

RUNNER-UP: STONE HORSES

Connecting Collectors Through Model Art

By Symone C. Skrzycki



From recent product lines to entirely custom creations, Stone Horses is taking model horse collecting to new heights, blending artistry, craftsmanship and imagination. The company specializes in high-quality, high-end, hand-painted and hand-customized model horse art that makes collecting a deeply personal experience.

The design-a-horse line – entered in the recent Coolest Thing Made IN Indiana competition – captures the heart of that approach. “That tends to be our entry point for the business because people really love the idea of getting to choose your sculpture,” explains Erin Corbett, CEO of Stone Horses.

Each month, customers select from a rotating collection of base sculptures before moving into customization. They choose from 10 different body colors, 15 to 20 pattern designs and several eye colors to create something uniquely their own.

For Corbett and her team, that customer connection carries deeper meaning. “Model horses ... it is an interest that a lot of people don’t take seriously,” she admits. “That’s one of the reasons our model horse community is so special. This is where we fit in – with like-minded people who understand the value of what we do.”

That’s also why making it all the way to the finals of the “Coolest Thing” contest and being embraced beyond the tight-knit collector group was especially powerful.

“To have what we do recognized as important or valuable outside of our little community is rare,” Corbett reflects. “Obviously, our community really came through and voted for us, but we also had people who had never heard of us saying, ‘Wow, that is really a cool thing, and I’m going to vote for it.’” That external recognition – that sense of legitimacy – she says was the “best part.”



Stone Horses recently launched a storefront at its Shipshewana location. Visitors can shop and take selfies with a mega-sized model horse.

Right out of the gate

Stone Horse figures are available in three sizes: large (1:9 scale of the real-life animal, approximately nine inches tall), pebble (1:24 scale, approximately five inches tall) and chip (1:32 scale, approximately three inches tall).

The model horse designs are as unique as the customers requesting them. While many are in search of realistic horses, another large segment opts for something in the realm of fantasy or space themed.”

Among 2026 product lines are a Vintage Chips Series (1980s and 1990s pop culture), GemStones, Literature: A Year With (Edgar Allan Poe, Exciting Elementals and more.

But you won’t find any Stone Horse art in retail stores.

“We do all direct-to-consumer (services) because we never really make more than 30 pieces of anything (at one time),” Corbett notes. “Our models are all small batch. We take a lot of time and put dozens and dozens of hours into every single piece we make. So, it’s certainly more of an art studio than a factory or an assembly line.”

A lasting bond

Stone Horses was established in Shipshewana by Peter and Elaine Stone in 1996.

“They wanted to make a higher quality product to fill a demand that they saw within the model horse community they didn’t think was being effectively addressed,” Corbett comments. “They created a business and successfully grew that business for almost 30 years. They retired in 2024, which is when I purchased the business.

“I’ve been a collector of model horses – and a horse fan – my entire life.”

Stone Horses is the only fully “made in America” model horse company. In addition, products are all produced in Indiana. It employs approximately 35 full-time staff and ships items around the world.

“We’re super fortunate to have such a vibrant and interactive community of collectors,” Corbett says. “We talk to them every day. We’ve got a Facebook group with 10,000 people – that’s our primary communication method with most of our customers. And I love how interactive it is because businesses would kill for the amount of customer feedback we get on a regular basis, which is wonderful.”

Making an impression

Events throughout the year showcase art and keep Stone Horses connected to collectors. One is its annual country fair.

Stone Horses supports its local community through a variety of programs. It donates models to horse shows around the world and sponsors events such as the North American Model Horse Show Association’s national annual show and National Model Painting Month in February, which involves painting model horses for all ages.

Reflecting on a quality that sets Stone Horses apart, Corbett asserts, “This is many people’s dream job. It’s very difficult out in the world to find a job where you can do art and get a steady paycheck and have a real benefits package. That doesn’t exist in a lot of art jobs. I’m really happy that we can offer a place for artists where they can just get to come in and create.”

RESOURCE: Erin Corbett, Stone Horses, at www.stonehorses.com