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## **FAB: In a Glass House with a Flame Thrower**

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## **In a Glass House with a Flame Thrower**

-Barbara Bruederlin



If you happen to be standing in line at Safeway and you spot a woman checking you out a little more closely than you think warrants, don't get too concerned that you cut her off at the lights or that she's going to hit on you. It could just be Cindy Anderson, dreaming up what kind of bracelet she would

design for you.



Cindy is the owner and designer behind Bead Happy, a Calgary-based business that specializes in unique jewelry fashioned from handcrafted glass beads. She possesses an uncanny ability to tell, just by looking at someone, what jewelry will be right for them. “I am not entirely sure how I come up with what I think they will like,” she admits. “It is mostly good observation skills. I look at what colours they would look good in and the style they would like. Some people suit loud, bold beads while others suit quiet more subtle beads.”

Although she admits to spending her queuing time dreaming up bead designs for strangers, most of the time she creates custom orders in consultation with her clients. She will often design beads for special events, like the Santa snowmen beads that she was commissioned to create for the Bon Soo festival in Sioux Ste Marie, or the matching pieces that she was asked to design for a group of friends to wear during their recent Oprah appearance. “Probably the strangest request was from my 19 year old son and his friends who wanted ‘boobies’,” she laughs.



Cindy stumbled upon her passion for glasswork and bead design five years ago while on vacation in Invermere. A little fed up with the realization that she was cooking and cleaning while the rest of the family played, she went for a walk and happened upon a glasswork class being offered at a local shop. The appeal was instantaneous.



Now with her torch, propane tank, dental implements, and a rainbow of glass rods that she molds and bends into an endless variety of unique beads, Cindy devotes an average of 2-3 hours per day, 3 days per week to Bead Happy, indulging her passion for jewelry design.

She has never had any trouble finding sources of inspiration for her bead creations and always has an ongoing project waiting in her studio. “I am going out to my cousin’s farm to see his baby lambs,” she tells me, “and yes, I can make little lamb beads.” She has been known to craft beads to resemble dogs, sheep, hedgehogs, fish, rabbits, abstract golf ball, and carrots. At one point she fashioned beer mug beads, which ended up serving as something more than just a decorative purpose. “I give them to kids that are 18 to put on their key chain to remind them not to drink and drive,” Cindy explains.



With many of her beads being custom work, Cindy rarely carries much of an inventory, and is in the enviable position of selling mostly everything that she makes as quickly as she can make it. Presumably this includes any “boobie” beads she happens to design.

[www.bead-happy.net](http://www.bead-happy.net)

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