

The Kunu Basket Story: A Captivating Tale from Indian Island

Nestled amidst the serene waters of Puget Sound, the picturesque Indian Island is home to a time-honored tradition that has captivated hearts for generations: the art of Kunu basketry. These exquisitely handcrafted baskets, woven with meticulous skill and imbued with profound cultural significance, tell a captivating story that transcends time.



Kunu's Basket: A Story from Indian Island

by Phyllis Krasilovsky

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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The Birth of a Tradition

The origins of the Kunu basket can be traced back to the indigenous Lushootseed people, who inhabited the Pacific Northwest for centuries. These skilled artisans crafted baskets from a variety of natural materials, including cedar bark, beargrass, and spruce roots. Each basket served a specific purpose, from storing food and belongings to ceremonial rituals.

Cedar: The Heartwood of the Kunu Basket

Of all the materials used in Kunu basketry, cedar bark holds a special place. Harvested from the majestic Western red cedar trees that grace the

island, cedar bark possesses exceptional durability, flexibility, and a rich reddish-brown hue. Artisans painstakingly remove the inner bark, split it into thin strips, and dye it using natural pigments.

Spirals, Stars, and Salish Weaves: The Language of Kunu Baskets

Kunu baskets are renowned for their intricate patterns and motifs. Spirals, stars, and waves are common designs, each with its own symbolic meaning. The Salish weave, a distinctive flat-coil technique, is employed to create sturdy and visually stunning baskets.

A Basket for Every Occasion

Traditionally, Kunu baskets were created for a wide range of purposes. Small baskets were used for gathering berries, while larger ones served as storage containers for food and belongings. Ceremonial baskets played a significant role in rituals, such as weddings and funerals.

From Household Utility to Work of Art

In the early 20th century, the Kunu basket underwent a remarkable transformation. Tourists visiting Indian Island were captivated by the beauty and craftsmanship of these baskets, recognizing them as not just utilitarian objects but works of art.

Indian Island's Basketry Legacy

Today, Indian Island is renowned as a center of Kunu basketry. Master artisans continue to pass down the ancient techniques from generation to generation, ensuring the survival of this cherished tradition.

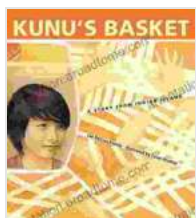
Preserving a Cultural Treasure

Recognizing the importance of Kunu baskets to their cultural heritage, the Lushootseed community has taken steps to preserve and promote this art form. Basketry workshops, exhibitions, and educational initiatives play a vital role in safeguarding this cultural treasure for future generations.

The Kunu Basket: A Living Heritage

The Kunu basket is more than just a handcrafted object; it is a tangible manifestation of the rich cultural heritage of Indian Island. Each basket carries with it a story of tradition, skill, and the enduring spirit of the Lushootseed people.

Embark on an unforgettable journey to Indian Island and discover the enchanting world of the Kunu basket. Delve into its captivating history, marvel at its intricate patterns, and witness the artistry that has kept this tradition alive for centuries. The Kunu basket is not just a souvenir; it is a living heritage, connecting us to the past and inspiring us to appreciate the beauty and resilience of indigenous cultures.



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