

North Carolina Pottery Center

Seagrove, Randolph County

By Margarita Galvan



The Pottery Center's light, airy gallery, and a demonstration by Seagrove's Chad Brown in the educational building.

➔ Situated in the village of Seagrove, surrounded by bucolic countryside speckled with approximately 100 potting studios, stands the North Carolina Pottery Center. With its mission to promote an awareness of North Carolina's pottery heritage through exhibitions, education, outreach and visitor services, the NC Pottery Center (NCPC) offers visitors a chance to explore the state's ongoing pottery heritage and traditions.

Family ties keep pottery traditions alive

The state of North Carolina boasts a highly developed potting culture. Geological boons of abundant naturally occurring clay and the minerals used in glazes helped root North Carolina's ceramic history. However, it's the state's unbroken chain of pottery heritage which allowed the art to grow and thrive into what it is today.

The Industrial Revolution forced most potters around the nation to leave their wheels for more modern trades, but family networks of potters in pockets of North Carolina kept the traditions alive, enabling the passage of knowledge, techniques and talents down from generation to generation. Many family potting studios in Seagrove can be traced back four and five generations. The village of Seagrove, referred to as the "potting capital of the North Carolina," is a fitting location for the first State Pottery Center in the nation. The center has been well received from the start. Only six months after its opening in 1998, visitors from each state of the nation and 20 foreign countries had toured the center.

Center displays more than 800 pieces

Architect Frank Harmon of Raleigh designed the award-winning facility, with a nod towards a rustic barn but tempered with a light and airy elegance, where more than 800 pottery pieces and artifacts are on display. Permanent exhibits depict the state's historical beginnings of pottery from prehistoric Native American ceramics, the European settlers' traditions and up through modern day. New exhibits

guided by the center's mission are featured quarterly. Additionally, the center showcases contemporary pottery talents from local Seagrove potters in a gallery of vases, cookware and scowling face jugs in every hue from brilliant saturated reds to muted earth tones. For visitors intending on shopping Seagrove's unparalleled variety, this sampling of local potters' work both whets the shopping appetite and can serve as a guide for plotting which of the many pottery studios to visit.

Upcoming events

The NCPC puts on demonstrations, workshops and events throughout the year. Upcoming is a live auction, free and open to the public, on April 25. Leisurely peruse the auction pieces from 3:30 to 4:40 p.m. while munching on appetizers and enjoying the live bluegrass band. The bidding starts at 5 p.m.

The NCPC is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for students. 📍

North Carolina Pottery Center

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