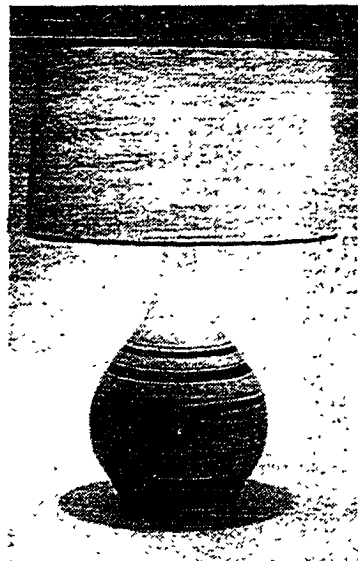


Family Share Business

By Bernice Stevens Decker Written for The Christian Science Monitor

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Marshall Studios
(Left) A stoneware lamp by the Marshall-Martz family team with white matter glaze, horizontal striping, and tan goatspun

shade. (Right) Jane Martz and her young daughter, Ann, look on while Gordon Martz works at potter's wheel in their studio.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Marshall at work together.

Family Share Business

Blend New With Traditional

By Bernice Stevens Decker
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When Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Marshall of Veedersburg, Indiana, took their daughter and her new husband into their lampshade business a few years ago, they expected their production of ceramics to be just a side line.

But, the young couple, Jane and Gordon Martz, began to win one prize after another for their stoneware. Their stoneware table pieces placed several times in the Good Design exhibit of the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. This year several pieces were among the 100 designs selected from the best of the showings for the past five years.

Their tableware, simple and inexpensive, caught on: so the Marshalls had to expand their facilities to keep up with the orders. Custom lamp shades are still a basic part of the business, but the ceramics department has been growing rapidly.

Now the Marshalls are also manufacturing ceramic lamp bases of modern design. In fact, the young people have pretty well changed the complete family operation, and their parents aren't objecting in the least, even though they were once noted for their fine traditional shades.

Traditional Forms

Mr. Marshall studied architecture at the University of Illinois where he had been indoctrinated in traditional art. His mother started the shade business in her home while he was still in school. His wife came into the business and they carried it on together.

But when the young people came along, they were modernists. Both had graduated with honors from Alfred University, the New York State College of Ceramics. There they had learned that there was a good future for any designers who

could turn out inexpensive, well-designed contemporary tableware.

They looked upon their classmates and other young married friends as their best customers. They noted their preferences as to design.

They also knew just how much these young folks had to spend. They decided to concentrate on pieces that would make good, inexpensive gifts for this market.

So, the first objects to come out of the kiln in the corner of the lamp factory were cream and sugar sets, pitchers and tumblers, mugs, salt and pepper shakers. The first items sent to Good Design were accepted, and so were later ones—consistently. They expanded their line with cruets, herb and honey jars, trays, salad bowls, candlesticks, planters, and candy dishes.

Proud Parents

They became so well known that the lampshade customers wanted to know why they couldn't make lamps, too. That meant an addition to the small town factory and more stock. But now the proud parents can also offer custom-designed lamp bases of stoneware.

As a special feature, they point to the artist's signature on each lamp. The lamp bases follow the same simple lines of the table pieces. Some carry special decoration such as banding, ver-

tical or horizontal incising, majolica, and abstract designs.

Since one development always seems to lead to another for the Marshall Studios, the young people have also designed related vases to be sold with the lamps as accessories. The expansion into ceramic bases has proved a boon for the lampshade business, because shades can be integrated with glazes, a feature in much demand by decorators.

More Mud Pies

Gordon does most of the designing and Jane most of the decoration. But, for the past year, Gordon sometimes has had to look after both ends. Their young daughter, Ann, takes much of Jane's attention. However, she still spends plenty of time "making mud pies" as they like to call it.

Most of their pieces are either rolled or cast. This means the original forms are made in plaster or clay and then used as models for plaster molds. Clay is cast or pressed into the plaster molds. Glazes are put on either by brush, by dipping or spraying.

The Martzes give very careful consideration to the choice of a glaze. They believe the surface quality of each piece should fit the feeling of the form. Their matte glaze has been particularly effective, and consistent in their prize-winning



A group of stoneware vases, designed through form, surface treatment, and size to integrate ceramics and flowers into an interesting and attractive unit which will grace the home.

pieces. In their vases they select colors and surface treatments that will harmonize with flowers.

However, like all potters, they want to spend some time at the wheel and do so for special-order pieces, or for special entries for shows and competitions. Gordon is also a sculptor and has already had some pieces accepted in shows around the country.

There is more "family" in the business, too. The Marshalls' son, John, is in the accounting de-

partment. Mr. Marshall's brother and sister-in-law are in charge of the office and Mrs. Marshall's brother is in charge of production.

Farming, Too

Both the Marshalls and the Martzes believe their progress proves that business can be just as successful in a small town as in a big city. When rural electrification came to the area some years ago, the Marshalls returned to the farm Mr. Marshall had

inherited from his grandfather.

In the same family since the original land grant, it is now a thriving beef farm. Raising fine beef cattle doesn't exactly go hand in hand with a business in delicate custom lamp shades, the Marshalls admit, but they like the life.

Veedersburg is just a short drive from Turkey Run State Park, so they have lots of visitors to their studios. They all say they are so busy that they never have time to miss the city anyway.