

# come to the clay

A back roads tour of Seagrove

Set within a 15-mile radius that includes Randolph, Moore, and Montgomery counties, America's largest community of working potters heeds a calling to the land. Centered by the stillness of their surroundings and set into motion by the energy of the earth, residents of the Seagrove region — potters, farmers, businessowners, and visionaries — reenact a daily ritual of craftsmanship, entrepreneurship, and enchantment.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: STACEY HAINES AND WHITEBOX WEDDINGS



Inspired by Seagrove's pastoral landscape and the promise of an idyllic lifestyle, Al and Milly McCannless bought 167 acres on which to start a farm in the early 1970s. Their plans to work the earth evolved into working *with* the earth — they opened Dover Pottery in 1983, becoming the 14th pottery shop in the region.

DOVER  
POTTERY  
STRAIGHT  
AHEAD





Dan Triage of DirtWorks Pottery began as a music major, graduating from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. After receiving a degree in pottery from Montgomery Community College, however, his fate was determined. "When I found pottery, I knew I had found my life's work," says Triage. The 42nd shop to open in Seagrove, DirtWorks takes its name from Dan Triage's initials, DRT. "Add an 'I,'" says Triage, "and you have 'dirt.'"

With about 270,000 acres of farmland spread across Randolph, Montgomery, and Moore counties, many areas remain untouched by the growing trend of urban sprawl. In the quiet confines of Seagrove, horses peacefully graze along the roadside, a reminder of the clean, country lifestyle locals love and visitors seek.





A community institution since 1964, when it first opened as an ice cream shop, Seagrove Dairy Breeze, now owned and operated by Jill Ford and her son, Allister, serves breakfast and lunch. Hand-dipped ice cream is still a menu favorite, along with hot dogs and hamburgers — and you can place your order right from the pick-up window outside.



