

Peggy Garvin relates the history of her replica Vincent's Window

Why did I make the Vincent window?

If it hadn't been for my son, Rob Blackburn, I never would have found Beauty and the Beast the television show. While the show was on the air I was working 2 jobs and had no time for TV. My son kept telling me he was watching a show that I would LOVE. When it was cancelled Rob found the reruns and insisted I watch them with him. And I was hooked.

Like every other Beauty and the Beast television show fan, I was in love with the show and especially Vincent and his wonderful chamber. I had a stained glass workshop and was making custom pieces for myself, my family and even selling some. I taught my daughter, Michele Pearman, how to do stained glass and we had a show at a local art shop. I also taught my son-in-law but he didn't care for it and branched off into mosaic glass and now is a very successful mosaic artist. So the window immediately caught my eye. I used to sit right in front of the TV and replay the sections of the episodes that showed the window. I even tried to take pictures of the TV screen (and we all know how well that works).

Then, I was at a B&B Con and another fan, Brooke Rodriguez, showed me pictures she had taken of the actual Vincent window. All I could think of was how lucky she had been to actually see the set where our beloved show was filmed. I begged her to let me have copies of the pictures and she gave them to me. Since seeing the window in person was an "impossible dream" because the set was gone -- I knew I had to make a replica that was as close as possible. Of course, with the strange lighting on the set of B&B we will never know the REAL colors but I think it's more important to try to be true to the way the window looked in the pictures.

At that time my dream was to recreate Vincent's Chamber in my own home. I wanted to have a bed like his and find all the wonderful things he had in his room. And especially I wanted to have that window. It didn't take me long to realize that was much too big of an undertaking – but I had to try to make the window.

So while I was having a company in Augusta, Georgia, build some wooden frames for a stained glass window I was making to fit in the bay window of our bathroom, I asked if they could build a frame for a half-oval window. They said they could if they had a pattern. At the time my daughter was working as a graphic artist. She scanned the photo to get the proportions of the window, drew the pattern and printed it on a huge printer. When my husband asked me what I wanted for my birthday (in July, 2004) I told him I wanted a frame for Vincent's window. It took them until September, 2004 to make the frame.

The frame had to be modified since the stained glass process I use is called "copper foil" and you can't make pieces bigger than 2'x2' with that method. So there are extra wood braces in my window. I would imagine the process used to make the actual window was "lead came" which allows you to make much larger pieces.

My replica window measures 50 inches wide and 28 inches tall. After the wooden frame was made, we searched for the right color paint to make it look close to the picture.

Little did I know the frame would turn out to be the easy part. Since I am a stickler for authenticity, the search for what I perceived as the exact right glass was a very long and expensive one. I went to every local stained glass shop I could find in South Carolina and nearby Georgia. I would show them the picture of the window and they would try to match the glass – but no luck. This actually took years and I still had no glass that I considered perfect.

So, in 2008, I started contacting companies on the internet. I would email, send them a copy of the picture, and they would send me samples. The thing about stained glass is the inconsistency. So a

small sample would look great only to order the glass and it not match the sample. The light gray/blue is a more common glass that I ordered through Delphi (a stained glass supplier) and the darker streaky glass is made by a small company – Armstrong.

The brown/gold glass was the hardest to find. After settling on the other colors, I looked for over a year and finally found the texture I felt I needed. It's opalescent glass with what they call "catspaw" texture – isn't that just purr-fect for Vincent's window!! But when I got a local glass shop to order what I thought was the right color, it just wasn't right. That's when I contacted Kokomo Opalescent Glass in Kokomo, Indiana. They sent me samples and I finally found the one I wanted only to have them tell me it was "out of production". I put in my order and waited another year for them to get enough orders to roll that particular color and texture of glass. So in June, 2010, I finally had all the glass I needed.

My window is made from stained glass. Some people think you take plain glass and paint it (which I have seen done) but the real stained glass windows are made from glass that is already colored. The different colors of molten glass are poured onto a table and smeared around. After they harden they are cut into pieces. This is why the colors vary so much making finding the right color an even more challenging process.

I know many fans are obsessive about Beauty and the Beast but I still can't believe I spent about \$1,000 to get glass that was good enough for Vincent's window. It wasn't perfect but, being part Cherokee, I subscribe to the legendary Native American belief that if you ever create anything that is "perfect" you will then die. So I willingly accepted that this window would be the best I could make it but not perfect.

I mentioned before that the process I use to make stained glass is called copper foil. I took a copy of the big pattern and cut it into individual paper pieces and numbered them. Then I placed the pieces on the appropriate color glass making sure the flow of the glass was consistent to the overall window. It's a laborious process. Then I drew around each piece with a glass pen, numbered the pieces and cut them with a diamond saw. I ground each piece by hand to get rid of the jagged edges. After that I washed and dried each piece and began fitting them onto the big pattern. I had to fit the pieces leaving an allowance for the copper foil tape. This is usually a tedious part of making stained glass. Once I was satisfied the pieces fit together as closely as possible, then I washed and dried them again. Once they were completely dry I took the copper foil, which comes in rolls, and wrapped the edges of each individual piece of glass. Using a fid (which is a wooden tool) I smoothed all the edges to insure the tape adhered to the glass. In the next step I put each section of the window back together with small pieces of masking tape to hold the pieces while I soldered with flux and stained glass solder. Then I washed each section to remove the flux (acid) and used a neutralizer. And finally I polished and sealed each section, placed them into the grooves from the back side of the window and caulked them in place.

Now that the window was complete, it had to be hung. At that point we were replacing the windows in our house and I had the regular windows in my "Vincent Room" replaced with a large picture window. Then Frank, my wonderfully understanding and talented husband, built a wooden framework to support the window.

Until Angie asked me how long it took to make the window, I actually had no idea that from seeing the photos in July, 2003, to having the window displayed in my Vincent Room in 2011 – I spent 8 years on this project. And every time I look at that window I realize it was worth it.

I want to say that without the support of my family and all the wonderful people who tried to help me find the glass – this window would not exist. And without Angie and all the hard work she does, the fans – no matter where they live – would never be able to enjoy all the wonderful Beauty and the Beast items she locates and lovingly puts in the Treasure Chambers.