



Sarah VanderVoort



Wes Weiss



Tim See

## Wood fire

**Characteristics:** Amorphous colorations, white to cinnamon to dark gray with dull, glassy and/or shiny surfaces

**Firing temperature:** Cone 6 – Cone 13

Kilns for wood firing are individually designed and built with consideration given to the site, the amount of work that will be fired, and the number of people who will use the kiln. Most contemporary wood kilns are single-chambered, but others are multi-chambered and may be built into a gradually ascending hill to direct the flame.

Wood firing, a labor-intensive process, is often accomplished by a group of potters who work together. A mix of multiple face cords of both soft and hardwoods works best; the soft wood creates a high but fast burn and the hardwood gives a longer, steadier burn.

The process is started with a small fire and is built up gradually. As the firing progresses, the team of potters keeps the fire stoked for anywhere from a day to several days (or even weeks) around the clock. As the wood burns, gas settles on the pots that may or may not have been glazed, thus creating the unique surfaces of wood fired pottery.

Potters must constantly monitor the kiln by checking the cones to see if they are melting and by observing the color and height of the flame coming out of the chimney to determine when adjustments must be made. These adjustments might include adding more wood to raise the heat and/or opening or closing dampers to adjust the air circulation.

Once the firing is done it can take days for the kiln to cool down enough to open the door and reveal the results.



Independent Potters' Association  
ipa  
ipacny.org