

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2003

\$3.50

# FOCUS / SANTA FE

A SELECT LOOK AT SANTA FE ARTS, CRAFTS, TASTES AND STYLES



PHOTO ©2003 BY GLENN GREEN

"Horizontes" (Horizons) by Eduardo Oropeza  
bronze, ©1995, edition of 10, left: 96" x 15" x 12"; right: 61¼" x 35½" x 15½"



Above: "The Gift" (front and back views), ©2002, bronze, edition of 15, 40" high  
 Opposite: "Summer," ©2002, bronze, edition of 12, 70" high

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## THE ARTS

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# PRAIRIE GOLF & PERCHING ANGELS

*David Pearson finds artistic inspiration  
 in living with the land and sky.*

*By Gussie Fauntleroy*

It is fitting that the graceful bronze sculpture of Santa Fe artist David Pearson is often found adorning gardens and lawns, sometimes in the form of a fountain, bird bath, or container for bird seed. This takes the work full circle, back to the world of nature that first inspired it. Pearson's sculpture is in numerous private and public collections, and was hung on the 2002 White House Christmas tree. We asked the artist about the sources of his creative energy.

**Gussie:** Tell us about some of the things you like to do that aren't specifically work-related but that give you a chance to be on the land and out in nature.

**David:** Living in the country is a big inspiration in my work. Every morning my wife and I get up at sunrise and walk down to the stalls to feed the horses. This is a really great time of the day for me. The cool air, the freshness of the morning. The birds are out and singing. The rabbits are already

busy eating. It's a wonderfully quiet time that sets the pace of my day.

**Gussie:** You mentioned something one time about playing "prairie golf." What is that?

**David:** Prairie golf is my most favorite treat of the work week. My friend Jim and I hit golf balls off a wooden deck that juts out over a cliff overlooking a huge valley. We have a large stone circle we aim for. The record is three in a row (balls in the circle,



PHOTOS BY ADDISON DOTY



*"The Blessing" (three views shown, above and opposite), ©2003, bronze, edition of 15, 24"×36"*

that is). We use a sand or pitching wedge for that hole. We also get out the drivers for another stone circle around 250 yards away. After we hit about 100 balls we walk down and pick them all up.

It's a great way to spend a couple of hours first thing on my Friday morning. Jim is an artist and we talk about art and our week while we hit balls. I try not to miss this very fun day. We've been doing it since January. The stone circles we hit balls at can lead into my stone circle.

**Gussie:** What is your stone circle?

**David:** I'm building a stone circle directly east of my studio. It's 60 feet in diameter. So far I have three stones up. Each one weighs well over two tons and took very large equipment to install. The stones are lined up for the equinoxes (March and September). My goal is to have the circle completed in two years. I love going to the rockyards and picking out the perfect rocks that I want to place in the circle. It's my way of keeping in touch with the land and the sky. It grounds me for my sculpting by

dealing with such large stones.

**Gussie:** Have you been doing any large sculpture lately?

**David:** My most recent life-size bronze is "Summer," which was a commission. The clients wanted a large piece to hold water or bird seed in the dress. When it was finished we went to their home for dinner and they had installed her in the garden and filled the dress with a gorgeous flower arrangement. It was a nice surprise as the flowers and the bronze really complement each other.

I am working on another commission, this one a bronze that will hang on a wall in an enclosed pool courtyard. The clients and I worked very closely via e-mail to get everything perfect. I would send them drawings and they would respond with suggestions until it was right. It took about three weeks of corresponding every day. We decided on an eight-foot-long grouping of branches with many perching birds and an arrangement of leaves. This will be a unique piece.

**Gussie:** Birds often figure in your work. What is it about them that attracts you?

**David:** The birds have a special place in my heart. I think of them as little angels. When they sit, perched on a tree branch or a telephone wire, they seem to be watching us humans and saying to themselves, "You people have come such a long way, but still have such a long way to go." Then they continue to sit there, patiently waiting.

I use them in my sculpture to combine the figure with nature and to suggest how they can teach us. They gather their food mostly in the cool of the morning, drink what water there is, and work diligently raising their young in season. Knowing the dangers around them, they still have a sense of play and reflection about them. Also, they sing such beautiful songs. The birds continue to inspire me.

*David Pearson is represented by Patricia Carlisle Fine Art, located at 554 Canyon Road. Hours: 10:00-5:00 daily. (505) 820-0596 or 1-888-820-0596. www.carlislefa.com.*



PHOTOS BY ADDISON DOTY

*"The Blessing," ©2003, bronze, edition of 15, 24"×36"*

