

RENEE

Celebrating 50 Years of Painting

Renee Benner started painting in 1958 when her children had all started school. Her talent had been identified at an early age, but the responsibilities of marriage and bring up a family of five boys had meant any attention to this skill had to be put on the back-burner.

Starting just with a burning desire to paint, and with few tools she joined the local Arts Society in Te Puke, and the rest is history. 1000's of her works have been sold to admirers of her work from around the world, due mainly to innovative marketing in tourist areas with roadside exhibitions she and husband Vernon ran in the Bay of Plenty.

Renee has been a prolific painter, working from her studio in rural Te Puke, and latterly during retirement in Te Puke township. She still has a rural outlook that inspired her to paint the beautiful countryside that surrounded her. From the bush covered hills on the farm, to the coastline around Maketu and Mount Maunganui, to the many rivers and valleys around New Zealand.

In 1967 she was accorded the honour of being hung in the "Kelliher Exhibition" in Wellington. At the time this was the peak for any New Zealand Artist. Her trip to Wellington for the exhibition was recorded in the Bay of Plenty Times.

She has been a member of both the Te Puke and Tauranga Art Societies, exhibiting her work consistently over the last 50 years. She has formed many friendships with fellow artists, such as Ruth Taylor, who shared with Renee both painting and child raising, with children of similar ages. In the 1980's, Renee and Vernon started traveling New Zealand in a campervan, and this greatly extended the variety of scenes for her to paint. And there are still many that only exist in her sketchbook. However in her later years these provide a wealth of ideas as she creates new works.

Renee has worked in a number of media, but mainly oil and watercolour. Her skill with capturing the beauty of water with watercolour has brought many a compliment, as this is not easy. She has ventured into acrylic and also ink and wash. On the occasion she has been know also to use Selley's products to produce a 3D effect. One such painting portrayed a group of children climbing rocks. To her amazement one of the children "fell off the rocks" during an exhibition!

As a young artist she looked for many ways to express her talent, and her young children often awoke to find that the bedrooms, or even curtains, now had a new look.

Renee has expressed her artistic talent in so many ways. Her garden has been both a source of inspiration for her painting, but is also itself a work of art, and springtime always brings her home into a brilliant and delightful display of colours and smells, as the roses bloom, and camellias dazzle.

After 50 years Renee is still tireless in her love and passion for painting. It is with joy that we are able to share this unique talent for art with you all. There is more of her work on display on her website <http://renee.benner.co.nz>.

