

Andrea Fisher

Fine Pottery

Ambrose Atencio

Santo Domingo



Ambrose Atencio was born to Joseph Ray Atencio and Juanita Atencio of Santo Domingo Pueblo on June 11, 1963. He tells us he learned the traditional method of making pottery from his cousin, Robert Tenorio (and his family), starting around the time Ambrose was 13 years old. The 30+ years since then Ambrose has spent perfecting his technique. His progression is reflected in the perfect shape of his pots and in his exquisite execution of the traditional Santo Domingo designs that he chooses to use.

He collects the basic materials to make his pottery on the grounds of Santo Domingo Pueblo. When his pieces are finished and ready, Ambrose ground fires his work using cottonwood bark, like his grandmother, Crucita Tortalita (Robert Tenorio's maternal aunt), used to do. Lately he's been teaching his son Elroy to work with clay in the traditional way.

Ambrose has won multiple awards at venues such as the Indian Arts Northwest Market in Portland, Oregon, the Fountain Hills Indian Market in Fountain Hills, Arizona, the Eight Northern Pueblos Arts & Crafts Show in Espanola, New Mexico, the Dallas Indian Arts and Crafts Fair in Dallas, Texas, the SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market (where he's taken home ribbons for Best of Class, Best of Category and others), and the Heard Museum Guild Indian Art Fair in Phoenix (where he's earned 1st and 2nd Place ribbons).

Ambrose tells us his favorite shapes to make are storage jars and large dough bowls. He also really enjoys decorating them with traditional Santo Domingo birds, plants, animals and geometric designs. Like many Native American traditional potters, he says his inspiration comes from above, through the clay.

When he's not busy making new pots Ambrose says he enjoys hiking. On special occasions he enjoys music concerts, his last one being a Fleetwood Mac concert on his birthday.

He signs his work: "Ambrose Atencio KEWA" and adds the date the pot was created.

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