

Valley Potters A00112659W ABN: 78 071 492 195



WHAT'S NEW AT VALLEY POTTERS

Events

Continuing
Exhibition - Sol Gallery
20th September - 1st October

Weekend Away - 14th-15th October, Castlemaine and surrounds

In this edition:

AGM / New Committee Members Update on Pit firing workshop Earth Matters - Sol Gallery Book Launch Spring Fever New sponsors



PRESIDENT'S REPORT AGM SEPT 2023

Thank you all for being part of the Valley Potters. Having such a wide membership base of over 100 members shows how important it is for people to have a connection in this community. The vast experience of our members makes our group special, from those who have just begun their clay life to those who have been working with it for many years, sharing knowledge and helping each other is what Valley Potters is all about.

It has been a busy year for the group, and you will hear the rundown of what has gone on from each office bearer shortly. But we have had a lot happening behind the scenes too.

At the start of the year, we changed the website platform from Weebly to Square and implemented JotForm to streamline the workshop, exhibition and membership forms. It was a learning curve for many of us and we had a few hiccups along the way, but a huge thanks goes to Danielle for sorting it out and continuing the tech side of things.

We started the members only Valley Potters Catch Up days. Our first at Claire Johnson's studio and then at Juliet Widdows, these were very successful, and I want to thank our hosts and everyone who came to them. It was a wonderful opportunity to catch up with new members and longtime friends in a relaxed atmosphere and share information, have a play, and of course eat some lovely food. We plan to have more Catch Up Days at the start of next year and I look forward to seeing you there.

A Buddy System has been implemented this year. The new members have a current committee member Buddy as a point of contact to make sure people feel more included and welcomed to the group.

We have started working on the 50th Anniversary Exhibition which will be celebrated in 2028. We have been looking at venues. It sounds like a long way off but it's only 4 years, so it's important to get ideas and things in place as early as possible. If you are interested in being part of the organizing team, please contact me

I want to thank everyone who came up with ideas for housing the plinths and Acquisition Collection. The plinths have a home now, thanks to Bernadette. The Acquisition Collection is still without a home now, I haven't had a chance to get back to that job and I'm grateful that we have the storage locker to house the cabinets for the time being. It isn't a long-term solution, but it has taken the pressure off me for a short time. I will get back on it soon.

As our group has grown so much, we have decided to add two more committee positions to help spread the load of some of the positions. Our membership fees have been \$50 for about 5 or 6 years, so we are asking to increase the fee by \$5 to \$55 from the 2024/2025 financial year. The increase is due to the increase in insurance, the storage facility, the cost of workshops, exhibitions and saving for our 50th Anniversary Exhibition. We continue to provide as many opportunities for our members at an affordable price as possible.

I want to thank the dedicated Committee, on behalf of the membership and myself, for volunteering their time and hard work. If you have been on committees then you know what it takes to make the events and general running of a group a success.

Thank you for having me for my first year as President, I feel privileged to have this position and I hope we can continue to build on what we have begun.

Alli xx

Meet your 2023/24 Committee

President

Alli Duckworth alli@valleypotters.org.au

Vice President

Karen Goldsmith

Secretary & Public Officer

Laura Windmill laura@valleypotters.org.au

Treasurer

Meg Ford meg@valleypotters.org.au

Assistant Treasurer Vacant

Property Officer

Laura Windmill laura@valleypotters.org.au

Exhibitions Officer

Bernadette Skinner bernadette@valleypotters.org.au

Assistant Exhibitions Officers
Kate Young kate@valleypotters.org.au
Juliet Widdows juliet@valleypotters.org.au

Workshops Officer

Adrienne Mann Adrienne@valleypotters.org.au

Assistant Workshops Officers Linda Moore linda@valleypotters.org.au 2nd Assistant: Karen Goldsmith

Social Media

Kathryn Young kate@valleypotters.org.au Assistant: Vacant

Newsletter Officer

Vacant

Website Administrator

Danielle Segal danielle@valleypotters.org.au

General Committee Members

Sharon Twining Jill Anderson

A huge thank you to Helena Griffiths and Jill Anderson

A big thank you goes to Helena Griffiths who has been on the Valley Potters Committee for a very long time. Helena held a few roles such as General Committee, Website Co-Ordinator and Newsletter Editor. We really appreciate all you have done, and the time and effort you put in for the group. We look forward to seeing some of the pots that will be made and entered into the exhibitions in the future.

