

San Antonio Pottery More Than Just A Hobby to Jack Boyle

By Karen McBride

For over 30 years, Jack Boyle has created beautiful ceramic pieces from his San Antonio Pottery store. He shares his love of ceramics by teaching the craft to students. With a ball of clay, a potters wheel, and patience, he instructs his students on the basics of centering the clay, and then transforming it into whatever their imaginations want it to be.

Jack had always been interested in crafting with his hands. It wasn't until he attended University of South Florida (USF), and obtained a degree in Fine Arts that his creativity turned to ceramics. He knew, even before the class was over, that he wanted to work with clay. "That was it" says Boyle, "I went out right away and bought my first potters wheel and electric kiln. I was hooked." He honed his skills by taking more classes on

ceramics and continuing to practice on his own.

While returning from a trip to North Carolina, Jack and his wife, Deborah, decided to take the back roads instead of the highway and found themselves in the rolling hills of San Antonio. He and his wife knew that this was where they wanted to live. Jack opened his first pottery store on Curley Street in 1977.

When not in the store, Jack sells his creations at art shows, gift stores and even creates custom work. This spring he was in Gainesville, at the Santa Fe Art Festival www.springartfestival.com, at the Mainsale Art Festival in St. Petersburg the Melbourne Art Festival, and then the Fernando Beach Art Festival. On May 7 and 8, he will be in Lakeland at the Mayfare Art Festival. In June, he will be going to the Virginia Beach Boardwalk Festival. For

more information, go to <http://www.cacv.org/events/boardwalk.asp>. Jack is now tentatively planning to attend the Cool Art Show, which is held in the Coliseum in St. Petersburg. The art show is organized by PAVA, the Professional Association of Visual Artists, based in Pinellas County. Since it is too hot and rains often in the summer, the Cool Art Show is a great festival to attend, because it is held indoors.

Recently, my daughters and I enjoyed an afternoon of pottery making and we have several vases and bowls as keepsakes. Classes are \$195 for 6 week class. You can choose from: hand building, figurative sculpture, beginning wheel throwing and intermediate wheel throwing. Students will be given 2.5 hours of instruction per week and an additional 2 hours of studio time to create their art. If you just want to get your feet wet,



One of many beautiful ceramic pieces created by Jack Boyle

well make that your hands wet, take a 2 hour course on the basics of centering your clay, using the wheel, and making your first bowl. The cost for the 2 hour session is \$25 per person.

Classes are taught by either Jack or his assistant, Peggy "Maggie" Clark, who earned her BA degree in Fine Arts from USF. There are no toxic chemicals used

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in the studio, but if you have asthma, you should not be in the studio as minute airborne particles are present.

Jack is moving towards instructional DVDs. His website is expanding to include Youtube videos, such as the Cylinder Demonstration. One of the most important steps is to center the clay on the wheel. If it is not centered, it will be difficult to create a symmetrical piece. Once you have the piece centered, you then make your first pull, which is a process of pulling the clay towards you, and make the floor, which is the bottom. The process of pulling the walls up consists of using water, a sponge, and using even pressure outside and inside the wall to produce the desired results. Each time you pull the wall up, it is considered a pass. It takes a great deal of practice to perfect this technique. In the instructional video, it looks so simple. A rib is a flat, oval tool that can be used to

compress the wall, to trim the base, and to make designs in the clay. Once your pottery is complete, you use a wire to cut through the clay to remove it from the bat. Your work of art can then be fired and glazed.

San Antonio Pottery is located at 11903 Curley Street, San Antonio, Florida 33576. For more information go to www.sanantoniopottery.net or call 352-588-4228.

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