&E Thursday, January 8, 1987



otter Nancy Patterson spent years in Scandinavia and learning her craft, but picked the tiny Tennessee vil-Taiwan learning her craft, but picked the tiny Tenne-lege of Laurel Bloomery to make her dream come true.



Forn Severt paints a pitcher at Nancy Patterson Lan Mountain Stoneware in Laurel Bloomery.



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Best of both worlds Tennessee Potter turns art into a living

Nancy Patterson Lamb is an artist who wants the best of both worlds. She started out as an individual artist, the kind who makes one piece at time and sells it through art galleries and shows. A quarter of a century ago she decided that she could never make enough money that way to support herself as a potter. Somehow she had to find a way to mass-produce her handreafted work so that she could make money and still be able to experiment as an artist.

that ane could make money and sun be able to experiment as an artist.

You should see how now, at Iron Mountain Stoneware Inc., in the village of Laurel Bloomery, Tenn., her hand-made pottery coming off a production line of bands in the forested Appalachian

Mountains.

They use the same techniques an artist-potter uses in a studio, making good pottery the way it was made 100 years ago, but the result is several thousand pleces a week sold in hundreds of stores nationwide.

nationwide.

HOW DID a dreamer like Nancy get to a place like Laurel Bloomery, population 30? She was born in Wisconsia, grew up in California, attended folversity of Southern California and later Art Order and the California and later Art California and Later and Later

support your experience as an artist.

SHE SPENT another four years in Taiwan, learning how to create a production system for handmade ceramics. Petito Ceramics of Taiwan sold the first handmade stoneware ever sold in the U.S.

Nancy had never lived in Tennessee, but when it was time to make ber dream come true, she moved to this tiny village in the crook of a Tennessee hill, parity because it was a central place among the clays of Tennessee, Kentucky and South Carollina.

among the clays of tensesson, tensesson, tensesson, tenses and the calls himself 'the errand boy but is really the vice president in charge of finances and mechanics of this business, has another explanation. 'When like it there.'

Joe was an engineer making pottery machinery



1-of-a-kind traveler Iris Jones travel edito

when they met and he makes that machinery work here among three dozen employees recruited from the local area. Every single one of the employees was trained here, up the hill from the main street, the only street in town. Many have been here since from Mountain Pottery opened more than 20 years ago.

Joe and Nancy buy their body clay in bags, but they make all their own glazes and moids. Any housewife watching David Phillippi fit the clay into a moid for a casserole lid would recognize the process.

HE TAKES a preformed "mud pie" and makes a "pie shell" out of it, poking a hole in the middle to let out the air. He puts the pie in a jiggering machine, exactly the way potters did a century

ago.

Lila Dunn is over by the window making handles for a three-quart casserole and Dora Adams is around the corner doing handles for coffee cups. They are "pulling the handles" like art potters do; Joe says this is the only place in the United States where it is done on a production-line

Oblides states where it is only on a provided as a case.

After a little smoothing, the newly formed piece goes through a first firing at 1,800 degrees. That takes the remaining free water out so it can absorb the paint and the glaze.

The ceramic pieces are beginning to look like recognizable products now, especially when you see Fern Street handpainting pitchers, brown plant on biscuit-colored clay. It will be a bluegray background with cobait blue flowers when it is glazed, fired at 2,500 degrees and ready for the market.

narket. Het at 2,000 tegrees and ready for the market.

It is hard to watch Fern and Mary Greel dip that beautiful design in a pot of grayish glaze even though you know that the glaze will be trans-parent after the firing, leaving the design to show through.

IN ONE FASCINATING little side demonstra-tion, we watched Mary do something Nancy learned long ago at that Chinese pottery place in Talwan: If you dip different parts of the plate sev-

Iron Mountain Stoneware uses the same techniques an artist-potter uses in a studio, making good pottery the way it was made 100 years ago.

eral times in the same glaze, letting the dips overlap, you will get a pattern because the double-dipped areas come out lighter than the rest. There is from in the clay and from in the glaze, the further you get from the iron in the clay, the lighter it gets.

That is all back room stuff, of course. If your cyes love good pottery, you have already sucked in your breath as you entered the showroom and saw the plates and fowls and tiles glowing on shelves and tables in every direction. There are dinner plates and fruit plates, Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary plates, most of them bearing Nancy's own designs time ago trying to make a dream come frue. Now she lives amid a gloty of mountains, doing the things that every make a dream come frue. Now she lives amid a gloty of mountains, doing the things that every chool, attenting ball games and hand concerts—and she is making be handerasted pottery on a mass market scale.

The best of both worlds.

For more information, contact Nancy and Joe at Iron Mountain Stoneware Inc., Laurel Bloometry, TN 37880 or telephone (615) 727-8881.

ery, TN 37880 or telephone (615) 727-8888.
P.S. WHILE you are appreciating what individual creative people can do in their own corner of Tennessee, go a few miles down Highway 18E to the Ridgawood Restaurant, just south of Bluff City, where Grace Profitt and her son Terry make barbecue lovers such their teeth and say hah with their pork and beef barbecue, served with pork-and logical south of the served with pork and beef barbecue, served with pork and beef barbecue, served with pork and beef barbecue, served with pork and the same amblence, two long rooms of the served with the same amblence, two long rooms of the served with the same amblence, two long rooms of Tennessee. They make met over green hickory wood and earry it rampped in a spiry barbecue sauce. The beans come in a pot.

