

Welcome to House of Clay

We're so glad you're here! House of Clay is a teaching studio, and our goal is to help you feel supported, confident, and excited to learn.

Pottery is a new skill that takes time to master, so be patient with yourself. Everyone progresses at different rates, and that's completely normal.

Give yourself permission to experiment. Some people prefer functional pottery, others lean toward more artistic work. Some people love wheel throwing, while others gravitate toward hand-building. You do you.

It's also okay to recycle pieces that didn't turn out as expected. Clay is reusable, and recycling work is a normal and healthy part of the learning process.

What's Included With Your Class

Your class registration includes:

- **One 25 lb bag of clay** to use during your class session
- **Dedicated class shelf space** for:
 - Student clay
 - Student-purchased tools
 - Pieces in progress
- **Additional studio hours** outside of your class time
- **A glaze firing allotment** for work made from the bag of clay provided with the class (Bisque firings are included and do not count toward your firing allotment)
- **Access to studio tools, glazes, and equipment** during your class and studio time

Please be aware of other people's work when using shared shelves and studio space.

Check-In & Studio Time Tracking

Please check in for class on the iPad at the front desk.

When using studio time, check in when you arrive and check out when you leave. This helps us manage shared studio access fairly and smoothly.

Studio Basics

What to Wear

Beginners often underestimate how messy clay is.

- **Clothing:** Wear clothes you don't mind getting permanently stained. Avoid loose sleeves or dangling jewelry.
- **Footwear:** Closed-toed shoes are mandatory for safety.
- **Apron or Towel:** You may want to bring an apron or a towel to help keep your clothes cleaner.

Essential Vocabulary

- **Bat:** A removable plastic, wood, or plaster disk attached to the wheel that allows work to be lifted without touching wet clay.
- **Bat Pin:** A metal pin mounted in the wheel head that holds a bat in place while throwing, preventing it from shifting during use.
- **Bisque:** Clay that has been fired once; hard but porous and ready for glaze.
- **Bone Dry (Greenware):** Completely dry clay that is extremely fragile and ready for the first firing.
- **Cone:** A small ceramic indicator that bends in the kiln to show what firing temperature has been reached. Our studio fires to Cone 04 for bisque and Cone 5 for glaze.
- **Cookie:** A thin, fired clay disk placed under a pot in the kiln to protect shelves from glaze drips.
- **Glaze:** A liquid suspension of minerals that melts into a glassy, waterproof surface when fired.
- **Glazeware:** Clay that has been fired a second time with glaze; the finished, glassy product.
- **Kiln:** The high-temperature oven used to fire clay and glazes.
- **Leather-Hard:** Clay that has partially dried and is firm enough to hold its shape but still soft enough to carve, trim, or attach handles without cracking.
- **Plastic / Wet:** Fresh clay that is soft and easy to shape.
- **Reclaim:** The process of recycling scrap clay by breaking it down, re-wetting it, and wedging it back into a usable state.
- **Score:** Roughening the surface of clay with a tool to prepare it for joining.
- **Slip:** Clay mixed with water to a liquid consistency, used like glue to join pieces.
- **Stilt:** A small ceramic support with metal points used to elevate glazed pieces during firing when appropriate.
- **Stoneware:** A durable, high-fire clay body that becomes dense and non-porous when fired.
- **Trimming:** Removing excess clay from a leather-hard piece to refine shape and create a finished foot.

- **Underglaze:** A colored clay-based material used for decoration that stays in place when fired, often applied before a clear glaze.
- **Wax Resist:** A liquid coating applied to specific areas of a piece to prevent glaze from sticking during firing.
- **Wedge:** The process of kneading clay to remove air bubbles and create an even consistency.

Common Tools

Needle Tool: for trimming rims, cutting details, and checking wall thickness.



Wire tool: Used to cut clay from a block or remove pieces from the wheel.



Sponges: Used to add or remove water and smooth surfaces



Ribs (Wood or Rubber): Used to shape, smooth, and compress clay surfaces.



Loop/Trim Tools: Used to remove clay during trimming and refine forms.



Wooden Knife: Used for shaping, cutting, and refining clay.



