



Cutting you in on the latest from Spectrum Glass Co.

The Butterfly Fantasies of Jillian Sawyer

It's been more than a dozen years since we first discovered a stained glass designer from Australia named Jillian Sawyer. At that time she had just published her first pattern book, "Australian Bush Beauties." Very impressive! Since then, Jillian has delighted her fans with nine more books. While she has a wonderful flair for traditional concepts, Jillian's true mark upon the stained glass world has been made with forays into fantasy characters such as "Faeries" and Dragons. In these, she has found her niche and captivated the imaginations of glass lovers around the world.

To label Jillian's fanciful publications as pattern books somehow seems an injustice. Jillian doesn't just draw pictures to be made out of glass — she creates very unique and individual characters. She's filled two books full of graceful Fairies, another with dragons, goblins and assorted mythical beings — she even wove her magic spell around the humble frog. Now she's turned her talents toward the world of butterflies in her new book titled, "Butterfly." Though realistically portraying these creatures, this book is as filled with magical nuance and charm as any of her fantasy themes have been. Each of her designs radiates a distinct personality and Jillian often reveals even more about the characters she's created by including bits of poetry she's written. She has an amazing capacity to communicate the essence of each design — drawing you into her vision as you collaborate together in bringing it to life.

We asked her what's behind this unusual connection she has with the mystical, fantasy world many of us lose touch with as we mature. After a moment's pause, she said it must have been because of her magical childhood. She's been able to keep in touch with the child inside her, tapping into that saucer-eyed imagination where anything's possible. Hence, she's given the artglass world Faeries, Dragons, Frogs, Butterflies — and magic.

While never formally studying art, in every line she draws, Jillian demonstrates that she is an artist of exceptional talent. Knowing early that she had an artistic gift, she tried many different crafts. About the time she'd hauled the umpteenth unfinished and abandoned project to her attic, Fate stepped in. A glass shop opened its doors right next to the little corner store Jillian and her husband, Brian, operated. She took one class and was hooked for life! Now she devotes herself fulltime to creating books.

Jillian says she loves the simplicity — the naivete — of the line drawings in stained glass design. This seems a little contradictory since her lively little characters are anything but simple and naïve. We won't argue though — just keep them coming, Jillian, just keep them coming.

