

Chuck Lewis oil and ink works achieve 'Valhalla'

Part-time artist shows his best

By STEPHANIE INNES

Staff Reporter

Wherever he goes, Chuck Lewis carries brown ink, paper and oil paints.

"I really can stop anywhere and start painting or sketching," said Lewis. "It's a relaxation activity for me."

Although Lewis has exhibited his brown ink and oil paintings throughout Ontario and has a steady stream of requests for commissioned work, his art remains a recreative pursuit.

"I would like to be a full-time artist one day," said the 49-year-old Port Credit resident. "But I have to be realistic about it. It's a risky thing to do."

A self-taught artist, Lewis said he once considered a career in commercial art, but decided it wouldn't give him enough creative freedom.

"If someone is telling you what to do all the time, then that is not art," said Lewis.

Instead of art, Lewis went into business management and is now an associate for an electrical engineer consulting firm. His job takes him all over North America, frequently to Ottawa and San Francisco, which are both common settings for his intricate ink drawings.

"With the business I'm in, there are always problems and not too many people call you up to ask what kind of day you're

having," he said. "So I have my art. It's therapeutic."

Lewis' job actually intertwines with his art because he spends a great deal of time going to construction projects, allowing him to observe various styles of architecture. His transparent brown inks on watercolor paper (for its texture, he said) feature buildings such as a windmill in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, an old mill in Cambridge, Ont., and an historical building in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The approximately 20 pieces of work he is exhibiting at the Valhalla Inn this month are in both oil and ink media.

"I work in both oil and ink about equally, which one is based on my mood," he said. "The inks are very absorbing and precise, and the oils allow me to be more free. They (oils) give me a chance to show how I feel," he said.

While Lewis' older oil landscapes stick with earthy colors, some of the newer works on exhibit this month employ bolder hues, such as a bright red barn on a backdrop of vibrant green fields, with a sky of brilliant blue and pale pink.

His oils range in price from \$400-\$1200, while the inks are \$150-\$500. The Valhalla Inn is located on Valhalla Rd., between Hwy. 427 and The East Mall. The exhibit will continue through April 30.



Port Credit artist Chuck Lewis, shown here with his oil painting titled, 'After the Storm,' is exhibiting about 20 of his latest works at the Valhalla Inn this month. The show will feature landscapes in oil and his brown ink, "sepia" drawings. The show opened last Sunday.

Staff photo by Fred Loek