www.frankomacollector.com

Why Frankoma-?

FRANKOMA POTTERY has rightfully earned its position as America's outstanding creators of "useful and beautiful" earthenware. The colors, textures and crafted designs are created at Frankoma, and are unique in American ceramics.

Archeologists say that the Great Southwest was the cradle of the American Indians' culture. As the various tribes dispersed in all directions, their art and potting developed according to the materials and inspirations at hand. Most Indian tribes made pottery of some kind because of the universality of clay, and the ease with which it could be prepared and fashioned into so many useful items.

All tribes of the Southwest were potters, producing grain storage jars, water pots, serving bowls, pitchers, plates and such pieces as they needed to store, prepare and serve their food. Ceremonial objects, including sculptured figures, handled pots and bowls were common. Their decorations were slip painted earthen colors, applied with a brush, or incised designs. Their motifs were taken from daily surroundings — animals, plants, flowers, trees, clouds, hills, weapons, figures, etc.

Our pottery of today differs very little from theirs regarding materials, inspiration and uses. While they were limited as to firing methods and refinement of raw materials, we have added glazes and controlled temperatures and developed complex body compositions. But our common uses for pottery are the same — for the preparation, storage, and serving of foods. Naturally, we have enlarged our scope of uses—flower containers, decorative tile, lamps and other art objects germane to our modern homes.

"Pottery" has been refined, and developed in so many directions that one's selections of dishes, for example, becomes one of discrete choice according to the mode of living one chooses. America's conception of Freedom and Free Enterprise makes it possible for all classes and strata of its people to select a "dinnerware" or "tableware" from these general classes:

Pottery	China	Porcelain
Earthenware	Fine China	

Glass — as well as countless other materials.

Frankoma entered the field of ceramics in 1933, utilizing the heritage left it by its predecessors, the Southwest Indians, by choosing POTTERY as its field of endeavor. Our aim was to combine the traditional art of the Indians, the spirit of the American pioneer and the creative tendencies of the youth of the Great Southwest, and mold them into good pottery forms.

John Frank, originator of "Frankoma," came to Oklahoma from Chicago in 1927. His teaching Art and Pottery at the University of Oklahoma and his work with the geological survey — unearthing Oklahoma clay deposits — brought together valuable material for his future venture of "potting." The natural inspiration of the Indians and the opportunities in the new state that had never had a pottery was too much of a challenge to let pass. In 1933 he started a "studio" pottery in Norman, Oklahoma, — equipped with one small kiln, a butter churn for mixing clay, a fruit jar for grinding glazes and a few other crude tools and tables. Help was easy to get in 1933, but it was still necessary to continue teaching until enough ware was produced to prove that a product could be made of Oklahoma clays that was a contribution to Art and Ceramics and still saleable — at a profit.

Resigning his teaching in 1936 he and his wife, Grace Lee, set out on a venture of creating beautiful pottery **for everyday living.** They felt the need of using Oklahoma clays, if possible, for Oklahoma's first pottery. First a clay from Ada was used, then in 1954 a red burning clay dug at Sapulpa became the basis for all Frankoma ware. In 1938 the "studio" grew into a small factory as it moved from Norman to Sapulpa, where it is now.

Frankoma chose to stay as a "pottery" as it grew, and demanded of itself to make as fine a pottery as could be made considering the limitations of its materials. This means constant research to take advantage of raw materials and processes as they are brought to light.

Pottery enjoys so many advantages over the more "refined" and delicate ceramic wares. **Frankoma** pottery is manufactured by its unique once-fired process — clay body and colored glaze are fused and fired at the maturing point of the clay, and tempered as it slowly cools. It can be used "indoors — outdoors" because of its ruggedness and durability. It can really "take" the handling of every day use. It is ovenproof and food can be served in the same dish in which it is baked or prepared.

Color is such an indispensable part of today's decor — and nothing allows the wide range of colors and textures in ceramics as **pottery.** Eating from lovely textured and beautifully colored dishes is a fascinating experience. Some colors such as the "Rutile Art Glazes" which have identified Frankoma's unique tableware around the world, can only be produced on colored earthenware clays. By applying these unique glaze colors in various thicknesses according to pattern and design, the red body shows through the glaze giving a beautiful mottled effect when fired.

No ceramic product seems so close to the artists as pottery — so much so that one can almost trace the potter's fingerprints as he originally formed the body, lips, handles, and designs of a piece. This is an important consideration with Frankoma, for we are artists first, and clay is only the medium of expression.

The uses to which pottery can be put are myriad. Serving bowls double for baking or cobbler dishes, open bowls and platters can be used for hot rolls or upside-down cakes, or keeping the barbecue hot in the oven until ready to serve. Many table service pieces double for table centerpieces or a whole Mexican main course can be served in one. The chop plate can also hang as a wall plate. Pottery keeps foods or drinks hot so much longer than other materials.

Frankoma with its modern plant and latest equipment has been able to maintain its very popular price range in the face of higher materials, taxes and labor costs and the influx of foreign goods; yet, it maintains the original concept that made it accepted as a standard of fine "Pottery" — "every piece should be both useful and beautiful and be a contribution to both art and ceramics." We will continue to do just that, so that every piece will add to your daily pleasure of casual living.