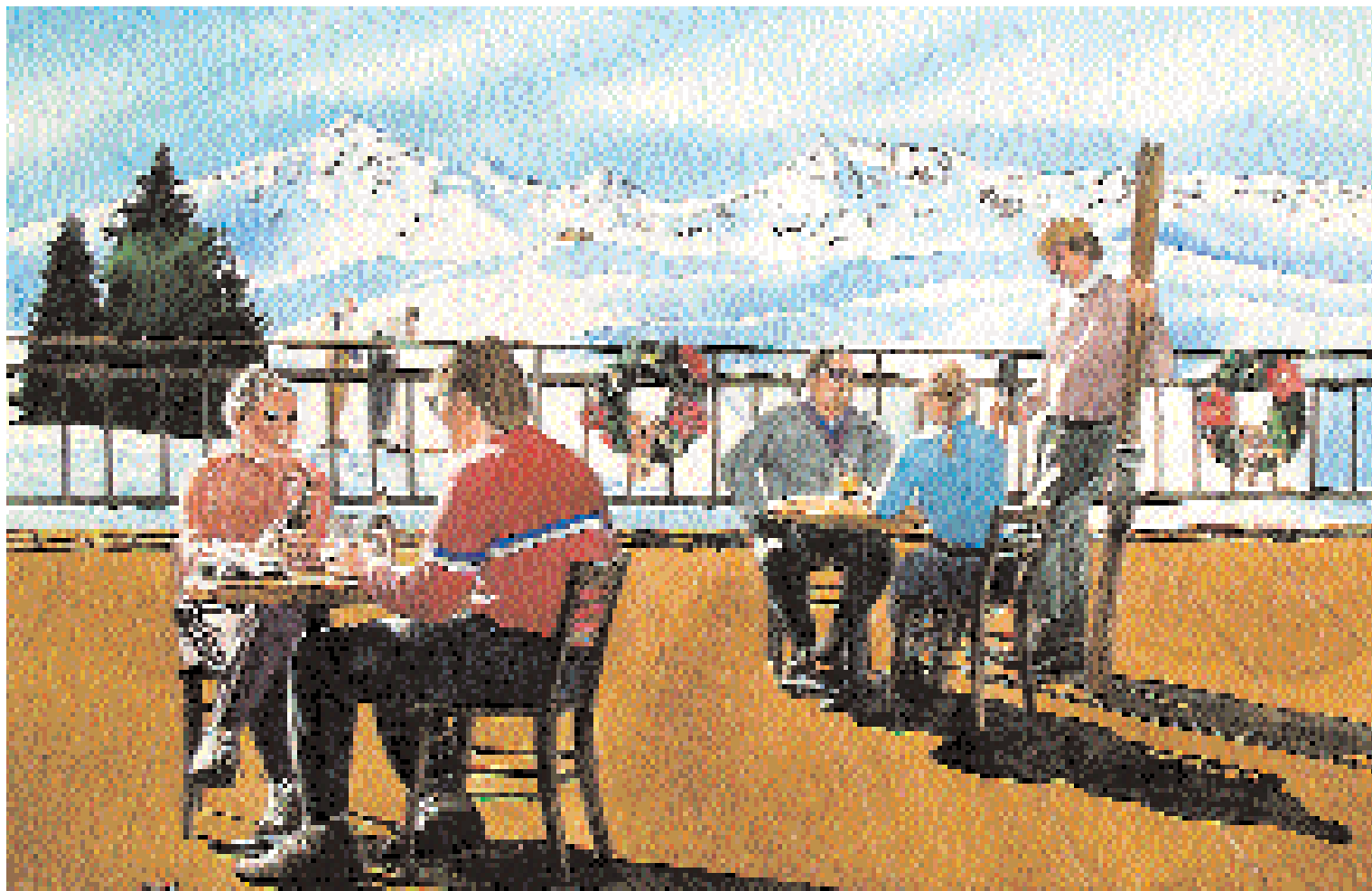


fine arts



Submitted photos

This watercolor painting by artist Andy Sewell was used by the Deschutes Brewery for the label of this year's Jubelale. The artist painted himself into the festive scene: He's the one holding the skis.

Art of a local vintage

By Andrew Moore
The Bulletin

His art graces the label of this year's release of Deschutes Brewery's Jubelale, but Andy Sewell wants to brighten more than the refrigerator.

A watercolorist, the versatile Sewell paints a wide range of subjects, including portraits, landscapes, flowers, birds and fish. Sewell, 41, also paints sporting scenes, such as windsurfing and fly-fishing. Most of these Sewell sells at regional arts and crafts shows that keep him crisscrossing the Northwest.

Recently, however, the Pullman, Wash.-based artist has struck upon a variation of his craft that marries his graphic art background with his love of painting, and allows him to tailor his artwork to a specific community in ways that Sewell feels are more resonant than paintings of a local landmark.

Sewell's "vintage" series incorporates local scenery with graphic type to create pieces reminiscent of 1930s and '40s magazine advertise-

ments. As an example, Sewell will paint an image of a fly fisherman and then use computer software to add type over the painting to localize it, such as "Fish the Deschutes River." Sewell paints and produces playful images of skiers, snowboarders and windsurfers in the same manner, even though the latter two sports didn't

exist 60 years ago.

"It's a challenge I enjoy," Sewell said. "Making (the art) look like old time, but it isn't. People look at it and go, 'what?'"

It did catch the eye of Lesley Walthew, marketing manager for Deschutes Brewery, who discovered Sewell at the 2004 Bend Summer Festival, where Sewell was selling his artwork from a booth. Based on Sewell's vintage pieces, Walthew thought a "vintage, 1960s, European ski poster type thing" would work well for this year's Jubelale label.

