

FEATURE

Okoboji for Christmas

By AMBER VANDE ZANDSCHULP
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MIDDLETON, WI—Precious memories from days spent at the Lakes now can hold a special place on a Christmas tree.

Two unique ornaments created by Brad and Isa Primavera-Wipperfurth capture the fun and memories of just one day—or even an entire summer—spent in Okoboji.

Founders of a business called Wipper Willow in Middleton, WI, the couple designed a glass ornament featuring landmarks of the Lakes area.

Isa originally is from the Lakes area, and she and her husband make the trip back to Iowa a handful of times each year, Brad said. “We’ve known each other for three years, and my wife has good memories of that place,” he said. “I appreciate the area and enjoy it myself.”

The Wipperfurths value the area so much they came up with the idea of making the Okoboji ornaments. Brad said the idea was inspired by the Christopher Radko ornaments Isa’s mother collected.

“Creating these was another extension of that,” Wipperfurth said. “It’s what we wanted to do.”

The two Okoboji ornaments are the first products the couple has created for Wipper Willow.

The ornament idea is a venture that “just kind of came to us,” Wipperfurth said.

“Within five minutes, we had an idea of what we wanted it to be,” Wipperfurth said. “It was amazing how it came together.”

The process to make the ornaments began in January and took approximately six months to complete, beginning with the creation of the designs.

All of the fine details were ironed out quickly, and many hours were spent blowing the glass, developing it and painting the pieces.

Wipperfurth said each ornament is a sturdy piece made of quality material.

“The main thing about this ornament is that it’s unique,” Wipperfurth said. “There’s nothing else like it of its kind.”

Each glass ornament is hand-blown and hand painted by Polish artisans. Each ornament was made in Poland, where workers created a mold used to form the glass ornaments.

The ornaments are painted in patriotic colors of red, white and blue.

Unique ornament brings the joy of the Lakes to homes all year long

AT A GLANCE:

What: Okoboji Christmas Ornament

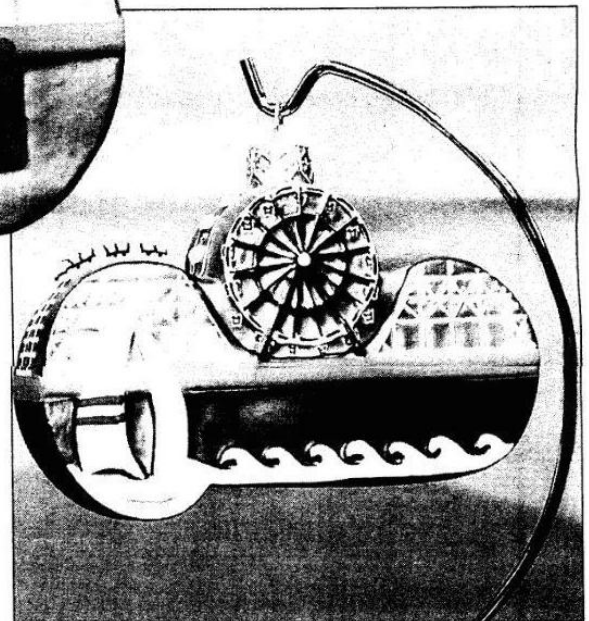
Contact: (608) 833-0371 or wipperwillow@charter.net; or order of their Web site at www.wipperwillow.com

Notes: Each ornament is \$36 with an additional \$5 for shipping and handling; add \$1 for each extra ornament. Iowa residents should add six-percent sales tax, which is non-applicable if you order through the Web site. The ornament stand is sold separately. Contact Wipper Willow if you are interested in purchasing one.



The Okoboji ornament accurately displays some of the Lakes’ most recognizable features, including the Arnolds Park Amusement Park Ferris wheel and the roller coaster complete with cars coming over the hill. The ornament is perfect for any Christmas tree or can be displayed in the home all year long.

(Photos by Dana DeJong)



One side of the ornament proudly displays the name Okoboji in bright red letters. In the background, the Ferris wheel from Arnolds Park stands tall and the cars from the roller coaster can be seen coming over the next hill.

“On the rollercoaster, we added the cars,” Wipperfurth said. “These are special little things that some people might not notice.”

On the other side of the ornament, a similar scene of the rides in Arnolds Park can be seen in the background while in the foreground a sailboat glides along the blue waters of West

Lake Okoboji.

The ornament can be hung on the tree or displayed on an ornament stand.

“I would say that just about everything is unique about this ornament,” Wipperfurth said. “They can be displayed in your home all year long and I’ve seen nothing else like it. This is something that never has to be put away and is special.”

The ornament can become the centerpiece in any Christmas collection. Wipperfurth said that he and his wife have quite a few ornaments similar to the Okoboji one; what makes it unique is the fact it represents the Lakes

area.

He added the ornament is unique not just in the Lakes area, but in all areas surrounding the popular destination.

“This is not your standard bulb. There are limited quantities,” Wipperfurth said of the 300 ornaments. “It’s not something you can just pick up in any store.”

Wipperfurth said they have been making good headway in selling the heirloom, despite being on the market for only a month.

“We’re still trying to get the word out to the area,” he said. “We’re pleased at this point at how the sales have gone.”

Wipperfurth said all feedback returned has been good and he and his wife have received many positive comments.

“To really appreciate it, you have to see it in person,” he said. “Once you see the ornaments in your hand or on a stand or on a tree, you see how truly special they are.”

For the Wipperfurths, the Okoboji ornaments are just the beginning in what they hope will be a successful venture.

“It’s just a small business idea that started with these ornaments,” Wipperfurth said. “Hopefully we can branch off these and continue to be creative in other ways.”

As for the ornaments, all of the hard work put into each one is something the Wipperfurths can appreciate, as well as those who purchase them.

“It will be around for generations and generations to come,” Wipperfurth said.