

# Cheryl Koen

Inspired by the masters

CHERYL KOEN grew up in a small West Texas town with little exposure to art. But creativity was in her blood, and Koen's natural artistic abilities showed in her penchant for mixing colors as a toddler. "I think you're born an artist. I don't know if that's something you really evolve into," she says. "It's there from the start." As a youngster she drew constantly, mostly horses and faces, but with little art schooling she eventually pursued a real-estate career—that is, until a pivotal encounter changed her course.

Koen was on a trip with her daughters to see the Annenberg Collection at its stop at the National Gallery in Washington, DC, in 1990 when she came face to face with rooms full of historic artwork. The works of the master Impressionists awoke her desire to pursue art, and in 1996—after a personal tragedy—Koen decided to leave behind her successful real-estate career to focus on art. Since then the oil painter has honed her skills and style, first painting European street scenes based on her travels overseas and then depicting southwestern themes inspired by her home in Santa Fe. With a love of light and color, Koen has developed a style imbued with soft hues, which give her equine and western paintings their signature look. "Your style is kind of like your handwriting—it's not a conscious effort," she says. "It evolves as you mature as a painter." —*Joe Kovack*

Koen's works can be found at La Posada de Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM, and [www.cherylkoenfineart.com](http://www.cherylkoenfineart.com).

ROW 1: *Sunrise Roundup*, oil, 10 x 20. ROW 2: *The Hat Parade*, oil, 20 x 24. *Buffalo Huddle (detail)*, oil, 30 x 30. ROW 3: *Jacarita Peak*, oil, 12 x 24.

