

Vella arrived in New Orleans to work at Studio Inferno almost a decade ago as a gaffer (a master glass blower), nurtured his creative impulses by dedicating one day a week to making his own art and bought Inferno's glass-blowing business about three years ago. Because Vella Vetro still operates at Inferno's location and maintains a workload for some of Inferno's clients, Vella honors the groundwork that was laid since its 1991 founding. But he separates his work from that of Inferno: While his style is influenced by 16th-century Venetian style, his look, he says, will be no look. And that will be Vella Vetro's signature, he says: to have people assume a piece originated there because it doesn't look like it came from anywhere else.

While he praises his assistants, Vella also looks forward to the summer's activities. "Being around other [glass artists] really



Even the common vase gets dressed up at James Vella's studio.

tends to inspire me. The time I take off away from my shop every summer inspires me because I'm working with other people, I get to watch other people work—which I never get to do in my shop—I get to share ideas."

Vella Vetro's furnace closed in early June ("Once it's shut off, you feel so helpless. A painter can always paint") and will reopen in August. But the break won't find Vella sitting idle; his schedule includes three exhibits, the residency at the Frauenuau glass factory, and a short but intense stint at Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina. Then—and this part is crucial—comes an honest-to-goodness, roughly 10-day break during which he will spend time with his wife, garden, perhaps golf or fish, and ultimately get bored and anxiously await the return of the blowing "season."

"My wife has it down on the calendar," he says. "I'm halfway tolerable for seven to eight days." ♦

James Vella, Vella Vetro, 3000 Royal St., 2nd floor, 948-0414, www.vellavetro.com

Guaranteed to age gracefully.



**Top's Woodwork
& Supply**

Phone (504) 822-8708
Fax (504) 822-0013

4344 Earhart Blvd.
New Orleans, LA 70125



BROOKHAVEN
CABINETS

www.wood-mode.com

notopswoodwork@earthlink.net



Portfolio

OF HOME BUILDERS

The Framework for Finding Perfect Partners for Living

Throughout Southeast Louisiana & the Gulf & Emerald Coast Areas, home building professionals aim to make your dreams come true. This month, we invite you to take a closer look at a select group of some of the finest builders in town. Whether you already have the floor plans for your dream home forming in your mind's eye or you're looking for a house plan to fit your needs, you'll find the professional partner you need in our portfolio of local experts.



For more information call Nancy Ruiz at 504-830-7242 or email nruiz@mcmediallc.com