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WEEKEND BREAK

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Hazel and Brand Schlesinger
at the Grand Canyon while
on a painting trip together.



ABOVE: 'Portofino Harbor' by Hazel Schlesinger. BELOW LEFT: Schlesinger's 'Chianti Highway.' BELOW RIGHT: Schlesinger's 'My Sunset.'



Painting perfection

Schlesinger is inspired
by coastal scenes

By ZOË BUCHLI
For The Astorian

Hazel Schlesinger is one of the Oregon Coast's most prolific painters. With a collection featuring oil and acrylic paintings of vibrant sunsets, bright red poppy fields, stormy days at Haystack Rock and compositions of Mediterranean coastal towns, it is easy to see why.

Schlesinger grew up between Seaside and Cannon Beach. Running around beaches and spending time outdoors as a child yielded a deep appreciation for the natural beauty around her — an appreciation that has had a lasting impact on her creativity.

"Growing up on the coast has been the best education possible. The colors are so vivid. You get such a huge vista of panoramic views, and unobstructed views of sky and ocean," Schlesinger said. "There's never a boring moment."

Northwest by Northwest Gallery in Cannon Beach has featured Schlesinger's artwork since 2010. Since 2012, she has instructed workshops at the gallery. This year, she was selected as Cannon Beach's Stormy Weather Arts Festival's featured artist.

Schlesinger's artwork is on display at 12 other galleries across the country, including Portland Art Museum's Rental Sales Gallery. She also has work featured in Art Gallery H in Arizona.

Finding inspiration

Schlesinger describes herself as an impressionistic painter.

"I like to focus on broken colors and brush strokes to give my paintings energy," she said.

By using her brush strokes as a compositional part of painting, she's able to create works of art with clear definition and textures. When it comes to finding moments to capture in her paintings, Schlesinger said that light is the most determinant factor in catching her eye.

"It's about how light strikes an object that excites me, and then secondary is the color," Schlesinger said. "It can be the light that's reflected from a tree branch or a palm frond on a wall that's more exciting than the tree branch or palm frond itself."

Painting the sunsets of Oregon's coast has allowed Schlesinger to play with and understand light in her work.

"Being a coastal girl, I know exactly when the best time to paint a sunset is. So I have to wait for that," Schlesinger said. "But then it gets dark, and that will happen in a snap of a finger. So if you're in that spot and then snap there it goes — that's what really, really is exciting to me."

Schlesinger added that it's also vital to