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Home Made Artist

An In-Law's House Has Turned Into A Dream Studio For Delmont Woman

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DELMONT — Eight years later, Elizabeth "Sam" Grosz still feels warm memories walking through her late mother-in-law's home.

Louise "Babe" Grosz lived in the house on the west end of Delmont, a Douglas County town of about 230 residents. After her death, the family was left with the decision of what to do with the home.

Should they live in it? Sell it? Tear it down? Or ... make it a home for art?

Sam Grosz has converted the former residence into the Paintbrush Studio, offering art lessons and featuring the work of regional artists.

"I was still trying to decide whether to start an art studio. It was a big step," she said. "But one evening, I was with my husband, Terry, and we talked about it. This is the house where he grew up, and now it was available. I thought, if I don't do it now, when am I going to do it?"

Sam Grosz felt a sense of urgency, realizing the golden chance awaiting her.

"I don't want to get to the end of my life and wish, 'If I had just done this, if I had just pursued that artwork a little bit more ...' and I had the opportunity and passed it by," she said. "This (studio) was one of those things on my bucket list."

Grosz said she always felt artistically inclined. She took art classes while pursuing a journalism degree at Augustana College in Sioux Falls. Her artistic interest ratcheted up when she worked as a receptionist in an art studio.

"I would hang over the back of the artists' chair and see what they were doing," she said.

Grosz gained design experience working with newspaper advertisements in Pierre. She also took drawing classes and painted acrylics, but she remained mostly self-taught.

PURSuing HER ART

After her marriage, Grosz moved to Delmont and worked as a weekly newspaper editor for the *Parkston Advance* and *Tripp Star-Ledger*. She retired as editor but still continues as a freelance writer, including work for the *Press & Dakotan* and Douglas County Publishing.

No longer tied to a full-time job, Grosz has seriously pursued her art interests.

"I happened to see the ad for the Cottage Art Studio that Linda Schroder had (in an old farmhouse on her property) near Armour. I thought, I can take that class now that I have time, so I called Linda and I was at her studio the next day," she said. "I just loved it. I was painting with Linda for about three years. When she said she was closing her studio and moving, I thought 'Well, OK, where am I going to paint?'"

Grosz thought of the little house in Delmont as a studio. Schroder challenged her instead to become an art instructor.

"I said I didn't know enough to teach," Grosz said. "Linda said, 'You can teach!' She helped me set it up with stuff from her studio."

Grosz not only took on Schroder's students but added two other painters.

Last month, Grosz celebrated her Paintbrush Studio's first anniversary with special classes and other offerings. Delmont resident Elle Rice also taught two jewelry classes, and the studio provided a display area for regional artists.

Visitors enter the kitchen, which serves as a gift display and clean-up area. The dining room serves as the studio, while the living room houses the gift shop with rubber-

stamped greeting cards, pictures, purses and ceramics. You could say that Grosz has provided area artists with a home.

"I think there are more artists out there than most people realize," she said. "Most people in the area, who do this sort of thing, look for a place to get their items out there."



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D
Delmont artist Elizabeth "Sam" Grosz displays some of the work in her studio, which is located in the home of her late mother-in-law. Grosz recently noted the first anniversary of her studio and as a painting instructor, which grew out of her lifelong passion for art.

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