Jill Anderson has been an indispensable part of our committee. She has been Newsletter Editor and Workshops Officer and has been a driving force with advertising, making the workshops so successful, and bringing in new members. We appreciate all you have done and although you resigned as Workshop Officer, you have decided to remain on as a General Committee member which is fantastic. We are thrilled to have you still on board and are grateful for all your hard work.

VALLEY POTTERS INC - LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Just in case you didn't know ...

Valley Potters Inc. is a legal entity, i.e., a legal person that stays the same even though members may change. It can enter contracts in its own name (e.g., to borrow money or buy equipment). This protects individual members of the group from legal liabilities.

We are registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and have certain obligations to fulfill.

We need to comply with the annual reporting of finances in the event of the group winding up. To continue to function, we must have certain office-bearing roles filled. The roles are President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

All members of the committee must be financial members.

We must have a quorum of at least 5 committee members for a meeting to go ahead.

The nominated Treasurer is responsible for all our financial transactions; however, we have 4 signatories to our bank account, and any payments by the Treasurer are authorised by two of those signatories.





GETTING CREATIVE AT THE AGM

At the Valley Potters AGM, it's straight down to business with all the office bearers delivering their reports for the year and election of a new committee. We try to get that part over and done with very quickly (this year in under an hour), so we can move on to the more fun parts of the meeting.

Of course, we had another amazing feast and Max and Fifi Campbell conducted their annual trivia quiz. It was a very hard-fought competition, with only 2 points separating 1st and 2nd teams.

Laura ran a terrific workshop about how to build stacked sculptures with pinch pots. She had a presentation to show us and then it was time to get creative!











Pit firing - The Gurdies

Reproduced from Audrey Liew's Instagram post)

Part 1. Thoroughly enjoyed my first pit firing experience with @valleypottersinc. We did the firing on farmland in Victoria. It looked like it was out of a postcard. Idyllic!

We started off with wrapping the pots with different materials like copper wires, seaweed, different fibres, sea salt, and dried banana peel in hopes of getting different flashes and colours on the pots. The pots are then carefully stacked into the pit and sprinkled with salt, copper carbonate and different materials hopefully also to get more colour on the pots.

It took a little bit to get the fire going and once it did, it was covered with the sheets [corrugated iron]. It will be burning for a while (my guess is 8-10 hours) and if you stood next to the pit you could hear a soft crackling sound. It would be way too hot to try and unload on the same day so we will be back next weekend to unload the pit.

Thank you Dani and her family for being so generous and letting us use their beautiful space.

Part 2. We had lunch with a magnificent view and were kept warm and cosy with the fireplaces. Everyone brought something to share and it was a feast!

After lunch, we proceeded back out to start the horsehair and feather firing. Lots of horsehair and feathers are all being shared. Pieces taken out of the pit are tested for temperature and I find that the feathers work well around 500 degrees and the horsehair is great around 400-450 degrees.

Sugar can be thrown on the pots to create black spots. Major thanks to Linda for helping to heat up the pieces in the pit with her outstanding tong skills. It would have been so hot and she did such a great job for everyone.





















END OF YEAR PICNIC

Sunday 3rd December 11am - 4pm Bring a plate to share

Last event of the year

ENJOY A DAY ON THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA



11:15 AM PT LEO ESTATE

Join us for a wander around the sculpture gardens

> **REGISTER ON THE WEBSITE**



12:30PM COOLART GARDENS

Join us for a picnic on the lawns of Coolart Gardens

If you have time while you are on the peninsula, why not visit the Montalto Estate too.





EXHIBITION

20th Sept to 1st Oct 2023

SOL

COLIN HOPKINS & ILONA TOPOLCSANYI - Judges

I reckon there is only one thing harder than getting work ready to put in an exhibition and that's actually judging one. We found it really, really difficult. So, I think that really speaks to the quality of the work and the diversity of the work.

We actually disagreed on a lot of things and it ended up taking us quite a bit of time to actually dish out these awards. In the end, it is sort of unfair in a weird sort of way because there were so many pieces and it ended up that we had five awards and we could have given out dozens of them, so apologies in advance.

