



Jodi Merrimack glues tiny glass beads on eggs, often for customers who send pictures of their pets, livestock or barns.

Poultry Producer Uses Eggs For Beadwork Art

"I have more control with a tweezers than a paintbrush," says Jodi Merrimack, as she picks up a tiny glass bead and places it on a quail egg. She rarely draws her design on the egg first. "I start at a center point and go from there. If I don't like it, I wipe it away."

With experience gluing beads on eggs since 2001, she doesn't need to start over too often these days. She takes on a variety of challenges from customers who want their pets, livestock or barns memorialized on eggs.

Most of the eggs come from chickens, quail, pheasants and ducks that she and her husband raise on their Knapp, Wis., farm.

After draining the eggs with a syringe, cleaning them with bleach, and drying them thoroughly, the eggs are ready for art. Merrimack's designs usually completely cover eggs with beads, which help to make them more durable.

Her cardinals and other birds, flowers and geometric designs are popular with customers at the craft shows she attends. So are the animal families (a cow, pig or sheep with babies) that she makes entirely with beads.

"I'm always looking for new things to do.

It's challenging to find a good design," she notes. With 10 containers filled with trays of beads, she has plenty of colors to choose from - and it takes lots of beads.

She learned that quickly when making a Green Bay Packers football for her father. She had just a quarter-size space left to fill when she ran out of beads and couldn't find the right color (dye lot) to finish. She bought new beads, soaked the egg to remove the beads and started over.

"I'm very precise and want it to be a good product," Merrimack says, whether it's a tiny quail egg or a pair of Humpty Dumpty eggs on a wall.

Her prices run \$9 for quail eggs, \$20 for pheasant eggs and \$40 for turkey eggs. Emu eggs run \$125 and up depending on complexity. Smaller eggs come with hangers and larger eggs come with a stand.

Merrimack doesn't have a website, but invites people to contact her by phone, mail or email for custom requests.

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Woman Trains Chickens To Be Pets

By Carolyn White

Grand Junction, Colorado native, Joyce Stucker, loves chickens. "My husband, Rex, and I even keep an incubator in the garage for hatching our own," she said.

Nearly two decades ago, when one of those hatchlings emerged with a crooked beak, Joyce began feeding it with a syringe. "Chickens eat *all* the time, so when she was little I had to care for her constantly. Right away, she became a household pet."

Since the couple already had a trip planned, there was no choice but to take the deformed chick along. "I kept a stack of paper towels on my lap," Joyce explained. "After she used the top one, I simply removed it to keep things fresh."

Whenever they stopped, Joyce placed the chick on the hood of the car for feedings, and it often drew crowds. "Kids who had never seen a chicken up close before wanted to hold it." In no time at all, the tiny hen became completely at ease with all humans.

Unfortunately, "That chicken had genetic problems, and died young from a stroke," Rex added. Yet even at the vet's office, "before passing, it managed to lift a wing since chickens like to be scratched there."

The Stuckers were hooked, so much so that Joyce soon hand-picked another to train as a pet.

The key, Joyce believes, is to isolate the bird from other chickens. "It has to depend on you exclusively for food, water, and companionship." She starts out with hand-feeding, so the chick will associate human skin with something pleasant.

Once the process has been started, however, it cannot be returned to the coop. "Having a pet chicken is a commitment," Joyce warned. "If you put it back with the flock, they'll go for the kill."

Not that any chicken would choose to leave the comfort of the Stucker home. Joyce beds her feathered pets down in a towel-covered pan on a nightstand, complete with a water



Joyce Stucker says she loves chickens and enjoys training them as pets.

bowl. At feeding time, they sit on a towel on the kitchen counter and eat fresh vegetables.

One of their pet chickens (they've had 5 so far) was actually potty-trained. "Whenever he fidgeted in the car, we pulled over, and I set him out to do his thing. In less than 20 seconds we'd be back on the road."

After Seven Decades, He Finally Got To Drive His First Truck

Lew Pearson's father, Arthur, horse-traded for his son's first vehicle - a Model "TT" 1-ton truck. But it took about 75 years for Lew to fix up the old 1922 truck and take it for a drive on his 87th birthday.

"It steers hard like they always did," Pearson says, but after nearly two years of restoration work with his sons' and grandsons' help, and encouragement from his wife, Edith, it drove well and looked almost as good as a truck right out of the factory.

Pearson's journey to own the truck began when his uncle gave him a horse that had an injury and could no longer compete as a trotter pulling a two-wheel racing cart. Pearson was about 12 and rode the horse bareback until it got mean and hard to catch. After the horse threw him and Pearson broke his collarbone, his dad decided Pearson needed something with four wheels instead of four legs. Arthur traded the horse to a friend for the 1922 truck he had in his junk pile. Arthur owned a 1923 truck just like it and figured an extra truck would be handy to have on their Roberts County, S. Dak., farm.

Unfortunately, they never got it working and it was parked through Pearson's Army service in Korea, college years in Wahpeton, N. Dak., and 30-year career as an electronic test technician with Collins Radio Co. in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Shortly after retirement, Pearson's wife

passed away. Years later he remarried and during a visit back home to South Dakota, Pearson learned that the man who rented the farm had saved the two old pickups and other equipment from being hauled to the junkyard. He offered the trucks to Pearson for a reasonable price, and Pearson's three sons and wife encouraged him to restore them.

They restored the 1923 truck first. Then they worked on the 1922 model that was supposed to be Pearson's truck as a teenager. Pearson also purchased another 1923 truck for parts, but his youngest son thought it was too good to scrap so it is also being restored.

"There's no problem getting the parts if you have the money," Pearson says, noting he is fortunate to buy many used parts from a vintage vehicle club member who lives nearby.

The biggest challenge was fixing the body. "Rust takes a toll in more than 90 years, and truck chassis and body parts are rare and hard to find," Pearson says. "The motor and other parts are the same as the (Model T) cars; they both have a 20-hp. motor. Rear tires are bigger and more expensive."

What's interesting about the trucks is that Henry Ford didn't make the parts and bodies. "Several companies did, and he assembled them," Pearson notes. "Trucks had two different style cabs. One was a C cab, mostly wood with no doors."



It took 75 years for Lew Pearson to restore this 1922 Model "TT" truck, which his father had bought for him back when he was a teenager. He took it for a drive on his 87th birthday.

All of Pearson's trucks are the other style, metal cabs with doors.

Pearson enjoyed his first ride in his truck, but acknowledges that at 89, he prefers to let others drive and maintain the trucks. His brother Roger took care of the paperwork to regain the titles, and Pearson will pass the first two trucks on to two grandsons. The third truck will belong to his son, Larry, who is restoring it.

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The biggest challenge was fixing the body. "Chassis and body parts for these old trucks are hard to find," says Pearson.