

Eric Slade/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Ted Juve is a self-taught ceramicist in Enterprise. The designs of his work draw from the beauty of his surroundings.

By ERIC SLADE

Oregon Public Broadcasting

Ted Juve dreams of going fishing someday. But today is not that day. With dozens of freshly thrown bowls and mugs curing in the sun, and dozens more about to come out of the kiln, his work won't be done until after the sun sets.

That's what happens when you're one of Wallowa County's best-known ceramic artists. Juve's work is so in demand that there's seldom time to fish. "All people love his work," said Katy Madrid, co-owner of The Book Loft in Enterprise. "We get tourists that come in and have heard of it and are excited to bring home a bunch. And we have locals that can hardly wait for him to come out with some new stuff."

Juve grew up in Enterprise, in the shadow of the Wallowa Mountains. He remembers playing in piles of sand at age 6 while he watched his father build the barn on the family farm. That barn now serves as Juve's ceramics studio. "Living here on the farm is pretty much a dream come true. I've always loved the area and the farm in particular," he said.

Juve was first exposed to the art of ceramics while attending junior high school in Hermiston. "And by the time I was a senior in high school, I was running the ceramics

program," Juve said. "My art teacher basically said, 'have at it, Ted!'"

"When I graduated high school in '73," he recalled, "I went right to work for the Forest Service, doing trail crew. And in the wintertime, I would jump back onto my kick wheel and make pots every spare moment." In 1980 he decided to skip trail crew for a summer and just make pots all year. "And I just never looked back. I've been making ceramics full time ever since,"

He's known for the hand-etched designs on his work, designs that come to him intuitively. "The mountains put out a lot of energy," he said. "And they impact my work a lot. I'm always really inspired by what I see from my studio window as I work along for hours on end. I look up and you think you've seen it all and the next thing you know, something new is showing up.'

And as much as he'd love to be fishing, Juve counts himself lucky to be spending his days gazing at mountains and doing what he loves on the farm he's called home for most of his life. "I like to pass that enjoyment on to other people — the people that are around my work every day, that use my work," he said. "I try to put that spirit of the potter into that piece so that they can pick up that positive energy. Each piece has a spirit of its own."

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