

HOMESTYLE

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february 2009

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Say It All

With the Victorian
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The Daily Progress
THE NEWS VIRGINIAN

It's a Treasure to Be Remembered

By Wendy Edwards



Vintage Valentine Card Set



*"Do you ever see a man look through
a stack of mail, and notice that
suddenly his face lights up as he
seizes a letter 'from home'?
He tears it open eagerly,
his mouth up-curving at the corners,
as he lingers over every word."*

*~ Emily Post (1873–1960).
Etiquette 1922.*

SEEING THE HANDWRITING OF A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER ON THE FACE OF AN ENVELOPE CAN TRIGGER A SMILE, ESPECIALLY SINCE MOST COMMUNICATION IS DONE ELECTRONICALLY NOWADAYS. E-MAILED GREETINGS AND QUICK I-LOVE-YOU'S SENT VIA TEXT MESSAGE CAN LIFT ONE'S SPIRIT, BUT RECEIVING THEM CAN'T REPLACE THE EXCITEMENT OF HAVING A CARD IN HAND.

"Essentially, I think giving a card to anyone is a gift in and of itself," says Cary Oliva, creator of ByCary Handmade Goods. "There is something refreshing and romantic about it. It's very intimate."

If a pen is put to paper, even just to say hello, it becomes a heartwarming token that delivers the writer's personality into the hands of the recipient.

"It's a gift - a keepsake. I would not want to throw this away," Oliva says. "I automatically feel extra loved, extra cared for. I'm not thinking dollar signs, just that someone went out there to find that handmade creation, and it's taken a little extra time to find, to buy just the right image and with

just the right sentiment. It automatically creates more value."

The artist's appreciation for handmade expression is a major motivation for her business. "It's such a personal process," she says. "My cards are a unique product. I like the way they feel. There is a little texture to the paper and it reinforces the old-school nature of sitting down and writing a letter to someone." ByCary handmade cards are truly archival art. The arrangements are printed on high-quality, heavy cardstock that is ideal for framing.

Oliva uses found images as well as her own. She has found a way to manipulate Polaroid photographs to create an extraordinary impression, as seen on the University of Virginia graduation card this past spring.

Many ByCary inspirational gifts consist of ideas developed while walking and discovering Charlottesville's scenery. Another of her favored pastimes is to visit antique malls where she can find old postcards. "The images are interesting, and reading them is fun," says Oliva, whose love of old-fashioned prints is reflected in her work.



Valentine floral collection

Oliva is focused on bringing natural and real objects to her craft table. Some of the work is digitally printed; some silk-screened. “I’m drawn to older methods, and I’ve thought of letterpress,” Oliva says. “I love the look of letterpress.” She is also considering the use of a Japanese printing method called Gocco, a practice similar to screen printing, that uses a unique light source to create a thermal image. “There’s a lot of time and energy and sweat that goes into it.”

Oliva’s work is worth every bit of time and effort that she puts into it, especially in our day, when a traditional greeting is usually expressed over the Internet. Her matchless creations extend beyond appreciation in that they tell the recipient, “I remembered you.”

Handmade goods ByCary are to be cherished. Find them on the walls of Sticks Kebob shop on Pantops Mountain, on display at The Barn Swallow in Ivy, and at the Hedge Fine Blooms at Main Street Market.

Etsy hosts Oliva’s online store at www.caryoliva.etsy.com. Be on the lookout for the upcoming www.bycary.com.



Vintage Paper Coaster Set



Four Shell Coaster Set



Rotunda Print