

Glass-blowing is breathtaking

Make your own ornament at Louisville studio

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PROVIDED / FLAME RUN

A Flame Run artist shows a youngster how to make an glass ornament like the ones at left.

11/9/07

This holiday season, why not start a tradition that's hot *and* dangerous? Louisville's Flame Run Glass Studio and Gallery lets you do just that with its annual Holiday Ornament Blow. Under the guidance of seasoned glass artists, you can create your own unique and affordable blown glass ornaments. Flame Run guarantees it, even for participants as young as six.

"There is a bit of danger involved. The fire is loud and intimidating," says Brook White, an award winning contemporary art glass artist and owner of Flame Run. "But the kids do much better than some adults, I have to say."

White, along with his wife, fellow glass artist Susie Slabaugh White, opened Flame Run in June 2004, after renovating the building. From its earliest days, its holiday glass-blowing event has filled up fast. Two people enter the hot glass studio at a time, but others can watch from the second-floor viewing area. Individuals to families to groups as large as 20 can reserve ornament-making time - a memorable event for a private party.

"You get to choose a color and design your ornament," White explains. "You can mix up to three colors, or just make a white ornament. In the studio, a Flame Run artist gathers the glass and rolls it through the colors while you watch. They heat it, shape it with a bubble, then you blow your ornament to it's final size. Your breath is trapped in that bubble."

Hundreds of people complete the 10-minute ornament making process each season, many returning the next year.

"It may look easy, but it takes a lot of concentration," White says.

While making the ornament is quick, cool down takes overnight. Ornaments, which are generally about the size of a baseball, can't go home the same day, but Flame Run will ship them for a nominal charge.

Can't wait? You can always select from the contemporary art glass pieces created by Flame Run and other nationally known artists on display in their 7,500 square-foot gallery.

Until Nov. 20, work of White's mentor, Stephen Rolfe Powell, will also be on display.

Or, if you want something more than an ornament, you can commission one of the artists at Flame Run to create something just for you.

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