

# MyWorld

A VISIT WITH **DANIEL PINKHAM** AT HIS STUDIO IN PALOS VERDES, CA

Text by Bonnie Gangelhoff, Photos by Michael Garland



**Tell us about your studio and its history.** The studio is an exact replica of a 16th-century Romanesque Italian chapel. It was built in 1924 by Frank Vanderlip, president of the National Bank of New York, who also helped formulate the Federal Reserve Act. He came out to California in 1913 and bought the entire Palos Verdes peninsula for \$1.5 million. Vanderlip then hired the Olmsted Brothers architectural firm out of Massachusetts to go to Italy for three years and do drawings, photos, and watercolors of famous Italian buildings and come back to reconstruct them here on the Southern California coast. Our structure was based on a roadside chapel just outside the Vatican that was Michelangelo's studio and home when he was working on the Sistine Chapel commission. We bought the chapel in 1998 when we heard the city was going to bulldoze it. We have spent more than a decade restoring it. It didn't even have a foundation in the beginning; it was sitting on stacked railroad ties. The plaster walls were propped up with two-by-fours so they wouldn't fall over.

**Who did the renovation?** My nephew, a builder, and my wife, Vicki, and I have done all the work. Many of the artists in the Portuguese Bend Artist Colony have helped, too.

**Did anyone try to talk you out of it?** Everyone tried to talk us out of it, but Vicki and I both realized that as artists it is important to be surrounded by an artistic environment. It feeds you.

**What is the Portuguese Bend Artist Colony?** It's seven artist friends who have known each other since junior high school. Vicki and I are part of the group, and also Richard Humphrey, Stephen Mirich, Kevin Prince, Thomas Redfield, and Amy Sidrane. We are all landscape painters. We come together to paint the landscape in order to save it from development. We have an annual show, and 40 percent of the proceeds go to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy.





**What do you like about living in the area?** I love the undulating hills and the rolling layers of land down to the coast. I love the different moods that come with the changing atmosphere. The Pacific Ocean is across the street, and I can paint there. We can go up on a hill behind us and have a 180-degree view of the coast. It's reminiscent of Laguna Beach 90 years ago—before all the development took place. We live on the largest single landslide in North America. We are slowly creeping toward the ocean every year. The beauty of this is, because the slide started in 1955, there's been restricted development in Portuguese Bend. We have very few neighbors.

**If your studio was on fire, what one thing would you save?** First my wife, and then my sketchbooks and writings.

**Do you listen to music while you paint?** I have music on constantly, mostly classical music and choral music with a preference for Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, and Mozart.

**What impresses you about other artists?** Their dedication, energy, and commitment to grow, expand, and learn.

**What is the one place people will never find you?** At a bar.

**When you are not painting, what do you like to do?** I like being in nature's temple, quietly isolated in beautiful surroundings, where I have a line of communication with nature.



**When people visit, where do you like to take them?** We love to take them to the cliffs, because we are 250 feet above the ocean, and it's a great view. ❖

## representation

American Legacy Fine Arts, Pasadena, CA;  
[www.danielpinkham.com](http://www.danielpinkham.com).

## upcoming show

Maynard Dixon Country, Mt. Carmel, UT,  
August 24-28.

Read more of this interview at  
[www.southwestart.com](http://www.southwestart.com).