I was just going to say that we went through one of the last of the TAFEs. It was a Box Hill Institute of TAFE when Sue McFarland and Shane Kent were still there. It was really fantastic - we had an incredible time there. And I just think that it's such a shame that those sorts of organisations are closing down. But on the flip side, it is up to the rest of us to develop some sense of community support systems and opportunities, and I think that's where you guys have done an incredible job.

Groups like the Valley Potters – it is about trying to get that sense of community and support. Also, things like this exhibition are amazing. Shane Kent used to say to us that one of the most difficult things as an artist is defining a problem for yourself. And, having an exhibition is a great problem. How do you represent yourself on a plinth? Because it brings up a lot of things for you. To actually say "I am going to embody what I stand for on a piece of work on a plinth" is a pretty full-on thing to do. So, my congratulations to you all.

When we were trying to decide where the awards were going to go, you might be surprised by some of our choices. Our overriding criteria was – is there some sort of sense of taking a risk? Taking a risk to put yourself on a plinth. I suppose at the end of the day that was what coloured our decisions a little bit. Also, obviously the quality of the work, attention to detail – all those other things – but it was a little bit of courage to put yourself out there, and maybe take those risks.

We often say that ceramics is a language, and what we were partly looking for is that you had control of that language, but you also had a dialogue with the clay. It was almost that we were looking for a bit of a conversation. So that you weren't dominating or pushing or controlling the conversation, but that you were listening and responding. So, we were looking for that in the collections of work. What was the conversation that you were having with the clay? And we were eavesdropping into your conversation.

The Fired Up Kilns Award - Glenn England. The Australian Pottery Supplies award - Claire Sunderland

The Northcote Pottery Award - Carly Housiaux Walkers Ceramic Award - Danielle Segal



The Fired Up Kilns Award - Glenn England



The Australian Pottery Supplies award - Claire Sunderland

Next is the Ruth Petersen Award

I wish I had the opportunity to meet Ruth, she sounds like a pretty amazing person. The criteria for this award was about pushing boundaries. We really connected with this idea, Colin and I, our studio is called Cone 11, and when we were at TAFE we were firing to Cone 9 and 10, and when we left we decided that we were going to go to 11, we were going to do extreme ceramics and push the boundaries, so this award really touched our hearts. The award goes to **Pauline Meade**.

I think part of the reason why we chose Pauline's work was because we walked away with more questions than answers and wanted to know more – which is a good thing! The technique and where it was going had a really strong direction, but got us wondering, looking and wanting to know more.

The final award is the Lisbeth Duncan Best in Show award, and this award goes to Ann Knights. We found in Ann's work that it was a journey, an ongoing journey, and this in a really good way – that the work isn't fully resolved. It feels like there is an element of risk-taking in it, an element of chance, and I just enjoyed the surfaces. They weren't traditional surfaces, and it wasn't a traditional form. I really felt that there was an exploration going on and a willingness to take risks that appealed to both of us. We really enjoyed that sense of risk taking, and we want you to keep going and take more risks. It's the sort of work where I can imagine a lot of things can go wrong, but when it goes right there is something pretty special going on.

There is a lot of attention to detail as well – attention to the outside as well as the inside of the form, and I think that's what we were really looking for in the works that we chose that there was attention to the whole piece, the underside of the piece. In particular Claire's work was the attention to detail, the fact that when you picked it up, she continued the really intricate work all the way through to the foot. She just didn't think 'no-one's going to see this so I can't be bothered' – she carved right into the foot. And we thought this is someone who has put a lot of attention to detail.

Congratulations, I know that for some of you, it's the first time that you have gone through the nerve-wracking experience of putting your work out into the world. Please keep doing it, but it doesn't get any easier.

I just want to reiterate that we thought it was an incredible quality of work and diversity of work, and we really enjoyed that. It's a testament to how amazing ceramics is – such a variety of forms and surfaces, and glazes and approaches. There's some figurative work, and some functional work and everything in between. We thought it was a fabulous snapshot of Australian ceramics, so congratulations to all of you.

