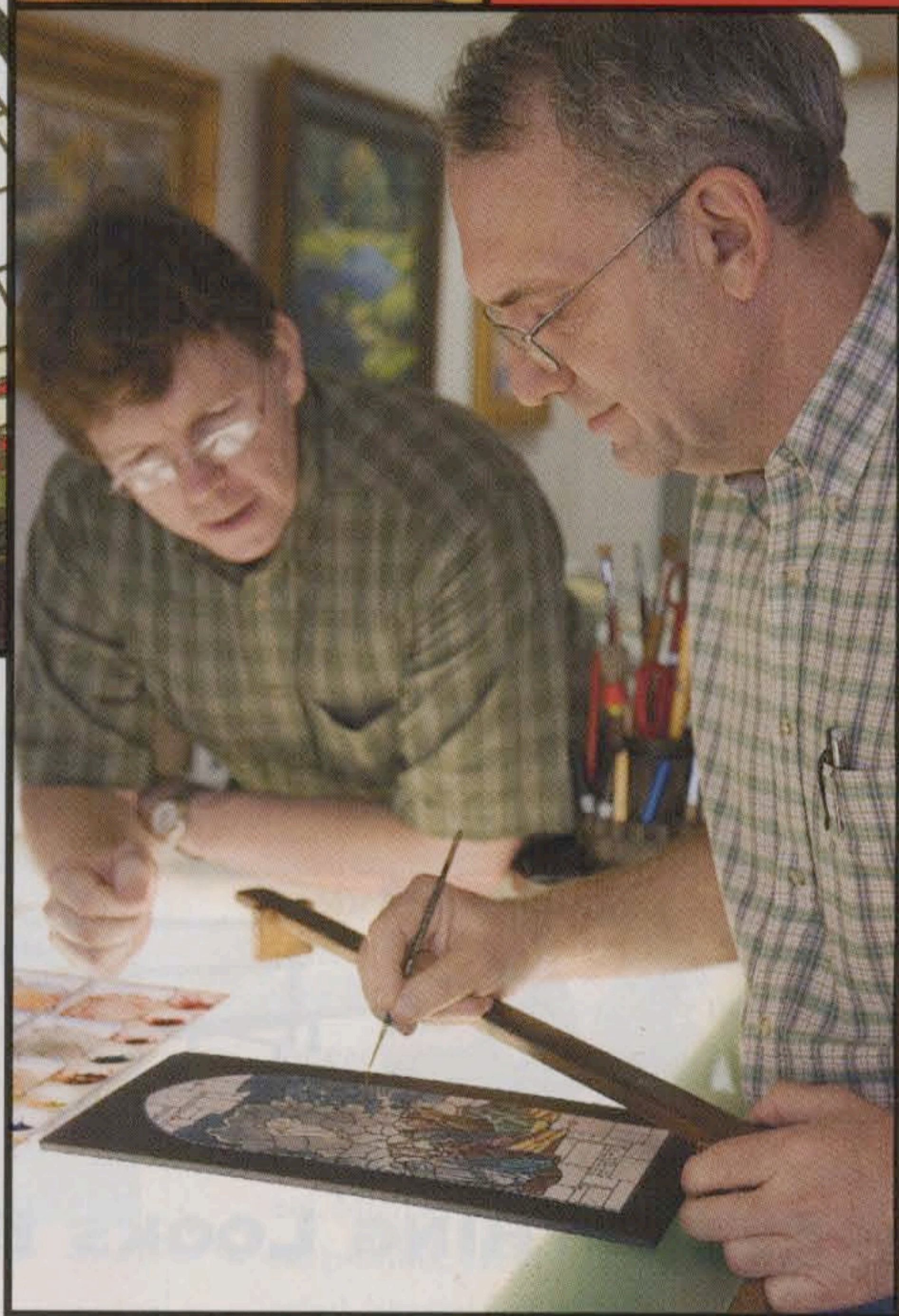