"It seemed like that was a really cool, eclectic way to go," said Walthew. "We hadn't done anything like that before, and Jubelale is such a unique thing, our goal is to come up with something different every time."

Sewell's vintage series is also catching the attention of galleries, whose decisions to show his work mean that Sewell's goal of leaving the grueling arts and crafts show circuit is coming to fruition.

IF YOU GO

What: An exhibit of Central Oregon-themed watercolor prints by Andy Sewell

When: Through October

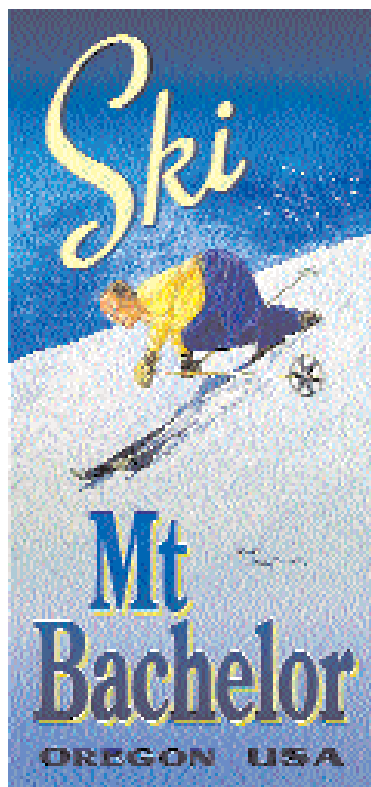
Where: Jill's Wild Tasteful Women & Friends Gallery, St. Clair Place, 920 NW Bond St., Suite 107, Bend

Cost: Free

Contact: 312-4335 or www.jillnealgallery.com

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fine arts



"Flyfish the Delightful Deschutes River," "Ski Mt. Bachelor" and "Experience it Snowboard" are watercolor paintings with printed typography, characteristic of artist Andy Sewell's vintage series of paintings.

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"I started carrying (his work) in July, and it's just been flying off the wall," said Jill Neal, owner of Jill's Wild Tasteful Women & Friends Gallery in Bend.

That's good news for Sewell, who spends a majority of the year on the road, traveling from festival to festival. He usually returns home after each show to see his wife and kids and to "crank out" more art, but Sewell is growing weary of life on the road.

"Traveling so much is really wearing me out," Sewell said.

Besides your local supermarket (i.e., the Jubelale), an exhibit of Sewell's artwork is on display at Neal's gallery in Bend through October (see "If You Go").

Sewell was born outside of Seattle, but raised in Ketchum, Idaho, home to the Sun Valley ski resort. His mother worked at the resort, so Sewell said he and his siblings were all "spoiled ski bums."

Before raising a family, however, Sewell's mother was a model. She did lots of work for the Union Pacific Railroad, Sewell said, often around Ketchum, promoting that area's natural beauty. Many of the images Sewell has saved are black and white, and Sewell has found that they are great for inspiring his vintage-series paintings.

Sewell also solicits old black-and-white photographs from friends, and even from visitors who happen by his booth. They are the key to making his vintage images, he said, as the period clothing helps him make his paintings more realistic. Additionally, although Sewell's paintings are in color, he said his work is better served if the photos that inspire him lack color.

"I'm finding that there is something about the old black-and-white photos — when I have to imagine the colors — that really adds more of a look of old-ness to it," Sewell said. "If I paint from a color photo, it's almost too real."

For his vintage series, Sewell often draws inspiration from the old photos of his mother. The fly fisherman in his "Flyfish the Delightful Deschutes River" painting, for example, was painted from an old photograph of one of his mother's friends, Sewell said.

But he also hires models. For one vintage-series image of the Metolius River, Sewell hired a Sisters model to pose in the river with fishing gear.

He's also hired his brother, and even his neighbors, to pose for him. For a vintage-series painting of a snowboarder, Sewell dressed his brother in what he imagined to be 1940s snowboarding garb — a sweater, turtleneck and Chuck Taylor high-top sneakers. Sewell then had his brother stand on a picnic table in the middle of summer and pretend he was snowboarding.

For the Jubelale painting, Sewell hired his



Submitted photo

Sewell was raised in Ketchum, Idaho, and has worked as a full-time artist for two years.

neighbors — students at Washington State University — to pose in period garb as subjects for the painting. Sewell also dressed himself up and had his wife snap a photo of him. Sewell then took the photos — of himself, his neighbors and the Three Sisters — and merged them together with a computer-graphics program. From that final image, Sewell sketched his painting.

The vintage-series idea hit Sewell after he saw a fellow art-show artist doing something similar. That artist's works were all digital, but Sewell said he knew that artist was onto a good idea.

With a fine-arts degree from the University of Idaho, Sewell harkened back to his years as a graphic artist. Just after his graduation, Sewell worked for the Appaloosa Journal, a trade magazine for fans of Appaloosa horses. At the magazine, Sewell was responsible for most of the art aspects of its production, from drawing sketches for ads to painting cover images to actually putting the magazine together for publication. In that role, Sewell learned about cutting, waxing and typesetting — "the traditional way," he said, to put a magazine together.

He amassed "quite a collection" of type, which Sewell has now been able to dust off for use in his vintage series.

"It's a way I can mix my graphic design love of typography with my painting, together in one piece of art," Sewell said.

He hopes to adapt his vintage series for different parts of the Northwest, but Sewell is quick to emphasize that he will not duplicate his images. Each painting in his vintage series will be unique, he said, and fun.

"It's got to be fun, and that's part of what I hope it does," Sewell said. "It makes people laugh, and yet, it's something nice to look at, too."

Andrew Moore can be reached at 541-617-7820 or amoore@bendbulletin.com.