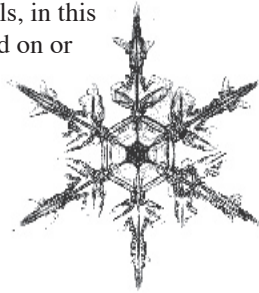


Hot Ice



The crystals in the glazes on these porcelain pots are grown at just over 2000° for up to 6 hours, but the process is as similar, delicate and unpredictable as making snowflakes or the frost on your winter window. Just as water vapor, under exactly the right conditions, will become a snowflake (a crystal form of water), so the glaze on these pots, when fired precisely, will grow crystals, in this case made of zinc and silica. Crystals are not painted on or placed on pots. They grow out of a tiny nucleus, a speck that with a million of its neighbors would together be smaller than the dot on this i.



Colors come from various elements: the light green comes from copper, the blue comes from cobalt, the beige comes from iron, the blue/green comes from nickel.

These crystal pots are fired in a gas kiln, an essentially unheard of firing method for crystal work, because electric kilns are normally both more controllable and have no internal atmosphere issues. Crystal glazes are like divas. They respond to conditions they don't like by refusing to sing. The gas kiln that produced these pots was born with excellence in its veins, and provides just the right combination of flowers and flatteries to coax out the voices you see in these glazes.

Of the clays, porcelain may be the most beautiful, yet it is the hardest to work with. Of the glazes, crystals may easily outclass all their rivals, yet are the fussiest to please. Put these two together, and you can understand why only a few potters are willing to be subservient to these demanding masters, and thus why there are so few crystal pots.



Joe Symons and crew work in a small studio on the east end of Orcas Island. You can learn more and **buy our work online** at www.HotIceOrcas.com