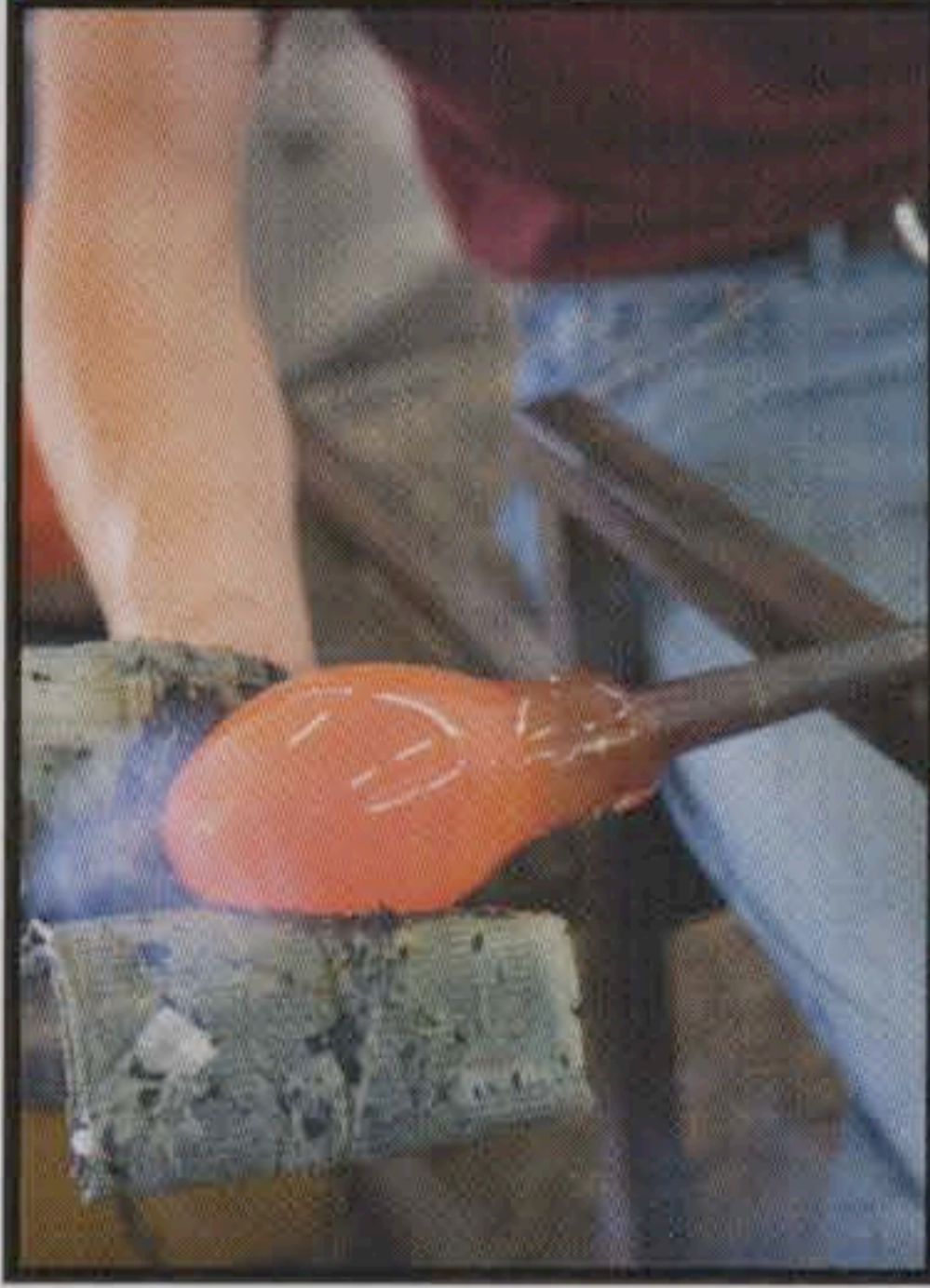


CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Artist Joe Barbieri creates a commission for a church. Stanton Glass Studio made the skylight at The Driskill Hotel in Austin. Bryant Stanton's daughter, Tiffany, designs Art Nouveau lamps. Bryant and Joe consult on a design. Wet newsprint is used to shape molten glass.



From Glass, Fine Art

One Waco artisan watches a legacy of craft take form.

By **Taylor Bruce**

Bryant Stanton, founder of Stanton Glass Studio in Waco, knows something about generational craftsmanship. It lasts.

His father, Norman, was a boatyard engineer on Long Island and also owned an antiques restoration business. His brothers, Warren and Gary, build furniture and teach college art and photography, respectively. And Bryant, a one-time cranberry bogger, oil field worker, and aspiring farmer, followed the accomplished right-brained lineage to a life in glasswork.

"At Texas Tech," he says, "I stumbled upon a small shop near campus. They offered a beginner's class, and from the first, I was hooked on glass."

That was 1974. Life soon took Bryant and his wife, Suzanne, to Waco, and in 1979, the couple opened up their

first studio. Bryant's workshop quickly began to gain the trust of Waco residents, especially its churchgoers and public officials, whose places of worship and government buildings offered the open canvases for his multihued patterns.

"I designed the work, built the work, sold the work, and installed the work. It was a one-man dog and pony show," Bryant says of his early days.

Today, eight folks work in the studio, including two of his sons, artist Joe Barbieri, and craftswoman Ingrid Andre. Bryant's glass now glistens far beyond Waco—from the Badlands Hotel in Lajitas to The Driskill Hotel in Austin.

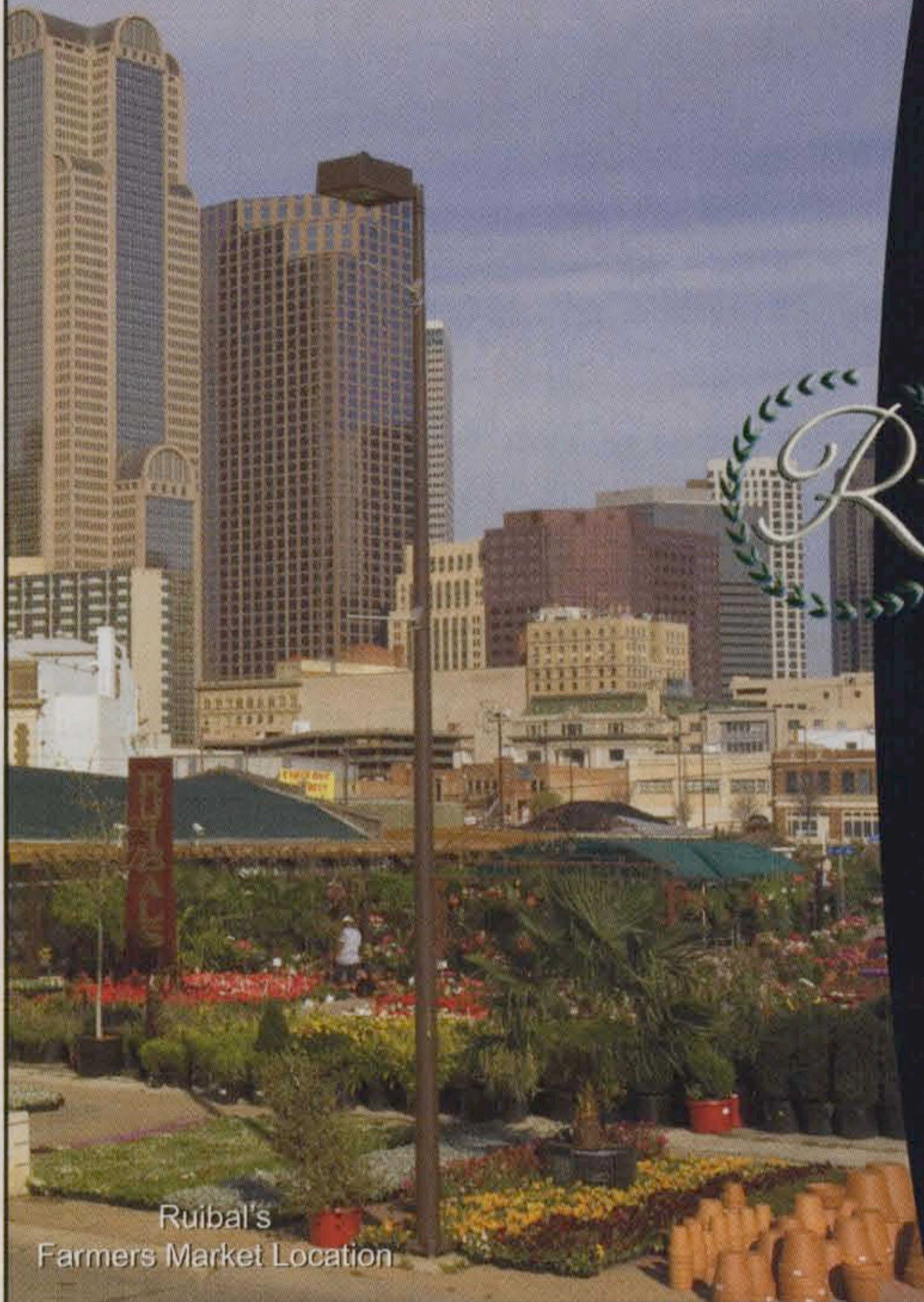
"I Was Trying To Live a Soho Life in Waco." The early days of fine-tuning the glass-maker basics—fault lines and foiling, grinding and mudding—laid a steady

