



# Renowned artist highlights weekend art show at Milltown Village



Qoro fine-art canvas reproduction of Bayard Taylor Berndt's "Smith Bridge"

The artistry of Milltown Village, surrounded by the natural environs in Delaware's Pike Creek Valley with its hills and dales, is already a masterpiece. But from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., this Saturday and Sunday, September 7 and 8, artistry will take a quantum leap forward as Benchmark Builders presents an art exhibit of works by Bayard Taylor Berndt.

It's the second in a series of special presentations celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Delaware home-builder. On display will be a collection of Qoro fine-art canvas reproductions that includes many of the artist's most celebrated pieces. Of additional interest, Michael Brock, owner of Hardcastle Galleries, will give a free presentation on Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 on the Art & Legacy of Bayard Taylor Berndt.

"We chose Milltown Village as the venue for this showing because the beauty of nature is on full display here and the fact that the landscape wouldn't be out of place in a Berndt original," commented Steve Bomberger, President of Benchmark Builders. Mr. Bomberger is referring to the 50 acres of forests and open space that make up the 55-plus community, as well as the panoramic views. "We're proud to feature Bayard Berndt as part of our 25th

Anniversary Series... now there are two great reasons to come here this Sunday," added Bomberger.

Because Berndt has only recently emerged as an important artist influenced by the Brandywine River School tradition, it might be best to offer a short biographical sketch. Bayard Taylor Berndt (1908-1987)

was a local artist schooled at the Wilmington Academy of Art under the tutelage of N.C. Wyeth, Frank Schoonover and Gayle Hoskins. Upon graduation, he won the school's European Travel Scholarship and spent a year abroad where he polished his skills, lived the life of an

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artist and built up a large portfolio of watercolors.

When Berndt returned in 1931, the young artist went back to the Wilmington Art Academy where he spent the next 10 years alternating between teacher and secretary. Once World War II broke out, the school was closed and he went to work in the Wilmington shipyards. In 1946, he and his brother-in-law assumed ownership of Hardcastle's framing and art supply shop, which under his management became the unofficial center for the area's art scene. Although running the business was a full-time job, he dedicated one full day a week to painting.

Throughout his lifetime, Berndt produced nearly 500 oils and watercolors depicting the Brandywine Valley countryside and historic scenes. With his unusually bold pallet, striking compositions and assertive, broad brushwork, Berndt captured scenes that included Old New Castle in the 1700s, Wilmington in the 1800s, and Brandywine River Valley landscapes in all seasons. Many were imagined aerial depictions.

Numerous influences have occurred that has kept his artwork out of the mainstream. In the 1950s, his European portfolio was stolen and never recovered. Throughout his lifetime, the artist gave many paintings away as gifts and without a list of recipients, the whereabouts are unknown to this day. Although rarely found on the open market, some of his original works have been collected and are currently in collections of the Hotel duPont, Wilmington Trust, Delmarva Power, University of Delaware and other private collections, but at least half have simply vanished.

Since the artist's death in 1987, his son, David Berndt has been on a mission to find his father's lost art and ultimately give the name, Bayard T. Berndt, the recognition it deserves. The collection on display at Milltown Village is a portion of the known art in the form of amazingly detailed Qoro canvas editions.

For those not familiar with Milltown Village, the 55-plus community of detached single-family and carriage twin homes is located just off Pike Creek Road creating a hamlet-like



setting among the verdant landscape of the Pike Creek Valley. A rich mix of stucco and stone exterior features enhances the timeless European-inspired architectural designs, and one can't help but notice the peace and serenity of the setting.

There are eight home styles from which homebuyers may choose with pricing starting at \$390,000. Of note, is the addition of two new detached, single-family designs that offer innumerable opportunities for customization and expansion. Regardless of the home design, one can't help but notice the bright, open-air interiors where the combined living, dining and kitchen areas become the heart of the home. And, of course, an opulent first-floor owner's bedroom suite set off in a dedicated area is de rigueur.

For artistry that inspires and homes where, as the builder says "you make the difference," a visit to Milltown Village this weekend is in order.

**More information and directions can be found at [BenchmarkBuilders.com](http://BenchmarkBuilders.com) or call 302-366-1515.**



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