

# Meet Jane Seymour

## Coming to Charlotte in April

TEXT BY SHERRI K. OOSTERHOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE JEWELL AGENCY



PHOTO BY CHARLES BUSH

If what Picasso once said is true: “Art washes from the soul the dust of every day life,” then art was exactly what Jane Seymour needed during a difficult stretch in her life nearly fifteen years ago. Picking up a paint brush was a turning point in piecing her broken life back together after a devastating divorce, the death of her father and the realization that she was starting over—emotionally and financially.

But that was several self-portraits ago. Today, this Emmy and award-winning actress approaches life with an open heart, as reflected in her art—from her popular line of jewelry to her paintings soon to be on display right here in our home town.

### HOPE ON A PALETTE

Soon after her divorce and her fortieth birthday, she gave her last bit of money in exchange for a drawing of her children, which she bid on at a charity auction. “Rather than have a nervous breakdown, I decided to listen to the wise words of my mother and go out and help someone,” said Seymour who described these earlier days by telephone, sitting in a hotel lobby while stranded in a February snow storm in New York.

Artist Tom Mielko visited her home to photograph her children, and at first-glance, he saw talent in her finger tips—a piece of “art” hanging in their playroom. “I thought he was kidding when he said that my finger painting was terrific,” she laughed. “He offered to teach me to paint, which I couldn’t afford at the time, but he did it for free because I guess he believed in my potential.”

With two days of watercolor technique to her credit, she became lost in the process of painting. “I would stay up all night and paint,” she said. “To this day, if I’m under great stress, I still paint. I just never imagined anyone would ever see them.”

### BROAD STROKES

It was after another charity auction in 1995 at the Guggenheim Museum that Seymour, accompanied by her children and husband actor/director James Keach, and a host of humanitarians got to see her paintings. “I donated one of my early watercolors to the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and it sold for twenty-five thousand dollars,” she said. “I was glad to have helped grant five children their wish . . . and for the confidence it gave me.” That same image later landed on a celebrity-painted Discover card, exposing her talent with great reach.

This confidence added a new credential to her list of accomplishments—artist. She’s designed champagne labels for Korbel, silk scarves for Escada and a jewelry collection for Kay Jewelers inspired by her Open Heart paintings. There is also the highly visible “Compete with an Open Heart” poster commissioned by the XXI Winter Olympic committee, featuring what Seymour describes as a “snowy open heart, symbolic of a time when so many countries come together and stop fighting.”

She admits she’d be crazy not to concede that her celebrity status contributes to the awareness of her many projects. She has a couple of books to her credit, a skin care line, and has just announced partnerships to design lighting products and outdoor furniture. Seymour’s keen eye for color and savvy design skills are the key component to her craft—across all mediums.

While her familiar face does open doors, she believes that her art can stand alone without the crutch of her *Dancing with the Stars* celebrity status. “One of the first paintings I ever sold was to a collector who didn’t even know that I am an actress,” she said.

### CURRENT WORKS

When she’s not acting, writing or designing, she can be found in her Malibu studio painting (yes, that’s her lovely studio used as the backdrop for the Kay Jewelers commercial). This studio shares a view of a pond and waterfall with flowers and a garden—pure inspiration for her canvas.

When asked what currently inspires her creativity, Seymour simply says it’s the colors in nature. Her current exhibit is colorful indeed—a collection of flowers, scenes in nature, self-portraits in serene settings and a series of Open Hearts, synonymous with her signature.

Look closely and all of her paintings tell a story—whether a vase of fresh cut flowers or a self-portrait from an earlier time period. “People seem to like my self portraits,” she said. “One of my favorites is a self-portrait set in my former garden in Bath, England which I owned for 26 years.” Seymour went back last summer,



where the kind owners let her drop in for a visit—and additional inspiration.

Sometimes her work winds up as a self-portrait, and it didn’t even start out that way. For example, her painting titled “mother and child on beach,” was inspired by a photo she had taken of others. “When I paint, I take photos, and then I turn them into whatever I want—turn light hair to dark, that’s the beauty of painting.”

For Seymour, the process is as important as the outcome—although she says, “it’s hard to know when you’re finished. Sometimes it comes quickly and easily, and others I spend a lot of

time thinking, coming to that place and perfecting the image,” she added.

Seymour sells most of her original artwork, which she admits is hard to let go. “If I have sold an original, I keep a Giclee (print from the original) on canvas,” she said.

When the snow lifts in New York, and she heads back to sunny Malibu, Seymour says that she’ll start work on two new self-portraits, each from a different era. “I’m also working on abstracts of the ocean,” she said, adding, “they have a lot of energy.” \*



**TOP**  
*The Artist in Her English Garden*  
Original oil on canvas, signed lower left  
24 x 36 inches

**BOTTOM**  
*Koi X*  
Original watercolor on paper, signed lower right  
10 x 8 inches

## Meet Jane

Friends of art and Jane Seymour fans alike can meet her and view her exhibit, which includes original oils, acrylics and watercolor paintings, as well as limited edition artwork. Pieces range from two thousand to fifty thousand dollars.

Friday, April 23 - 7 pm – 9 pm

Saturday, April 24, 2010 - 5 pm – 8 pm

Wentworth Gallery: South Park Mall, 4400 Sharon Road, Charlotte, NC

For details call: 704.365.2733 or 800.732.6140