

# Bear Creek Trading Post...Like No Other

By Penny Randell

If you're in search of exceptional and uncommon gifts and crafts, you're in luck. Just head down the hill to Kittredge and there in the Adobe Creek Village sits Bear Creek Trading Post. Owners Beryl Shanahan and Ray Trujillo spend Monday through Wednesday creating these one-of-a-kind works of art, and then open their door to the public Thursday through Sunday. Every item in their inspired shop is a product of their own imagination, and something you will never see elsewhere.

The shop opened for business July first of this year. Not one item was bought for the event, for the two simply brought all their merchandise from home and displayed it in a sun-filled room that somehow captured the essence of the business. "The interior of the shop is perfect and exactly what we were looking for. Our works seem to be accented by the overall atmosphere," said Shanahan. One month after opening the two provided an open house with prizes, drawings, and gift certificates. Trujillo said, "We pretty much sold out of everything in that one day and had to bring in new inventory the following week."

Both Shanahan and Trujillo have been originating their personal art for decades. Shanahan grew up in England during World War II and says beginning at a young age she learned to sew by hand, making all her own clothes. Surrounded by bombed out buildings, continuous air raid siren alerts, and gas masks that had to be worn daily, this determined child entertained herself and survived. At 18 years of age she moved to America and lived with her aunt in Virginia. There she discovered her first real sewing machine and she reports that was the beginning. After providing funding for her mother and brother to follow her path to America, she dedicated herself to full-time sewing that gradually initiated a successful drapery and window treatment business.

Trujillo began his life in Littleton, Colorado and joined the Air Force after completing two years of college education. Once his hitch was over, he returned to his home and completed another year of school. He says he was a good student, but just didn't appreciate the confinement of a classroom. So, he traded in his books for a career in sales, where he enjoyed great success. He lived in New Mexico for a short time, then returned to Denver to attend his ailing mother. However, while in New Mexico he began to create. Eventually he exhibited his crafts at art shows, but felt that the experience "just didn't fit."

During these years, Beryl and Ray met and enjoyed a superior friendship that lasted several years. Once Shanahan married, the relationship came to an end and they had no contact for over 20 years. After the death of her husband, Shanahan received a letter from Trujillo inviting her to lunch. He was unaware her husband had passed. When Shanahan received the invitation she immediately took him up on his offer. But, this was the worst of times, for she was battling cancer.

All alone and with no one to help, Shanahan maintains the letter gave her the energy she needed to leave her house. The luncheon was apparently meant to be, for it was a total success which begged for further involvement. Nonetheless, the illness continued and Trujillo made the decision to enter her life full time and pledged to provide full-time care. "This was an absolute miracle. After no contact for over 20 years this man committed himself to me and nursed me back to health," Shanahan said. From the beginning this couple applauded one another for their personal creations and discussed mutual longings to own their own shop.

When asked, Trujillo admits he was always taken by Shanahan and the incomparability displayed in her work. “We were coming from the same place. I knew we were meant to be, and so is this business.” Both members of this unrelenting team state that it has always been their passion to create crafts. Trujillo’s woodwork, lamps, pottery, artistic antlers, jewelry, custom-framed prints and wall hangings are a perfect complement to Shanahan’s tote bags, purses, pillows, and more. While constructing and designing are anchored to the hearts of these two creators, it is their mutual respect, passion, and love that keeps them moving onward.

This miraculous story wouldn’t be complete without including the mention of their finest possession: a 1929 Ford, Model A. The couple says they bought it after it was restored and it runs like a new car. Belonging to a Model A club, the two enjoy activities through their membership. Shanahan says, “This is an excellent club filled with super kind people. Both of us really have fun and we love the events they sponsor.” The car usually sits in front of their shop with a sign that reads, “A Ford able Art.”

Meeting this inventive and energetic couple is obviously the main attraction when visiting their shop. And, of course, the inventory is like no other. Shanahan’s collection of what she calls “dumpling pillows,” along with rugs, drapes, and decorative pillows will absolutely warm your heart. And, too, with over 25 years of experience in crafting original works of Southwestern art, Trujillo has much to offer. With Christmas only three months away, it’s the perfect place to begin shopping. After all, gifts born from this kind of passion retain a bit of the fervency with which they were originated. How striking it is to purchase from such a couple. That in itself is a treat.