

# PAINTING THE TOWN

TERRY COX-JOSEPH'S MURALS BRING COLOR AND CHARACTER TO HAMPTON ROADS



Terry Cox-Joseph works on her most recent mural, Italian scenes covering the walls of Mama Lina's Ristorante in Newport News.



For 14 years, Terry Cox-Joseph has displayed traditional canvasses and painted Italian tiles on her website

([www.TerryCoxJoseph.com](http://www.TerryCoxJoseph.com)) and at Blue Skies Gallery in Hampton. But even if you haven't surfed her site or set foot in the gallery, there's a decent chance you've seen her artwork. She created three of the Mermaids on Parade in Norfolk and has painted murals in homes and businesses throughout the Peninsula.

The first murals Cox-Joseph created were in her own home, turning plaster walls into limestone, adding ivy creepers, and giving her living room a butler carrying a tray of cocktails. When an interior decorator visited her house, she was

impressed enough to invite Cox-Joseph to paint murals for Smithfield's Parade of Homes. Once her art appeared on those walls, word spread, and she was commissioned for more.

"I've done all kinds," says Cox-Joseph. "I did a game room with giant playing cards that had faces, several walls with family pets, and a 20-foot-tall sequoia and other trees in a stairwell. For this one job in Hidenwood, I painted backpacks on the wall where the kids were supposed to hang their backpacks. That was a really cute idea because they'd hang them up on pegs right next to the paintings."

Cox-Joseph cites painting a South American jungle scene in a baby's bedroom as one of her most interesting jobs. She included plenty of baby animals to keep the room fun and friendly and hid various things at higher spots on the walls so the child could discover them as she grew older and taller.

"I was really excited when they told me I could paint the whole room, including the doors, because it makes a nice, continuous scene," says Cox-Joseph. "I had to use oils because the doors were shellacked and varnished." Normally, Cox-Joseph uses large brushes and wall paints to cover most of the area and then supplements with acrylics. "But it turned out very well," she says, "and it was exactly what [the owner] wanted. I covered