

LINA SCARFI

Painting The Story Of Her Life

By GLENN R. SWIFT

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EVEN AS A young girl, Lina Scarfi knew that she was different. “I’ve always known who I was and what my life’s journey would be,” Scarfi says. “I’ve been very lucky to know how to stop, look and listen.”

That hasn’t always been so easy, however.

Born in a small fishing village on the island of Sicily, Scarfi was uprooted at an early age when the family decided to leave their native Italy in search of the American Dream. Settling in Westchester County, N.Y., the frightened youngster found herself “in a strange country with a strange language.”

During her first few years in school, little Lina sat quietly in the back of class drawing pictures of Superman. “I was trying to hide that I didn’t know how to read, and art became a way for me to cope.”

Adding to the emotional strain was a difficult family life in which harmony was often elusive. “Like many immigrants, my parents were very fearful and often overprotective. I was discouraged from going outside to play, so I turned to paper and pencils.”

Scarfi’s love of art only grew with time, although her career path did not directly mirror her passion until recently.

After attending the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design, Scarfi began a successful, award-winning career as a graphic artist/art director for several newspapers in South Florida, including the *Stuart News* and *Palm Beach Post*. To say that she gained the recognition of her peers is putting it mildly. During her 25-year career as an illustrator, Scarfi won an impressive six first-place awards, three second-place awards, and four third-place awards from a number of renowned journalistic organizations (Florida Press Club, Florida Society of Newspaper Editors, The Society for News Design and National Headliner).

But it was two years ago when Scarfi decided to devote herself full time to painting.

“I had just turned 50 and decided that it was time to finally do what I had always wanted to. Of course, I knew that I was taking some risks to live out my dream, but it’s turned out that all my fears were unfounded. In fact, I feel as if I’ve won the lottery, without the money.”

As for what gave her the courage to leave the corporate world and turn her living room into a studio, Scarfi did not hesitate in answering. “For 28 years, I had the privilege to watch an infant turn into the most glorious human being I’ve ever known. He gave me the strength,” says Scarfi, referring to her son, Sean Lawson, assistant technical director at the Caldwell Theatre in Boca Raton.

Now in case you’re wondering what the focus of Scarfi’s art is, that’s a rather complex subject. From beginning to end, Scarfi’s paintings exude emotion – all of them.

“My work is the story of my life. I paint the truth... what I feel, see and hear. I’m my own country song. I’ve just never played at the Grand Ole Opry.”

While that may be true, Scarfi’s work has certainly been garnering attention – and not just locally. In addition to recent showings all over South Florida, including the nearby Lighthouse Center for the Arts in Tequesta and Rosetta Stone Gallery

in Juno Beach, her paintings have been on exhibition at a number of galleries from Vicksburg, Miss., to Beaver, Pa.

Scarfi is also excited about another new opportunity to express her considerable and varied talents.

“I’m going to be teaching two classes at the Anglen Gallery in Tequesta, one on illustration and the other on abstract.”

For all those aspiring artists out there, you may wish to give this some serious consideration. You, too, may learn how to paint the story of your life.

