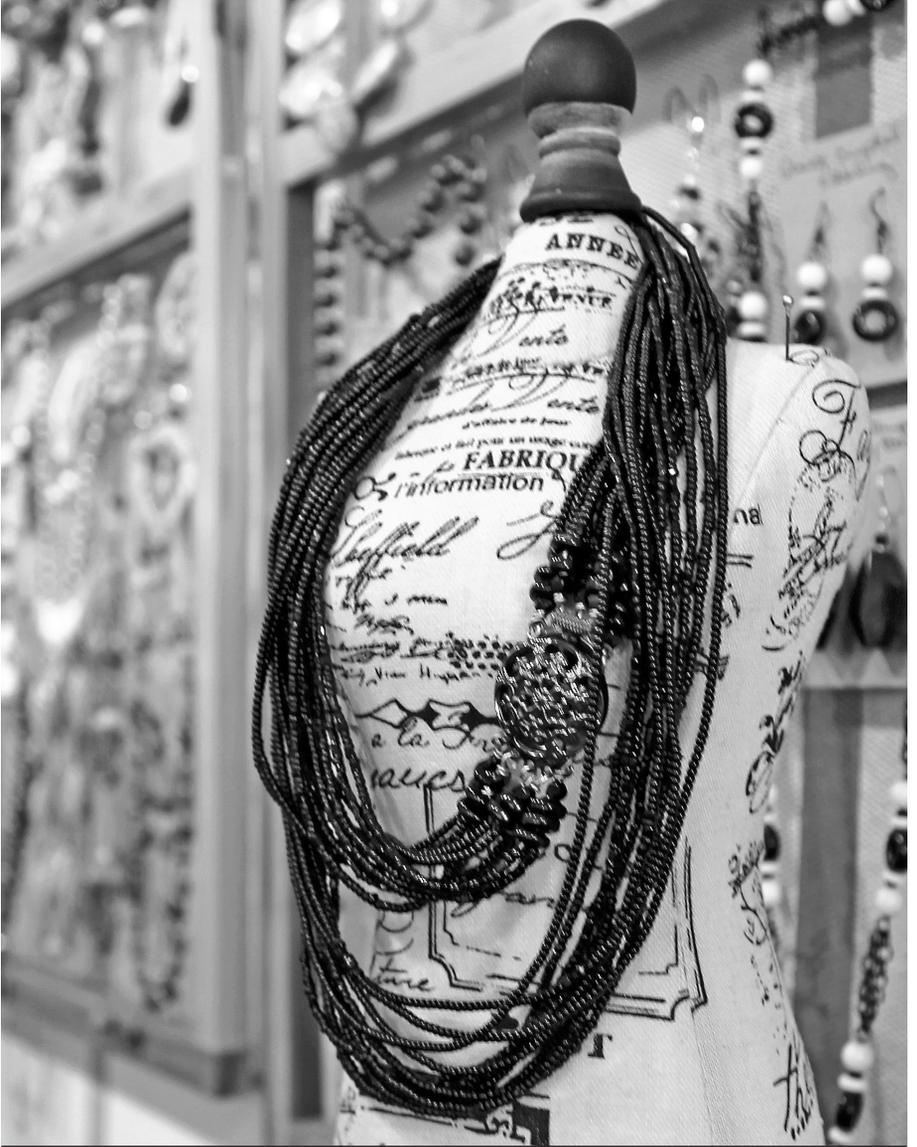
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If you visit 3 Gypsies Designs, you'll find a fetching selection of gorgeous necklaces, attractive earrings, and both daring and dainty bracelets tastefully displayed on the walls of the jewel box-shaped shop. Beyond her extensive in-store selection, a portion of the jewelry and accessories that Ms. Border creates are custom orders. For instance, she has helped put a unique touch on the wedding days of many Quad-Cities brides by creating jewelry and hairpieces for both brides and bridesmaids.

Other times, her custom orders are more straight forward. "Sometimes customers will ask me to create pieces based on the designs I have available in the store. Perhaps they love the style but want a different color or a different length. I'm happy to accommodate them," she says as she moves merrily about

the small shop petting her tiny chihuahua, Valentina, examining shiny beads and colorful ribbons, and preparing materials for the multitude of projects she says are currently waiting to be formed.

Though most of her shop is devoted to jewelry, Ms. Border also crochets adorable hats and scarves. She typically does not use a pattern, but rather creates as she crochets, using a variety of fabrics of varying textures like linen, cotton, rayon and Italian nylon. Mixing textures, she says, makes for a visually interesting finished product. "In all of my work," she says practically, "I like for things to be artistic, creative and unique. But I also want it to be wearable. I want my art to be out there in the world."

On a recent visit to 3 Gypsies Designs,

Top: Ms. Border is constantly creating new designs, very few pieces displayed in her shop are alike.

Bottom left: 3 Gypsies Designs also features creations by local artist Jean Lac. **Bottom right:** Each glass bead that makes up Ms. Border's jewelry is individually handmade.

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Ms. Border fired up her torch in the small work space at the back of her shop where she melts and shapes Italian glass at over 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and showed me a bit of her artistic process.

“Isn’t it beautiful?” she asks me after a few moments of concentration, holding up a shiny blue bead with two additional layers of texture and color that will eventually become part of an elaborate, yet wearable, piece of jewelry. Examining the result — the colors, the shape, the remarkable detail on such a smooth, tiny surface — I enthusiastically agree.

Ms. Border’s favorites

Ms. Border loves the dainty leaves that she has flat pressed and shaped out of yellow, orange, and golden glass and strung together to make a bright, sunny variegated sunflower petal necklace featuring a copper leaf clasp (\$138). She loves the look and feel of the leaf-shaped glass and is at work making another necklace for fall, this time using rich autumn hues. “I may make one or two more

using the same shapes or patterns,” she says of the design, “but then I’ll start to feel a bit bored and need to move on to another style.” This, one can assume, is a tendency that keeps her work fresh and inimitable.

My favorites

I couldn’t take my eyes off a burnt-orange necklace and earring set that Ms. Border created using fire opal Swarovski crystal on gold, hand-linked wire (\$240). Complicated tiers of the sparkling beads created an interesting, well-balanced look that anyone would feel glamorous wearing this fall. I also admired several pairs of earrings made from contemporary cloisonné glass enamel and metal (\$27). The muted colors and pretty patterns were delicate and sweet.

Why you should go

Month after month, I am struck by the depth of talent and creativity that is present here in the Quad-Cities. Like all of the local treasures featured in this column, 3 Gypsies Designs offers a unique, high-quality product created by a talented resident artisan.

When you should go

The charming 3 Gypsies Designs is located at 1018 Mound St., Davenport. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Find 3 Gypsies Designs on Facebook or call 563-340-6975 for more information.

Each month in The Gold Standard, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — for Gold Book readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and three young children and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer.

