

Marvin Blackmore

Blackmore Studios — known by art collectors around the world for its intricate, refined design and Native American influences — is wonderfully rooted in humble and hardworking roots.

The Evolution of Talent

A child of the Southwest, Marvin Blackmore grew up in Cortez, Colorado, a hub of Native American art and craft. The sixth child in a family of fourteen, Marvin immersed himself in art and showed talent and drive at a very early age.

Surrounded by American Indian pottery makers, Marvin's first efforts reflected the influence of pueblo-style carved pottery with gloss and matte black finishes, famously known in the Southwest as "Black-on-Black" pottery.

While successful with the traditional style, Marvin's developed a unique etched, two-tone technique that rocked the Native American pottery market. With a keen eye for design, he added a layer of a colored clay slip and then carved detailed patterns through the slip to the pot's base color. The process was labor-intensive and required multiple firings. As Marvin's techniques evolved, more layers of color were added to create increasingly intricate, elegant designs.

His constantly evolving designs, while primarily influenced by Southwestern Native Americans, now incorporate influences from Plains Indians and the ancient East and Middle East. The layering and etching have become so sophisticated, other top artists are at a loss to replicate the results. Evolved from craft, Blackmore pottery now graces the collections of serious art collectors from around the world.

A Humble Start

Pottery making is now financially rewarding for Blackmore Studios but in 1989 it was barely supporting Marvin and his family. Marvin, then in his early 20s, truly lived as a "starving artist."

Living in low-income housing, Marvin ventured into the art world with little money and a bit of hope. At his first art show, he earned \$1,800 in pottery sales and was awarded first place. Inspired and rewarded, Marvin attended shows throughout the Southwest, winning numerous awards and gaining worldwide recognition. The pace of both creating and showing his art, however, wore him down.

Like many of his contemporaries, and historical art icons such as Da Vinci and Michelangelo, Marvin took on assistants. Originally hired as apprentices, Native American artists Leo Blackhorse, Doris John and Rodney John have worked with Marvin for over a dozen years and are great artists in their own right. Full-blooded Navajo Indians, they contribute not only a natural expertise in the craft but add a treasure of knowledge of traditional American Indian design.

With study, heart and hard work **Marvin Blackmore** and **Blackmore Studios** create vessels infused with culture, history and art.