

# Andrea Fisher

---

Fine Pottery

**Barbara and  
Joseph Cerno**

Acoma



---

Barbara Hayah Cerno (born in 1951) and Merle Joseph Martin Cerno (born in 1947) are a husband and wife team making traditional Acoma pottery. Joseph learned the basics from his mother, Santana Cimmeron Cerno. She won many prizes for her work in the early days of the Santa Fe Indian Market. Joseph says he spent years working with his mother, learning to work with the clay, make the natural slips, pigments and paints they use and fire pots as large as he makes now. Barbara is descended from a long line of Hopi potters and kachina carvers. After marrying Joseph she, too, learned from his mother.

While Joseph usually makes the pots, Barbara usually decorates them. Together they make some of the largest and most colorful contemporary Acoma pots being made today. They have also made some of the smallest Acoma pots, usually in the form of seed pots. On large water jars, they often decorate with a parrot theme and on seed pots ancient Mimbres designs are a common theme. Now and then they decorate some of their larger jars with Mimbres themes, too.

Barbara and Joseph have taken home many prizes over the years as they have participated in shows at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, the Inter-Tribal Ceremonial in Gallup and the SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market. Their finely shaped and beautifully painted jars are among their most popular work.

Their pottery is formed by hand using the coil method with hand-dug Acoma clays. Decorations are painted with colors derived from ground minerals and boiled-down plants, the latter usually boiled-down purple blossoms from bee weed. From the time they dig the clay to the final clean up after firing a jar can be months: the traditional method of making pottery is not a quick process.

---

100 West San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501 (505) 986-1234  
[www.andreafisherpottery.com](http://www.andreafisherpottery.com)