

Lifestyle 83

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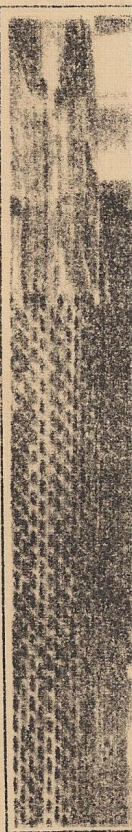
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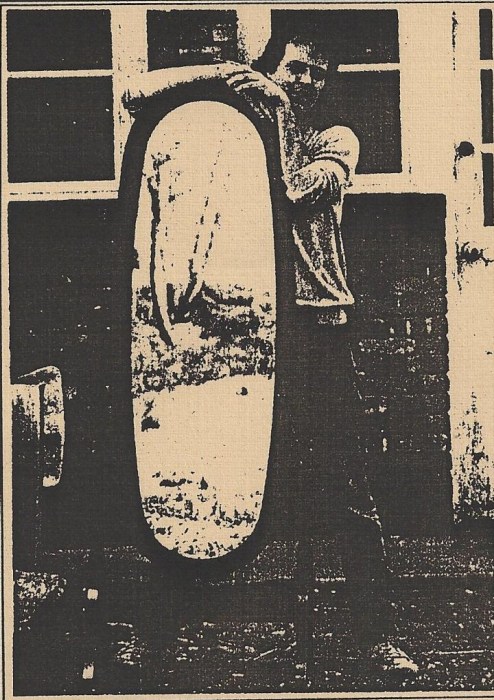
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says Rich, it would
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Robert Rich

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Although some inevitably turn up their
noses at this kind of craft, Rich has found
even more people turn their heads in admi-
ration.



Staff photo by Peter Monsees

One of the fairest of all Rich's mirrors.

Glass etcher's mission is clear

FROM PAGE B-1

ing one of his toolboxes that hold a
half-dozen electric engraving tools
and some 60 grinding stones, which
he uses to shape pictures into glass.
"Every job calls for something dif-
ferent. I like it because you don't get
bored that way."

To create the proper engraving
texture for some jobs, Rich wears
down stones before using them. For
detailed work, he purchases a new
electric engraver, so the motor runs
evenly. Over the years, he says he's
owned 50 or 60 electric engravers.
For large jobs, he draws stencils and
sandblasts designs into glass. For
small work, he might first cut a de-
sign with a razor-sharp mat knife. "I
developed my techniques by picking

up my tools and playing with them,"
says Rich. "I love to mix up medi-
ums. You just have to know the right
recipe."

Not all is so playful, though. While
sandblasting, Rich has swallowed
large amounts of dust. "Put me up to
an X-ray machine and I look like
David Bowie in 'Ziggy Stardust,'" he
says, referring to a character from
the rock star's glitter period.

The other major problem is more
financial than physical.

On occasion — only six times in 12
years, says Rich — a window or mir-
ror cracks while he's engraving it.
What does he do?

"I just go to a bar and have a
couple of beers," says Rich. "Then I
start thinking about how I'm going
to pay to replace it."



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working, you have to keep movin'

Since dropping out of a pastry
prentice program at Brightwood
National Technical High School in his
man year in 1966, Rich has
Dumont, Virginia Beach, St. Louis