

Judy Prichard Creates Both Functional and Decorative Pottery

Brown County potter Judy Prichard learned her craft half a world away from here.

“[In Australia] I learned the real ins and outs of having your own small studio,” she says.

Ms. Prichard took her first ceramics course at IPFW (Indiana University, Purdue University, Fort Wayne), but the majority of her training came from a three-year ceramics program in Sydney, Australia. She went there with her husband Tom, whose job had been transferred.

Tom has since retired early from that job, and is now a potter himself, and they both work full-time at their home studio, Oak Grove Pottery.

“Tom and I will both get up in the morning and head directly down to the studio and work all day,” Ms. Prichard says.

She prefers to throw new pots in the morning and spend the afternoon finishing pots, but the weather can influence how clay dries, and therefore what work she does. The weekends are often spent in the studio and gallery, since they are often the busiest times for customers.

“Tom and I work together in our studio,” she says. “Many people wonder how we can do that.”

But the Prichards are used to working together. They built the log cabin where they live, with their own hands.

“We love working together,” she says. “We each have our own strengths.”

Ms. Prichard’s strengths are in terra cotta and stoneware pottery, through she also makes sawdust fired pots. She is



currently developing new place settings, and creating place settings by coordinating plates with current bowl and mug designs.

“I love making platters,” she says, “but plates are more of a challenge.”

Her favorite decorative features are basket motifs and leaves, and she draws most of her inspiration from her environment.

“It’s what I see everyday,” she says. “Of course, seeing others’ beautiful work gives me inspiration. It’s about seeing something and making it individual.”

Ms. Prichard and her husband chose to move to Brown County for the rolling hills and the beauty of the area. The fact that it is the perfect place for an artist to live is secondary, but a wonderful plus.

Although she doesn’t teach pottery as part of her business, Ms. Prichard does feel the importance of passing on the experience of the craft. She participates in the Brown County Mentoring Program, in which junior high students study with artists around Brown County. She is also willing to let visitors get their hands dirty.

“I will gladly allow someone to throw clay on the wheel just to let them get the feel of throwing and completing a pot,” she says.

Oak Grove Pottery, which features the work of both Ms. Prichard and her husband, is open to the public year-round, and is one of the studios on the Brown County Studio and Garden Tour, held each year the last weekend of June, and the Back Roads Studio Tour held each October. Her work can also be seen in Nashville at Ferrer Gallery and the Brown County Craft Gallery.

More information about Judy Prichard and her work can be found at www.OakGrovePottery.com or www.BrownCountyStudioTour.com.

by Michele Heather Pollock

