

Gary Carlson

Gary Carlson has been making pottery for about 25 years. He works primarily in stoneware, glazed in black, blue, green brown, white & rust colors. He often combines glazed & unglazed areas in his work. His pieces are principally wheel-thrown but frequently include hand-built components, as well.

Gary has a strong interest in indoor water fountains, which he creates in a wide range of designs & colors. Gary also makes a variety of other stoneware pieces, including vases, chalices, bowls, platters & Ikebana (Japanese flower arranging) containers. Southwestern motifs (such as wall-hanging fountains with Southwestern landscapes & pueblo scenes) & Oriental designs (including matte-black fountains, rice bowls, serving platters & Ikebana containers) are two of his favorite themes.

Gary won a blue ribbon in pottery (Professional category) at the 1997 State Fair for one of his unique shadowbox design wall-hanging fountains. His work has recently been featured in a Slim Randles article in the Albuquerque Journal.



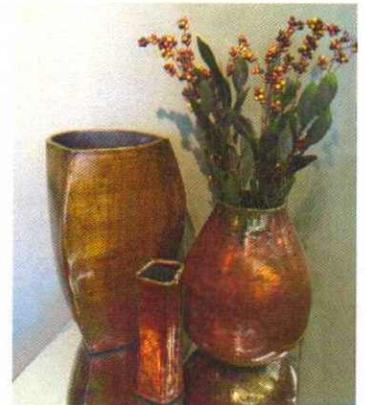
Raku pottery is created with a specific ceramic firing process that uses both fire & smoke to create unique patterns & designs. With raku pottery, the piece is first bisque fired. Then, it is glazed & undergoes a raku firing process. The raku firing process requires a special raku kiln that is fueled by propane & reaches temperatures of about 1800°F (about 982°C).

In order to complete the firing process, the raku pottery must remain in the kiln for approximately 30 minutes. The raku pottery is then removed from the kiln using specially designed raku tongs. While the raku pottery piece is still hot & glowing, it is placed inside a metal can full of combustible materials. The heat emitted from the raku pottery causes these materials to catch on fire.



After the materials inside the metal can catch on fire, a lid is placed over the can & the raku pottery is sealed inside. The raku pottery is capable of withstanding these high temperatures & the fire within the can because it is made from a special type of clay that is capable of withstanding thermal shock. Traditional pottery clays, on the other hand, would crack from the drastic temperature changes raku pottery undergoes.

As the fire consumes the oxygen within the can, it also draws the oxygen out of the raku pottery & its glaze. This process is called post fire reduction. It is the post fire reduction stage that creates the unique look of raku pottery. The resulting patterns & colors are unpredictable, as they are created through the natural process of oxygen removal.



After the raku pottery remains in the sealed metal can for about 15 minutes, it is removed & placed in a can of water. This freezes the patterns that were created during the post fire reduction stage. The amount of time a piece should remain in the cooling water largely depends on the piece & its size.

There are three very important **warning disclaimers** regarding Raku pottery.

Due to glaze chemistry & the low firing process used:

Raku is not food safe.
Raku is not water tight.
Raku is fragile.

Consider Raku as an art object, not as functional pottery. Raku should always be handled with care as it does not have the strength of stoneware.

Fountain Care & Cleaning

Periodically, it may be necessary to clean your water fountain. The following are some guidelines for cleaning pottery water fountains.

1) Most importantly, always use distilled or deionized water in your fountain. All other water contains minerals that will create deposits through evaporation.



2) If you notice some slippery materials forming in your fountain, you may want to add a few drops of Clorox every few weeks to prevent the growth of algae or other organisms.

3) If your fountain is in a dusty location, you may want to clean it every year or so to minimize dirt buildup (see step 4A below).

4) If you experience mineral buildup (that nasty "bathtub ring" look), a natural process resulting from water evaporation (minimized by using distilled or deionized water), more heroic measures may be required (only step A is recommended for most stone fountains).



A) Remove rocks & other loose components & clean everything using a brush or rag. Remove filter guard on pump & clean pump inside & out using an old toothbrush or equivalent. If pump is very dirty or if pump is noisy, remove, clean & rinse impeller (part with three yellow vanes). Dry the fountain components.

B) Using rubber gloves, apply cleaner (Limeaway or CLR, both available at grocery stores) to deposits. Foaming indicates the deposits are being dissolved.

C) Using nylon scrub pad or fine emery paper, lightly scrub the deposits to help loosen & remove. Rinse well & dry.

D) Repeat steps B & C in sequence two or three times, until clean or until no more deposits are removed. Reassemble fountain.

E) (Optional) You may find that a bit of liquid furniture polish will cover most of the remaining deposits.

F) For especially tenacious deposits, harsher chemicals may be required. Call your friendly fountain man for help, as these can be dangerous to handle.

5) Add water, turn on your fountain & enjoy!