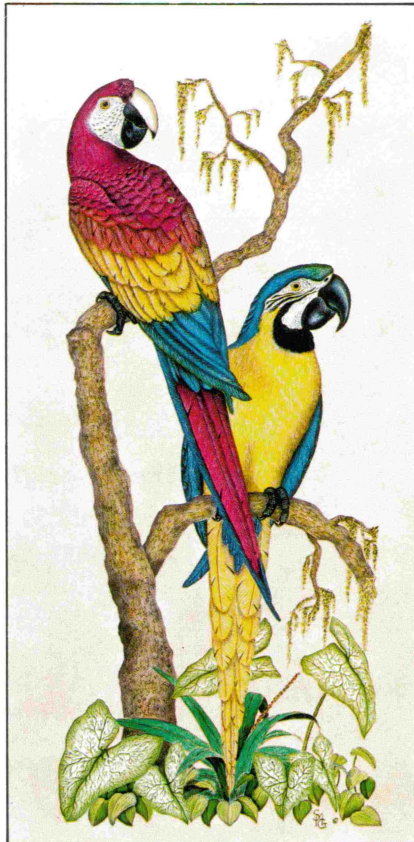


*"Meet Our Fine Feathered Friends"*



# Michael Steven Gardner

an artist on his way

Steven Michael Gardner, a newcomer to the art world, is constantly working to capture the image of various members of the animal kingdom true to life, complete with disposition. Though his collection of paintings is relatively small, for his career has just begun, those paintings have received public and professional attention and even awards.

With pencil in hand at the age of sixteen, Steve would pass the time by sketching. Those sketches have given way to serious pieces of art; the pencil evolving into paint and air brushes. Now with innate ability, Steve can record a living thing on paper with impressing detail and stunning design.



The style and design of each piece is specific and deliberate to coordinate with the animal at hand. Steve says, "I am intent on portraying my subjects as realistically as I can, while at the same time manipulating the style and design so as to set the mood and control the viewer's eye."

Unlike the minimal time involved in his sketches at sixteen, a piece may now take months. The "Meet Our Fine Feathered Friends" print demanded four and a half months from thought, through research, talking with breeders, and designing, to a beautiful conclusion. It was well worth the wait!

Steve also uses his skill and knowledge of photography in the gathering of information for his paintings. He says, "It is difficult to paint a live subject. How many animals will pose quietly for you as you paint? My own photos give me the perspective and detail of the subject that coincides with what I see in my mind." Steve strives for and achieves an extra spice in his paintings which are a step above what can be captured in a photograph.

Only recently Steve dove head first into the bird world and came up with a great new attraction for himself. His major work so far, mentioned above, called

"Meet Our Fine Feathered Friends", is appropriately a great collection of birds. Ninety-eight to be exact! Steve says, "What I basically tried to do with this piece is to please as many people as I could with one single picture. Each bird lover has his or her particular favorite bird, so I have tried to collect pictures of most of the popular birds from every corner of the bird kingdom and put all together in a collage type design." This work is a great enjoyment for him as well as for bird enthusiasts.

The Hawk-headed parrot, found as the center piece of this work, is a favorite of the artist. Aesthetically minded, he states, "It is simply because of the vivid, contrasting colors within the bird, and also it's unusual shape and rarity, that I love it so."

To Steve's delight, the public has embraced his work. The Professional world also gave it's difficult-to-obtain nod of approval through an "Award of Excellence" for design and illustration.

As well as working further with the American Federation of Aviculture, Steve's vision is to someday illustrate a book on wildlife. If he continues the way he's going now, this goal will surely be realized.





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