

~Reprinted from Business People Magazine~

# Business People

HELPING NORTH BUSINESS GROW SINCE 1987

\$3.00



Richard Fischer,  
owner of  
Deco Illusions.

## The world of illusions



Richard Fischer standing among one of his creations, Figline (Feleeny), textured Tuscan stone wash with an embossed florentine scroll stencil.

# The world of illusions

Artisan Richard Fischer, owner of Deco Illusions, uses custom and decorative finishes to transform your walls, ceilings and furniture into the environment you thought you could only imagine.

As our schedules continue their hectic paces and as each of us draws closer to families and friends in reaction to events close to home and around the world, our personal space has become an even more important component of our lives.

You have the perfect space in mind, but how do you transform your idea into the environment that represents the times and places that comfort and please? One way is through the originality of interior and exterior faux artistry, created by a skilled artisan who will listen to you and then create images in your surroundings, whether at home or work.

Richard Fischer is that artisan. He's the creative talent who takes your vision and, using custom and decorative finishes, transforms your walls, ceilings and furniture into the environment you thought

you could only imagine.

"I am adding texture and giving a new life and special dimension to an environment," says Fischer, owner of Deco Illusions. "Whether I'm recreating a style or a period of time, I'm applying a sense of color and design and I'm transforming a space. Working with clients, I'm creating an environment in a specific place."

According to Fischer, his work is more than just painting a wall or applying a glaze. It's learning a client's ideas, it's applying old and new techniques, and it's developing the unique atmosphere that makes a home special.

Whether he's creating European Old World textured finishes, using contemporary and historical glazing and other specialty treatments, or designing custom stencils and applying textures to walls, ceilings and furniture, Fischer finds it

"rewarding to see an end result that reflects a time period or a feeling that is specific for each client."

By spending time with a client in the space they want to create, Fischer gains an understanding of their ideas and desires. Then, he develops sample boards that demonstrate his visions for that particular space. Using the client's reactions and additional thoughts, he will next update the samples to ensure the comfort and agreement of everyone involved before the actual design work starts.

For Renee Meyer, Fischer's work in her home has continued as she moves from room to room adding, she says, "style and beauty to the home. The walls themselves and the ceiling he did as a faux copper are just beautiful. We don't even need artwork on the walls, and when people walk in, they notice the detailing right away."



In this dining room, Fischer used Nuvalatto ("milky clouds in Italian") faux marble pillars with oxidized copper end caps and faux suede leather on the walls.

To further enhance a client's space, Fischer is able to apply finishes to doors, fireplace mantels, furniture and other accessories. He says those additional finish applications are important to the space and a client's budget. He enjoys that aspect of his specialty because "I love being able to salvage what is old or outdated, recreating it and bringing it new life," he says.

Interior Designer Jean Chappell has worked with Fischer numerous times on her clients' projects. She says that for many people, wallpaper is no longer the only answer. Instead, Fischer's unique applications of paint and textures really enhance a home.

"Rick has been able to create exactly what my clients are looking for," Chappell says. "He's a real find, because he takes the time to talk with us and create samples we can refine together. His work offers so many different looks, and Deco Illusions presents a versatility that provides the answers my clients and I are looking for. I've never had a client who wasn't absolutely thrilled with the results."

Chappell says an important aspect of Deco Illusions is Fischer's "willingness to continue to look for training and techniques that add to his resume."

Fischer prides himself on that aspect of his work—a dedication to learning and enhancing the artistic options he offers clients. He has a personal interest in historical architecture and finishes, and is a member of the local Better Business Bureau, Home Builders Association, Network Group, and ARCH Historical Architecture association. He has also spent time learning and being a certified installer and educator of Old World Italian plasters, decorative concrete floors, and many other faux finish techniques. While in the past those techniques often went to the grave with the artist, Fischer says decorative artisans like him are relearning the techniques from today's masters.

To further his skills, Fischer pursues the work of other artisans, spending time with them on their jobs across the country, doing what he calls the "grunt work" in exchange for knowledge. Then,

using techniques he has learned from other experts, he is able to incorporate his own styles to create new environments clients desire.

"Learning from other masters gives me a foundation for each technique I apply," Fischer says. "I have been fortunate to connect with these skilled artisans who are teaching others so the knowledge won't be lost. The hands-on experiences are priceless, and in return I can bring those techniques back to my clients."

Carrol Lepper has had Fischer working in her home since seeing early examples of his work and creative abilities. "I wanted to update the bath in my 14-year-old home, and I recognized Rick's talent the minute I saw his sample boards and work," Lepper says. "When he completed the bath, we moved to the dining room, where he changed the entire room through his techniques. He even duplicated a vase design to create a border. Now, he's recreating my kitchen, and from there we'll move to the bedrooms. His work is contagious and people who see what he's done can't believe it."



In this room, Fischer used antiqued-pressed tin on the ceiling and Finitura Ruvida stucco on the walls to create the look of an Italian bistro.

Lepper says an important aspect of Fischer's work is his interest in offering advice regarding related room details. For instance, he helped her "select coordinating trim and suggested new lighting options to complement the surroundings he had created. He doesn't have to take that extra step, but he does to ensure the job is fully complete," Lepper says.

Unless he has a specific need for sub-contractors who can do prep work, Fischer works alone. "Like the artisans who are teaching me, someday I would like to teach others my techniques. Right now, though, by working alone I can give each client the dedication they expect and avoid having a crew of strangers in their personal space."

Fischer recognizes that there has been extensive media exposure to the new options for decorative painting and finishes, making homeowners more aware of the opportunities. As a result, there are many painters and wallpapering professionals who are doing a wide range of decorative painting. Fischer acknowledges that these mid-range professionals have their niche in the market, but Deco Illusions is not out to compete with them. Instead, Fischer's focus is on "providing clients with authentic finishes that are done well, because I want to be unique for each client."

Fischer says he will continue pursuing opportunities to learn from other masters, and he looks forward to additional travel opportunities that will give him new

ideas to bring back to clients. He is especially interested in visiting historical and commercial restoration projects in Europe, which he says give him a chance to see different effects and applications.

"I don't see a time when I would reach a point where I've learned everything," Fischer says. "There are so many ways to research and so many opportunities for new possibilities and continued learning. Fort Wayne is a diverse community, too, and it gives me ample places to apply so many different effects and techniques."

"My customers want what is different, and I want to help bring the past back into today," Fischer adds. "For that reason, I remain dedicated to specialty, exotic and difficult textures and finishes that require my training and artistic skills. There really is no end to the types of work I do because these techniques have already been around for centuries. I'm simply bringing them into today's world. What I do is timeless."

Carrol Lepper echoes the feelings of many Deco Illusions clients when she says, "One day Rick Fischer's work will be untouchable, because he is a true artist." BP

## for your information

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**YEAR ESTABLISHED:** 1993

**PRODUCTS/SERVICES:**

- Architural Old World Venetian Plaster & Italian Stucco
- European Fresco's Trompe L' Oeil & Stenciling
- Distress Color Washing, Glazing, Woodgraining & Marbling
- Gilded Gold Leafing & Patina Metal Effects
- Custom Furniture, Trim & Cabinets Refinished
- Decorative Acid Staining & Design On Concrete and Countertops



Here, Fischer used Ventiano (Venetian lime-based plaster) on the walls and Leta del Bronzo finish with embedded impressions of maple leaves in the ceiling.