



Winton and Rosa Eugene
Interviewed by Saddler Taylor

1. **Experimenting with glazes (01:40)**

S. Taylor: Well explain to me, we were talking earlier about the, to me it sounded like, really complicated glazes that you use.

R. Eugene: Well, see, they're not complicated. See, I might use the same glaze on three different clay bodies and with a... with the white stoneware I use mostly celadon glazes. Which is really not complicated because I can't use celadon on the, on the stoneware, it's just not going to work. Celadon doesn't work on stoneware.

W. Eugene: It's a transparent, a translucent...

R. Eugene: Because you can, you can see through it. So I use that on, on the white stoneware, so it's not really complicated. You just have to know what glaze is going to fit on what clay body.

S. Taylor: Are these glazes that you mix yourself?

R. Eugene: Yeah.

S. Taylor: Or can you buy glazes pre-mixed? What... I mean what's your preference?

R. Eugene: You can buy them pre-mixed, no, but they're expensive.

S. Taylor: Are they?

R. Eugene: Oooh, who's going to pay like ten or fifteen dollars a jar for...

W. Eugene: A quart.

R. Eugene: For a quart. And you can only do, what, maybe three pieces?

W. Eugene: Maybe three pieces...

S. Taylor: Wow.

W. Eugene: When we first started maybe three pieces and the pieces were like this...but now you could probably only do one piece.

R. Eugene: Yeah, yeah.

S. Taylor: So explain that mixing process.

R. Eugene: Oh, oh, for me to mix?

S. Taylor: Yeah, say you use a celadon glaze and then you said you do use some alkaline glazes.

R. Eugene: I use celadon, I use alkaline, I use transparent, I use opaque... I use about fifty different glazes.

2. Applying glazes (02:06)

R. Eugene: But then we run into the other problem with dipping, see, I don't dip.

S. Taylor: How do you apply it?

R. Eugene: It's brushed.

S. Taylor: Brushed.

R. Eugene: See, most parts have these large vats, so I have to tell them, what you do when you get your one hundred grams, if it's a hundred and two point six grams of whatever you've got, you have to multiply that times um... how much ever you want to make a gallon or two gallons.

W. Eugene: Five, it's five.

R. Eugene: Huh, five gallons?

W. Eugene: That, that thing is five gallons.

R. Eugene: It's five gallons they dip into it and then that's how much chemicals you need. But seriously if they, if they read more and read these books... these books will tell them everything they need to know. That's all they have to do is just read and practice. I tell people just practice you know, practice doing it everyday, but if you don't like to cook or you don't like to wash dishes, and you don't like to clean up, then you don't need to be a potter. Because it's basically, these pots have to be washed, one he finishes firing it, bisque firing all those pots back there, they have to be re-sanded with the sandpaper to get all the rough edges off and then we wash them, like not with soap and water but you know, wash all the dust off.

S. Taylor: Right.

R. Eugene: And then they dry and then I pour the insides, then the outside is brushed.

W. Eugene: And then she washes it again.

R. Eugene: And then I wash it again because this clear glaze has to go over the top.

S. Taylor: So you pour it in the inside and you just move the piece around so it coats the inside?

R. Eugene: Exactly.

S. Taylor: And then you brush the outside?

R. Eugene: Yeah.

W. Eugene: That's why the color is always consistent and true, because it's, it doesn't fall out of the solution when it's in a five gallon vat...

R. Eugene: It's going to fall out.

W. Eugene: All the heavy metal goes to the bottom, so if you don't have something that'll keep...

R. Eugene: Constant agitation.

S. Taylor: So yours is mixed in small quantities?

R. Eugene: Yeah, like that jar.

W. Eugene: That jar.

S. Taylor: Oh, those jars right there?

R. Eugene: Exactly.

S. Taylor: So you're going to brush directly out of that...

R. Eugene: Two inch brush.

S. Taylor: Out of that Mason jar?

R. Eugene: Yeah, that's how that works.

3. Process of coiling pots instead of turning (02:58)

S. Taylor: So Rosa, you started coiling pots to save his sanity, is that what you're saying?

R. Eugene: Well no, because I know he couldn't work that hard.

S. Taylor: Right.

R. Eugene: And anybody who, who, who's around my husband knows that he works extremely hard and you kind of have to feel sorry for him...

