



Make a change! Learn Glass in Istanbul



My husband and I live on the Central Coast of California, which is, we thought, unmatched in its natural beauty, opportunities for outdoor activities, and cosmopolitan world view. So it was a complete shock when we got out of the airport in Istanbul and both exclaimed "I think were home!" We had held many preconceptions of what to expect in Turkey—a country on the borders of both modern Europe to the north and the troubled Middle Eastern neighbors to its south and east, but not really managing to be part of either. But nothing could have been further from the truth. Istanbul is a vibrant, totally modern city that blends the best of the modern west and the exotic east.



But the delights we were to experience did not end with our spectacular views of the Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosques from our hotel room balcony in Istanbul, nor our awe inspiring tours of the travertine pools in Pameccule and the cave dwellings of Capodocchia. Our trip to the Glass Furnace was also a fantastic and unexpected journey. After a half hour winding drive through green rolling hills, we arrived at the school, which sits on a winding stream in an impossibly lush valley.

The Glass Furnace itself far surpassed any glass school or institute I have ever visited. It is set in a sleek, modern building with all of its well appointed studios and galleries set around a central atrium that houses a fantastic infinity pool in which new graduates of the school floated their works on glass platforms. It was quite inspirational, especially given the high quality of work produced by students, many of whom had been introduced to the glass arts only a couple of weeks before. And the hospitality of the school staff was heartwarming—they treated us to the most yummy Turkish barbecued beef sandwiches on baguettes, and we weren't even teachers or students when we were there!

Touring the grounds, which is a glass museum in itself with installations in every corner of the campus, we saw the spa-like student housing, complete with swimming pool out back. I am truly looking forward to my second trip to the school in less than a year and would encourage anyone interested in both a great opportunity to explore the glass arts and the immense cultural history of this fantastic country to join me.

