

## Exploring Nevada City: Discover the Art of Lampworking at Darbeads Gallery and Studio

*By Valerie Moberg*



*Visitors to Nevada City can take the rare opportunity to see how glass beads are made and learn the fine art of Lampworking. Lampworking classes are offered at the Darbeads Gallery and Studio. If you have always wanted to learn how to make glass beads now is your chance. Classes are available for beginners with little to no experience, as well as for those more advanced.*

Have you ever wondered how glass beads are made? You can experience the fine art of lampworking (also known as flameworking or torchworking) first hand at Darbeads Gallery and Studio, a charming shop, studio, and classroom located at 317 Spring Street in Nevada City. Since opening the store in 2010, Janien Guntermann and Darby Graham have spent each day creating stunning one-of-a kind beads, pendants, and jewelry pieces.

Lampworking was probably developed around the first century B.C. but not widely practiced until the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Italy. Everyone has seen the most familiar use of Lampworking – colorful, jewel-like glass paperweights that were all the rage in 19<sup>th</sup> century France and are now prized collectibles. Unlike glass blowing, which uses a pipe to inflate a glass gob, Lampworking manipulates glass by heating over a propane or natural gas torch and then manipulating it with tools or gravity.

Darbeads' artisanal lineage is as impressive as its exquisite collection of unique beads. A master artist and craftsman, Darby, who is originally from Chicago, has been working with glass for the past twenty-five years. He began his career working in stained glass; he spent eight years as a bench assistant for Charles Lotton, maker of the world's most prestigious glass. Ten years ago he turned his attention to lampworking. Janien learned the craft from Darby and focuses most of her attention on turning glass beads and pendants into unique and colorful jewelry pieces.

Everything made by Darbeads is *inspired by nature and applied in glass*. Visitors to the shop can expect to see glass sea turtles in tones of amber and honey or green and translucent teal, purple and green dragon flies, cosmic storm focal beads in black, amethyst, pea green, deep red and cobalt blue infused with fine silver, tide pool focal beads in shades of blue, as well as landscape and tree of life specialty beads and pendants. Glass Paperweights, bowls, vases, ring holders and sculptures in an array of striking, illuminated colors are also displayed. The studio also houses an exquisite original Charles Lotton lamp.

In addition to creating glass beads, the couple teaches Lampworking classes. A Beginners Workshop consists of 12 hours of instruction and teaches all of the classic bead shapes. Lampworking and Lunch—a beginning bead making class that teaches the fundamentals—is taught the 3rd Saturday of every month. By the end of the session participants should have made enough beads to create a one-of-a-kind piece of Jewelry. Private Instruction is also available as is torch time rental by the hour, week or month. You can visit Darbeads on the web at <http://www.darbeads.com>

Valerie Moberg is the proprietor of the historic Broad Street Inn, and the go-to person for information about Nevada City. Built in 1870, Broad Street Inn is a small, family-owned, eco-friendly green business that prides itself on providing comfortable accommodations at affordable rates. Located in the heart of historic downtown Nevada City, this Victorian inn offers six contemporary rooms and a peaceful garden setting just a short walk from downtown Nevada City's great shops, restaurants, theaters, and wineries. For more information about the Broad Street Inn and the Nevada City area, contact Valerie by phone (530.265.2239) or email ([info@broadstreetinn.com](mailto:info@broadstreetinn.com)) or on the Web: <http://www.broadstreetinn.com>.