

# On The Trail....

## Of Barn Quilts



The Natural State has long been a mecca for the practitioners and purveyors of what is generally known as folk art. Artisans range from a wide spectrum of disciplines such as pottery making, blacksmithing, basket weaving, and quilting. In recent years the centuries-old art of quilting with its beautiful colorful quilt square patterns has crossed paths with the practice of painting symbols on the sides of barns. What has resulted is a completely distinct artistic discipline of painting and displaying barn quilts.



Painting symbols on barns traces back to the origins of our country. As European immigrants from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Holland began to colonize and move west, the barns they built became the more visible aspects of the roads and byways of our countryside. The earliest examples of these barn-painted motifs were called “barn stars” and were focused in southeastern Pennsylvania.

The concept of painting a barn quilt was born when Donna Sue Groves from Adams County, Ohio was inspired to paint a quilt square on a sheet of plywood and hang it on a local barn. From that moment of inspiration in 2001, more and more of these colorful works of art are becoming visible across our highways and byways. Quilt trails have been developed in all of the lower 48 states and Canada. After a number of barn quilts have been displayed in an area or county, a map is developed that guides the viewers to the location. The map will have an address, a

picture of the square itself and a name or explanation of its meaning.

Barn quilts come in all sizes from 8 ft x 8 ft traditionally seen outdoors on barns and large structures to 4 ft x 4 ft that one sees on fences, garages and houses. Smaller sizes such as 2 ft x 2 ft are more commonly seen and enjoyed indoors in dens and hallways. Some examples of barn quilts with traditional quilt patterns seen here are Cardinals, Ohio Star, and Bear Claw. Like with any folk art movement, the imaginations of barn quilters have led to a huge variety of expressions. More than 700 barn quilts are on display across the 24 counties



of our state. Each county has its own barn quilt trail. You can start your discovery at [arkansasbarnquilttrails.com](http://arkansasbarnquilttrails.com) or use the QR code below.



**Twin Creek Barn Quilts**

*....they're not just  
for barns  
anymore*

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