

A Day In The Clay

by Tom Snell

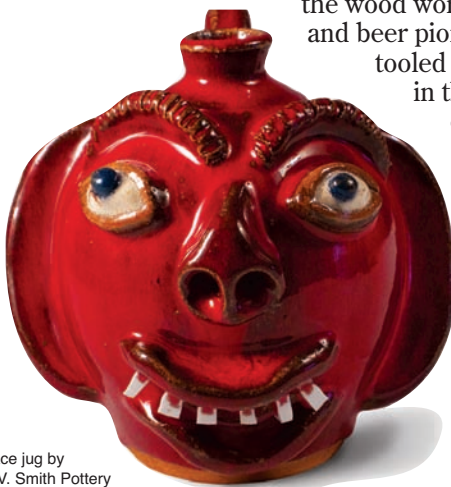
Travel about 35 minutes southwest of Raleigh, down Highway 1, and you'll find yourself smack dab in the middle of clay country. In a community once the brick capital of the world and still boasting the moniker of "Brick City", its richest history is not in the making of bricks, but in the creation of pottery.

Lee County has a long celebrated pottery tradition in North Carolina, dating back to the 1700s when the Cole family settled here. The celebration continues at the Sanford Arts and Vine Festival in Sanford, NC.

May 2 and 3, come visit Sandy Cole, the granddaughter of A.R. Cole, and her husband Kevin Brown, at the Festival. You will find other renowned potters there too, like Broadway native, A.V. Smith, and Rob Barteel of Shovelin-Barefoot in Sanford.

This show is a festival for all the senses. In addition to seeing all of the wonderful pottery, run your hands over the wood work, taste the wine and beer pioneers, smell the tooled leather and delight in the sparkle and hue of the glass and copper from local artists. Oh yes, and you can literally taste a Sanford classic, ice cream from Yarborough's. My favorite is banana pudding. Or maybe it's peanut butter and chocolate?

Face jug by
A.V. Smith Pottery



There will be live music all weekend and the vibrant energy of thousands enjoying the arts, the weekend before Mother's Day. And something new this year, a free pass. For the last 13 years, Sanford's festival required an entry fee, but this year, due to its growth and the generosity of corporate sponsors, the festival is not requiring a fee to see the artists and music. There will be an over-age-21-only wine and beer tasting tent, entry cost \$15, that includes six North Carolina wineries and five craft breweries. It is bound to be a great weekend for the arts.

When you make your way to Sanford, plan to stay for a while. Walk one of the greenways or catch a live show at the Temple Theater, have dinner at The Steele Pig or Davison's Steaks. And make sure you head downtown to visit Carolina Artists' Colony on Moore Street. Over 100 North Carolina artists show their work there. And in the two weeks leading up to the Festival they are hosting "The Great Teapot Extravaganza", artists reflecting their chosen media in teapots. The last two days the teapot collection will be on display at the Sanford Arts and Vine Festival. Stop by to cast your vote for "People's Choice".

So come join us. See the art, drink some wine, eat some ice cream, and spend a day in the clay.



Photo by Wes Beson of The Sanford Herald



Photo by Richard Hayes