

Asparagus
Valley
Pottery
Trail tour
returns this
weekend

POTTERY PASSPORT



Tiffany Hilton, who works out of her Florence studio at 221 Pine St., will be one of the host studios participating in this year's Asparagus Valley Pottery Trail. Above is work by Hilton.
(SUBMITTED PHOTOS)

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While you can go to a local home goods store and find a new coffee mug or vase, the potters along the route of this year's Asparagus Valley Pottery Trail are encouraging you to think deeper about where the pieces in your home come from.

"There can be great designs that comes through at Target but getting to talk to the maker and see their inspiration and see their studio, it's a totally different experience," said Tiffany Hilton, the organizer of the 21st annual spring tour and one of the potters along the route.

"When you use that mug, you're going to remember that little conversation you had with the artist. You're going to remember that experience, and that's going to be part of your interaction of having that favorite mug rotate through your dish rack. You're going to remember your connection to that human being," she added.



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Hilton, who works out of her studio in the Arts & Industry Building in the Florence section of Northampton, is one of eight host studio locations along the tour. She will open her doors to visitors for the two-day event on April 26 and 27.

"There's eight studios that are hosted in the space where this work is being made," Hilton said. "You get to see their bulletin boards. You get to see what's tacked up on their walls that inspires them. You get to see the little vignettes of rocks and debris on their window that inspire their artwork. And you get to see the view out of their window of their farm and their fields and see what inspires that maker."

And Hilton, who specializes in dinnerware like plates and mugs and teakettles, is inspired by nature.

"I work in batches of cycles of making and throwing and trimming and firing and stacking up this square so that I have all these blank canvases to decorate with glazes," she said. "I use a lot of wax resist first — simple but bold brushwork that people will often say, 'Is this the eclipse?' or 'Is this the moon?' It'll be inspired by nature and

it will be an image that they relate to, but it's simple line work and imagery."

There are eight host studios on this year's Pottery Trail, and among them, 28 total artists who will be sharing and selling their work. "The eight hosts are the same, but each of us invite one, two or three guest artists at our studios. There are 20 guest artists this year from as far away as Minnesota and Tennessee," Hilton said.

Hilton herself will be hosting two guest artists this year — Alison Palmer, of South Kent, Connecticut, and Diane Sullivan, of North Adams.

"When I'm picking guests, I like it to be work that's very different than my own, but I like the guest artists to relate in some way to each other," she explained. "So, both Alison and Diane have a more sculptural element to their work. There's a lot of students and collectors who come on the tour, (and) it's nice to just see sculptural work."

Palmer's online portfolio touts several different ceramic jars topped with animals, like a lion and a turtle, and on Sullivan's portfolio, sculptural busts depict incredible detail, both distinctly different from Hilton's own simplistic nature-inspired dinnerware.

"What we hear from our guests is that they love



Above, from left, is work by James Guggina (908 Ryan Road, Florence); Donna McGee (47 East St., Hadley); and Molly Cantor (The Handle Factory at 49 Conway St., Shelburne Falls). Below right is work by Tiffany Hilton (Arts & Industry Building, Studio #336, Florence). Their studios will be open to guests during this weekend's free Asparagus Valley Pottery Trail.

coming every year, that it's fun to see the same peoples' work over time, but it's also exciting to have the guest artists change every year," Hilton said.

Potters on this year's tour and their guests include:

■ Donna McGee, 47 East St. in Hadley, with guests Sam Taylor (Westhampton), Tom White (Northfield) and Mucuy Bolles (Brattleboro, Vermont);

■ Tiffany Hilton, Arts & Industry Building Studio #336 in Florence, with guests Alison Palmer (South Kent,

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Jovi

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Zeppelin long before Bon Jovi. I didn't know all of the band's material except for the monster hits on radio. When Don Jovi was formed, I had to learn their much bigger catalog of music and it revealed to me just how many great songs they did. I wasn't familiar with them before that until studying the catalog. It gave me a new perspective and opened my eyes to how really great a

songwriter he was," Chaffin said.

Chaffin, in addition to his lead vocals for Don Jovi and Voices of Extreme, has also stepped up to the mic as lead vocalist for Red Lamb, Ram Jam, Riot Act, Road Crew and American Mafia.

In addition to Chaffin, Don Jovi includes Sean Tarr on lead guitar; Chris Tristram on bass; Nick Troiani on keyboards; and Matt Ricci on drums.

Tickets, priced at \$19-\$45, are available online at 52sumner.com.

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Connecticut) and Diane Sullivan (North Adams);

■ James Guggina, 908 Ryan Road in Florence, with guests Gabrielle Schaffner (Boston), Kristen Kieffer (Otter River), Ellen Grenadier (Monterey) and Emmanuel Okechukwu (Rochester, New York);

■ Steve Théberge, 319 Rocky Hill Road (Rt. 66) in Florence, with guests Jeremiah Ibarra (Philadelphia) and Ruth Easterbrook (Philadelphia);

■ Lucy Fagella, 86 Leyden Road in Greenfield, with guests Ben Carter (Howell, New Jersey) and Ben Krupka (Monterey);

■ Molly Cantor, The Handle Factory at 49 Conway St. in Shelburne Falls, with guests Olivia Avery (Memphis), Ben Eberle (Conway) and Laurel MacDuffie (Parsonsfield, Maine);

■ Mary Barringer, 5 Cross St. in Shelburne Falls, with guests David Swenson (Clearwater, Maine), Clarice Allgood (Minneapolis) and Kourtenay Plummer (Richmond, Virginia);

■ Stephen Earp, 15 Masonic Ave. in Shelburne Falls, with guest Haakon Lenzi (New York City).

There is no admission charge — you can stop by one or two of the studios or all eight.

The Pottery Trail passport

The two-day Asparagus Valley Pottery Trail is self-guid-

ed, and while a printable map is available online at asparagusvalleypotterytrail.com/map/, there is no order in which you're required to visit the studios.

No matter which studio you stop by first on the weekend tour, you're encouraged to pick up a Pottery Trail passport, which will be available at all eight locations. The goal, Hilton said, is to encourage people to visit all eight studios on tour. For each studio someone visits, they will receive a stamp on their passport.

"We have a different stamp at every studio, and if they go to all eight, they can submit their passport and they fill out the back," Hilton said. "That's where we collect their contact info and ask them how they heard about the tour — and then we raffle off a cup from every one of the participating artists."

Since there are 28 artists on this year's tour, that means there are 28 opportunities to win a prize.

"It's a good incentive for people," Hilton said, adding that the passport can also be printed online from the Asparagus Valley Pottery Trail's website.

While in between visiting studios, Hilton added that people are encouraged to "make a weekend out of it" and visit one of the tour's local sponsors — like the Florence Pie Bar at 17 A Main St. in Northampton, Mo's Fudge Factor at 9 State St. in Shelburne Falls, or The People's Pint at 24 Federal St. in Greenfield.



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