Studio Etiquette

The "Golden Rule": Never Touch Someone Else's Work

This is the most important studio rule. Pottery is extremely fragile before it is fired, especially in the "bone dry" stage.

- **Don't move it**
- **Don't inspect it**
- **Don't uncover it**

Dust Awareness

Clay dust can become airborne and linger in the studio. Being mindful of how we clean and handle dry clay helps keep the space safe for everyone.

- No Indoor Sanding: Sanding dry clay (greenware) inside the studio creates fine dust. Always sand outside or use wet sanding techniques.
- Dirty Aprons/Towels: Do not shake out clay-covered aprons or towels inside the studio, as this sends dust into the air.

Studio Cleanup & Safety

A clean studio keeps everyone safe and makes the space enjoyable for all. Cleanup is part of the class experience.

Before you leave

- Clean your work area so it is ready for the next person
- Wipe tables and surrounding surfaces
- Sweep only to pick up **larger pieces of clay from trimming**
- Use a mop to clean up around your work area
- Wash all tools and sponges thoroughly
- Return tools and supplies to their proper locations
- Wipe down wheels, bats, and splash pans

Slop, Clay & Water Disposal

- Dump all clay scraps, slop, and dirty water into the **reclaim tub**
- Do not pour clay or slop into the sink—this damages plumbing
- Use sinks only for final hand and tool rinsing after clay has been removed

Clay & Material Rules

- **No outside clay is allowed** in the studio
- Use only clays, glazes, and materials approved by the House of Clay

Glazing & Surface Decoration Guidelines

We mainly use two types of surface applications: underglaze and glaze.

- Some of the commercial glazes we have **can run when fired**. Labels may include terms like fluid or moves — always read and follow application instructions.
- For dipping glazes, **one or two dips is sufficient**.
- **Glaze in pint jars is intended for brushing only**. Please do not dip or pour with these glazes.
- Wipe the rim of glaze and underglaze jars clean before putting the lid back on and returning them to the shelf.
- When using dipping glazes, place whisks, tongs, or measuring cups on the overturned lid between uses so excess glaze can drip back into the bucket instead of being wasted.
- Always mix glazes and underglazes thoroughly before use.
- Underglazes cost approximately **\$25–\$50 per pint**—please use thoughtfully & only take what you need. You can always get more!
- Allow glaze or underglaze to fully dry before applying a different color or a second coat
- Make sure brushes, tongs, and whisks are clean and free of the previous color before switching colors.
- Check carefully that there is **no glaze on the bottom** of your piece before submitting for firing.
- Do not add water to any glaze or underglaze jars or buckets.

Wax Resist Use

- If you are using wax resist, please do not apply it over the wooden work tables. Use the metal table in the glaze area of the studio.
- Wax drips can transfer to other people's work and surfaces.
- Newspaper is available and should be used to protect surfaces when applying wax.

Submitting Work for Firing

Our studio uses a studio management software system to organize firings and track work from submission through pickup. When you submit a piece for firing, you're helping us track your work and notify you when it's ready to be picked up. Because many pieces look similar, please be sure to **sign your pots on the bottom** and **take a photo** of them when submitting for firing.

Finished pieces are stored on our shelves for **4 weeks**. After that, they are placed in the **Last Chance** box for an additional week. If a piece is not claimed after that time, we unfortunately have to dispose of it, so please be sure to check the shelves and pick up your work promptly.

Bisque Firing

- Only submit fully dry, bone-dry pieces for bisque firing
- Make sure your piece has no cracks or loose parts
- Bisque firings do not count toward your firing allotment
- Submitting bisque firings through our studio management software is optional
- Follow all studio instructions for placing work on the bisque cart

Glaze Firing

- Only bisque-fired work may be glazed
- All glaze firings must be submitted by you through our studio management software
- Measurements for glaze firings must be rounded up to the next whole inch
- Glaze must be kept at least **1/4 inch from the bottom** of the pot
- Pieces that do not meet this requirement may not be fired
- If you are unsure whether a piece is safe to fire, we have kiln cookies and stilts that may be used with assistance

Ask Questions

Everyone is learning—no matter their experience level.

If you're unsure about a technique, glaze choice, firing, or cleanup process, please ask. If something spills, breaks, or seems wrong, let us know right away. We're here to help and want you to succeed.