



Want to be the Best of the Best along the PA Rt 6 Artisan Trail? Here is some insight from a seasoned Artisan Trail hopper.

I've been in so many great shops and galleries and most are inviting, intriguing, inspiring. Once in a while I sense that the shop owners are no longer seeing their space from the perspective of their customers. Some insights:

Catch my attention! You must have your name out in the ether these days—website, blog, social media—all will boost your presence. Also **join** local and regional Chambers of Commerce, Visitors Bureaus, and of course, the PA Route 6 Artisan Trail. And remember: **signage** is absolutely critical—I need to know that I have arrived.

Light Up! I hesitate to step into a dark space.

Keep regular hours. **Post** your hours at your shop, on your website, phone answering message.

Make me feel like I'm welcome. Sounds like a no-brainer, but once in a while I feel like more of a bother than a welcome customer. **Welcome people in**, but don't pester. No one wants to be hounded. Those 'just looking' customers may return to buy.

Quality Always Counts! We can always tell. Enough said.

Find (and Keep) Your Niche! You can't be all things to all people so don't even try. The line "we have something for everyone" is very rarely true. Settle into **Your Style**. You have found your niche, fill it!

Keep it Clean! It isn't just the floor that needs sweeping—check out those cob webs in the corner. And the dust on the window sill. These are **big clues** that your stock hasn't changed much.

Stay Current! It isn't hard to see when a shop hasn't updated decor. Even simple things like the sign on your door can set the tone. Color schemes have a life-cycle. Remember the dusty blues and pinks of the early 80's or the fushia, teal and purples that came later? Unless your style theme is retro, you may need to freshen up.

Play it Again Shopkeeper! Music sets such a definite mood and wandering around in a dead silent space feels lonely. Pick what suits your artwork style: jazzy? country? mellow? edgy?

Order or Chaos? If I can't tell there is some sense of order I might think that is a reflection of your business sense. While many of us creative types thrive in the midst of chaos, it doesn't translate well in a gallery or shop.

Safety First. I once opened the door into a beautiful little shop, knocking over a ladder just behind the door, and the hammer that was resting on the ladder landed on my toe. I had boots on, wasn't hurt, but I was hesitant to walk around much. (The shop owner handled it with charm, apologies and humor so that helped)

Inspire Me! So often I'm completely surprised by a new idea or a new way of expressing an old idea. Sometimes it is a subtle touch, nuance, a bit of whimsy. Sometimes I'm feeling hit over the head something so powerful I can't get it out of my head. Inspire me - I want to support that.

What can you add?