

# "I love sharing my passion with everyone"

Joanna Sheen

We caught up with popular crafting celebrity **Joanna Sheen** to discuss her **love of all things handmade**

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**W**ith 40 books, a novel, CD-roms and countless television shows to her name, Joanna Sheen has definitely made her mark in the craft industry, becoming one of its most recognisable faces.

Joanna started her company back in 1979. "I'd just had my first daughter and didn't want to leave her in day care, so I started a business creating pressed flowers." After launching, it grew quickly all around the world. "Harrods picked up my work and from there it went global. I supplied artwork and card companies

worldwide, including the gift shop at Highgrove House in Gloucestershire. I've also exhibited pressed flower pictures at the Chelsea Flower Show for the last 20 years."

### Create and Craft

Joanna started working with Create and Craft almost as soon as they launched. "A lady that came to my workshops asked if I'd seen the new satellite channel that only did craft programmes. After that I watched every show for a week to figure out how it worked and what kinds of programmes they ran. I then wrote them a letter

saying that I would love to work with them and they rang me back the next morning to say that they would love to work with me too. Two weeks later I was on air for the first time!"

It was through Create and Craft that Joanna got more into cardmaking. "I started designing my own range of patterned paper as I couldn't find the right designs to go with my pressed flowers. My husband and I thought that it would be great to have patterned papers available on a CD so you could print them as and when they were needed. At that time, eight or nine years



Joanna Sheen's newest products



Joanna Sheen's latest collection

ago, CDs were very new. They turned out to be a massive success and flew out of the door."

This year she has a lot to look forward to. "We have two brand-new CDs coming out this year and I'm absolutely in love with the artwork. The first one will come out in April. We'll also finish our second novel, the sequel to *A Sticky End*. This is really exciting, and something I want to focus on more. After finishing the sequel I'll start working on my first solo novel."



Joanna Sheen



The dog joining the staff outside for lunch on a sunny day



The Joanna Sheen office

"A lot of my plans this year involve family though. My first granddaughter is 14 weeks old and she's the most beautiful baby girl there is. I already have a drawer for her in my craft room and I think two is the perfect age to start crafting with her. I can't wait for us to make cards together."

**Sharing creativity**

Crafting has a very social side to it, especially with the rise of the internet. "Back in the day if you had a craft shop close

by you were lucky, but finding someone else to share it with was sometimes really hard. The internet has changed the way communication works; it's now so easy to share your work and ideas with other people through the internet on forums, Facebook and blogs. Hooray for the internet!"

Joanna also loves talking to fellow crafters. "Sometimes people say that they're afraid of approaching me at shows, but please do, as I love talking to people and seeing the cards

they've made. There are so many talented crafters out there. I reply to hundreds of emails a week from readers and I also have my own blog, which is just me having fun with recipes, images from my garden and cards", she says. "I want people to get to know me like they would their neighbour. We really value that in our company. If people just want to call and chat for 20 minutes about craft, they can."

"I find that creativity is very nurturing and healing, particularly when you're not very well. It's something to do with the mind and it's great to fill up a gap in your life if, say, if you've suffered a bereavement. It can help you process grief by giving it a place and giving you something to do at

the same time."

"A lot of my success happened because I followed my dreams and my gut instinct, even though everyone said I should give up. I never did, because I firmly believed in my ideas and dreams. If you just keep going, it's amazing what you can achieve." Her love for inspiring people in their crafts and encouraging them to follow their dreams and passion is the reason she keeps going. "I would never be able to do something soul destroying as my daily job. I need to be able to share my passion and inspiration with others, that's what I love to do."

Turn the page for designer inspiration using Joanna Sheen dies

