

# Waterlife Art

By Virginia Garrison



How would you like to have a “one-of-a-kind” signature piece of coastal North Carolina history in your home or business? Wright and Gail Smith offer exquisite products in their business, Waterlife Art. It is a local resource for driftwood tables and lamps as well as original oil paintings and giclee reproductions that are signed and numbered. Any décor

– coastal, traditional, modern, or eclectic – can be enhanced by their beautiful art pieces.

Wright and Gail met at Wake Forest University as classmates, reconnected 30 years later at a college reunion, and have now been married for 12 years. Together they have four grown children and four grandchildren. Their furry child, Maggie, is a Golden Doodle who likes to be involved in whatever they are doing. Sometimes she naps at the foot of Gail’s easel, but mostly she supervises Wright’s workshop where she has her own bed.

The Smiths started Waterlife Art over 4 years ago at the intersection of inspiration and opportunity. Wright has been self-employed for 44 years, owning several business in that time, and Gail is a retired fundraising executive. They now have made room in their lives for artistic pursuits. Living on the beautiful Brunswick River, they are inspired by their surroundings which provide unlimited subject matter.

For Wright, there is an abundant supply of drift-



wood with a fascinating history dating back to the Cape Fear River’s logging industry of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Their dock has become a mooring place for interesting pieces of wood that come their way. Gail shared, “We have been sitting at the table, enjoying a meal, when Wright notices a log in the river and jumps up to make sure it doesn’t get away from him. He lassos logs and ties them to the dock until he can retrieve them at low tide.” The logs are power washed and allowed to dry and season for 12-24 months before work is begun to transform these beautiful works of Nature into distinctive and gorgeous works of art. The wood is more than 100 years old, mainly cypress and cedar, and Wright is captivated by the character of each individual piece of driftwood. No two pieces are identical, even those cut from the same tree.





her viewers' comments as she shares, "I enjoy re-creating images that appeal to the senses and evoke memories of familiar places, experiences, even childhood. My favorite reactions to my paintings include 'that reminds me of...' and 'that makes me smile' as viewers escape, even for a brief moment, to a happy memory."



Owning a Gail Smith award-winning work of art helps the buyer keep those memories alive forever. Owning a Wright Smith original table or lamp allows the buyer to enjoy not only the unique beauty of his and Nature's creation, but also to own a

very rare piece of history of coastal Carolina. Delivery in the greater Wilmington area is free of charge.

For more information and pictures, view the website: [www.waterlifeart.com](http://www.waterlifeart.com).



Gail's passion is to express herself through art. Her previous creative pursuits included interior design and graphic design, but her appreciation for fine art has led her to explore painting, especially oil on canvas. Gail's paintings are inspired by the ever-changing Brunswick River, marshes, skies, and shore birds common in this region. Her grandchildren have also given her inspiration for a series of children's paintings.

"Life's most pleasant experiences stay with us as happy memories." Gail especially likes to hear

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