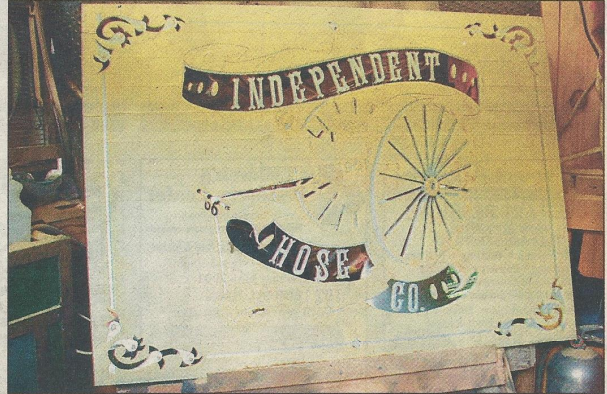


Photo courtesy of Robb Rich

In the evolution of a hand-carved mirror, the artist begins by tracing a form of the original subject onto a piece of paper, which will then be transferred to a masking tape form that is attached to a blank mirror.



Robert C. Frederick/Staff

The masking tape overlay is then placed on the mirror for the artist to painstakingly work against.

Glass

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to ban the practice.

As auto work dried up on the East Coast, Rich said he accepted a friend's invitation to "hit" Hollywood. Once out there he called on George Barris, the self-proclaimed king of automobile customizing, best known for creating the Bat Mobile used in the 1960s television show "Batman."

Working for Barrister, Rich said, he earned jobs customizing

the cars of celebrity clients, including Zsa Zsa Gabor. But he found that Hollywood was "not his scene."

Rich said he returned to the East Coast and shuttled between New York and Virginia Beach, taking custom glass-etching jobs as they came.

Some of his works include large, custom-made mirrors carved with everything from a restaurant's logo to family pets.

Some of his work can be seen in local restaurants.

One work of which he is especially proud is a massive world map on display in Colgate Palmolive's corporate headquarters in Parsippany-Troy Hills.

Rich is currently working on a four-foot mirror commissioned by the Dumont Fire Department's Independent Hose Company that will hang on a firehouse wall.

Working from an oil painting of an antique pumping cart, Rich painstakingly traces a paper form that can be trans-

ferred onto masking tape.

He covers the mirror with the tape form, then spends hours "shaving" away layers of glass, following the tape outline to create a relief of the image. The finished mirror looks as if it was created in a mold, not carved by hand.

Given the choice, Rich said he would love to concentrate on creating nothing but mirrors, as the creative challenge would keep him sharp in his artistic endeavors. But the demand just

does not exist.

Rich said the demand for hand-carved champagne toasting glasses, coupled with a lack of places to find them, should give his business the boost it needs to stay afloat. He plans to produce no more than 1,000 sets per year, to avoid "flooding the market."

He said the limited production of glasses, if successful, would give him the time he needs to pursue, and possibly resurrect, his desire to concentrate on mirrors.