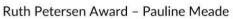


The Northcote Pottery Award - Carly Housiaux



The Walker Ceramics Award - Danielle Segal







Lisbeth Duncan Award - Ann Knights

























NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following new members to Valley Potters:

Wonki Kim
Kirsten Formston
Audrey Liew
Vanessa Law
Harry Kyriakou
Debbie Jurblum
Helen Matthews
Julie Chambers
Jennifer Gough







BOOK LAUNCH

"TURNING INSIDE OUT" by Alistair Whyte Alli

The book launch for Alistair Whyte's "Turning Inside Out" was held at Projekt 3488 in Warburton on the 16th of September. So, Karen and I were unable to stay for the workshop at the Valley Potters AGM.

Alistair was very good friends with the owners of Projekt 3488, an exquisitely beautiful function space, that was perfect for the launch. The building was originally the Masonic Hall, it has been renovated and has the most fantastic interior and amazing garden which makes for a wonderful function/wedding venue.

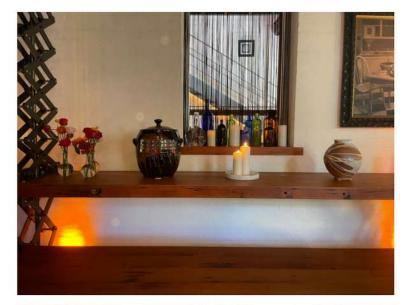
We were privileged to have been asked to speak at the launch and although very nervewracking, we got through without any dramas. It was beautiful to hear the many other people stand up and speak of how Alistair was part of their lives and what he meant to them.

Tomoko, the second eldest daughter read from "Turning Inside Out", and Mariko, the youngest daughter was MC.

Alistair was a man passionate about sharing his ceramic knowledge and expertise and believe me, it was extensive. But he was constantly learning and wanting to find out and try new ideas and explore what was his life's work and passion.

There were about 50 people attending, family, friends and students. I got to meet people who did assignments on him for their diploma from over 30 years ago.

Various works of Alistair's were out on display for people to see, some hand-built works, woodfired, porcelain and beautiful handpainted pieces. Such a wonderful display of the beautiful and varied work of a Master Potter.

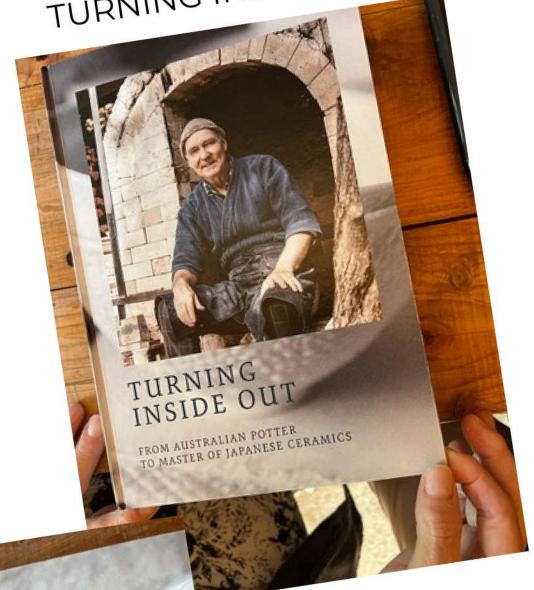




Alli Duckworth, New VP member - Audrey Liew and Karen Goldsmith



ORDER ALISTAIR'S BOOK TURNING INSIDE OUT



ALISTAIR WHYTE

ence. A life in porceloin is

the reader through the step-by-step synthetic for a successful outcome. Turning braide Que - From Australian Porter to Master of Japanese Ceramics is a

Can be purchased at Monsalvat or ordered online here: https://www.alistairwhyte.com.au/books

What's coming up



EXHIBITION

20th Sept to 1st Oct 2023



OCTOBER

WEEKEND AWAY

Saturday 14th to Sunday 15 October

to the Castlemaine / Bendigo Region Still time to register on the website

DECEMBER

Sunday 3rd December 11am - 4pm
Bring a plate to share
END OF YEAR PICNIC
PT LEO ESTATE & COOLART

Two venues for the end of year gathering. For those who would like to see the sculpture at Pt Leo Estate, we will meet there first, and then have a picnic at CoolArt about 15 minute drive away.







VALLEY POTTERS APRON \$40.00



This lovely practical apron is a fundraiser for the Valley Potters. It is beautifully embroidered with our logo. Money raised will help keep our costs down and make you look fabulous.

