

[back to story page](#)

Printed from ABQjournal.com, a service of the Albuquerque Journal

URL: <http://www.abqjournal.com/biz/04956316548biz12-04-08.htm>

Thursday, December 04, 2008

Ceramic artist's works make it to Nordstrom

By Tamara N. Shope*Of the Journal*

When Kelly Jo Kuchar puts her hands to clay, people take notice. And these days, Kuchar is raising some pretty highbrow eyebrows.

Kuchar, a Los Ranchos de Albuquerque ceramics artist, now has her work featured on Nordstrom's espresso bar shelves. The high-end retailer is carrying Kuchar's ceramic bowls, plates, serving platters and coffee cups this season.

And, if all goes well in terms of sales, Kuchar's business with Nordstrom could stretch into a longer engagement, she said. A spring collection could also be on the way.

"Even though this is supposedly one of the worst retail seasons in the past decade, people will still appreciate what it is. I'm kind of hopeful because there's a real return of interest in American-made craft."

The artist/designer submitted six patterns to Nordstrom and two were chosen. The company told her they were looking for an American-made retail line with an "old world feel" that would also include a coffee and/or dessert theme. That old-world style was familiar to Kuchar from her work for wineries across the country, she said. Her patterns were competing with 20 to 25 other designers.

Kuchar has been a New Mexico resident since 1991, and she's found that this is just the kind of place where people appreciate her kind of art. Every holiday season, she hosts a tour/open house of her 10,000-square-foot warehouse at 6829 Fourth St. NW. Now in its ninth year, the tour has become one of her favorite traditions because it allows her to mingle more with her loyal fanbase while also meeting new collectors and gift buyers.

Next on the to-do list is a self-sustaining business, more one-of-a-kind pieces and more corporate gift work, she said.

Meanwhile, though, she's fired up about her newfound Nordstrom glow.

For more information, visit Kuchar's Web site (kellyjodesigns.com) or stop by the warehouse for a tour.

Three to get ready

There's a new shop in town, ladies. It's cute, it's fun, and it should come as no surprise to you that it's in Nob Hill.

Owners Suzanne Danciger Garcia and Rachel Rankin are calling their shop Tres Boutique, which is full of clothes, shoes, earrings and accessories.

"If you are looking for clothing for a fun evening out or you need a great pair of earrings or necklace to update or set off a favorite outfit, this is the place to visit," Danciger Garcia said. "We realized there was a definite need for a shop where women can find one or two really great pieces to update or enhance their existing wardrobes without spending a fortune and looking well put-together and stylish."

Tres Boutique, 3021 Central Ave. NE, is closed on Sundays.

In fine company

When you're chatting with your carnivore friends about the best steakhouses in the country, you might think of SW Steakhouse in Las Vegas or maybe Peter Luger in Brooklyn. But, as it turns out, you don't have to travel far for a delicious cut of meat. Late last month, [Gayot.com](#) ranked the Gruet Steakhouse among the 10 best in the country. Gayot, which calls itself "the guide to the good life," is dedicated to making certain that "sophisticated" travelers know where to go and what to do while there.

"Gruet Steakhouse mixes an American love of beef with the French sensibilities of the owners, Laurent Gruet and Farid Himeur, who have been making French-style sparkling wine, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in New Mexico since the 1980s," [Gayot.com](#) informs its readers. For the record, the guide calls Gruet's bone-in rib-eye "stellar."

Shoppin' and strollin'

This week, Nob Hill, Old Town and the North Fourth areas will each host holiday shopping events. Roads will be closed, cider and cocoa will be served, and carolers will be about. Not only is it a remarkably cool atmosphere for gift-buying without the pressures of Black Friday, but it's also a great way to support local businesses and artisans. (And don't get me started on the deals to be had.) Nob Hill's event is from 5 to 10 p.m. today, Old Town's is from noon to 9 p.m. Friday, and North Fourth's is all day Saturday, with hours varying by merchant. North Fourth retailers (between Solar Road and Alameda Boulevard) will have turquoise flags indicating their participation.

The downside of the Nob Hill event has always been finding parking, something organizers set out to alleviate. This year, Nob Hill is offering a free park-and-ride service. Park at Central United Methodist Church just north of Central Avenue on University Boulevard. Drop-off locations are on Central at Richmond, Carlisle and Washington. When Kelly Jo Kuchar puts her hands to clay, people take notice. And these days, Kuchar is raising some pretty highbrow eyebrows.

Kuchar, a Los Ranchos de Albuquerque ceramics artist, now has her work featured on Nordstrom's espresso bar shelves. The high-end retailer is carrying Kuchar's ceramic bowls, plates, serving platters and coffee cups this season.

And, if all goes well in terms of sales, Kuchar's business with Nordstrom could stretch into a longer engagement, she said. A spring collection could also be on the way.

Three to get ready

In fine company

Shoppin' and strollin'

All content copyright © ABQJournal.com and Albuquerque Journal and may not be republished without permission. Requests for permission to republish, or to copy and distribute must be obtained at the the Albuquerque Publishing Co. Library, 505-823-3492.

[Back to story page](#)