

ARTASIA

About Artasia



Horace and Noella Varnum are the husband and wife team behind Artasia. Working from their home based shop in mid-coast Maine, they are committed to quality and craftsmanship as they produce each hand made gift item. Horace spends his time in the woodshop doing all of the cutting, wood preparation, and finishing while Noella oversees the packaging, inventory, and shipping. Each is in their preferred environment: Horace, in a pile of wood dust and not far from the wood stove (that's where any mistakes wind up!), and Noella, in much cleaner and quieter quarters.

Since 1993, Artasia has produced thousands of hand crafted clocks, wall hangings, and fretwork gift items. During the mid 1990's, Artasia's line of fretwork Christmas tree ornaments grew in popularity and demand and by 1998, it was necessary to focus solely on its growing collection of rock maple ornaments. Now, with over 400 designs to choose from, we feel that Artasia offers one of the finest lines of hand cut fretwork ornaments available.

HOW WE MAKE OUR ORNAMENTS

Our ornaments are hand cut on a scroll saw. We use kiln dried New England rock maple. We buy it 4/4 rough from a local dealer, usually six to ten feet in length. We use only the outer portion of the tree (sap wood), this ensures a consistent light color without any dark streaks of heart wood (the center portion of the tree). We prefer using maple for two reasons: #1) It does not darken over time like many other hardwoods. This ensures a nice contrast against an evergreen tree and the light color of the wood tends to enhance every saw cut. #2) It has a very dense grain which makes it a very

hard wood. This lends itself to very smooth, fine cutting, enabling us to cut exceptional detail without fear of damage.

The first step in making the ornament is to prepare the wood to size. We saw the boards to 3" width and then set them on edge and "re-saw" them down the middle. This gives us two boards, each approximately 1/2" thick. We can then run these boards through a thickness planer to 5/16" thickness. Once the wood has been prepared to size, the paper pattern is glued to the face of the wood and small pilot holes are drilled in the locations where cuts are to be made. Each inside cut is made after threading the blade through the pilot hole,



reattaching it to the scroll saw arm, and setting the blade tension. This step is repeated for each inside cut. Once the ornament has been completely cut, it is then carefully sanded. The front and back face surfaces are sanded on a 6" x 48" table sander and the outer perimeter edge of the round and oval ornaments is sanded on a stationary disk sander and routed to give it a finished edge. For a final sanding, all the surfaces are run over a serrated flap sander to remove any minute saw burr or roughness. The last step in the process is to dip each ornament in a clear finish, wipe off the excess finish and set it aside to dry. Once the ornament has dried, we initial each one, install a brass eye for hanging, and package it with a brass hanger for use on a christmas tree, 3/4" suction cup for use on glass, and a story card that tells some of its history.

Artasia's fretwork miniatures have found their way into homes all over the globe. Whether displayed on a Christmas tree, hung in one's favorite window, or used to enhance that special "niche" of collectibles, one of Artasia's fretwork creations will be a welcome addition to any home. Our hand crafted ornaments are guaranteed to not only arouse the interest of visitors and guests but will be the focus of many conversations for years to come.

Take a few minutes, browse our web site, and enjoy checking out our creative fretwork designs: <http://www.scrollsawornaments.com>