

S.A. LIFE AND CULTURAS

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Why "Glee" and "American Idol" have become can-miss shows.

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A gift from San Antonio to Dresden



COURTESY GINI GARCIA

A glass floral chandelier created by Gini Garcia will be unveiled in Dresden as a gift from the city of San Antonio.

Floral chandelier by Gini Garcia inspired by German city's famous glassblowers.

BY ELDA SILVA
lsilva@express-news.net

Gini Garcia was studying the work of German glassblowers Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka when she unintentionally grabbed a book upside down.

Looking at an image of peach blossoms by the father and son known for their amazingly accurate botanical models, she realized the inverted bouquet looked like a chandelier.

"It was an 'Aha!' moment," said Garcia, owner of Garcia Art Glass, a hot glass design and fabrication studio in Southtown.

That moment helped give

rise to Garcia's most ambitious project yet — a chandelier 6 feet in diameter and 5½ feet deep composed of 250 pieces of hand-blown glass made without a mold. Created as a gift from the city of San Antonio to the Blaschkas' hometown of Dresden, the piece will be presented at an unveiling Friday at Lingner Castle in Saxony, Germany.

It will be the first exchange between San Antonio and Dresden, which are engaged in an economic and cultural alliance as a preliminary step to becoming sister cities. Former Mayor Phil Hardberger initi-

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VOLUNTEERS

To list your agency, call the Volunteer Center at United Way, 210-352-7000, or email dtalamantez@unitedwaysatx.org.

NOMINATE YOUR VOLUNTEERS! The Volunteer Center at United Way is now accepting volunteer nominations for the 22nd annual Volunteer of the Year Awards dinner. To find out more and access the online nomination forms, go to www.unitedwaysatx.org. Deadline for nominations is Tuesday.

THE AUXILIARY OF MORNINGSIDE MANOR is an organized volunteer auxiliary seeking people at least 18 years old to donate their time, whether it's a couple of hours a week or every day, to make a difference in the lives of the residents at Morningside Manor. Contact Don Winkler at 210-521-7621 or www.rmmliving.org.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES is in need of a volunteer camp life-guard. Volunteer duties include supervising waterfront activities, including swimming. Camp is from June 14 to 15 in Wimberly. Life-guard must have current certification and be at least 18 years old. All volunteers must also take the Boy Scout's Abuse Prevention Training online and pass a background and sex offender registry check. Training provided. Contact Jennifer Shaw at 210-394-0392 or jennifers@hcsa.com

GLASS

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ated the relationship with Dresden, considered a leader in the bioscience, pharmaceutical and information technology industries, during his time in office.

"If you study Dresden at all, you'll see how important art and culture is in that city, so it's really a wonderful first gesture between San Antonio and Dresden," said Beth Costello, the city's international affairs director, who will be in Dresden for the unveiling.

Garcia, a glass artist for more than 21 years, has completed more than 50 site-specific works, including pieces for the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa and the Hyatt Regency San Antonio. She initially proposed the idea of creating a chandelier for Dresden to local arts patron Angelika

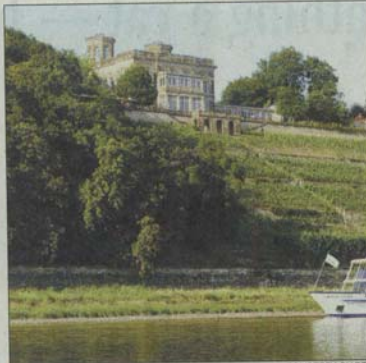


EXPRESS-NEWS FILE PHOTO

Gini Garcia shows some of the hand-blown glass discs at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Jansen, co-chair of San Antonio's Sister City Task Force.

The idea was "a little seed" when Garcia saw some works by the Blaschkas at the Corning Museum of Glass in New York. "I ended up looking at their collection and realizing, 'Wait a minute, what if these guys were alive to-



COURTESY PHOTO

Garcia's floral chandelier, which is 6 feet in diameter and 5½ feet deep, will be unveiled Friday at Lingner Castle in Saxony, Germany.

day? If they were alive today, what kind of a gift or chandelier would they give to their city? So I started working on that," Garcia said.

Garcia has described the glass and metal piece as "an oversized piece of jewelry." Surrounded by greenery, the flowers at the center of the chandelier are in

shades of pink, purple and red.

To finance the \$240,000 project, Garcia enlisted Joci Straus, a friend and well-known arts patron, to chair a fundraising committee. So far, Garcia has raised about \$112,000.

Garcia left for Germany last week to shepherd the chandelier, packaged in oversized crates, through customs and oversee installation. While in the country, she is putting works on exhibit at the Museum of Modern Glass in Coburg and the Frauenuau Glass Museum.

Having the chandelier installed in Dresden is "a huge honor," Garcia said.

"And this work is very organic. It's feminine. It's Latin. It's got color," she said. "And it's also bringing awareness to the citizens of Dresden about their own past. That makes me happy. It's not just 'Let's make something pretty and hang it in a pretty place.' It's more than that."