

21 years of markt elegance

Artist and calligrapher, Sabrina Verkamp, shares her expertise

BY CASEY UEBELHOR

With a flick of the calligrapher's pen, the letter A kicks its leg, Es and Fs stretch curly arms, and Qs twist their tails through the tops of Ts...

Visitors to Sabrina Verkamp's Christkindmarkt booth stand back in amazement as she gracefully, deliberately showcases her skills: the Ferdinand native has studied classical calligraphy for more than 25 years.

An artist by trade, Verkamp became interested in calligraphy while working at nearby Saint Meinrad Archabbey. There, under the direction of Benedictine monk and calligrapher, Fr. Eric Lies, OSB, Verkamp trained in the strict, old-world rules of the ancient art. At the time, her revered instructor was "90-something years old," she tells.

"He helped me hone my skills," says the artist, "and since then I've attended conferences, both national and international, where I fine tune."

Samples of Verkamp's fine-tuned expression abound in 170 x 135 pixel rectangles on the main page of her Etsy shop, Artfully SV. Here, guests' names embellish traditional silver-lined placecards and other popular wedding and banquet decor — river rocks, ornamental stones, agates, sea glass and driftwood.

Some names are written in proud calligraphy of past centuries; others swerve and dash in less fussy, contemporary styles. There are letters that look like they

listen to hip-hop, and a few are in the quiet lowercase of old typesetting.

Sharp blacks and whites, iridescent purples and stunning silvers prance across ornaments

and pirouette around wine glasses, *Baby's 1st Christmas*; *Mother of the Bride*.

At time of press, the shop enjoys 534 reviews, all five stars, from 2,084 sales. "With today's marketplace," professes Verkamp, "where things are so mass produced, I like that I'm able to offer something that has that personal touch to it. That is hand done."

At her markt booth, SV Calligraphy & Art, Verkamp displays a curated collection of her wares, including holiday

ornaments. Verkamp's hand-painted glass and shatter-proof balls swirl with painted snowmen and original Christmas designs. The ornaments may be personalized on-site, and a special ornament called "Our Grandkids" is one of Verkamp's top sellers. There are wedding, engagement and memorial ornaments, and the designer also paints original snowmen and winter

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Ferdinand Elementary

Bread & Butter — wraps, salads, drinks
Cedar Creations — cedar and old barnwood items

Cheesecake Fairy — variety of cheesecakes, large, individual cheesecakes and chocolate-covered cheesecake bites

Colonial Wagon & Wheel — handcrafted metal art décor for the home, patio, lawn and garden

Doug and Lori Collins — birdhouse, bags and purses

Fobbit — key fobs, up-cycled owls, quiet books, badge reels

French Ridge Pottery — handmade ceramics

Hannah's Herbs & Everlastings — Christmas floral

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