

Les Trois Amis in France & Italy

Reported by Vanessa Rothe

Imagine someone arranging for you to paint a model posing in your gondola as you float along the canals of Venice. Or perhaps your dream is to be given an easel, paints, and canvas so you can work along the avenues of Paris and Florence. That's exactly what happened for Jeremy Lipking, Tony Pro, and Alexey Steele, whose recent trip to Europe was arranged and sponsored by Jerry's Artarama, a major retailer of art supplies, based in North Carolina. Heather Goldstein, a vice president of artist resources for Jerry's, made all those arrangements and more so these three top California artists could meet representatives of Charvin and Belle Arti, two of Europe's oldest manufacturers of professional artists' supplies.

Goldstein wanted to introduce the artists to these companies, whose products are sold through Jerry's retail and online outlets, in hopes the three men might embrace the supplies and use them in their studios and classes. The group set out from Los Angeles on September 19, 2011 for the two-



Left to right: Alexey Steele, Tony Pro, and Jeremy Lipking in front of the Charvin store in Paris, France



Lipking and Pro at their easels in Venice, Italy



Lipking painting in a Venetian gondola



Gondola Ride

Alexey Steele

2011, oil on Belle Arti Pissarro linen panel, 10 x 8 in.

Courtesy American Legacy Fine Art, Pasadena, CA



Steele painting at Versailles in France



Duomo at Night

Alexey Steele

2011, oil on Belle Arti Pissarro linen panel, 10 x 8 in.

Collection the artist

week trip with only their paintbrushes and clothing. After arriving in Paris and overcoming jet lag, the team of painters, Goldstein, and Katie Yandle (also of Jerry's Artarama) were met by Bruno and Laurence Charvin, owners of Charvin, and were taken to their shop in the Latin Quarter to pick out supplies. The artists were given easels, paints, and canvas to work with, then allowed to spend several days capturing the beauty of the city and nearby locations.




Venetian Door

Jeremy Lipking

2011, oil, 10 x 8 in.

Collection the artist

The artists then traveled with their supplies to the south of France and on to Florence and Venice, Italy, making sketches and plein air paintings during the day and well into the evenings. Along the way, they visited with Odd Nerdrum, Daniel Graves, and other notable artists living in Europe, and they were greeted with warm hospitality by Ricardo Pieraccini, the owner of Belle Arti.

Steele extended his trip so he could paint in Rome and Siena, but relished the time with his friends. "Camaraderie was such a central part of this trip," he says. "There's nothing like traveling together with close friends and like-minded artists, particularly to such special places as France and Italy. It is precisely the personal and artistic closeness with Jeremy and Tony that made this trip so unique and meaningful on so many levels, and I am enormously grateful to Heather and Katie, not only for putting it together on behalf of Jerry's Artarama, but for fully immersing themselves in this remarkable experience, becoming an integral part of it."  CONVENTION INSTRUCTOR

Venetian Door

Tony Pro

2011, oil, 10 x 8 in.

Private collection

For more information, visit the artists' websites:

www.lipking.com, www.alexeysteele.com,

www.tonypro-fineart.com.