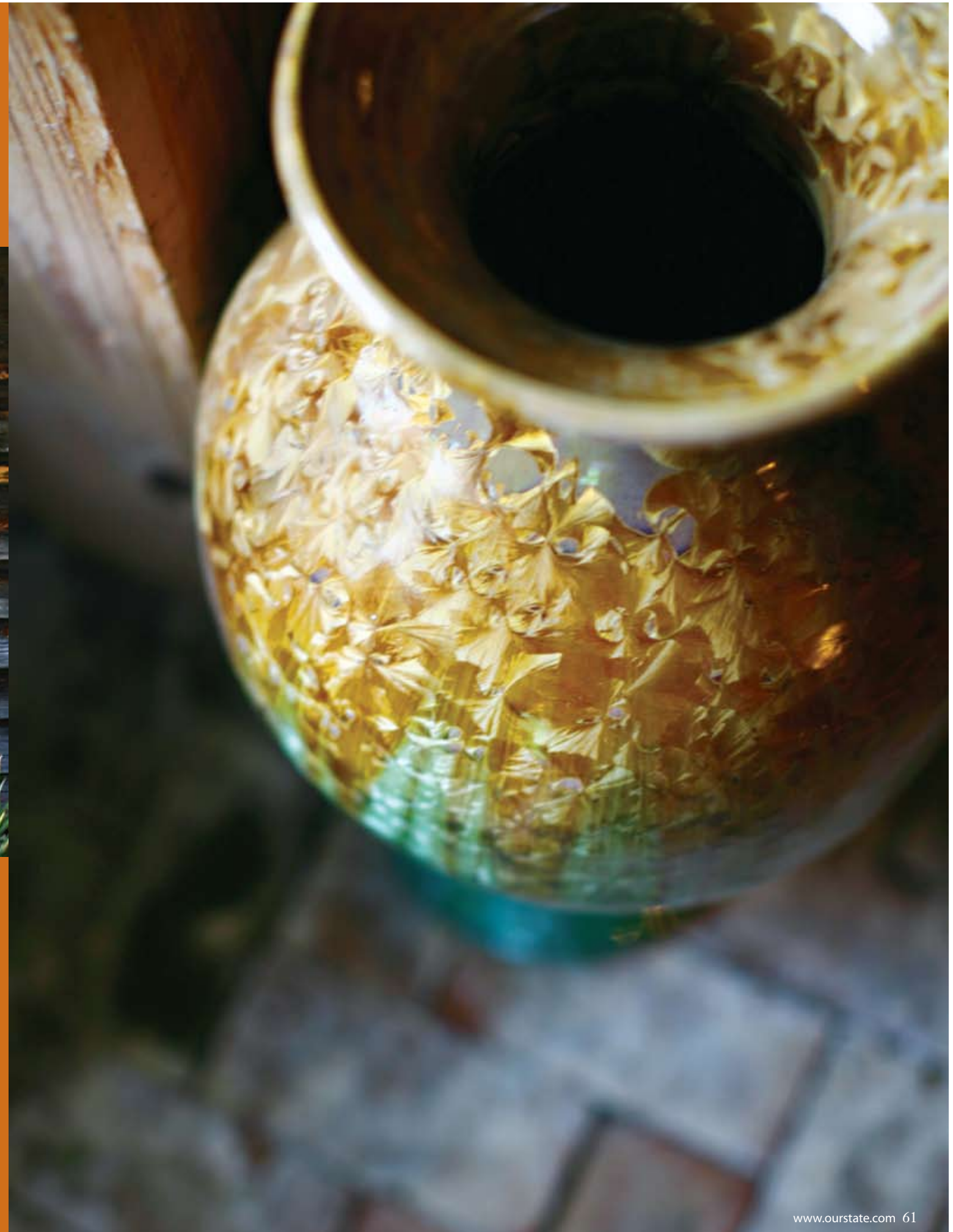


Tom Curtis, owner and proprietor of Seagrove Hardware, incorporated in 1915, took over the nearly-a-century-old business from his father-in-law, A.R. Auman, who inherited the store from his father, Artemas Auman. "Temas," as he was known, sold cross ties from the shop, owing in part to Seagrove's status as being "the cross tie capital of the world," according to Curtis. Temas expanded his inventory to include more general hardware, and, today, a large portion of Curtis's business supplies area potters.



Dover Pottery's Milly McCanless (above) wasn't always a potter. She began with a different hobby: dollhouse construction. To outfit the dining rooms of her dollhouses, she made her own dollhouse china out of pieces of clay.

Intrigued by the craft, she enrolled in the ceramics program at Montgomery Community College and soon moved beyond miniatures to full-size wares. Today, Dover's distinctive crystalline glaze (opposite) reveals an alchemy of artistry.





The rich earth that sustains so many potteries here also supports another industry rooted in the soil: Seagrove Orchids. Cultivating more than 200 different species of orchids, owner Linda Thorne's exotic sanctuary blooms beautiful year-round.



