

AS SEEN IN

# PERIOD LIVING

TRADITIONAL HOMES, INTERIORS, GARDENS, ANTIQUES & RENOVATION

## CRAFT REVIVAL

### Behind the craft

Naomi Jones finds out how Charlotte Storrs' simple and functional ceramics have been inspired by Japanese pottery

#### When did you become interested in pottery?

I joined an evening class in ceramics when I moved from the Netherlands to the UK 30 years ago. I was instantly hooked, but when our children came along I had to give it up; I was working as a music teacher and there weren't enough hours in the day to indulge in hobbies: family definitely came first. When our youngest son left home to go to university in 2003 I decided to go back to college and once again became addicted to throwing and set up the pottery a few months later.

#### Where is your studio?

In our 'secret' garden, away from traffic and noise, close to the River Thames and surrounded by fields. I listen to chamber music, look out over the garden and enjoy the change of seasons; my dog, Bramble, keeps me company – I'm very much at peace.

#### Does making ceramics keep you busy?

Yes, but I do have to fit it around other things: I still teach about 30 pupils the violin or viola each week, and devote most other hours to working with clay. It means planning my day the previous evening and managing my time as well as possible.

#### Can you describe your work?

Functional stoneware: I love being able to create usable objects from lumps of clay. For me, the throwing part is the most exciting; it's magical. When a pot is leather-hard I apply surface decoration by combing or using ceramic rollers; when

completely dry it's fired, then goes through the glazing process. Depending on the piece I might add chocolate vine (*Akebia quinata*, a fast growing semi-evergreen) for handles.

#### What made you start using vine in your pieces?

On my visit to Japan about a year ago, I visited many potters and quite a few use akebia; I completely fell in love with this natural material. I now import it from Japan and use it in a variety of ways in my work. I enjoy the combination of simply decorated pots and this wonderful plant.

#### Does the functionality influence your designs?

Yes, food can be so colourful and stands out beautifully against any white or muted glaze. Leafy greens, roasted vegetables, hearty soup, colourful fruit juices, and chunky pasta: all a feast for the eyes, particularly when set against honest designs.

#### Who inspired you to keep your designs so simple?

Shōji Hamada and his friend Bernard Leach; they met in 1918 and worked together in Japan before founding Leach Pottery in the UK. They promoted utilitarian styles over fine art – the ethical, useful pot as opposed to the fine art pot.

#### What advice would you give others who want to be more creative?

Go for it! Being creative is excellent for health of both mind and body. ☺

Contact Charlotte on 01235 520395, [charlottestorrs-stoneware.co.uk](http://charlottestorrs-stoneware.co.uk)



**ABOVE** This utensil pot can hang from its akebia handle

**LEFT** Pasta bowls have been simply decorated to display the integral art of food

**BOTTOM LEFT** This small tray (32cm) would look beautiful piled with fresh fruit

**BOTTOM CENTRE** Japanese style has certainly influenced the design of these vegetable buckets (from £35 for H10cm)

**BELOW** 'I feel very much at peace creating my pots in the studio in my 'secret' garden,' says Charlotte



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