



JENNY MURRAY & DAVID WHITE | Next Door But One | Llandyrnog





ORIGINALLY FROM London, Jenny and her husband moved to North Wales 22 years ago and wholeheartedly embraced the lifestyle and culture. Although not Welsh, she feels in that time she has become “Welsh by osmosis”.

Jenny’s family home nestles amongst the trees at the foot of the Clwydian Range, with stunning views of Moel Famau and Moel Arthur in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Her light-filled studio sits at the heart of the house, every surface laden with work at different stages of completion. Finished ceramics spill out into the hallway and kitchen, on shelves and tables waiting to be packaged and sent out to the many galleries that stock her beautiful work. Stacked into huge antique wooden bookcases and cupboards are pieces that Jenny has kept or collected from other ceramicists she admires, such as Lisa Hammond.

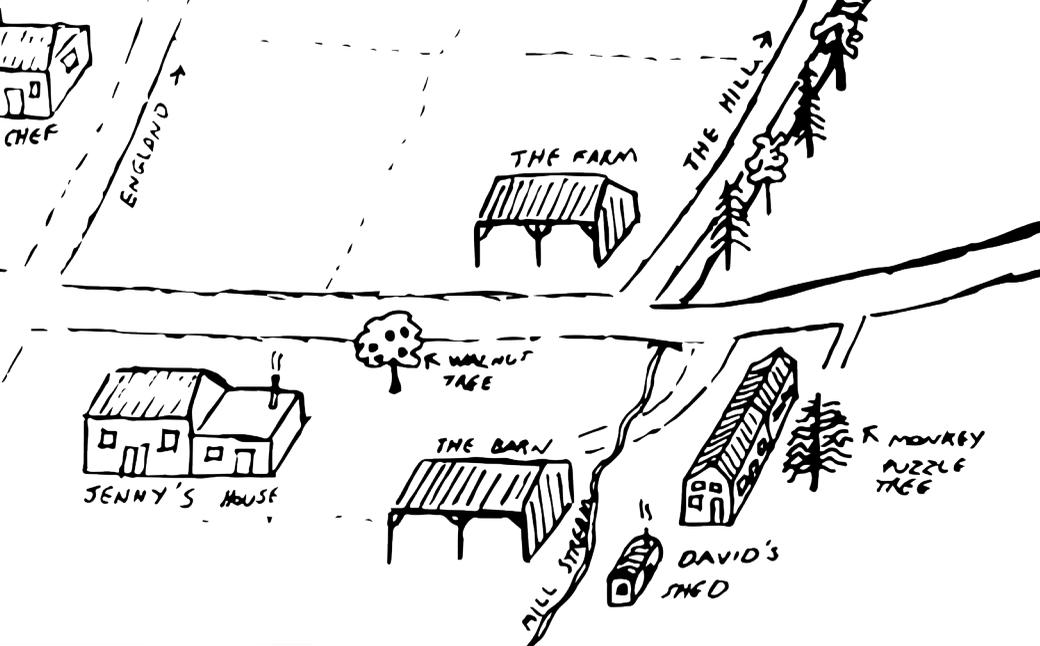
Jenny explains that she originally fell into studying ceramics by accident as the life drawing evening class she wanted to join was full. She remembers being quite annoyed enrolling for the pottery class at Tooting, but reluctantly gave it a go. From that moment on, crafting beautiful vessels from clay became a passion. After more years of study, both in London then in Wales, she started her business with only minimal materials, but has been successfully selling her work for more than 12 years.

Jenny’s ceramics are delicately crafted from white earthenware, porcelain or stoneware and whether thrown on her bargain-find Shippo wheel or carefully hand built, her pieces gently reflect the Welsh landscape that surround her. Inspired by a love of nature, seasonal changes and the Welsh weather, her understated botanical drawings of flowers and seed heads adorn

simplistic cream earthenware vases, jugs and cups, using the clay body as the background with brightly pastel-coloured interiors using clay slip. Hand built one-off pieces incorporating silt mud and grasses collected from the local area, depict a more rustic and abstract translation of the stunning hills and valleys typical of the landscape view from her studio window. Jenny spends time throwing then manipulating these sculptural pieces: the considered decoration relies upon years of skills learned, and joyful spontaneity, making each piece distinctive in its individuality.

As with most ceramicists, Jenny’s making process is so practised it has almost become “therapeutic”. It has, of course, taken years to perfect so that she is happy with the clay, coloured oxides, slips and glazes she uses and can successfully anticipate what she will get out of the kiln. Each of her vessels are beautifully unique, something to be treasured, but it’s also incredibly important to her that they’re useful and used as part of someone’s daily routine.





ORIGINALLY FROM Colwyn Bay, David White now lives with his family at the foot of one of the most beautiful mountain ranges in North Wales with incredible views of Moel Arthur. His studio is testament to his artistry and skill with wood: the crafted building houses everything from his hand-built wooden lathe, handmade tools and woodpile to the beautifully crafted items he produces, each of these housed in bespoke storage with aesthetically pleasing attention to detail. Having always made things from wood, the move from a city back to rural Wales gave David a new awareness of nature, the seasons and the possibilities trees presented to him.

David's connection to the local landscape means he sources all of his green wood locally using self-taught knowledge of tree species and their characteristics.

He initially started by whittling traditional Welsh peasant soup spoons, but over time has progressed to much larger commercial projects, creating wooden tableware for Michelin-starred restaurants such as Ynyshir in Machynlleth. David explains that the pieces he makes for Gareth Ward at Ynyshir echo the restaurant's ethos of using locally sourced and foraged food. The process starts with Gareth talking to him about a particular dish and how if it's using, for example, birch sap, for birch cordial, or wood sorrel from nearby, David is able to use these in the tableware, reflecting the connection and adding to the overall story.

David's neatly ordered tools are made by a blacksmith near Machynlleth using designs that have changed very little for hundreds of years. He makes the wooden handles, then carefully selects wood from the tree species that has characteristics to suit the design, working with the grain to add strength so that each piece will last forever. He also teaches wood-carving workshops in Snowdonia amongst the Welsh woodlands. David firmly believes that working

with nature in this way taps into something deeply genetic.

He is currently working on gallery pieces made with oak salvaged from a slate mine in North Wales, carrying each water-soaked 100-year-old railway sleeper up from the mine in his rucksack. He then works on it in its sodden state to produce stunning design-led vessels. Once dried, they form immensely beautiful, strong and tactile pieces that are black from the oxidation of the long-gone iron track. Although the fragility of the oak makes it difficult to work with, David says the rare qualities of the wood and that it is a finite resource are what make it really interesting and unique.

Pinned to the wall of his studio are sketches of larger pieces he is planning: larger pieces featuring modern interpretations of traditional stools, benches, rakes and sculpture. Very much driven by design, he talks about how he relishes the next challenge and thrives on the reward of knowing that people will be using his products for years to come.

