



# Jim Moore

by: Susan Bowen

Invariably, when glassblowers across the world discuss tools, Jim Moore's name is mentioned. As a skilled toolmaker and artisan, his goal is simple; make tools that will sell themselves. And for twenty-five years his tools have been doing just that.

Jim's fondness for metal began at an early age. At twelve he saved his lunch money for his first acetylene torch. With supportive parents he spent many hours welding and making metal sculpture. As the years passed, he acquired a keen working knowledge of metal.

Needing work and knowing the right people landed Moore a job at Englesby Glass Studios in 1982. His metal working skills were immediately put to work sharpening and altering some of the tools and equipment. Glass blowing tools were hard to find in the eighties, so Jim made the tools he needed as he began blowing glass. His first was a graphite paddle, followed by a puffer. He later began trading and selling the tools as he made them.

While working at the Glass Eye Studio, Jim purchased his first pair of jacks. They were made by the master Italian toolmaker Antonio Dino and they cost Moore a full week's wages. As he studied the fine Italian tool, he





wondered why tools of that caliber were not readily available from American manufacturers. Combining his tool-making skills with his knowledge of glass blowing, Moore realized he could craft a tool that would be comparable to the Italian product. From 1985 to 1990 he worked hard at learning how to make a better tool. With guidance and suggestions from many glass blowing friends, he was able to craft the tools they needed.

In 1990, the Glass Art Society held its annual conference in his hometown of Seattle, Washington. Moore was able to introduce his tools to glass artists attending from around the world. As his customers were discovering the integrity of Jim's tools, Moore was making a discovery of his own; it became clear that there was a market for his quality glass blowing tools. He had found his niche. He promptly quit his day job maintaining industrial furnaces and began making tools full-time.

The glass blowing community at that time was small and close-knit, and news of Moore's tools spread quickly. Liz Wootten first



heard of him while working at a glass factory in South Africa, several years before they met in 1994.

"When I met Jim he was making tools all day and returning phone calls and shipping late into the night," Liz says, smiling. "It was obvious to me that he needed a wife!"

Liz took over the shipping and office end of the business, leaving Jim to focus on developing his product line. Claude Wootten, her brother, joined the business in 1997, contributing his tool and die expertise.

Over the years, Jim has created a variety of tools for shaping, cutting, and manipulating hot glass. His shears, tweezers, and jacks are among the most popular, often referred to as "work-horse" tools by the artists that use them, because the tools never wear out. Those who have used Moore Tools know that quality does make a difference in the end product. His tools make that end product better.

With the recent popularity in glass bead making, they have received increasing requests for new tools. Andrea Guarrino-Slemmons, world renowned bead artist, has been helping Jim design tools to fill their unique needs. With many students taking bead-making classes, Jim has found that "new students mean new tools."

The Moores work out of their home in Port Townsend, Washington. When visiting the workshop, one finds stacks of shears and other tools in raw form waiting to be forged, ground and polished. Liz packs the tools on the dining room table and ships to artists in 17 countries. Their children, Anna age ten, and Groves, age eight, serve as a delightful distraction. They can be seen helping out in the Moore Tools booth at the annual Glass Art Society Conferences.

When asked what direction his business is headed and what





Claude Wootten, Jim Moore, Liz Moore, and Joel Burns

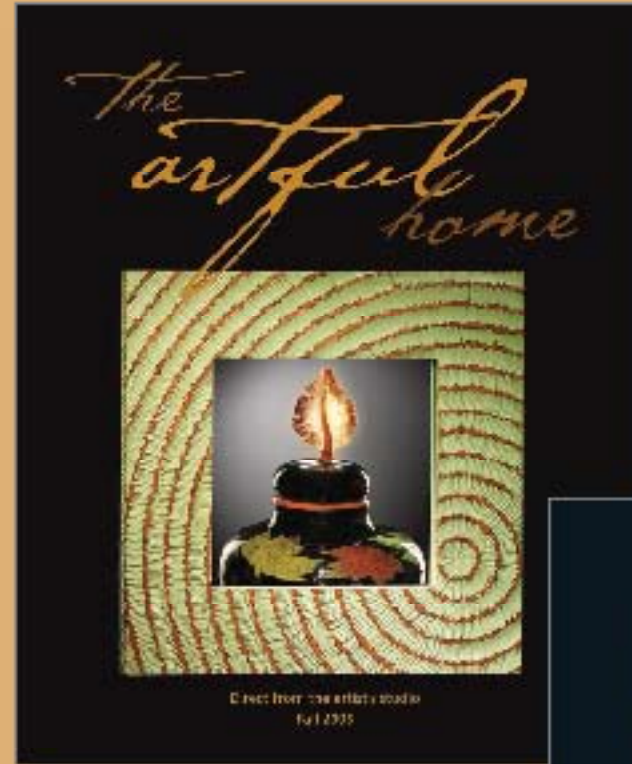


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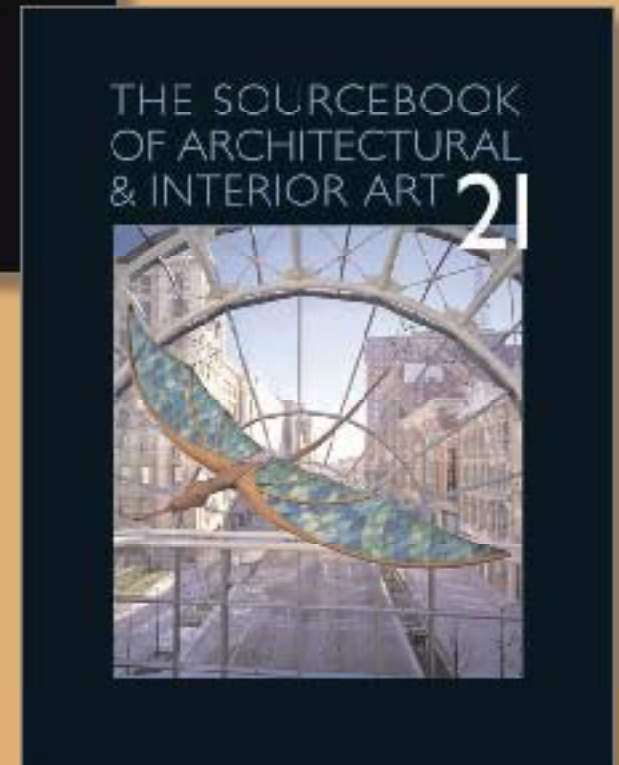
the future holds, Moore answers, "Keep making quality tools and follow the direction glass goes." With his knack for staying close to the pulse of the glass art industry, it is evident Jim Moore will continue to fill the needs of the glass artist, maintaining his high standards and producing quality tools.

Perhaps he characterizes his work best with the following statement taken from his website:

"Tools, life and art continue to evolve, but my goals remain the same. I try to make tools that help you translate the picture in your head to the piece on the stick. Tools that feel right in your hand and that you feel right about owning. Tools that do exactly what you want, every time you pick them up."



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