

An Artist's Touch




Handcrafted dinner and glassware bring personal stories to the dinner table. **by Hollie Welch**

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE between slow-cooking a roast for hours—anticipating the results and enjoying the aroma throughout the day—and ordering a roast beef sandwich through a drive-thru window. The first has a story to it, a personal quality of labor and excitement. The second is just fast. Oh, and the homemade roast just plain tastes better, too.

The same can be said for fine glassware, dinnerware and flatware. Skilled craftsmen spend hours creating pieces that can be mass manufactured in seconds. But it's that personal touch that gives the handcrafted version a special quality, says Phoebe Howard, owner of Mrs. Howard, an interior design store in Avondale.

Howard, who says she's always looking for something a little different yet practical to stock her shelves, recently discovered Teroforma, a U.S.-based company that specializes in handcrafted tableware. Established in 2006, Teroforma brings together designers and artisans from 14 different countries to create glassware, dinnerware, linens, flatware and accessories. Company owners Andrew and Anna Hellman pair artisans with designers to create the products. "There is a lot of energy around the people we work with," Andrew Hellman says. "It is tremendous to see the excitement they have for what they are doing. They are passionate, and it's contagious."

And it's the artists' stories that drive the company. "When you know the story of the people who made what you hold in your hands, you appreciate it even more," he says. So each product is presented in tandem with the narrative, photos and drawings from its creator.

The 13 product lines range from tumblers and wine glasses to serving boards and white china, which according to Howard are the prettiest white plates she's ever seen. (She's a self-pronounced white plate connoisseur). "It's special in a very subtle way," she says. "It's for people who love simplicity in its finest form and appreciate the quality of something not over-designed." 

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