

the women entrepreneurs issue

# COUNTRY LIVING

DECORATING | ANTIQUES | COOKING | CRAFTING | GARDENS

## Stylish Solutions

**54** pages of ideas for creating a home that fits your life, your budget & your personality

BONUS SECTION  
Turn Your  
PASSIONS  
Into Profits  
SEE BACK COVER

Make Your Own  
**CRAFT ROOM**

see page 49

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# contents

country living | march 2007 | vol. 30 no. 3

## FEATURES

### \* 84 Creative Instincts

Virtually everything in the century-old Illinois farmhouse Pat King shares with her husband shows her expert hand—at sewing, painting, restoring, and reinventing.

### 92 A Potter's Passion

For nearly 25 years now, potter Joan Platt has been fashioning in her studio in Palisades, N.Y., elegant ceramic tableware that honors her reverence for simple forms.

### 98 Spring Fling

Every spring, Jen O'Connor, founder of Earth Angels Toys, invites the folk artists whose work she sells to an afternoon of celebration at her house in upstate New York.

### \* 104 Capturing Memories

Recognizing the bounty in her life—home, family, work, a glorious Santa Fe locale—Laurie Lenfestey founded a business dedicated to preserving memories.

### 112 A Taste of Chardonnay

Sandy Reed and Chris Hallman lassoed their dream job: to raise, train, and board horses, as well as operate a bed-and-breakfast in Texas. They're both securely in the saddle.

\* Refers to this month's cover stories. ON THE COVER: What began as a modest Illinois farmhouse was transformed with a gold stain on the walls, crown moldings, and hand-sewn slipcovers, pillows, and ottoman. For story, see page 84. Photograph by Tria Giovan.

# A POTTER'S

Thirty years ago, a skiing accident forced Joan Platt to seek ways to exercise a broken shoulder.

# PASSION

Little did she know that this misfortune would result in an artistic career.

Two fish platters, one glazed in lustrous black and one in pearly sand, convey an air of serenity. Each piece deliberately retains evidence of Joan's hands. During firing, the clay changes color, showing through the glaze on these delicate shell dishes. PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSIE CUSHNER  
PRODUCED BY CHRISTINA LANE  
WRITTEN BY BETHANY LYTTLE

*"I never intended to become*

a potter," reflects Joan Platt, a former teacher, who, at age 71, produces exquisite, world-class ceramic tableware at her studio in Palisades, N.Y. "But about 30 years ago, I broke my shoulder and as a way of encouraging me to use rotary motion, a physician suggested I wash dishes as a form of physical therapy. At the time, my husband and I were raising three small children in New York City, and, frankly, I felt like all I did was wash dishes," she says. So, Joan registered for a ceramics class instead. "I took to the process almost immediately," she recalls. In support of Joan's newfound passion, friend and artist Grace Knowlton offered her the use of a studio. "At first, I just played at making objects, but eventually, I developed my own designs." Today, nearly 25 years later, Joan works five days a week at this very studio. And although she introduces a new piece from time to time, the much-sought-after tableware retains many of its original features. Distinguished by a reverence for simple forms and glazed in hues that enhance, rather than compete with, food, Joan Platt's pottery is as unexpected and beautiful as the path that led to its creation.

