

Stanley Rose Automotive Artist on the Road

By Sherrie Wilkolaski





Art

While traveling in Burgundy, France late last summer, I spent a few days at le Chateau de Mailly. My tour guide was Chef Katherine Frelon and she was on assignment, cooking for an English group of wine enthusiasts who had come down for their annual wine excursion. They were guests at the chateau and Katherine was hired to cater over the long-weekend. The chateau is set up on cliff's edge, overlooking the Yonne River and the Canal Nivernais. The view is breathtaking. The entire setting is serene and has just what you want in an old French chateau, brick walls, farm tables and countryside knick knacks.

My time was spent in the kitchen and I had a front row seat to the magic of Katherine's cooking. As I sat back, I imagined I was watching a play, as characters exited and entered the kitchen as if they were coming in and out of the one-room set. With only a handful of players and Katherine taking the lead, it was clear this was not their first performance. Everything was running smoothly and I was able to jump in and help out from time to time. What a thrill!

We all had a moment to enjoy our own dinner after guests had moved on to

their cheese course. I had the pleasure of getting to know the ladies who were helping her tend to guests. One woman on the crew was Avril Rose and is a dear friend of Katherine's. They had worked together years before on canal barges and during our break, her husband Stan joined us. As it turns out, they are two fellow British transplants who have found a home in France. After several glasses of wine and a scrumptious plate of Beef Bourguignon, the conversation took a turn from the day's events and I discovered I was sitting next to a world-renowned artist. Stanley Rose is the leading artist of automotive art and I was honored to be sharing a lovely meal and much wine with both him and his wife.

As it turns out, he had been working on a book of a collection of his artwork and that is how the conversation unfolded. We pulled out the iPad and he took me to his website to show me his work. I was blown away. You do not have to love cars to enjoy his pieces. There is something that is classic in his style and his attention to detail jumps off the canvas. He is a true working artist and spends his days painting in his studio in France, not too far from le Chateau de Mailly.

As a follow-up to my visit, I spent more time getting to know Stanley Rose the artist. Stan was born in the UK and obtained his B.A. Hons in Fine Art and then taught fine art and design for 13 years. Next he moved to France to set up his own studio and paint full time. He's a member of the Automotive Fine Art Society (based in the U.S.) and is the current President of Artist-Auto, a French-based association of artists.

His preferred medium is acrylics and oils and when I asked why he enjoys these types of paints, he said, "I use acrylic paint as under-painting and finish with oils. Each medium has its unique qualities and that is what I try and exploit. Acrylic is quick drying and transparent. I use it to quickly develop the painting and love the immediacy of it. I let the paint run and drip on the canvas and see this as a metaphor of the nature of the medium, then follow with oil paint to bring out the details in the picture. Oils are richer in colour and can have a range of textures which enable me to paint detailed fabrics, a quality difficult to achieve with acrylics."

When asked if he has always been interested in art, he replied, "I've drawn since I can remember. At the age of eleven I won my first art

competition and had a couple of pictures shown on TV. From that point, I knew that I wanted a career in art and it became my motivation for passing school exams in order to qualify for art school."

His earliest influences came from the figurative artists of the Pop Art era in the early sixties, such as Peter Blake and David Hockney. Stan said, "My real inspiration, though it is probably difficult to see in my work, comes from Robert Rauschenburg. The melange of abstract and figurative elements really attract me."

Personally, I have a thing for old, classic European cars, particularly the Aston Martin. I asked Stan if he had any paintings of the Aston and he does. It turns out it is one of his favorites. He said, "One of my favourite pieces is called 'Mrs. Martin with Aston', a play on words that refer to the make of car in the background. What I like most about this picture is the successful (in my eyes) way that the foreground and the figure merge with the background. I also like the slight deception of the gender of the figure. At first she is seen as male, due to gender stereotyping and only on second glance you see that it is a female. I like that."

The conversation moved from specific paintings to exhibitions, and he had this to say when asked what was the best exhibition he has ever seen, "The Retrospective exhibition of Jean Michel Basquiat at the MOCA in Los Angeles. I have seen many individual examples of his work and though they are interesting they mean very little in isolation. It is only in viewing the complete works together, in one place that you start to appreciate the immense power of his work."

In the art world, it is nice to find an artist who is not "starving" and is truly making it. When I asked what his secret is to his success, he said, "Being original is key in succeeding but also creating a market for your work." He loves being his own boss. One of his biggest challenges as an artist is when he is commissioned to paint a picture. He explains, "I want to remain true to what I do whilst honoring the clients' wishes."

Stanley's current work in progress is a combination of two elements, a racehorse and a car. It belongs to a series he's been working on for some time, comparing the relationship between horse, rider, car and driver. When he's not working, he enjoys looking at contemporary art, and he and his wife Avril regularly take city visits to explore different art galleries.

If he could be another artist for a day, who would it be? "Cy Twombly. Because it would give me an insight into how to achieve more poetry in my own work. Other art inspires me to think beyond what I am doing and guards against complacency."

His creative truth: "Be yourself. Mimicking other artists is a pointless exercise. Appreciate and learn from others but go with your natural instincts and think about what it is that YOU want to achieve."

Stanley Rose shows regularly at the Pebble Beach Concours D'elegance in California, as well as "Retromobile", Paris. Additionally, he can be seen at "New Masters Gallery" in California, as well as Places de Vosges, Paris and the Mall Galleries, London.

His most memorable moment as an artist was selling his whole exhibition in one go in his early days of exhibiting at Retromobile, Paris.

To see more of Stanley Rose's work go to www.stanley-rose.com.