Made with polyester/cotton blend. One size.

CLICK HERE

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

NEWSLETTER contributions are always welcome. Please send photos and articles to admin@valleypotters.org.au

Spring Fever ... Suncoast Clayworkers Queensland

Danielle Segal

Jackie Gasson has been president of the Suncoast Clayworkers for almost 23 years. She has a terrific network of potters around Australia and the world, and a very hard working committee ... much like the Valley Potters.

My sister is a member of the group and invited me to join her for the annual Spring Fever Festival. I am so glad I did. The Clayworkers took over the showgrounds of Maleny, pitched tents / caravans or rented airbnb's for a weekend of learning, fun and feasting.

Presenters for the weekend included Janet De Boos, Ted Secombe, Ian Dowling, Cher Shackelton and Stuart McKay from WA, Trudy Golley and Paul Leathers from Canada, and a number of others.

All presenters were very happy to demonstrate their skills, and impart their wisdom. So no matter whether you were a hand builder, slip caster, wheel thrower, or even kiln builder, there was something for you.

Yes, I did say kiln builder. Let me tell you a little bit more about that. Stuart McKay built, fired and unloaded an updraft woodfired kiln over the course of the 3-day festival. He built the kiln from a 44 gallon drum and plough disc lid both lined with kiln fibre and a base of kiln bricks. In the base he left room to stoke the fire with wood from pallets splintered to the right size, and a section to catch the ash as it dropped. The kiln fired to Cone 11 in about 9 hours, and was left to cool overnight ready for unloading on the final morning of the festival. Everyone was very happy with the results, a lovely reduction, and even a little ash at the bottom of the kiln.

We were also treated to a Raku firing from Ted Secombe who brought his kiln all the way from Melbourne and shared some of his Raku glazes with the group.

All in all it was an excellent weekend, worth the trip giving me the opportunity to catch up with my sister and meet all her pottery mates from Queensland.



Cher Shackelton, WA - Hand built wall hangings usually wood firedt







Ian Dowling, WA -Thrown and altered forms. He thows an open cylinder, and adds a base for the teapot, hand carves the surface before adding spout, handle and feet

Ted Secombe, drove all the way from Victoria with his Raku Kiln. He carefully measures the temperature and watches what's happening with the glazes before removing the pieces and putting them into a bin with combustable material.





Janet De Boos demonstrated how to throw and alter her beautiful jugs, teapots and cups. She also shared the secrets of how she makes her terra sigalata. For those of you who are wondering how to pronounce it, it sounds like 'jig' with a hard 'G'. Janet made a point of letting us know that she studied Latin, and how to say it properly!





Building a Barrel wood fired kiln

The barrel is lined with fibre, and open top and bottom. A hole has been drilled for a thermocouple.

The base of the kiln is built using kiln bricks. Some of the bricks were denser than others. The denser ones go on the bottom encasing the firebox. You can see the lid in the background. Made from a plough disc, the lid is also lined with fibre and pinned with ceramic buttons, similar to how you would make a home made raku kiln.







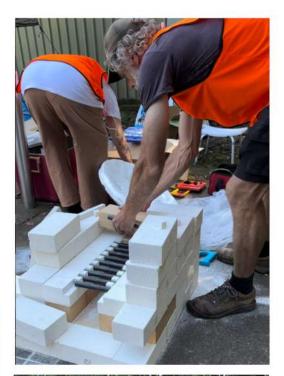
Iron rods are used to create a barrier between the wood box and where the ash falls. Once the base is complete, the barrel is placed on top. The flue (about 2 meters) is added to the lid, and gaps in the front of the base are filled with additional kiln bricks. Each brick is numbered for easy dismantling.

The kiln is stacked with three shelves and loaded with pieces from Suncoast volunteers. The kiln is lit and stoked with small pieces of wood from a chopped-up pallet. Temperatures are carefully logged, and care must be taken not to choke the fire. As the temperature gets higher, it oscillates, and can vary 20-50 degrees before reaching final temperature.

