

# Still Determined... After 25 Years Williams Mill Creative Arts Studios

By Bruce Madole

**Y**ou could say it was stubbornness that saved the Williams Mill in Glen Williams. Or maybe, determination. Doug and Mary-Lou Brock had bought the 1820s heritage complex, and though experts advised tearing it down, they began to renovate and re-purpose it, still not knowing what it might become. Then, 25 years ago, they launched the Williams Mill Creative Arts Studios, with working studios for a wildly diverse range of fine arts and craft.

The Williams Mill soon grew into something quite unexpected. They've had weavers, furniture makers, stained glass artists, wood and stone carvers, jewellers and



▲ Then: the original Williams Mill sawmill in Glen Williams, circa the winter of 1988. PHOTO PROVIDED BY ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

much more. Some artists have even evolved and changed media, reinventing themselves with their artistic practice.

There have been more than 75 working artists who maintained studio practice here through the years. Internal spaces have been redesigned, on occasion. There is a well-equipped event



Now: the same building 25 years later, with studio spaces and The Glen Tavern in the lower level. This is only one building in the Williams Mill complex, which also includes Main Street Studios, Glen Williams Glass, Courtyard & Stone Building, and Parkside Studios. PHOTO BY MARLENE MADOLE.

space at the parkside level where the Credit River runs.

Still, 25 years later, four of those original artists are still making art at the Mill: Carol Nesbitt and Andy Kuntz (glass-blowers), Marlene Madole (painter, art instruction), and Carol-Ann Michaelson (was a potter, now a jeweller and painter). Even with change, and

the passage of time, the Mill has always sustained a quiet current of creative energy. It's a vibe. Infectious. And 25 years on, if you talk with the artists, watch them work, creating, taking care of a business in the arts, you can detect a second current, like the hum of creativity. Call it determination. Making something.

## Indoor Orchids

**T**he Niagara peninsula between the Escarpment and Lake Ontario has become prime orchid-growing land. From here, thousands of orchids are shipped each week to markets all over northeastern North America. CosMic Plants in Beamsville manages a 200,000-sq.-ft. greenhouse that grows the widest selection of Phalaenopsis Orchids, a subspecies that can produce blooming plants year-round, and are stronger, easier to care for and have very long bloom times.

### Care

Don't place the orchid in direct sunlight, but put it near a south window with moderate light. Water well once a week

but then empty the saucer or pot so that the orchid never sits in water for more than 15 minutes. Don't put the orchid near ripening fruit, which gives off a hormone that causes the blooms to age and wilt

quickly. To get an orchid to rebloom, stress it by cutting off the bloom's stalk above a thick node, moving the plant to a cool location and reducing watering. After a few months, it should rebloom.

### Showroom

Orchids can be seen and bought by the public at The Art of Orchids Retail Boutique, 4665 Bartlett Road, Beamsville. Call 905.562.9389 or see [www.cosmicplants.com](http://www.cosmicplants.com).



Inside The Art of Orchids Retail Boutique. PHOTO PROVIDED.