



Joseph and Peter Woods run the plant and day-to-day operations.

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And to Think It's "Just" Mississippi Mud

by Sharon Neff

It could be said that many things have come out of Mississippi mud: the Blues, exceptional writers, rich forests, and vast fields of cotton and soybeans. And in Mound Bayou is a family that has taken Mississippi mud and built a thriving business, known across the country and around the world. It's Peter's Pottery, of course.

There are no big signs on the highway, and it might take your GPS or a phone call to find the unassuming wooden buildings. But once inside, you are transported to a magical place where the Mississippi mud has been transformed into delightful animals, stunning bowls and candlesticks, unique tableware – just all things pottery – all because the Woods brothers wanted to “do something different” back in 1998.

Peter, Joseph, Sandy, Jr., and Arthur Woods had all worked at nearby McCarty's pottery over the years but left in 1998 because they wanted a change. Peter says, “We really just left to do something different. But people kept asking us to do pottery, so we prayed about it and fell back into it.”

Pooling their resources, the brothers built the original building themselves on land that one of them owned. They couldn't borrow money, so they came up with other ways to get the job done. For example, the beautiful cypress inside the building came from around Linden Plantation on Lake Washington through bartering. Peter explained that the owners – the Bridges family – had access to a mill and to cypress. They also hosted weddings and other social events at Linden and loved to use pottery created by the Woods brothers. So they traded pottery for cypress.

This family business began with the four brothers and two nephews. Sadly, brother Arthur passed away several years ago. Today, there are 16 family members at Peter's Pottery. This sense of family permeates the business and contributes to the personal touch that characterizes it.

Peter explains that while they have a website – peters-pottery.net – they do not have a catalogue from which to order. “No two pieces are alike, and we would rather



(the “Mississippi mud”), the pottery is not just beautiful, it's also functional. Everything is food-, dishwasher- and oven-safe. Pieces come in four color palettes: Dogwood Brown, Dirty Jade, Bayou Blue, and Cotton White (the newest color). You can find pieces sorted by color and by function, the colors and pottery pieces making a subdued but rich rainbow all around the walls.

Balancing the new with the old, Peter notes, “We introduce three or four new pieces each year. Some come from requests, and some are just what we like. As generations change, we need to change, too. But we keep in mind that it needs to go with what you already have if you've been collecting our pottery for years.”

When asked how the brothers get along, Peter replies, “We all have our own areas of expertise. Working together and combining our talents have made us successful. We have our disagreements, but we get over it quickly.”

Commenting that they are “truly blessed,” Peter brings God into the equation, saying, “When you include God, I believe it will thrive.” If you look closely at their logo, you can see a cross in the large “P.” As Peter tells the story of the business, he makes several references to relying on prayer in their decision-making and says, “Our mother and father raised up all eleven of us in the church. We are a close family and are active members of the Jerusalem MB Church here.”

As they have been blessed, Peter's Pottery has in turn blessed their community. They were technically outside the Mound Bayou city limits, so they asked to come back in so that the town would get the benefit of the sales tax. The town, in turn, was able to get a grant to pave the road and extend water and sewer services to the growing business so customers would be more comfortable. As products of the Mound Bayou school system, the Woods brothers sponsor four scholarships for high school seniors each year as a way of giving back to the community. They are also active in many areas of the community and can be counted on to contribute to a number of local charitable causes.

Peter's Pottery: rising out of the Delta mud, using Mississippi mud to make charming and lovely items for the home. Certainly worth a trip to behold the Woods Brothers' handiwork and to purchase some as a gift or for your own enjoyment! 



All of Peter's Pottery serving pieces are oven safe!