

Debra Burden



# The Joy of Eggshell Artistry

I first became interested in eggshell artistry after my first daughter Natalie was born in 1980.

At that time, a good friend of my mother gave me a decorated duck eggshell that held the figurine of a little baby. My curiosity was aroused. I got a chicken egg from my fridge and started pecking at it with a pair of cuticle scissors. That was the start of my hobby. I've gotten a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction—and some grey hair—over the years from designing and creating my eggs.

Eggshell artistry—also known as eggery—is not a very prevalent hobby. It is definitely better known in the USA than in Canada. Consequently, it has

been a challenge over the years to find supplies, including miniatures. I have had to import most things and create some of my own.

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As mentioned, I began with cuticle scissors and a chicken egg and advanced to using a dremel—an electric hand tool with a small cutting disc—on a variety of eggs such as duck, goose, emu, and ostrich.

I now most often use an air drill, much like a dentist's drill, to do much more detailed filigree cutting on the eggshells.

The eggs can be made into jewellery cases. They can have hinged doors that open to reveal a miniature scene inside; they can adorn wedding cakes and commemorate special occasions such as births and anniversaries and so on.

Some may have lighting in them or music boxes. The only limit is my imagination and, unfortunately, the amount of free time I have available.

I have learned the craft over the years by trial and error, experimentation, and reading any literature I could get my hands on. My husband Marv has helped me blow out many a goose egg—which sometimes can be a pretty nasty job, depending on the age of the egg—and has assisted me with the wiring for the lights.

Once the eggshell is cut, the inside is reinforced with glue, except



A collection of decorated eggshells: Duck, goose, and emu eggs



Ostrich eggs. The one on the left has a music box and also lights underglass swans. The one on the right is a jewellery case.



*Large goose egg, filigree-cut*



*Large goose egg made for my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. The back showcases their names, wedding date, and one of their wedding photos.*



for ostrich eggs, which are extremely durable. The outside is covered with paint, beads, or rhinestones and numerous coats of some type of lacquer or other finish—all of which help strengthen the shell. Once an egg is completed, I can handle it the same as I would fine bone china.

Before my notarial career began in 1991, I am sure I created well over 100 different eggs that were either given as gifts or sold by word of mouth or at craft fairs. Some of

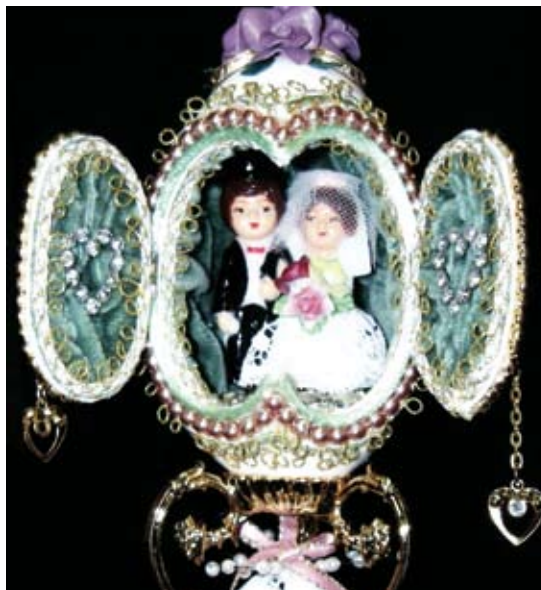
my eggs found homes in Europe and Australia. With a busy notarial practice, however, my free time for creating eggs has become limited to personal special occasions such as my two daughters' graduations, parents' 40th and 50th anniversaries, and so on.

In the last few years, I've become interested in rubber stamping as a hobby—you'd think I'd get my fill of stamping at the office! Stamping also takes up my free time.

My list of things to do once I eventually retire continues to grow—providing I still have my eyesight, a somewhat steady hand, and my sanity! ▲

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*Goose eggshell with doors that open to reveal the bride and groom*



*Goose egg made for my daughter's graduation. The name of her school and her grad date are on the sides.*