

# WVVAH

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## Add some bling to your kitchen

Litchfield Park weekend festival features chefs, artists and music

by Rich Ott  
assistant editor

For Buckeye resident Susan Waters, it began with a 2007 Christmas gift. She knew a neighbor of hers in the Sundance Active Adult community was making wooden salad bowls for gifts, so she decided to reciprocate by making a one-of-a-kind salad set.

She hasn't stopped making them since. "My neighbors loved it and went gaga over it," she recalled. "They started ordering sets and it quickly grew into a business."

Waters will be one of more than 200 artists who will be selling their wares from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. this weekend at Litchfield Park's annual Art and Culinary Festival.

The festival will take place in the downtown streets of Litchfield Park and in front of the Wigwam Resort & Spa.

Besides the many artists bringing works ranging from paintings and sculptures to handmade furniture and fine jewelry, the festival will also feature vendors selling edible items such as gourmet olives and homemade candy; several chefs giving demonstrations including Chef Vincent Tropepe straight from Philadelphia; a wine garden featuring wines from all over the world and microbrews; a large food court; and many musicians providing live entertainment.

Yet the artists are the heart of the event, and Waters said she is happy to be appearing for the first time at the annual festival.

### Bling-bling in the salad bowl

"Life is just too short not to have bling in your kitchen," Waters said.

The "bling" Waters is referring to are her works of art — Oneida stainless steel kitchen utensils with beads, glass drops and stones added to them and held in place by gold or silver wire.

Waters will have a variety of utensils for sale, including salad sets, pasta servers, cake/pie servers, wooden salad sets, big/little spoons, one- and two-scoop coffee scoopers, slotted spoons, cheese slicers, ladles, ice cube grabbers and wine glasses.

Prices for Waters' art range from \$6 to \$35, she said. "I think the affordability of my product had something to do with the success of it," Waters said.

One way Waters is able to keep the cost of her handiwork down is by buying all of her beads at half-off or even lower prices. Though sometimes she splurges for unique beads, which is usually what decorates her higher end products.

One thing she always does is make sure each utensil is unique.

"I like to do something creative, something different all the time," Waters said. "My advertising is even if the food doesn't taste good, it looks like it's going to."

The six-year Buckeye resident said her art is also a therapy for her, as she suffers from Parkinson's disease.

"It's like a companion hobby," she said. "I don't know how long I'll be doing it, but I'm enjoying it."

### He has a wooden heart

Arizona native Charles Taube is in the same boat.

The 56-year-old west Phoenix resident has been doing his art as a means of emotional and physical therapy ever since he lost more than 70 percent of the function of his left hand after almost severing it in 1997.

Taube uses his right hand to create one-of-a-kind wooden pieces in such shapes as music symbols, question marks, hearts and abstract designs.

"I found the fountain of youth through these sculptures," Taube said. "It's a marvel to me to see what is discovered when I sand them; the wood's true color comes out."

Taube's sculptures, which take anywhere from three weeks to four months to produce, range in price from \$1,100 to \$125,000.



**WOOD ART** by Charles Taube will be featured at the Litchfield Park festival.



**KITCHEN UTENSILS** are jazzed up with decorative beading by artist Susan Waters. She will sell her work at the Litchfield Park Art and Culinary Festival this weekend.



**SUSAN WATERS**, a Buckeye-based artist, shows samples of her customized kitchen ware.

He just returned from Tulsa, Okla., where he sold and delivered a 6-foot tall heart made out of padauk wood to a hospital.

"My major big pieces have been selling," Taube said of surviving in the current economy.

Taube, who has family living in Arlington, said he looks forward to the Litchfield Park festival.

"These Valley shows really appeal to me," he said. "Since I'm a third-generation Arizona native, I want to get popular in Arizona."

The festival itself is popular, as more than 50,000 people are expected to visit the event over the weekend, event organizer Candy Vermillion said.

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**WHAT:** 11th Annual Litchfield Park Art and Culinary Festival  
**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday  
**WHERE:** Downtown Litchfield Park, at the intersection of Wigwam Boulevard and Old Litchfield Road  
**INFO:** Admission and parking are free. Call 623-935-9040 for information.