

# Everybody Knows Your Name

Having had his name above the door of a near-legendary Manhattan bistro for almost 30 years, Shelter Island's Eric Demarchelier is now putting his signature on the artwork displayed on its walls—and those of his home, and a local gallery....

by Cindi Cook

ANYONE WHO'S LIVED on the Upper East Side for a while has most likely met friends for drinks at the bar at Demarchelier, or ordered a dish of bistro fare in its dining room. Situated on East 86th Street between Madison and Park, the 27-year-old restaurant is approaching New York institution status.

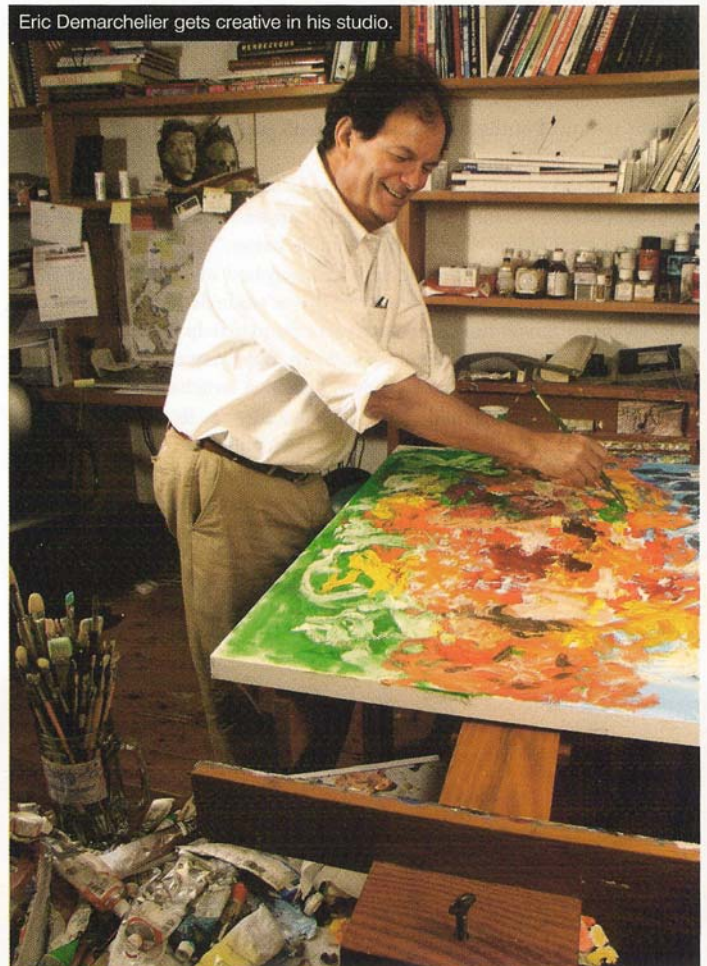
The restaurant's devoted proprietor, Eric Demarchelier—painter, father, and Shelter Island resident—has stayed involved with the place through the years. Considering the eatery's renown and the fame of Demarchelier's brother Patrick, the fashion photographer whose work graces every major fashion publication, "Demarchelier" has practically become a household name.

Locally, however, it's his artwork for which Eric Demarchelier is now becoming known. Twelve years ago he picked up a brush and painted his first stroke. "One day I decided to do it," he says with the casual yet confident shrug only a Frenchman can deliver. "I was always attracted to it." He soon found an instructor, Leonid Gervits, a Russian who was then teaching at the Art Students League of New York. For five months Demarchelier traveled to Gervits' home in New Jersey to study the craft. "He taught me the academic side of it, how to draw, all the proper techniques." Now Demarchelier's figurative and abstract paintings are represented by the Karin Sanders Fine Art gallery in Sag Harbor, where he will take part in an exhibition called "The Nature of Art," going up on June 30.

"I've always had it in me," Demarchelier says of his desire to paint. He keeps a studio in the back of the comfortable Shelter Island home where he and his wife, Catherine, have lived for 12 years. The house sits on a large stretch of land and has a very lived-in feeling. There's art on almost every wall, both his and that of daughter Emily, 28, a producer. (Son Jean-Christophe, 35, works for a luxury yacht company in Antibes, and son Benjamin, 24, is in advertising.) The family has been traveling to the island for 30 years; Demarchelier finds its similarities to his native Normandy—the abundance of green and proximity to water—part of the appeal. The brood comes out year-round and entertains often, both at home and at Sunset Beach, a nearby hotel and lounge. Brother Patrick sometimes travels over by boat from his house in East Hampton.

Conveniently enough, the artist's restaurant also serves as a gallery; he sold some 40 paintings during two recent shows there. Of late his inspiration comes largely from the Abstract Expressionist work of Willem de Kooning. "He's one of my favorites," Demarchelier says of the legendary painter, who was also a Hamptons resident.

Demarchelier is nothing if not appreciative of the creative haven the East End has been—and still is—for so many artists. "For me, the first thing is to have a good life. I drink wine every day, and I walk, sail, or play golf—but of course, I want to keep painting." **H**



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