The top shelf reached Cone 9 and the bottom shelf reached Cone 11



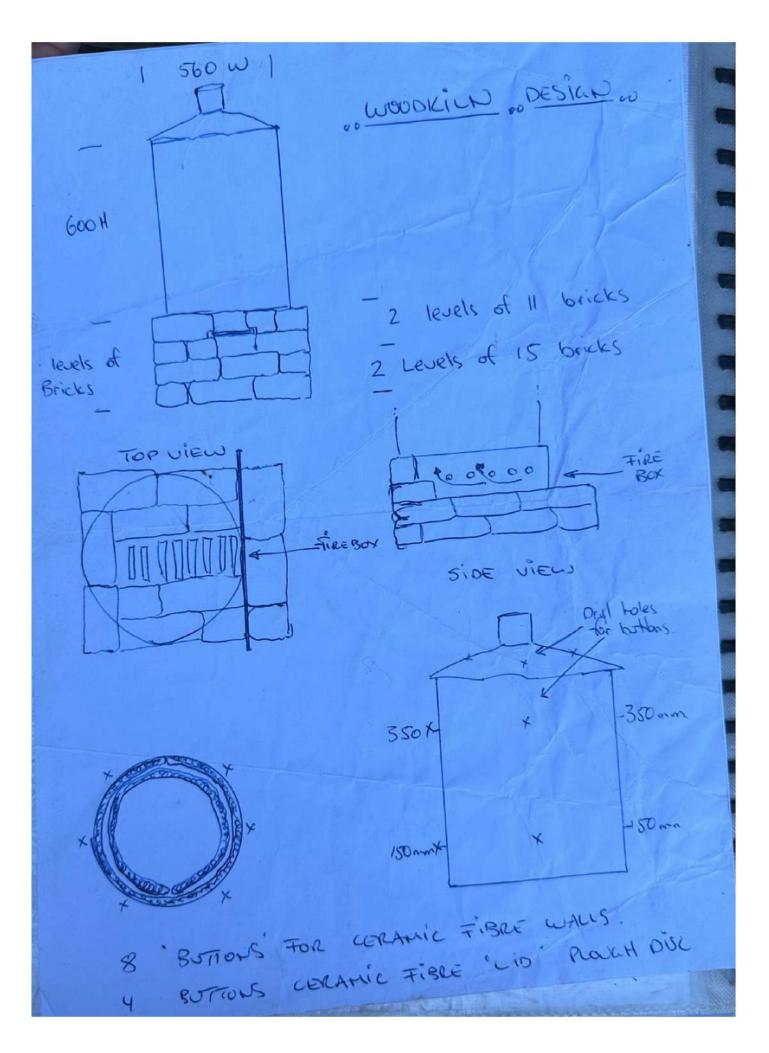








Plans for the Barrel Wood Kiln - Stuart McKay



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Multi layered insulation for lower power use

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Other features

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Sustainable and easy to use

- · Durable kanthal wire
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Durable firing temperatures for lower energy consumption and longer lifespan: 1260 °C. Max. temperature: 1300 °C



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www.firedupkilns.com.au

Meet our new sponsors



Fired Up Kilns: Your Go-To for Affordable and Versatile Electric Kilns and Pottery Supplies

Fired Up Kilns, entered the market in 2020 and captured the attention of pottery enthusiasts across Australia and New Zealand with its exceptional range of electric kilns and pottery supplies. The company quickly established itself as a major player in the industry by offering quality products at competitive prices with a commitment to excellence. The founder of Fired Up Kilns, Antony Gross, is a passionate potter with over four decades of experience in the craft. His love for pottery has led him to produce a range of affordable, versatile, and functional pottery equipment that he felt was missing from the market.

At Fired Up Kilns, the focus is on affordability and functionality. The products are designed to last and provide consistent performance, making them a reliable choice for anyone looking to create beautiful pottery pieces. The company offers a wide range of sizes and models to cater to the needs and budget of every customer. In addition to kilns, Fired Up Kilns also provides a variety of pottery supplies, including a range of Potterycrafts clays that are renowned for their incredible plasticity, reliability, and overall ease of use.

Antony and his team are deeply dedicated to their craft and pride themselves on delivering top-notch customer service and after-sales support. The Fired Up Kilns' website features an extensive range of products that is always expanding to meet the needs of customers. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced potter, Fired Up Kilns has got you covered. Check out their website, www.firedupkilns.com.au to explore their full range and enhance your pottery skills.