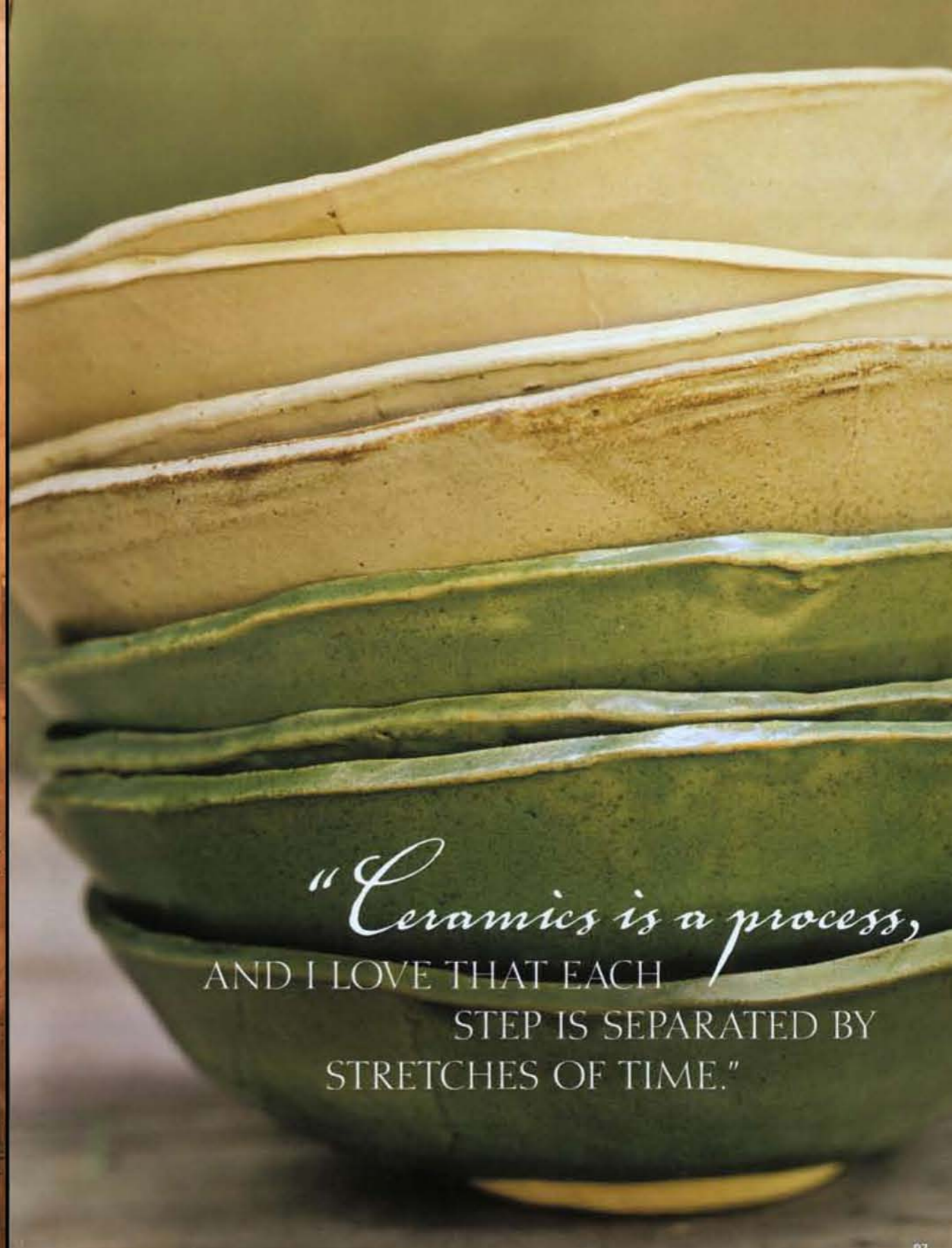


Since 1983, Joan has worked in this studio, previously a farm's machine-repair shop. OPPOSITE: Floor-to-ceiling windows welcome light and wooded views. Some pieces, such as mugs, are thrown on the wheel, but bowls and plates are pressed onto molds, or in the case of the tiny dishes, onto shells. FOR RESOURCES, SEE ADDRESS INDEX.





Wooden rolling pins are used to thin the stoneware clay before draping it over a mold. This makes it possible for Joan to create finer, lighter wares. Tools such as a wooden crimper, diamond-head roller, and seedpod press are sometimes used for hand-built pieces.



*"Ceramics is a process,*  
AND I LOVE THAT EACH  
STEP IS SEPARATED BY  
STRETCHES OF TIME."