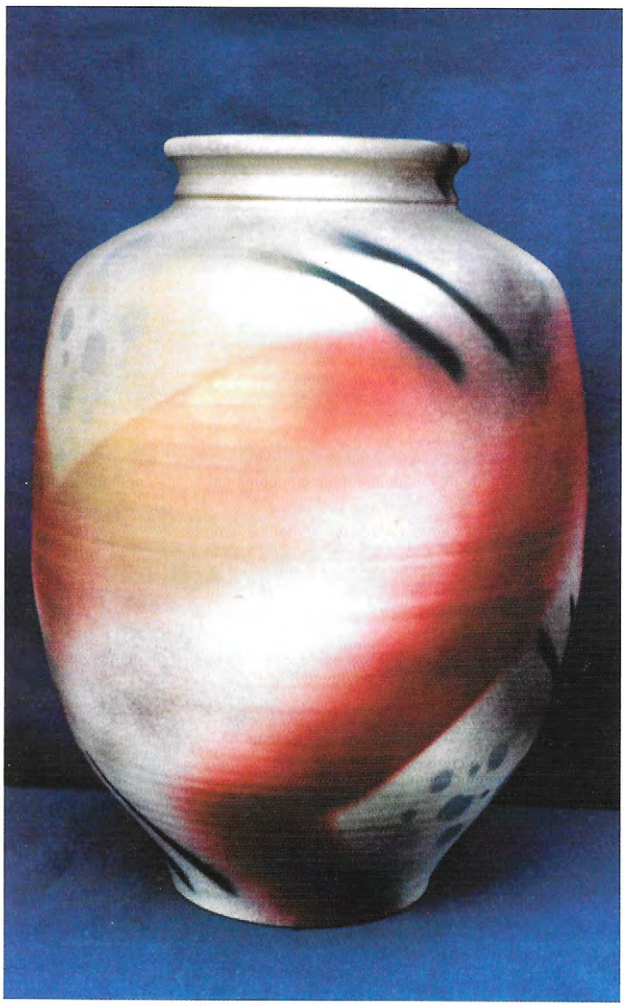


POTTER'S JOURNEY

By Sarah Howery Hart



Ojai potter Wyn Matthews' interests include meditation, and it was participation in a retreat that led him to leave Ojai last year.

"Every time I've done a long retreat, something in my life changes. I always go thinking that what's current physically or psychologically will be there to process, but it's always something else. During this retreat, I discovered that even though I had a full life in Ojai, it was time to leave. To trust in myself, the world, other people. I trusted that the next right thing would come and find me."

After leaving, Matthews wanted to explore other places he'd visited and lived. He continued to visit Ojai, though. When an invitation from fellow potter Robin Nahin reached him, he noted that he felt a big difference during his next Ojai visit in a blog post. "I'm not just visiting, but hope to be staying."

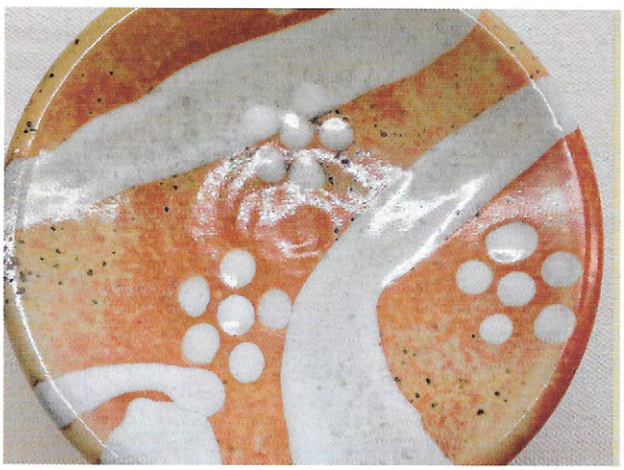
Nahin, new owner of a pottery studio, was adding a pottery school, Firestick Pottery, and needed a studio director/resident master Potter. "Robin asked how long I would be on the road," he said. "I said I had no plans to stop my travels, but would stop for the right thing."

The "right thing" earlier in life had not been pottery, but rather the study of physics at Oakland University. He discovered pottery in 1969 in a love-at-first-sight experience. "My college roommate and I were visiting friends of his. They were potters, and when I walked into their studio, my head and heart exploded. I knew it was something I had to do."

Matthews became affiliated with studios in North Carolina, New Hampshire, and Georgia, and also taught pottery in private schools. But it was his job at Kinko's that led him to Ojai.

"I moved here in 1997 from Ohio. I worked for Kinko's, where I was the regional technology person for Ohio and Pennsylvania. As I became more involved in procedural and technical issues, I became more involved with the Kinko's headquarters in Ventura. I knew about Ojai from reading Krishnamurti, and I drove around Ojai a lot, and decided this is where I wanted to live."

Matthews liked traveling, including by long-distance hiking — once he trekked 300-miles on a trail with his dog Sherman. The adventurous side of him was in part responsible for his Ojai exit. First he headed up the California coast, across Canada — hiking, exploring, and visiting friends. "I said, if I don't do this adventure now, I don't know if I ever



Trail leads Matthews back to Ojai, where he goes the distance

will. So, I got rid of everything and drove out of Ojai. I had no real sense of how long I would be on the road, where I would wind up.”

But he returned to Ojai three or four times before he received Nahin’s fateful call.

“We were in alignment about the new studio,” he recalls, “about developing a community of clay artists.” He adds that the move also brought him close to his children, who live locally. It also answered his frequent question, “What would I really like to do in the terms of pottery?”

Matthews received his answer and now teaches pottery at Firestick, applying a personal philosophy. “I relate to students here much more like they’re apprentices. There’s a skill transfer, but it’s more like them expressing themselves and creating their own vision.” He also believes in mixing beginners and advanced students. “A beginner may be the most creative person in the class. It also gives more advanced people the chance to mentor,” he said.

Matthews also started a new business with his partner, Peggy La Cerra, called Pink Moment Pottery. “A percentage of profits going to the Ojai Valley Defense Fund,” he said.

Matthews has never feared going the distance, and in addition to his work at Firestick and the new business, he’s planning his longest hike yet. “I’m doing a long hike this year, the Colorado Trail. It’s about 500 miles.”

(Wyn Matthews, 805-207-3122, wyn@wynmatthews.com, owner, Pink Moment Pottery, pinkmomentpottery.com. Firestick Pottery, 1804 East Ojai Ave, 805.272.8760)

