

Two Paths of Inspiration

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hen a person leaves for Murano, it is time travel. I've spent years dreaming of this glass Mecca and the day I would arrive.

When you get to Murano, the past embraces you at every turn. My trip to the island was a crusade of sorts, wanting to realign myself with the "Glass Gods" and in turn, better share my passion of glass with the world. I was blessed to work with Maestro Cesare Toffolo, whose technique is as flawless as it was inspiring. His wife, Teresa was equally inspiring managing the office and Gallery, which offers the most incredible stemware on the planet. The experience was surreal and humbling. My passion was reignited by the energy of Murano and the energy of the glass. A trip to the store offered chance encounters with Lino Tagliepetra or Davide Salvatore. I was bunking at Emilio Santini's parent's house. Imagine how it felt to walk down the street and stop in Carlo Donna to pick up your jacks. I knew this would be a life changing experience, as glass is the way of life in Murano. You eat, sleep and breathe glass and just as I caught my wind, It was time to head back to the States.



The second half of my trip was a stark contrast to my time in Murano. My destination was a rural area just outside Rochester, New York. My mentor would be the legendary Milon Townsend. I was quite nervous at first, but felt at home after the warm welcome from Milon's family. The studio is a true "art zone" and I was bursting with my second wind of inspiration. I was

overwhelmed by the numerous projects in which he is involved. Though he won't admit to it, Milon is quite a role model. He is a successful artist, author and entrepreneur as well as devoted

husband and father. A typical day at the studio starts around 5:00 am and is very productive. Milon will work on more intense and creative projects early in the day, when he feels fresh and sharp. His sculptural ability, especially concerning the human anatomy, is beyond intimate. I was relieved to see great improvements in my own work almost immediately. I had a confidence that was not with me prior to my travels. The "Glass Gods" were pleased, for now.

The blessings of my trip affected my relationship with glass as well as myself. I could have traveled down one road, chose one experience. Faith and perseverance allowed me to travel both, and for that I am always grateful.

