



# Arizona Gourds

May updates from the desert southwest...

Welcome to the May issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

This month features my recent trip to the Gourd Gallery in Sugar Loaf, NY. Shown here is the sign they had posted by the front door to greet me. More below!

This month's newsletter is a few days later than normal. In addition to traveling to New York to teach classes, my husband Ev and I also took a trip to see Copper Canyon in Mexico. If we managed to get some good pictures I will share them with you in an upcoming newsletter!



## What's new on the [Arizona Gourds](#) website?

### Back in Stock....

**Turntables are back in stock (while they last!) on the [Kits and Displays](#) page.** These turntables are great for showing off your favorite gourd at a gourd show or competition. People are less tempted to pick up and handle your gourd and they are still able to see all sides of the artwork. The larger turntable can handle 3 or 4 small pieces on the same platform.



### Update: Gourd Classes

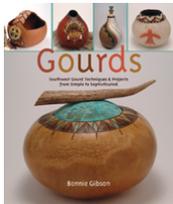
I will be offering a few late summer classes in Tucson for those brave enough to stand a bit of heat. Please email me if you have a class or date request. Inlaid inlay and coil basketry are good summertime classes.

I also plan to have a full schedule of classes in the fall, but dates have not been set. My tentative schedule is for classes in early September or in November.

Please send me a note if you have a preference. Be sure to join the class updates list if you want to receive information about upcoming classes. \*I'd also be interested in hearing from you if you have an idea of a new class you'd like to see me offer.



[Join The Class updates List](#)



**Gourds** Southwest Gourd Techniques & Projects  
from Simple to Sophisticated by Bonnie Gibson

All books I ship are autographed.

(Please click on the book cover for ordering information.)

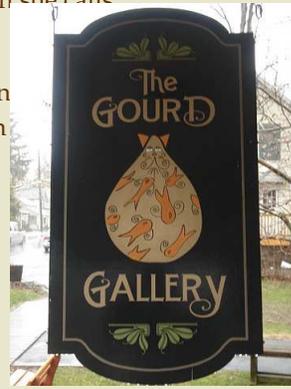
## May Feature: My visit to the "Gourd Gallery"

I recently had the opportunity to visit the **Gourd Gallery**, located in the small town of Sugar Loaf, New York. Sugar Loaf is a quaint town in southern New York, only about an hour's drive from New

York City. It has long been known as an artist's community, and it still has many small shops and artisans with interesting wares. Devon Cameron is the owner of the Gourd Gallery, and in addition to her retail store she also produces her own line of folk art gourd ornaments which she calls "Gourdaments".

Devon graciously provided me with the opportunity to travel to her location and teach a weekend of gourd crafting classes. Despite the soggy weather, a fun time was had by all.

Right: Devon's copyrighted "Cleo" gourd cat design greets you at the gallery entrance



Below: Local artist Claudia Pfeuger is one of many gourd artists that have their work available at the gourd gallery.



Inside the shop, a tree appears to grow up through the building - it's actually just a great way to display gourd birdhouses!



The gourd gallery has a wide variety of gourd objects including masks, ornaments, purses, birdhouses, art vessels, musical instruments and much more. In addition, they carry many other related art objects and a wide selection of Peruvian and World gourd pieces.



**At the gourd classes!** I taught classes at the shop on Saturday and Sunday. The cold and rainy weather over the weekend forced us to work inside but everyone still had a good time.



Left: Devon Cameron (standing on left) provided her workshop space at the gallery so we'd have a place for class.



Above and left  
Everyone got  
the spots on  
that comes fr  
their respirato



To the right is Cleo, one of Devon's original "Gourdament" designs. It was so cute, I had to buy one and bring it home with me.

