



The museum

The pottery museum is inside the old Latin School of Thurnau, which was built in 1552 and exists since 1914. In 1982 the museum has been opened. Thurnaus pottery products, a collection of Günther and Luise Stüdemann, make up the foundation of the museum.

Countless presents and lend products complete the stock.

1

The Black Kitchen

During the conversion of the building the so called »black kitchen« from the 16th century has been exposed. It is one of the oldest and most preserved black kitchen of Upper



Franconia. It was used by the headmaster of the former school for cooking and smoking. There is an opening above the reconstructed oven, in which the smoked goods were hung. The old »Gußstein«, the drain below the window, is preserved as well. The then living room – now entrance hall – has been heated through a little hole from the kitchen. The room in front of it served as a smoke gate and was probably used for resmoking as well.



There is an iron yellow cooking and baking dish exhibited in the kitchen. Special kinds of vessel such as the »Thurnauer Crock« or the »hare-frypan« (see photo) belong to the repertoire of Thurnaus pottery.

2

Ceramic - What is it?

Every kind of ceramic consists of clay, a malleable product made of stone, mainly containing quartz, feldspar and clay minerals. Clay exposed to high heat becomes a new material: ceramic. The combination of clay, temperature and glaze decide upon the characteristics of the ceramic.

Earthenware: The oldest ceramic goods are called Earthenware, indicated by porous broken colourful fragments. The sometimes disruptive water permeability is averted by glaze.

Crockery: Just like the Earthenware, the stone goods are porous and let water evaporate. But instead of colourful fragments, they are just white.

Stoneware: Some raw materials allow higher temperature during the burning process, so that the fragments don't melt. Starting at 1.200 degrees Celsius, the process of vitrification starts and the material becomes very hard and opaque. The glaze is added simply for decoration.

Porcelain: Porcelain is also opaque just like the stone stuff. The fragments are white or transparent.



3

The pottery studio

The pottery profession is one of the oldest there are. The work, which contains clay mining, clay preparation, modelling, decorating, glazing and burning, requires skill, strength and experience.

The most important tool of the job is the potter's wheel. Up to the middle of the 20th century only treadle driven wheels were in use.

The finished good will later be painted and glazed. From the middle of the 19th century on the technique of **»Schlicker-Painting«** becomes common. With the painting-horn, a pot filled with cream of clay, simple decors and designs are painted.

A special form of decoration is the **faience-painting**. In this technique, the colour pigments are painted by brush onto the white glaze before its burned in the oven. During the burning process, the colour sinks deeper into the glaze and connects with it.

4

Clay mining and preparation

Till 1974 the clay has been mined in the »Hutschdorfer« forest near by Thurnau. The mine (see photo) reached up to 200 meters into the mountain. Work was done in winter. On a good day, the mine dug up to 20 wagons of clay. The clay was stacked up in front of the mine, to allow it to fulminate, so the clay becomes ductile.



Afterwards the clay was transported by horses back to the village, where the preparation continued. It was put into barrels to get mixed and it was ponded and pounded (see photo) to get homogeneous.

Today potters buy the clay and prepare it with machinery.

5

The Glaze

Thurnau potters used to make their own glaze up to the 20th century. Lead ore were grind made by hand (see photo) to a fine powder and mixed with quartz flour, water and clay.

The glaze covers the pores and gives the colour a beautiful shine. However they were not safe for health reasons and put the worker as well as the user of the good at risk. Today the use of lead in the process is against the law. The



glaze now comes from special factories in plenty of colours. Only the artistic glaze remains part of the individual potter's choice.



6

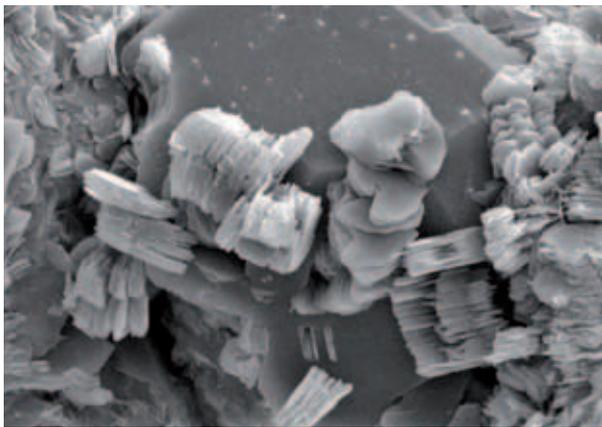
The burning

The burning of the ceramic forms the last step in the work process. Only through this process, the ceramic reaches the desired décor.

Beginning of the 19th century up until the second half of the 20th century, the burning in Thurnau was done inside the »lying oven« (see photo), a big oven out of brick stones, which could burn the whole production of several weeks of work. The oven reached a temperature of up to 1000 degrees Celsius.