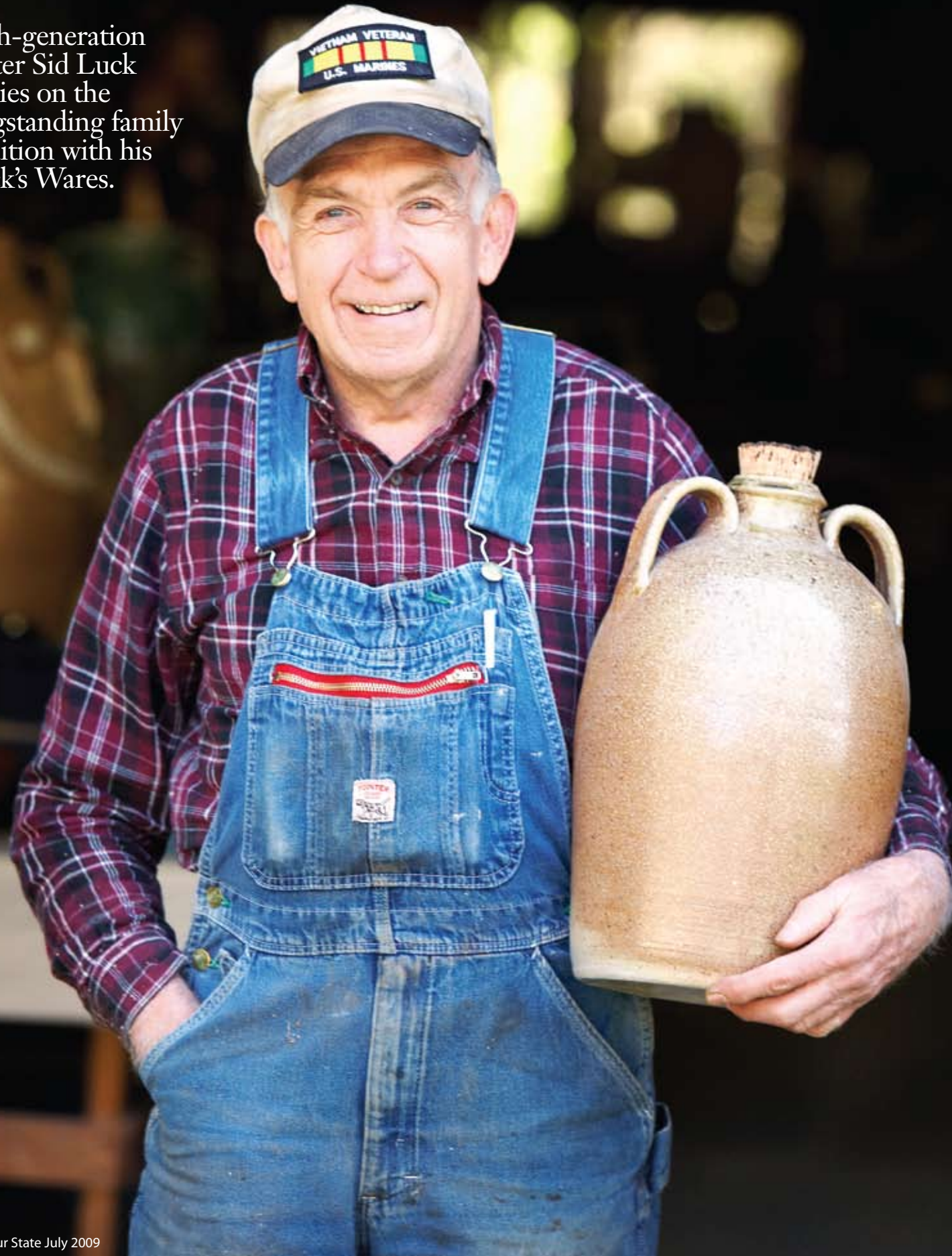


Drive in on N.C. Highway 705 — dubbed Pottery Highway — and you'll spot Will McCanless's vintage 1958 Mercedes parked outside his shop. The car, with its original 85,000 miles, is as indicative of the endurance of tradition as McCanless's own heritage: He's a second-generation potter who's returned to his roots after extensive travels abroad to Italy, Asia, and France. His intricate hand-painted work (opposite) reflects his studies in Italian Maiolica technique.