Devon is now having her gourdaments produced for her in Peru under Fair Trade agreements. It provides the Peruvians with a fair wage for their work, and at the same time makes it possible for her to keep up with the large demand for her products. You can visit Devon's website at: <http://www.gourdaments.com/>



*\*.... I'm trying to convince Devon to come out with a "Bonnie Duck" ornament next! After all the rain it just seems appropriate!*

### Tip of the Month: Sealing, Coloring and Finishing Carved Areas

I am often asked about how to paint or dye carved areas. I can only tell you what works for me and encourage you to do some experimenting on your own if you want to try other products. It's a good idea to keep an open mind and be willing to experiment with materials you have on hand. This can lead to surprising (*sometimes terrific, sometimes horrific!*) results. Who knows, you may come up with the next great technique!

First, I seal carved areas with a light spray of semi-gloss Deft lacquer. (I have tried generic brands but have had better results with Deft). A light misting will seal the carved area and provide a better painting surface, and lacquer dries very quickly. This light seal coat works well under almost any kind of paint or finish. Sealing also reduces or eliminates possible raising of gourd fibers when water based pigments are applied. Caution: Don't spray too heavily, you just want a very light mist. Wipe excessive spray from the non-carved areas with a bit of lacquer thinner.

Because dyes and inks are absorbed to a greater degree on carved areas than on the gourd skin, it is difficult to get even results with these products. They also make any small scratches or imperfections in the carving more obvious. Instead, I use acrylic paints to color carved areas. Whenever possible, I use an artist's sponge to apply the paint to large areas. This produces a softer and less "flat" looking color. (When paint is applied in thin coats you can even achieve the same transparent effects that are produced with dyes and inks!) Of course, for fine detail and small areas you'll need to use a paint brush, but you can avoid obvious brush marks by using thinner coats of paint. Build up thin layers of color, and use an extender or other painting medium if you need more working time for blending.

Finish the gourd with your choice of sealers. Lately, I have been using a spray matte finish on many of my gourds. I like the softer look of a matte finish on carved areas. Matte finishes also preserve the interesting dusty colors that are produced with patina solutions. You may prefer a glossier finish, that is simply a matter of personal preference. Deft lacquer also makes a nice finish - apply a few coats and then lightly buff with the finest possible steel wool. This will give a lustrous satin finish that is smooth and silky feeling.

*\*Do you have a tip or tutorial we can feature here? Please [contact me](#).*

### Featured Gourd of the Month: **Woven Antler Gourd**

This gourd had a big hole on one side, so I cut off that whole section and saved the scrap for other projects. The remaining gourd became a lovely vessel when turned on its side. To make it stand upright, I attached the gourd to a shed deer antler. One antler prong pokes inside the gourd, plus I drilled a few small holes and used some waxed linen to stitch the gourd securely onto the antler. The gourd was

### Featured Books of the Month:

Here are two books that have great information on drawing and painting a variety of animals. Both have some wonderful step by step illustrations and show you how to add realism with texture, expressions and lots of technique

decorated with some burning, carving, turquoise inlay, and woven pine needles. There is also a \*scrimshaw design and a small piece of turquoise inlaid into the knob on the antler.



\*Scrimshaw is a folk art developed by whalers. They would scribe designs onto whale's teeth, and blacken the scribed lines with soot. Scrimshaw is another one of my hobbies. It requires good eyes and a steady hand. Below is a piece I did on a fossilized walrus tooth. This is a dollhouse sized miniature of less than an inch long!



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Thanks for checking out the latest news! Feel free to pass the newsletter link along to your friends.

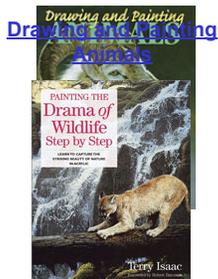
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[Painting the Drama of Wildlife](#)

information. These are good reference books with lots of inspirations for artists of any media.

For many more books on animals including patterns, reference and techniques, please visit the ["Animals"](#) book page found on my website.

*\*Be sure to visit all these different book pages to see some of the many other titles that are available. Click on each topic to see a variety of books about each subject.*

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