

Happiness for Marvin and Lynn Bailey is a Business Always Going to Pot

By Bill Baab



Lynn and Marvin Bailey flanked by dozens of their pottery creations.

KERSHAW, S.C. – The nation's economy isn't exactly what you'd call robust, gasoline and oil prices continue to rise, but Marvin and Lynn Bailey both quit their day jobs in order to go to pot.

Pot as in pottery. Face jugs. Folk art.

They're not rolling in cash, but they're happy.

Marvin, 48, a native of Lancaster, S.C., and Lynn, 33, a Great Falls, S.C., native, have been married nine years. She met him in a greenhouse operated by his father, Joe, in the Elgin community.

"I was told he was real quiet, but he talked my ears off the first two days I was there," Lynn said. "It was love at first sight for me," said Marvin.

He developed a fondness for pottery, thanks to his father, Joe, who loved collecting art pottery like Roseville and Rookwood. "Every now and then, he'd pick up a piece of North Carolina pottery and I got the collecting bug."

His wife noted that "he always collected pottery and sold antiques on the side, even when he was working at the greenhouse."

He left the greenhouse business and started making pots and selling antiques full time in 2001. Until two years ago, Lynn was working at a full-time job and the couple also were planning to become foster parents.

"I first started making vases and flower pots, later getting into face jugs, and my business took off when I started attending pottery festivals in the Carolinas and Georgia," Marvin said. "Then I branched out into doing folk art."



Grinning trio of hog riders carry watermelon (center), mini face jugs.



Astonishment shows plainly on the face of this pot, complete with handled lid.



Note what the owl is gripping in its talons.



Here's a face jug with a skin problem.

What great folk art! A recent visit to his antique store/studio in downtown Kershaw revealed tables loaded with wares to be taken to the Catawba Valley Pottery Festival in Hickory, N.C. A photo is worth a thousand words, so check out those accompanying this article. Are they neat or what?

Marvin regards himself as one who is

always looking to improve.

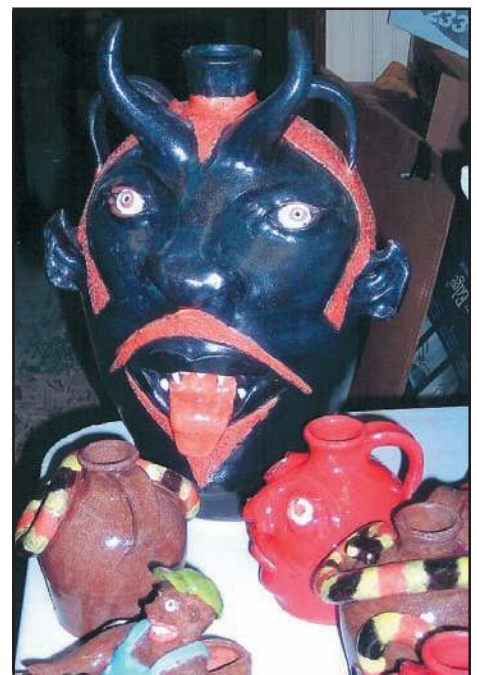
"The funnest part of what I do comes when I'm on the wheel and the clay is still damp. I get lost in thought sometimes although I am concentrating on what I'm turning. The harder work is applying faces to the jugs and glazing them. I use porcelain for eyes and teeth. You almost have to become a chemist to understand glazes and

those we use have come from trial and error."

Lynn's contributions include making all the animals and figurines except the snakes. That's Marvin's job and his coral snake creations so far are unique to the trade. If a creature needs scales, the Baileys use onion sacks whose fabric is pressed against the still-wet clay.



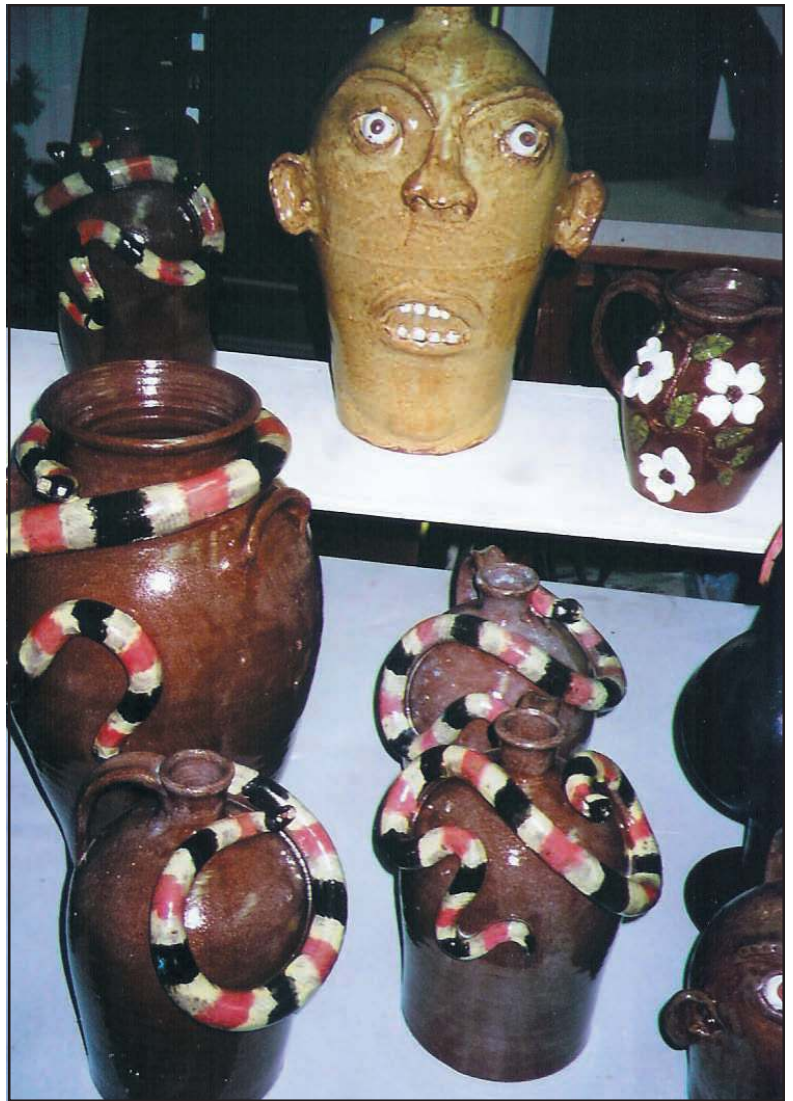
Happiness is a jug of corn whiskey.



Check out this devil-faced jug.



Rude face jugs, their tongues sticking out, flank two-headed chicken.



Jug's face doesn't look thrilled to be surrounded by coral snake jugs.



Lynn Bailey's sculpted bird dog (above) and pig mamas with hungry brood (below).



From left, a face pot and a pair of face jugs shows Bailey's wide range of talent.

The Baileys admit that quitting their "day jobs" was a gamble, but Marvin is going to sell his antiques inventory and move his studio back to his home in the Elgin community. Then he'll be able to devote all of his time to making pots. "I like to think that by becoming a potter, I am helping preserve a Southern tradition," he said.

"If we can continue to live the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed and be as happy as we are, that's how we'll do it," Lynn said. "We also are looking forward to becoming foster parents. Marvin's Dad and Mom are very proud of him, too, and both of us are so happy and thankful to be where we're at."

Photos by Bill and Bea Baab.