W. Eugene: You don't!

R. Eugene: Well, you don't have to. I'm the only person that do it, because nobody else in the family feels sorry for him and they do nothing. So I decided that I was going to learn to do something, so coiling... I tried to coil and I kind of liked it. It was soothing and it was comforting, so I decided that I was going to coil but my little pots they were just, they were just all whacked out. So Winton said, "If you're serious about coiling, then I'll go to the library and get you some books." So he went to the library and got some books and I read this on book by, I think it was by this Balando lady... I can't even think of her, I want to say Brenda Balando, I may be pronouncing it wrong, but she was a coiler. And all of my coils were smooth on the inside and I had the coils, you could see the actual coils on the outside. But she said that that was a sign of immaturity, the, you know, coil should be like, the pot should be solid. So once I read you know, about what she said about coiling and how it was supposed to be done and I read...you brought me like three or four books from the library and I sat down and I read all of them. Once I read all of them, then I decide that I was going to coil. I didn't have that extruder, my first... what, three years?

W. Eugene: Yeah, you hand-rolled everything.

R. Eugene: I hand... they were all hand-rolled. I rolled them all up, they were bigger, and the shapes were... wow. Absolutely wow. So, so what happened was, I said I was going to buy me an extruder as soon as I you know, sell a pot, you know... worth a lot of money. So I had five hundred dollars on one pot, so funny, and Winton said, "I don't know why you're putting five hundred on that pot, when it's two hundred dollars, that's just too much to be putting on your pot. Nobody's going to spend that kind of money." No sooner than when he says that, a lady came and bought a pot for five hundred dollars. And then I said, "Oooh, now I can go get me an extruder."

W. Eugene: Yeah, learn to keep my mouth shut.

R. Eugene: (Laughs). So then I went out and I bought the extruder, then that means I could make bigger pots.

W. Eugene: Three pots, then in the same, almost the same length of time to make two... because she had to roll everything out.

R. Eugene: Yeah, it was time consuming then, and it was bad, hard on my back and so then I did pots with it and they just kept getting bigger, bigger, and bigger.

4. Is it possible to achieve balance? (02:30)

R. Eugene: My husband doesn't think that I have balance, which I don't. I don't think balance exists, that's my philosophy. In order to have balance, you have to have total, something that's totally equal on both sides. And I do this serious coil to exercise the balance.

W. Eugene: Just say you don't have balance and it's very hard for you to maintain it.

R. Eugene: To achieve balance, balance does not exist. That's how great art is. He said you can make a pot that's... but even his pots are not balanced. If you look at pottery, you're going to get one spot that's out a little bit more than the other one, especially if they're hand made. Nothing is equal on both sides, then if you look at balance and you realize that balance does not exist, then you have to question equality. What is equal? And if balance doesn't exist and you can't achieve balance then equality does not exist.

W. Eugene: Balance does exist but what happens is, she creates stuff and all I'm trying to do is to get it to stand up. And it stands up without falling over. It doesn't have to be a gymnast or whatever, in balance; it just has to be a nice pot. If you're going to put something over here, put something over here... if your going to put something over here, put something over here. So you can, so the wind won't blow it over or if the cat brushes it, it won't fall over and break.

R. Eugene: So that's the reason I do certain series, but I have this one series that I do and it's called Exercising Balance, and that's where it comes from because we have this argument about balance. Because my pots are never going to be even, they're not ever going to be balanced, so I don't even worry about that.

W. Eugene: But here you explain that you'll go next door and show him some of the ones that she really goes...

R. Eugene: Oh hey just go crazy, you know.

W. Eugene: They go ok.

R. Eugene: Yeah, they don't have balance. See these bowls, I try real hard but they don't have balance.

W. Eugene: They do.

R. Eugene: They're better?

W. Eugene: You do pretty good.

R. Eugene: Well, he kind of likes these bowls you know, because he wants everything... me, I don't care about that. And usually people that buy my pots, they don't care about it either. They buy the pots and Winton is happy with the fact that I'm selling the pots and they sell for more than his pots.

W. Eugene: (Laughs).