



*Doug Prather has been documenting the beauty of Kentucky horse country since 1972. Popular prints include (clockwise from left) "Kentucky Morning Turnout," "Glory of Kentucky," and "New Beginning."*



# Capturing Louisville

Area imagery infuses walls with local flavor

On an ordinary spring day, Doug Prather's car winds its way through the heart of horse country's green hills in the fresh sunlight. The excursion is part of everyday life if you live off Catnip Hill Pike, in Kentucky. Here, everyday errands take place amongst the most beautiful treasures in the Bluegrass: horses and nature. Suddenly, Prather hits the brakes.

"What are you doing?!?!" asks his wife, heart thumping in her chest.

But Prather has already leapt from the car. "I am taking the photo that will be our next print!" he says with certainty as he heads for two friendly looking horses, eyeing him over a nearby fence.

The horses are perfectly framed by the white blossoms of a snowball bush, blue iris, golden hostas and the mottled branches of a buckeye tree tipped with bright budding leaves, as they peer towards the photographer over the black fence boards.

The moment is captured forever by Prather in the popular print "Glory of Kentucky."

But this moment was not just a happy accident. Prather has been studying this spot for many seasons, from sunrise to sunset. He has memorized the way the light falls and when the flowers are at their peak bloom. He has been waiting for synchronicity to complete his vision with the elusive equestrian element. "Later my wife told me she would never have seen it," Prather said.

Prather has been exploring the surrounding area since 1972, looking for hot spots for potential opportunities and noting what season or time of day would help create the ideal photo. "I have a little map in my mind," he said. "Every day is a brand new day and opportunity. I am like Lewis and Clark always looking for that elusive magical moment."

His work, which is currently featured in the renovated Louisville





International Airport, has captured the hearts of horse lovers in Kentucky and around the world. "Kentucky Morning Turnout" is hanging in the Kentucky Governor's office behind his desk, while the Queen of England admires it in one of her apartments and gives the print as gifts.

While horse and Derby related prints, Cardinal and Wildcat posters and Louisville cityscapes remain popular at stores like Deck the Walls in Mall St. Matthews or The Louisville Store's online


catalog, local flavor is captured in other artwork and photography as well.

"It is hard to sum up, in one word or image, a city that is so alive with so many attributes," said Julius Friedman, local photographer, graphic designer and co-owner of the Chapman Friedman Gallery.

Friedman was commissioned by the Regional Airport Authority of Louisville and Jefferson County, along with photographer Pat McDonogh, to capture local imagery such as the Belle of

Louisville's paddle, St. James Court's fountain, the Ohio River and more in the series that was displayed at the Louisville International Airport prior to recent renovations. The full collection of 48 photographs is available as custom prints or in the book, "Images: Louisville and its Environs."

"We are so much more than two minutes of horse racing," Friedman said. "People who visit here are surprised by the beauty of the architecture, and the quality of the performing and visual arts."



*Julius Friedman's photography captures many sides of the city's personality such as the local events, nature and the arts. (clockwise from left) The Kentucky State Fair, Bernheim Forest, and the Kentucky Center for the Art's Lonesome Pine Special poster.*





Friedman, who has passion for gardening, also finds interest in Louisville's nature. The changing seasons and the beauty of Louisville-area parks, three of which were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, the "Father of American Landscape Architecture," have inspired the photographer who considers them key to our city's identity.

Friedman has captured images ranging from overhead views of Bernheim Forest and rural farmland to the fascinating fine details of autumn leaves and forest mushrooms.

While many of Friedman's most well known posters, showcasing his trademark studio photography, feature local non-profit events and organizations, the images appeal to art lovers nationally and internationally.

"We try to do things with no boundaries," he said. Yet, the Kentucky based photographer, who does commercial work internationally, is sometimes surprised at where his work appears.

Friedman's Louisville Ballet poster appeared on the television show "The Sopranos" and in an Italian interior design magazine. "Fresh Paint" livened up the look of a sitcom. While another poster, "Mix Masters," was spotted by a weary Friedman, as he sat down for a late dinner in a Hamburg, Germany, pizza parlor.

Present day artists and photographers such as Friedman, are not the only source of Louisville flavor for your walls. Black and white vintage photography can create intriguing accents in your home. Louisville's rich history has left a legacy of striking imagery to choose from. Whether you are a fan of music, movies, theater, architecture, gardening, politics or sports, the city's history holds some moments of interest that connect to modern day lives.

"Black and white is a very hot trend and works well in a lot of situations because it is easy to decorate with," said Dan Carney, who owns Deck the Walls with his mother Sue, in Mall St. Matthews. Deck the Walls offers selections from the series of 1920s photography, "Louisville Yesteryear."

Louisville Yesteryear is a series of 52 images collected for a calendar designed by Julius Friedman and features photos of 4th Street movie theaters, soda shops, beauty schools and more.

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Italian tiles, printed with vintage images of Churchill Downs, are just a few of the many Derby related pieces available at Deck the Walls. The Louisville skyline, Muhammad Ali and local sports are also popular. (below) Cherokee Park's sled riding hill is celebrated by local artist Steve Cull. The painting was featured in a recent exhibit at the Chapman Friedman Gallery.

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University of Louisville's Ekstrom Library Photographic Archives holds a diverse selection of vintage Louisville images such as neighborhoods, workplaces, people and events. The Courier-Journal Archives Library is another resource. Did someone snap a picture when Elvis played the Louisville Gardens? Of course. *The Courier-Journal* captured the moment and nearly every other newsworthy event in the city's history. Prints are available for a fee from both of these archives.

The serious art collector may want to peruse the collections of local painters such as Prospect artist, Steve Cull to find one-of-a-kind local work. Cull had a 20-year career as a mail carrier for the U.S. Post Office before becoming a full-time artist. His work, infused with his own interpretation of Louisville imagery, is in major collections around the world. Rather than capture modern scenery, Cull interprets Louisville with a 19th-century twist, inspired by early American itinerant painters.

He has created a mural for the Post Office in Goshen as well as a riverfront scene recently purchased by the mayor's office. Other local landmarks captured by Cull's imaginative hand including Cherokee



Park's sled riding hill, Fountaine Ferry

and a lively vintage Churchill Downs scene, were recently on exhibit at the Chapman Friedman Gallery. **whk**

by **Mark Ray**

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source: Chapman Friedman Gallery, 624 W. Main St, 584-7954, [www.imagesol.com](http://www.imagesol.com); Doug Prather, [www.dougprather.com](http://www.dougprather.com), 1-800-854-5613; The Louisville Store, 1-800-391-7204, [www.louisvillestore.org](http://www.louisvillestore.org); Deck the Walls, Mall St. Matthews, 5000 Shelbyville Rd., 897-9387, [www.deckthewalls.com](http://www.deckthewalls.com)