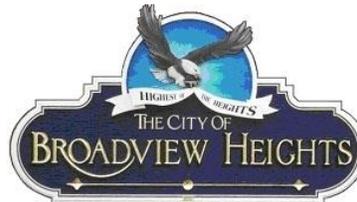


Broadview Heights Business Spotlight:

Elegant Ice Creations, Equipment & Bear Naked Signs



Did you know that Broadview Heights is home to a unique and ever-expanding business centered around one man's special talent and love for ice carving? Aaron Costic, owner of "Elegant Ice Creations", "Elegant Ice Equipment" and now "Bear Naked Signs" talked to the City of Broadview Heights Economic Development Director, Kristina Sorensen, to explain how he got started in this unique field, what his businesses do and how they have evolved into many different market needs.



*Aaron Costic, carving in his Broadview Hts studio
Photo courtesy of Fox 8 News*

Q: How did you get started in this business?

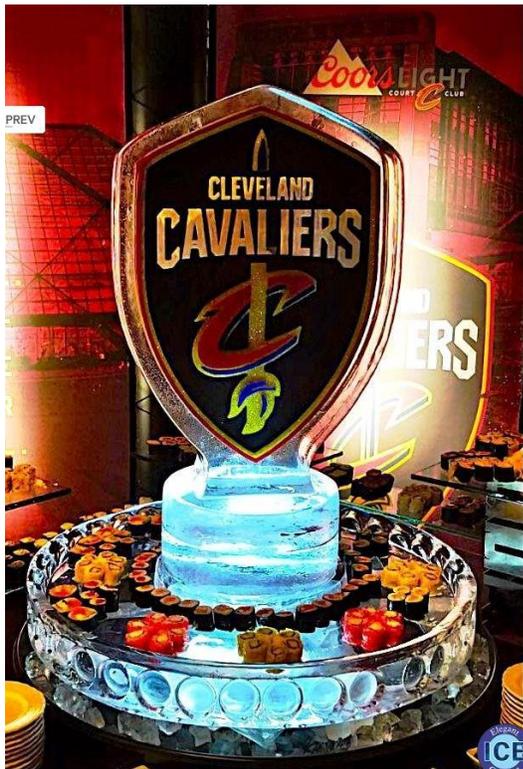
A: I was enrolled in University of Akron's Culinary Program with the intention of being a chef. While I was there, I went to different competitions and techniques, and ended up falling in love with ice carving. Through a lot of hard work, I was able to turn my passion into my business.

Q: When and how did “Elegant Ice Creations” start?

A: We have been in business 28 years and have always been headquartered here in Broadview Heights. Originally, we were located in the building behind DeNigris Garden Center, at Broadview & Route 82, which provided us a small space to do our carvings under reasonable rent with a central location to all markets in Northeast Ohio. We rented there for three years and during that time our business really grew. Eventually, with a need for more equipment to process the incoming demands we grew out of that space pretty quickly. From there, we relocated to our current location on Towpath Road and have been here ever since.



The Elegant Ice Team



*Corporate logo & seafood display for the Cleveland Cavaliers
Photo courtesy of Elegant Ice Creations webpage*

Q: So what exactly does “Elegant Ice Creations” do?

A: “Elegant Ice Creations” is an ice carving business that serves both individual and corporate clients all around Northeast Ohio. We process water, make the ice, create the sculpture, store and transport it under temperate conditions and set up for our clients. (insert some photos) People use these products for special events of all kinds. It’s an inexpensive and unique way to bring life to an event, and most of the times our carvings also serve multiple purposes; they are not just displays, they are also chilling food or beverages being served at the event.

One of the things that we offer, which is very popular, is a corporate logo made out of ice. For example, we do quite a

bit of events for the Greater Cleveland Partnership. They love for us to carve their sponsor logos into their ice wall. It's a conversation starter to have something like this at your event, while also honoring the sponsors in a unique way.

Q: Can non-corporate clients also purchase your ice carvings for their events?

A: Oh yes. We are able to provide ice-carvings for wedding showers, baby showers, special birthdays, weddings, parties, events – you name it. Our designs are very affordable and really add that “wow” factor to parties! We frequently create Ice Logos, Ice Luges, Seafood Displays, Wedding Ice Carvings, Ice Centerpieces, Custom Ice Carvings, Holiday Buffets, Ice Bars, Gourmet Ice ware – you name it. Anyone who is interested can call us for a quick quote.



Wedding carving

Photo courtesy of Elegant Ice Creations webpage



Golden State Warriors Ice Bar

Q: “Elegant Ice Creations” has been commissioned for some of the biggest events in Cleveland’s modern history. Can you share with me some insight into the unique experiences you have been afforded through your role?

A: We have our “We Love Ohio” wall in our showroom, documenting all of the events we’ve been honored to be a part of, from concerts, to

sporting events, to the RNC, to the Cleveland Cavaliers Championship, new hotel openings, etc. It’s something we are very proud of. We service both the Cleveland Cavaliers but, when they

come to town, we also service the Golden State Warriors. In 2016, when the Warriors thought they were going to clinch the title, we had to make a display that would hold champagne bottles, but when they didn't win we had to change the display to hold vodka bottles instead. We also had a carving slab designed that said "Back to Back Champions" (for the Warriors), but it never ended up getting used.

Q: You don't just do standard ice carvings though. In 2016 you were the World Champion of Ice Carving for the 9th time. How did you get involved in that program and what types of responsibilities come with that title?

