

By Barbara David

A portrait lasts generations, captures personality, speaks of tradition and represents the ideal version of a person. Award-winning artist Carol Strebel, who recently opened the StrebelArt Portraits Studio at 2723 Woodburn Avenue, describes her passion for portraiture: "People are endlessly fascinating. My primary interest has always been people. I think my gift as an artist is to bring life to people on canvas, and I strive to convey emotion and mood in my work."

The new StrebelArt Portraits Studio developed as the demands of Strebel's business outgrew her former space. Multiple easels line the work area, often filled with canvases of clients' work in progress. There's also the model stand, lights and various equipment Strebel uses to capture her models. "People always tell me what fun they had through the whole process -- from consultation to photo-shoot, to seeing the sketch, doing the color study, visiting the painting as it progresses and to finally owning the completed portrait. They just love it. Some of them change their outfits a few times, and I have costumes too. It's always about 100 percent satisfaction guaranteed."

And some of that satisfaction comes from Strebel's artistry in creating a person's "ideal self" in a portrait. "People often want to look a little younger, or slimmer. Men usually want a little more hair. That's all part of it."

Before the actual painting begins, Strebel does a full-size sketch of the work for client's approval of the painting's direction, impression of the painting's size. Building layers of color to give depth and luminosity to the portrait can take several months, but clients can use the full-size sketch to make preparations for the portrait's display in their homes. Additionally, Strebel welcomes clients' visits to the studio to see their portrait's evolution.

The studio also gives potential clients a chance to see Strebel's portrait work and make their decisions without a formal appointment. Anyone can come by, stop in the studio showroom, pick up a price sheet, and take a look at the portrait styles with no pressure at all. People may choose to browse and go, or they may linger and talk about the creation of their own work of art.

Studio Hours: Saturday 10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Monday - Friday: By appointment.

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