

roseville pottery identification guide

Roseville Pottery Identification Guide

Roseville Pottery is a celebrated American pottery brand known for its vibrant colors, unique glazes, and intricate designs. Established in 1890 in Roseville, Ohio, the company initially produced utilitarian ware before transitioning to decorative pottery in the early 20th century. Today, Roseville pieces are highly collectible, with certain items fetching impressive prices at auctions and antique shops. This identification guide will help collectors and enthusiasts recognize and authenticate Roseville Pottery pieces, understand their history, and appreciate their artistic value.

History of Roseville Pottery

Roseville Pottery was founded by Joseph Rose and his brother-in-law, William L. H. Smith. The company began producing simple brown and gray wares but quickly evolved into a manufacturer of decorative art pottery. The late 1890s and early 1900s marked a pivotal era for the company as it embraced the Arts and Crafts movement, leading to the introduction of various art pottery lines. Some of the most notable lines include:

- Rozane: Introduced in 1901, Rozane featured artistic designs and was often decorated with floral patterns.
- Futura: This line, launched in the 1920s, showcased geometric shapes and modernist designs, reflecting the Art Deco style.
- Florentine: A popular series known for its intricate floral motifs and vibrant colors.

Over the decades, Roseville Pottery produced a wide array of items, including vases, bowls, and planters, until it ceased operations in the mid-1950s.

Key Features of Roseville Pottery

To identify Roseville Pottery, collectors should be familiar with several key characteristics that distinguish it from other pottery brands.

1. Markings and Signatures

One of the most reliable ways to identify Roseville Pottery is through its markings. Most pieces are stamped with the word "Roseville" along with a model number. The markings can vary based on the period and line, but common

elements include:

- "Roseville": Most pieces will have this name impressed or marked in some way.
- Model Numbers: Often found beneath the glaze, model numbers are typically two to four digits long and may include letters.
- Date Codes: Some pieces may include a date code or year, providing a reference for the production date.

2. Colors and Glazes

Roseville Pottery is renowned for its wide range of colors and unique glazes. Some common glaze types include:

- Matte Glazes: These are soft and non-reflective, often used in earlier pieces.
- Semi-Matte Glazes: Combining the qualities of matte and glossy finishes, these glazes were prevalent in the 1920s.
- Glossy Glazes: Bright and shiny, glossy glazes became popular in later pieces.

The colors of Roseville Pottery can also provide clues to its age and style. Some notable color palettes include:

- Blue and Green: Common in the Rozane and Futura lines.
- Brown and Tan: Frequently seen in earlier utilitarian pieces.
- Pastels: Soft pinks, yellows, and greens emerged in the 1920s.

3. Design and Patterns

Roseville Pottery is characterized by its artistic designs, often inspired by nature. Common motifs include:

- Floral Patterns: Roses, daisies, and other flowers are frequently depicted.
- Geometric Shapes: Especially in the Futura line, geometric designs reflect the Art Deco movement.
- Naturalistic Elements: Leaves, ferns, and wildlife motifs are also common.

Designs vary significantly across different lines, and collectors should familiarize themselves with specific patterns associated with each series to aid in identification.

Popular Roseville Pottery Lines

Roseville Pottery produced numerous lines, each with unique characteristics.

Here are some of the most sought-after collections:

1. Rozane

Rozane is one of the earliest lines and is highly collectible. It features soft, muted colors and intricate floral designs. Pieces often have a matte finish and are known for their craftsmanship.

2. Futura

Futura is recognized for its modernist appeal and geometric patterns. The vibrant colors and glossy finishes make it a favorite among collectors, reflecting the changing tastes of the 1920s.

3. Florentine

Florentine pieces are characterized by their rich colors and elaborate floral motifs. The use of a semi-matte glaze gives these items a unique texture and aesthetic appeal.

4. Daisy

The Daisy line features charming floral patterns, primarily in pastel colors. This line is particularly popular for its accessibility and the variety of shapes offered, including vases and bowls.

5. Sunflower

Sunflower pieces are recognized for their distinctive sunflower motifs and are often found in warm tones. This line reflects the early 20th century's fascination with nature.

How to Authenticate Roseville Pottery

Authenticating Roseville Pottery can be a challenging task, but there are several methods collectors can use to ensure they are purchasing genuine pieces:

1. Research and Reference Materials

Consulting reference books and online resources can provide valuable insights into specific lines, patterns, and markings. Notable books include:

- "Roseville Pottery: The Collector's Guide" by Paul and C. C. Smith
- "The Roseville Pottery Book" by Robert and Robert C. Smith

2. Online Communities and Forums

Joining online forums and social media groups dedicated to pottery collecting can offer support and advice. Engaging with experienced collectors can help you learn about the nuances of Roseville Pottery.

3. Expert Appraisals

If you're uncertain about a piece's authenticity, seek an appraisal from a professional. Many antique shops and auction houses have experts who specialize in pottery and can provide valuable insights.

Caring for Roseville Pottery

To preserve the beauty of Roseville Pottery, it is essential to care for it properly:

- Cleaning: Use a soft, damp cloth to clean the surface. Avoid abrasive materials that can scratch the glaze.
- Storage: Store pieces in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight to prevent fading and damage.
- Display: If displaying pieces, consider using a cabinet or shelf that minimizes dust accumulation.

Conclusion

Roseville Pottery remains a cherished part of American decorative arts history. Understanding how to identify, authenticate, and care for these beautiful pieces can enhance any collection. By familiarizing oneself with the distinct features, popular lines, and historical context of Roseville Pottery, collectors can appreciate the artistry and craftsmanship that continues to captivate enthusiasts worldwide. Whether you are a seasoned collector or just starting, this guide serves as a valuable resource for navigating the world of Roseville Pottery.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key characteristics to identify Roseville pottery?

Key characteristics of Roseville pottery include distinctive glazes, decorative patterns, and the presence of a raised 'Roseville' mark on the bottom of the pieces. Common patterns include 'Futura', 'Zephyr Lily', and 'Apple Blossom' which often feature floral or geometric designs.

How can I determine the age of my Roseville pottery?

To determine the age of Roseville pottery, check the backstamp or mark on the bottom of the piece. Different marks were used during various periods, with earlier pieces having a simpler mark and later pieces featuring more intricate designs. Researching specific patterns can also help establish a timeframe.

Are there any resources available for learning more about Roseville pottery?

Yes, there are several resources available for learning about Roseville pottery, including books such as 'Roseville Pottery: The Definitive Guide' by Kevin McConnell, online forums dedicated to pottery collectors, and websites that specialize in antique and vintage pottery identification.

What are some common mistakes to avoid when identifying Roseville pottery?

Common mistakes include misidentifying non-Roseville pottery as Roseville, overlooking condition issues that affect value, and not verifying the authenticity of a piece. It's also important to be cautious about reproductions, which can sometimes closely mimic original designs.

Where can I find valuation information for Roseville pottery?

Valuation information for Roseville pottery can be found through auction house catalogs, online marketplaces like eBay, and collector websites. Additionally, consulting with antique appraisers who specialize in pottery can provide accurate assessments of value based on current market trends.

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