

check it out

# KAPUT KAPOT

## Dress bare pottery with your colors

Candle holders and piggy banks. Lamp bases and dog bowls. Soup tureens and funky teapots. You choose the pottery, the colors, the design. Then hop on the bar stool, take a brush and let your artistic patterns soak into the piece. Kaput Kapot, Chicago's first "paint-it-yourself ceramics store," provides the setting, materials and helping staff to bring the colors of your choice to the pale cheeks of pots, plates and other useful ceramic items.

For more than three years, the bright, one-room store on 717 W. Armitage has gathered mothers and children, birthday parties, dating couples and other pottery painting fans to produce the most individual, one-of-a-kind ceramics works. Kids paint the tiles for their bathrooms, girlfriends the bride's whole dinner set, and corporate parties their bosses' next Christmas gifts. "Anybody can do it," says Tory Beneke, the enthusiastic owner of the store. "Anyone from CEOs to infants."

The easy process begins with your tough selection of pottery. Shelves that reach to the ceiling display more than 100 different ceramic pieces. Beneke often changes the inventory, "so it always looks different" and never gets boring. The prices vary from \$5 for tiles or a baby shoe to \$55 for large serving platters. The one-hour price of \$6 includes an unlimited amount of four paint colors, any additional colors can be bought for \$1 each. The staff will help you make the

selections, and then set up pieces, paints, and your work place. Ask your questions about paint layers, application, drying etc.—all advice is included.

After an optional look through idea books, apply your colors and designs using brushes, sponges,

of glaze, fired, and ready for pick-up in three to four days. The staff will clean up your work station, including all the dirty brushes, soaked sponges and left-overs. The pastel-looking paints decorating a fresh piece come alive during the firing process. When you pick up

under her management, not just through the flowers on each table. She has introduced special events such as Flat Rate Wednesday (unlimited hours for \$15) or Must See TV Thursday Nights, and frequently suggests new gift ideas like "Paint a big bowl, add all the ingredients for popcorn, throw in a video." Kaput Kapot also offers a variety of classes. Learn how to paint glass or to make a mosaic table with broken pottery pieces.

So plan that special date with your sweetheart, spouse or friend, take along a bottle of wine and have a quality time at Kaput Kapot.

For store hours, class schedules, to book a party or other inquiries call 312-867-1792.

story and photos  
by Elke Oberg



your hands and/or stencils. If your raging creativity needs to calm down or while waiting for artistic inspiration, you can watch your favorite soap opera, have the food and wine you brought, or listen to an easy tune on your walkman. Again, ask the staff about interesting styles and special painting techniques. Your masterpiece needs sufficient attention and time. Plan your design, then draw it with pencil on the pottery. Each layer needs to dry completely before applying more paint. Overall, enjoy and relax.

All done? It gets easier from here. The completed piece stays at the store; it will be finished with a layer

your polished creation, the real look and colors will come as a pleasant surprise, and they will certainly make you feel proud.

Since July 1998, Tory Beneke is the proud owner of Kaput Kapot. She bought the business from the couple that had opened the store three years ago. As a frequent store client before taking over, "I knew they had a good idea," she says. The clean, often bustling store is now blooming

