



Q + A

THOMAS ARVID
POSITION Painter
ON THE ROAD 175 days a year

WHICH CAME FIRST—YOUR LOVE OF WINE OR YOUR PAINTINGS OF WINE, SOME OF WHICH SELL FOR AS MUCH AS \$100,000?

Painting is what introduced me to the whole wine world.

WHAT LED YOU TO PAINT WINE?

I really feel like I stumbled onto something. As a young, self-taught artist, I noticed all the famous artists had a focus, a subject they concentrated on. I didn't have a subject, so I started working on things that were red: Converse high-top tennis shoes, Radio Flyer wagons, crushed Coke cans—basic red American icons, things that made people smile. But when I did the red wine—just because it was red—people were able to connect to it because it said something about their lives.

YOU'VE PAINTED YOURSELF INTO A MOST OPPORTUNE SOCIOECONOMIC CORNER, HAVEN'T YOU?

Absolutely. Art magazines said I was a genius for painting for a group of people who already know how to collect. But I didn't think of that, I was just painting what I enjoyed.

DOES YOUR ATLANTA HOME HAVE A WINE CELLAR?

It does. We designed and built our house kind of on top of a wine cellar I can grow into. It currently has close to 2,000 bottles, but is probably capable of holding around 5,000.

ARE YOU ABLE TO DEDUCT THE WINE YOU DRINK IN RESTAURANTS AS A BUSINESS EXPENSE?

Wouldn't that be nice! Although I can't deduct the wine, I'm fortunate to have friends who like to share their favorite bottles.

YOUR STILL-LIFE VIEWS, SOME OF THEM ALMOST KEYHOLELIKE IN THEIR TIGHT FOCUS ON WINE-TASTING SCENES, HAVE BEEN CALLED PHOTOREALISTIC. HOW AND WHERE DO YOU PAINT?

I have a studio in my home, and I also have a studio in a cabin that's about 10 miles away where I go when family life gets a little hectic.

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BUT I HEAR THAT YOU HAVE YET ANOTHER WORKPLACE?

With the amount of travel I do these days, I often paint when I'm flying. While everyone else is opening up their laptops, I'll open a little watercolor kit, wait for the flight attendant to bring me a half-glass of water, and get to work. I might take a couple 5-by-7 or 8-by-8 pieces of paper, and it gives me time to maybe work through a rendering or a study for a larger painting.

WITH YOUR WIFE, VANESSA, SERVING AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF YOUR CORPORATION, ARE YOU ABLE TO COMBINE LEISURE TRAVEL WITH BUSINESS ON MANY OF YOUR GALLERY-VISITING TRIPS?

Many of our galleries are located in great resort destinations, so I'm lucky that I get to enjoy the scenery from behind the easel. I love my job, so to me, business travel is enjoyable—I can paint anywhere.

IS THERE A BOOK YOU'VE READ LATELY THAT HAS HELPED YOU AS AN ARTIST, OR AS VP OF A SMALL BUSINESS?

I've always liked *The Millionaire Next Door* and *The Millionaire Mind*, by Thomas J. Stanley. I think a lot of people think to be supersuccessful it takes a lot of money or something really special. Those books show you that we're all capable of becoming that millionaire and staying true to yourself.—J.G.

SEEING'S BELIEVING

Thomas Arvid will be making 18 personal appearances throughout the country in June, July and August. Details of his itinerary can be seen at www.thomasarvid.com. “Painting live really introduces people to my art,” says Arvid.



LABOR OF LOVE, OIL ON CANVAS