

# The Herald of Randolph

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Stone Revival on Route 100, Stockbridge, VT

By Martha Slater

Julian Isaacson works on a sculpture at his Stone Revival Studio and Galley, on Route 100 between Pittsfield and Stockbridge, Vt. (Herald / Tim Calabro) Stop by sculptor Julian Isaacson's Stone Revival studio and gallery, and you will see an artist immersed in his own private creative process, but one who is also reaching out to share his creativity with others. Isaacson says his location, on the Route 100 flats near the Stockbridge/Pittsfield line, is ideal.



"The whole idea is so that people can stop in and see an artist at work," he notes.

"The observer is also a learner and you never can tell what they'll walk away with. Art is a form of expression and when you use that term, it implies communication. Today artists have to be able to have a business sense, too, and be able to stop and explain themselves." Isaacson said the name for his studio came about because "I decided that what I was trying to do was revive a lost art. At the turn of the last century, almost every village had a stonecutter who created headstones and statuary."

Stone Revival offers interior and exterior hand-carved imperial tiles, fine art, and architectural enhancements. As a stone artist, he specializes in relief work, but also does full-figure stone sculpture, and works in wood. "I find it relaxing," Isaacson says. "It's the exact same process, working in wood or stone."

He often works on projects in both media at the same time, doing some work on one, and then switching to the other. He puts the "cartoon" (a drawing of what he plans to carve) directly on the surface and works from there. "When I'm doing a study, I spend a lot of time around what I want to carve," he says. "I want to see how things naturally react with each other."

The wood for Isaacson's work comes from a number of different sources and right now, he has several pieces from Liberty Hill in his studio. His favorites are black walnut and cherry. He's currently working on creating a torso piece called "Fallen Angel" from the crotch of a black walnut tree given to him by a friend who was an arborist.

It took Isaacson about two years to come up with the cold tile process he uses to make his hand-carved relief tiles. "The tiles are an offshoot of what I normally do," he explained.

He sculpts the original in stone, then makes a mold out of a state-of-the-art rubber material used in movie special effects. The tiles that are cast from the mold are made from a mixture of concrete and plaster, with a hardening agent added. He uses different formulas, depending upon whether the tiles, which are colored all the way through, are intended for interior or exterior use. Put outside, they pick up their own patina.

Isaacson's parents, Eileen and Sidney, were both artists. He grew up in Hancock and graduated from Rochester High School in 1973, then from UVM with a business and communications degree. In his 20s, he decided to follow his dream and become a sculptor.

"I've been carving for over 35 years," he noted. "My parents taught me to learn from my mistakes by keeping old pieces. I would have been a painter, but I'm colorblind and couldn't understand the palette. Dad showed me relief work and I started doing that at 15."

Although he lived on the west coast for about 25 years (the last 19 in Medford, Oregon), Isaacson decided to move back home to Vermont last year. He and his wife live in a small apartment over his gallery and studio right now., and his wife, Lee Ann. Isaacson works regular hours in his studio and the gallery at Stone Revival is open to the public most days from 10 a.m.- 6 p.m. To learn more, go to his website at [www.stonerevival.com](http://www.stonerevival.com).