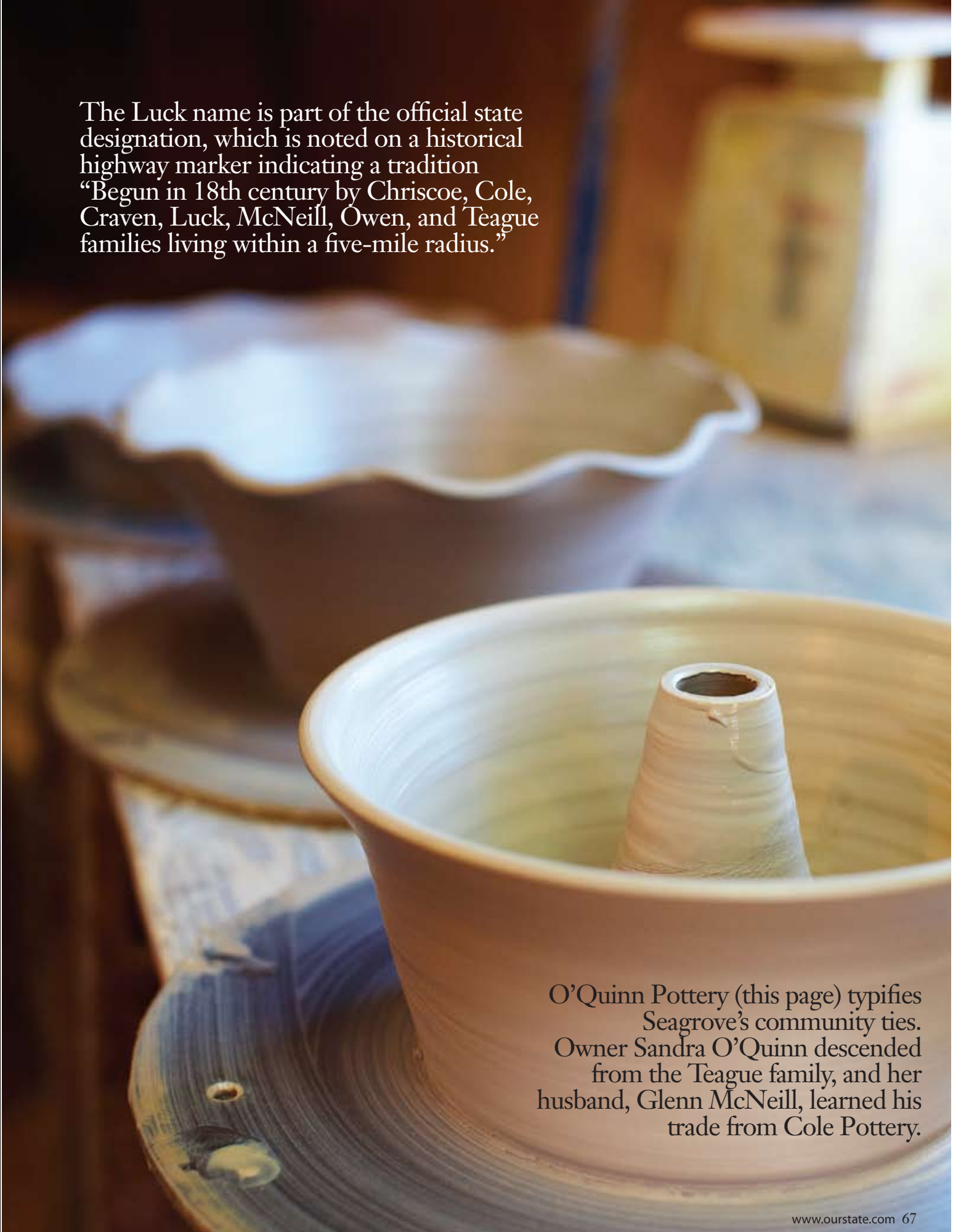


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Fifth-generation potter Sid Luck carries on the longstanding family tradition with his Luck's Wares.



The Luck name is part of the official state designation, which is noted on a historical highway marker indicating a tradition “Begun in 18th century by Chriscoe, Cole, Craven, Luck, McNeill, Owen, and Teague families living within a five-mile radius.”



O'Quinn Pottery (this page) typifies Seagrove's community ties. Owner Sandra O'Quinn descended from the Teague family, and her husband, Glenn McNeill, learned his trade from Cole Pottery.