This year Fired Up Kilns proudly sponsored an award at the "Earth Matters' exhibition held at Sol Gallery.





Antony dropped into the gallery to take a look at Glenn's beautiful Lidded Vessel!



Questions for Prue Morrison, Valley Potter Member and owner of Australian Pottery Supplies another new sponsor

What's your background in Pottery? When I separated a number of years ago, I decided to do some fun things I have always wanted to do, like pottery and painting. I loved it straight away and bought a wheel after my first class. Things just then grew very quickly to running classes, selling some work, and then students wanting to purchase equipment.

How long have Australian Pottery Supplies been around? Although I had been running classes and making my own things for around 4 years, the name Australian Pottery Supplies only launched to market last year. It has been a gradual increase of products that started with selling a few pottery wheels at the start of COVID to now being one of Venco's biggest sales agents.

Why did you start the business? It really came about as my students after finishing the classes couldn't buy wheels anywhere. I rang some suppliers I knew and they didn't have stock. So I contacted Venco and it just grew from there. I ordered a few wheels in my first order, just for students, and then it grew very quickly to stocking all their products. I started out as just selling wheels to home potters, and then grew to stock many studios in Melbourne and surrounds, and also helping now to set up Council-run art spaces, such as the Pump House project in Albury (can't wait to see this set up with a stunning 265 litre Kilncare kiln, wheels, slab roller, hand extruder and more) and some retirement villages in the pipeline! Which would be a great way to spend your time I would say! The business has grown from local purchases at Torquay to hand delivering wheels during COVID, to now shipping all over Australia and internationally.

What else do you sell besides kilns? Currently, we stock all Venco products including Venco Number 3 and Direct Drive Pottery Wheels, Slab rollers (mini and large), pug mills (mini, standard and large), hand extruders (standard and high capacity) and all spare parts and accessories to go with them. All products come with a 3-year warranty and we are proud to help our customers with any issues (though there haven't been many).

Tell us a bit about your new kiln range. We have just started to stock kilns from Stoke on Trent called Kilncare. Kilncare is a family-run business (similar to Venco), who have been operating for over 30 years in the UK. Lucky to have Keith Brymer Jones endorsing the kilns, they are high quality, built to last, and also utilise the latest technology (wifi Controllers and micropore insulation). They are very energy efficient and consistent in their firing schedule and within the kilns themselves so you know your work is in the best hands. I made sure I did my research and found the reputation they have for quality, as well as after-market service, was amazing. Jarrod Soper who is a well-known kiln tech (used to be Industalec) is supporting us with his skills. We feel so lucky to be supported by a great after-market team. The kilns all fire to 1300 degrees and have Stafford 32 program controllers with them, and options for wifi and more energy-efficient upgrades.

What's the best way to place an order with you? You can jump on the website

www.australianpotterysupplies.com.au and have a look, or if you rather, I am always happy to chat things through 0429633298. If you want delivery you will need to contact us, by email prue@australianpotterysupplies.com.au. We are working on automating this through the website but are not quite there yet! Although the kilns haven't launched officially on the website (the website is being updated as we speak), we have taken our first order with a soft launch to my customer base. If you are interested in a kiln purchase, please contact me and I can send you all the information I have about purchasing kilns in general, including things to consider, as well as all the specs and prices of the Kilncare Kilns. I can't wait to get this first order on Aussie soil, including my new 139-litre kiln! The order was made to spec, however, I did order 2 extra 60-litre top loaders that are up for grabs.



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"I have to say it's brilliant

The firing ramp is very accurate, and the insulation is mind-blowing.

-Keith Brymer Jones Head Judge Great Pottery Throw Down UK

Specialising in pottery equipment for the professional pottery studio and everyday potter

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- Hand extruders
- Slabrollers (mini & large)









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VISIT WELL KNOWN POTTERS AND GALLERIES

Weekend Away in Castlemaine

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OX ART
FELICITY CERAMICS
JANE MCKENZIE SCULPTURES
RYE SENJEN AND KIRSTIE MURDOCH
ANGIE ROBINSON

See website for more details and registration form valleypotters.org.au





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- A wealth of information for new & experienced potters
 - Technical and practical advice for everyone
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