

Foot Ring PUKIS

by Annie Chrietberg

Many of us have had this experience: You're at a show, selling your work, drinking out of one of your cups (because what else would you be drinking out of?), and a customer, not knowing that your cup was in use, picks it up, and dumps out your drink. Why? Because when people are looking at a pot, one of the first things they do is turn it over and check out the bottom. The bottom of the pot is important for more than strength and durability, it should also be well-finished and aesthetically pleasing.

As a handbuilder, I had been making pots with flat bottoms, and dressing them up with texture, glaze, and my carved signature, but was longing for the lift and possibility for a curved floor that wheel throwers can get so easily with a trimmed foot ring. My meticulous nature wouldn't allow me to simply add a coil, so I returned to the wheel to make a more precise tool that would allow me to make and attach a very tidy foot ring to the bottom of a pot made with a textured slab. I call them foot-ring pukis after the curved

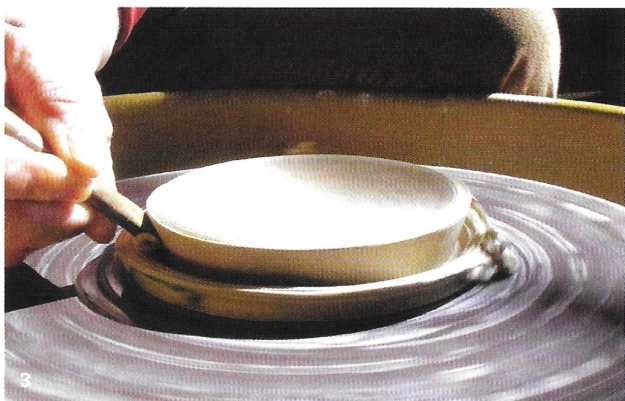




Center a 2-pound ball of clay then create the basic shape of your foot-ring puki.



Refine the curve in the surface, which will correspond to the curve of the floor of your pots.



Trim away any excess clay from the base to remove weight, then refine the edges.



Compress the surface with a rib, then create a foot ring valley with a trimming tool.



Smooth the edges of the foot-ring valley with your finger, then dry and bisque fire the puki.



Once your puki is bisque fired and ready to use, roll out a coil of clay thicker than the valley, so it overflows when you press it in.

bowl or gourd that Native Americans used to start building their curved-bottom coil pots.

Throwing a Puki

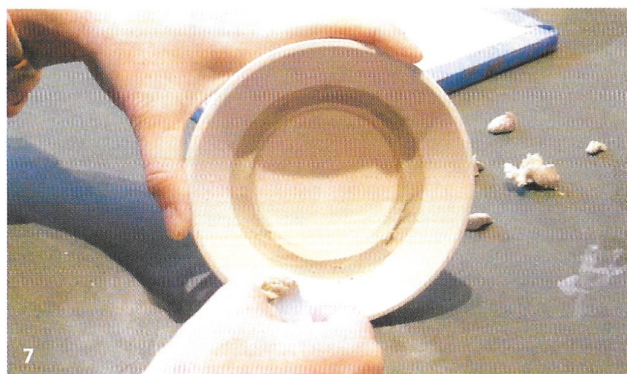
Foot-ring pukis are very easy to make with the most basic of throwing skills. For a cup-sized puki, center a two-pound ball of clay on a bat (1), shape it, and put the curve in it that you want for the floor of the pots you plan to make (2). Leave it attached to the bat and let it dry to a trimmable, leather-hard

state (3). Then, create the valley in the puki that allows you to form the foot ring (4, 5). Cut the puki off the bat, let it dry, and bisque fire it. Now you have a tool that you can re-use over and over to put a tidy foot ring on the bottom of a handbuilt pot.

Using the Puki

Start by adding a coil of clay into the valley (6). Scrape the outside edges of the coil back to the edge of the puki, leaving a peak in the center, all the way around (7). The peak will aid in

process | Foot Ring Pukis | Annie Chrietberg



7 Scrape back the coil to the edges of the valley, leaving a slightly raised center to the coil.



8 Score, add slip, then drop the base of the pot onto the puki, and press lightly to attach the foot ring.



9 Flip the puki mold over, tap the bottom of the pot out and onto your fingertips.



10 Place the base onto the bottom of your pot and blend in the seams between the foot ring and the bottom of the pot.



11 Replace the puki then flip the pot. Leave the pot in the puki while you blend in the coil on the interior and begin to shape the pot.



12 Before any drying occurs, remove the pot from the puki and refine the shape and finish the pot.

the attachment of the coil to the base of the pot. Score and add slip to the coil, then position a round, cut slab (textured if you desire) onto the puki and press lightly to attach it to the coil (8), being careful not to eradicate the texture. This slab forms the floor of the pot.

Now, turn the puki over and tap the floor until the foot releases onto your fingertips (9). Place this base on the bottom of your pot, then blend the foot ring in to get a good attachment (10). Next, replace the puki upside down on the bottom of the pot, and flip the pot back over while it's on the puki. Leave the puki in place while

you blend in the interior coil and shape the pot without distorting the foot or the texture (11). Then, flip the pot back over, remove the puki, flip back to upright, and finish the pot (12).

Foot-ring pukis can be made in any size to fit large and small diameter pots and can be designed with the specific curve that you need for the bottoms of the pots you want to make.

Annie Chrietberg is a ceramic artist dedicated to making beautiful and durable tableware with her own glaze palette. She teaches workshops and classes all over the country and online, which are listed on her website www.earthtoannie.com. Annie is currently located in Bend, Oregon.