grounding for Bryant. He worked hard to build the successful business, but also yearned to push boundaries into what he calls "new glass." He wanted to be more artsy, to bring the hip and unheard of to a 400-year-old trade.

Bryant, now the father of seven children, sighs when recounting those first years when he tried going the artist route. "I was trying to live a Soho life in Waco," he says with a laughing tone. "How insane is that?"

The seasoned businessman in Bryant slips out in this hard-earned memory. He sounds resolute in his course, confident in his craft, and

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People & Places

content in his place. After more than 30 years in the business, however, the artist in his soul still lingers when he sees light hitting colored panes.

Now that light reflects on his children, including Nathan and Jordan, who work in the business. Nathan, the older of the two boys and an accomplished woodworker and furniture-maker, will tell you that Jordan is taking his father's craft to a new place.

“He’s Just Something, Isn’t He?” Jordan, 17, folds yesterday’s Waco newspaper, squeezes a stream of water onto the creases, and gently lowers a burning orb onto the buffer. It’s a color of orange seen when looking at the sun set over a wide lake. The glass, which minutes before lay suspended in the form-changing heat, sizzles to a smolder on the wet papers. Flakes of newsprint flick onto the dirt beneath Jordan’s seat.

This is the glassblower’s circle. It’s a choreographed affair, and Jordan’s partner blows into the open end of the gaffer’s pole. The glass proves the blow by blushing into a magnificent ginger-yellow. Jordan signals to his partner with a look, and he spins the glass into the wetted paper, the only barrier between his skin and glass fired at 3,000° barely two minutes before.

“I’ve been watching him do this for more than two years,” Bryant says as he oversees Jordan preparing to break the piece of finery off the end point of the pole. “And in the beginning, it was a disaster every day,” he adds.

The curved shape, now cooling into a jade color, will go into the last of three firing chambers to harden over a few days. Jordan snaps off the work perfectly. Bryant beams and says, “He’s just something, isn’t he?” ●

Stanton Glass Studio: www.stantonglass.com or 1-800-619-4882.

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