

Horse Crazy Kid Grows into Talented Artist

Growing up without horses fueled one woman's hidden talent.

03-15-2007

Anyone who loves horses knows that it's difficult to find equine-themed home décor and artwork that is both aesthetically appealing and anatomically correct. Too often unnaturally colored horses are drawn or painted oddly out of proportion or they're portrayed frolicking at a gait that is neither gallop nor trot. You won't find any of those problems in the artistry of Mindy Winchester from Persia, Iowa. Her husband, the driving force behind Winchester Pottery, is a professional potter. Mindy Winchester adds her delicate equine designs in a method called slip trailing.

"Liquefied porcelain is squeezed out of a small bottle with a needle-nose tip," she explains. It takes a steady hand and a keen eye to basically draw the horsey scenes freehand with the fast-drying product.

"I try to be really accurate when it comes to anatomy, gaits, colors and breeds," Winchester says. She motions to an array of vases, plates, tea kettles and mugs, all intricately adorned with a variety of horses and foals. Some mosey through a meadow. Others are posed mid-jump and are clearly Thoroughbreds or Warmbloods. A few more are stock horses ready to go roping or dressage horses poised to piaffe. "Horse people notice right away if there are any flaws or inaccuracies in my horses."

You'd think that Winchester would be a horse owner, especially since she travels throughout the year selling her artistic wares at horse expos and major horse shows, but she reveals that she's never owned a horse.

"I grew up being a horse crazy little girl," she says. "And I was just obsessed with the image of the horse. I'd clipped out pictures of horses from magazines and newspapers. When I'd beg my mother for a horse—I already knew I couldn't have one—she'd just say, 'Go draw yourself one.' So I did. And now, years later, here I am."

The horse craziness never went away, despite her efforts to wean herself away from nothing but horsey images. "I've tried to draw other animals," she says with some amount of resignation, "but they end up just looking like deformed horses."

But that's perfectly fine for horse lovers who also love artistic creations. Mindy Winchester can just keep on putting her four-footed touches on her husband's pottery.