



By The Sea, Porcelain Teapot

Living the Dream

From Production Potter to Porcelain Artist

by Diane Heart

As a child I was always crafting something, and usually trying to sell it. My mother was quite a seamstress, and from her scraps I made clothes for trolls, pocketbooks, and of course potholders. In junior high I was beading necklaces and bracelets by the hundreds.

It wasn't until after high school that I got my hands in clay at a local art center. I was hooked on this pliable, recyclable material – much less expensive than the silver I had fallen in love with making jewelry in high school.

Wanting to learn more, I signed up for art classes at our local community college. Strong in the arts, but not being an academic achiever, I left to work at a pottery in Oklahoma. "Production potter – will train," the ad said. Paid by piecework. Wow, did I learn how to throw pots quickly!

The burn-out rate is high for potters working in a factory situation. I made it a priority to always to do my own work on the side. I went to craft shows to exhibit and sell my wares.

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My father died from ALS in 1982, which made me want to come back East. I found another ad for a job at a pottery in West Barnstable. This time it was producing early American reproductions. I was paid by the hour and I learned all aspects of working in clay.

When the pottery closed I rented a shared studio in Hyannis. To make ends meet, I rented studio time and taught lots of classes!

There were many times I wanted to give up, but I thought of my Dad working a job he disliked and waiting to retire only to die too soon.

I made pots for a woman in Boston two days a week. Pots for an animal crematory. Pots for craft shows and pots for free, too. Just do what you love and the money will follow.



Raku Fired Urn, 14" high

Learning to ask for exactly what you need was my motto. Get an exact number in your head and you'll be amazed! \$187 for a propane bill for my kiln and at the end of the day... \$187 in sales! BELIEVE!

Tired of all my long hours, I really wanted a shop on Route 6A. This would allow me to give up craft shows and selling my work at wholesale to other shops. People told me I was crazy. Just get a "real" job was what I heard over and over again. This was fuel for my goals.

I found a run-down house with a run-down shop building on 6A in Brewster. My friends thought I was nuts. My mother cried when she set eyes on it, but I had a vision!

I continued teaching, and two days a week I worked as a ghost potter. A ghost potter throws pots for someone else who then signs and sells them. Those production pottery days paid off!

At first, times were tough. There is one story from that period I want to share. I was sitting by the phone, hungry, with no money. One of my students called and said she had to move back to New York City and was wondering if I wanted the food in her freezer. She was a vegetarian like me, and a great cook. BELIEVE!

My years as a production potter pronounced my need for functionalism. I strive to make my pots radiate feelings of warmth and beauty, creating a shared comfort between the person and the piece.



Porcelain High Fired Vase, 11" high

Working almost exclusively in porcelain lends itself best to my carvings, glazes, and textural additions.

Inspired by the ocean, I hope to continually work with elements of subtle change.

To this day, 35 years later, I love making pots. I meet many people while at my potter's wheel turns in the back of the showroom.

In fact, 15 years ago, I met and married my true love when he walked in to order a special bowl. Mark Preu is a fine art nature photographer, and his photos grace the walls while my pots fill the shelves. BELIEVE!

This coming September, I have been asked to teach a one-week pottery class in southern Tuscany. We will be staying at Podere Monti, a country villa in Montepulciano. Along with pottery instruction, there will be time to explore the surrounding hill towns.

For more information, check out www.tuscanyartsvacation.com

Photographs courtesy of Mark Preu



Diane Heart owns and runs Heart Pottery at 1145 Main Street in Brewster.

Visit her shop, check out her website at www.dianeheartpottery.com or email her at diane@dianeheartpottery.com