

Jeanne's Orkney adventure makes headlines at home

By Leah Seator

A great American adventure took place last month, in Orkney of all places, and the expedition leader, New York artist, Jeanne Bouza Rose, is only just beginning to take it all in.

Having returned to her home in Woodstock, Long Island, last week, Jeanne, who brought an entourage of Americans to the county for art workshops, feels she has more than achieved her goal.

So much so, in fact, that she is planning to repeat the experience next year, as well as offering a chance for locals to take part in some way.

Now safely back home, Jeanne was delighted to discover that *American Style* magazine had done a glossy feature on her adventures in Orkney, and her local newspaper had put her on their front page.

The Orkney Art Adventure took place over four weeks this summer, based at Woodwick House, in Evie.

Students travelled from all over America, enticed by Jeanne's descriptions of the beauty of Orkney, and how it inspired her whole artistic career more than 20 years ago.

The courses, mainly focusing on the Japanese white line wood-blocking technique produced several artworks, showing a whole new perspective of Orkney landscapes, light and features.

An exhibition was held in Woodwick House at the end of the four weeks, and at the opening, Jeanne had the chance to demonstrate and show those who had helped her along the way what it had all been about.

Present at the launch was Trudi Hall, from the Waterfront Gallery, in Stromness, and Robert Miller, from Discover

Orkney Tours — two significant characters who helped make the art adventure a reality.

Jeanne explained: "Last year when I was there, in my last hour on the island I ran into the Waterfront Gallery, showed Trudi my work and asked if she was interested.

"She took my work on board, where she continues to display and sell it. Pieces done this summer will be left there, and some will also be on display at Woodwick House.

"The same thing happened with Robert Miller, of Discover Orkney. I ran into him at the Internet Cafe and, well, — the rest is nearly history."

Robert more than guided Jeanne in the right direction, in terms of getting around, what to see, where to go, and how to make it all happen.

Thanks to the help of Trudi, Robert and James Brian, from Woodwick House, the whole experience was one Jeanne will never forget.

She explained: "The art adventure has been successful because it was never designed with only the art in mind.

"My deep interest in Orkney is not just because of the light and the land and the cloud and seascapes, it is also because of the people, their stories, and the interplay of it all through the history — the history that is intertwined with standing stones, cathedrals and events like the County Show, St Magnus Fair or the weekly country dancing at the King Street Halls.

"Part of the success of the Art Adventure is due to the wide breadth of knowledge of people and places that Bob, of Discover Orkney Tours, has provided.

"He was able to do all the



Leading by example — Jeanne Rose helps one of her students during this summer's courses at Woodwick House.

groundwork before my arrival and all I had to do on my visit in April was to go around with him and meet all those to be involved.

"This combination of skills put together art with an array of experiences. This allowed the participants to become more involved than just the art."

During the courses, each lasting a week, 12 students took part, but far from just creating their masterpieces, they delved deep into our own culture.

Visits and talks from local artists, such as Jane Glue, took place regularly, and groups attended many local events, such as traditional dancing nights. They took trips to Kirkbuster

Museum, and storyteller Neil Leask also visited the groups.

Jeanne is more than happy with the results of her adventure, and, while promising a return visit next year, several of her students have also planned to come back.

She added: "The participants went away with more stories than they had come with, discovered more stories inside themselves, and left the Orcadians that they met with even more stories to tell.

"Every participant went away with a greater understanding of the uniqueness of Orkney and the Orcadian people. All of them left expressing the desire to return for a longer stay."