The needed temperature was hard to reach, since it had to be the exact same temperature during the entire burning process. A too low temperature would sacrifice density of the good and produce a dull glaze and undeveloped décor. A too high temperature would change the form of the good or possibly destroy it.

Then middle of the 20th century, Thurnau started using the first electric oven.



7

From Granit to Clay

Clay is a weathered product from volcanic rock especially granite. The feldspar inside the granite changes into kaolin (see photo).

A typical characteristic for clay is its plasticity and possibility to make a dense product through the burning of it.

The Thurnau clay was formed 200 Mio years ago. The original clay from Thurnau is dark gray, which changed into a lighter gray after the burning.

Clay-showing plants

Some plants sing up clay inside the earth. Those plants are very robust and assimilate quite well to more or less bad conditions such as a low content of oxygen and hard greasy earth-structures. The plants growing in this garden are such clay-showing plants.

8

History and development of the Thurnau pottery

The first prove of a Thurnau potter came about 1593. Since that time, there had always at least been one potter in town. The high came in 1870/1880 with eight potters working in Thurnau at the same time.



The Thurnau Earthenware has had a fantastic reputation and was of great importance to its economics. The goods were sold in Bamberg, Bayreuth and Nürnberg at markets and conventions. Later on, with connection to the new developed railway, also in Augsburg (see photo), Munich and Leipzig.



Typical products were iron yellow cooking dishes and with the horn painted dinnerware.



9 Ceramics in the service of playing and comfort

Clay is used to form several things. Apart from dishes the potteries made tiles, stovepipes, toys and figurine. Doll's dishes and toy-animals, so called »Mopper«, were made after work and were given to mothers as presents for their children.

10 Günther Stüdemann

Initiator of the pottery museum Thurnau

Günther Stüdemann, who had studied the technique of faience-painting in Italy, moved to Thurnau in 1939. In the factory Renner he learned traditional Thurnau ceramic production and reopened the old pottery Pittrof. In 1954



he relocated to the new factory Milzau. Stüdemann loved the experiment and the individual piece. Through new techniques, he led Thurnau into a new dimension. In his factory he had around thirty apprentices that had to take four exams. In 1971 the factory closed.



11 Pottery Pittrof

During his travels, Conrad Pittrof decides to join pottery Grimm in Thurnau in 1771. He marries the daughter of his master and founds his own factory in Thurnau at Rathausplatz 5. His son Georg Ernst and his grand children Johann Valentin and Fritz Nikolaus also become potters. Fritz Nikolaus takes over the father's factory. When he dies, the factory closes in 1880.

Johann Valentin founds his own factory at Mittlerer Markt 10, which is taken over by his son Fritz (see photo) but has to close 1926. It reopened 13 years later once again, when Guenther Stüdemann moved it.



Pottery Senft-Freitag

In 1881 Karl Senft opens a pottery at Kirchplatz 10. His daughter Johanna takes over in 1907 together with her husband Johann Adam Freitag. During the First World War his only son dies and soon thereafter he himself dies as well. Still today there is a nearly complete pottery oven in the building.



12

Pottery Weihermüller

In 1860 Christian Weihermüller founds a factory at Mitteren Markt 3 (see photo). He did not only create the usual, typical cooking dishes, but also knew how to make oven

tiles and the heating oven itself. He enjoys a very good reputation and as big success. Christian Weihermüller dies 1897 and his workstation is closed.



13

Pottery Spielbühler

In the middle of the 18th century Johann Heinrich Spielbühler moved to Thurnau where he founds his own pottery next to the lake in Thurnau. In 1763 his son Johann Friedrich was born, a new house and most likely the very first »Kassler Oven« was built.

When Johann Heinrich dies, his 21 year old son takes over the business which already then employed 10 workers. The pottery stays in the family for generations until the death of Hans Spielbühler (see photo) in 1977.



14 Pottery Freund

The apprentice Johann Freund entered the business of Spielbühler in 1749. When his master dies, he marries the widow and builds right away his very own pottery and agriculture business next to the original pottery (see photo).

When he dies, his son Johann Paul takes over in 1802 and after that the grandson Friedrich Heinrich. Also he then has a son who was supposed to take over the business, but dies in the First World War. With this death in 1932 the pottery Freund closes.

15 Pottery Renner

It is said that a man called Grassy settled down in Eckersdorf in 1870/71 and opened another pottery with a »Kassler Oven«. In 1876 the place is owned by Adam Münch, whose daughter marries Franz Otto Renner in 1884. Still today the pottery is open and owned by the Renner family.



16 Pottery Schnauder / ems

1965 Eveline-Maria and Heinz Schnauder, who studied with Günther Stüdemann, open their own pottery in Hopfenheide 10. 1971 they expand and rent the closed pottery of Stüdemann. 1977 the factory once again grows in size: they buy the pottery Spielbühler – now »Töpferei am See« (Pottery at the lake). The pottery was very successful. Up to 8 workers (see photo) are employed.