A: I enjoy the artistic side of my work and the challenges that creating different ice carvings pose. Creating sculptures out of many different blocks of ice that are carved to become life-like is a very unique, delicate process. Where I started out using basic ice carving tools I quickly realized I needed different tools to create the products I was looking for, which is how I started "Elegant Ice Tools". Being a pro in the business came with having the right tools and right approach. The World Championship event is a very challenging event to win. Now I am asked to come to events to help other carvers with their skills, and I find that an absolute pleasure.



*"Concentration" by Aaron Costic, which won him his 8th World Ice Carving Championship Title & a personal best 99 out of 100 points
Photo courtesy of Aaron Costic*



Q: How and why did you start your business "Elegant Ice Equipment"?

A: Seeing such a need for better carving products we originally created 3 items that I felt like the industry needed. Then, when I saw the current supplier for the industry wasn't doing that great of a job in providing quality tools and when I wanted to see the industry improve, I decided to fill a void by creating a business that supplies carvers with both specialized custom tools and a knowledge database, to learn and share new techniques or ideas. That is how

“Elegant Ice Equipment” was born. We make custom designed tools you can’t get anywhere else. We ship internationally. In addition to our tools, we provide daily emails, videos, and a general database of information to other professional ice carvers, which are helping our industry to grow. Now “Elegant Ice Equipment” is about half of our business!



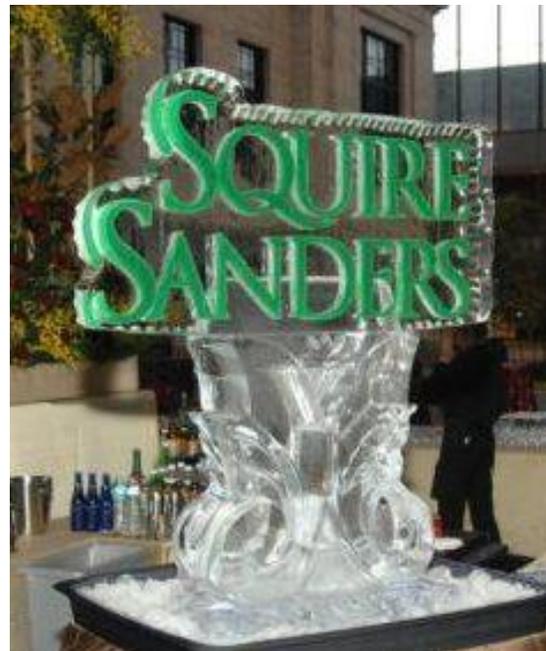
*Aaron Costic carving at an Ice Festival
Photo courtesy of Medina Gazette*

Q: It sounds like “Elegant Ice” is widely known in the industry?

A: Yes. We travel around to different events for different organizations in different states. For example, last year we went to New York State Fair to assist with an installation they had with an “Humpback Whale Exhibit” comprised of 400 blocks of ice. We carved the whales into the ice, and then the Fair charges people a price for attendees to walk thru the installation.

Q: Tell me a little bit about how you started your most recent business, “Bear Naked Signs”.

A: Through the process of creating logo sponsor signs for corporate events done at “Elegant Ice Creations” we realized we are essentially making signs, just signs made out of ice. The “signs” we are making in ice are so much nicer than flat signs; dimensional signs are so much more interesting. Our clients really love them! We realized that we are, essentially, in the sign-making business and can often make these unique logos in a very inexpensive format. We realized there is a market demand for these inexpensive and unique sign products.



*Squire Sanders logo carving
Photo courtesy of Aaron Costic*



Bear Naked Signs logo awaiting painting
Photo courtesy of Aaron Costic

Q: How did “Bear Naked Signs” get its name?

A: Most new businesses that are opening up don't have the budget for a large, expensive sign. They also are usually pretty entrepreneurial and don't mind taking on the labor to paint the sign either. With the logos that we are creating to insert into the ice sculptures, we are already creating the rendering of the sign, albeit it's not yet stained, or it's "bear naked". This is our product at "Bear Naked Signs" and our customer is the individual who wants something a little different, who is working within a limited budget.

Q: How long has “Bear Naked Signs” been around?

A: The company is in its initial year. We are harnessing our carving and design talents to feed what we see as the demand in the marketplace. Our customers already exist. We already have a marketing and distribution system to sell these products internationally.

Q: Can you tell me more about the sign product used at “Bear Naked Signs”?

A: We use a particular product, Sign Foam, and a computerized router to make the engravings as accurate as possible. The Sign Foam cannot be damaged by weather, rain, UV rays, etc - in our experience, it's the most durable material to make a sign out of. Our process is we complete a customized design (fee), we have all of the tools to make it, and then we ship the item to our customer who paints it however they want to. Most of our customers order these signs for monument signs, a sign on their building, or simply transportable signs that they travel with, to trade shows for example.



Bear Naked Signs, painted
Photo courtesy of Aaron Costic

Q: One last question. Does a customer have to have a design in mind when they come to you, or is there room for artistic expression?

A: It depends. Sometimes we receive a logo, sometimes I am given a budget, sometimes I am given directions...we can make anything work. Sometimes we are given a small logo and we end up doing a whole themed project based off of it. We are here to help our customer and can do whatever they please. We have a gallery wall both in our showroom and on-line that they can check out for inspiration.

You can find Elegant Ice Creations, Elegant Ice Equipment & Bear Naked Signs at:

**4001 Towpath Road
Broadview Heights, OH 44147**

440-717-1940

**[Elegant Ice Creations](#)
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