

### **Matthew Lovein "Wish Keeper" ceramic sculpture 9" x 9" x 14"**

Matthew Lovein's signature piece, called the Wish Keeper is his original design and concept which first began in 1992. Mary explained, "He woke me in the night and said, 'I'm going to make a Wish Keeper. I've seen it in a dream'." The dream showed the vessel which sits on a distinctive base and has a lid formed like bamboo, representing strength and flexibility. When lifting the lid a silk cord is revealed with an inner chamber which holds a parchment with your written wish.

The ancient symbol on the seal represents good fortune and abundance. When he first saw the symbol on the finial of a lamp, he knew it was the one that would become the Wish Keeper's seal. Each piece is sealed by pressing the carved symbol into the wet clay, for a lifetime of good wishes.

This artwork has made its mark in the world of ceramic art and today can be found in homes and offices around the world, sometimes a glimpse in a TV program about a celebrity home or in the pages of an architectural magazine showcasing an interior design.

Making other shapes and sizes of Wish Keepers developed into various sculptures and other mediums. The artist's dreams continue and his art takes on new forms and world class works of art such as Suspended Lid, Haiku, Six Foot Eight, Myphoria, The Oracle, to mention a few. His expansive studio is equipped with kilns for firing glass and ceramics and a metal working shop.

Raku is a 16th century process that was used in the Orient to make very special cups for the sacred tea ceremony. They chose to use that style of firing because each piece is unique and cannot be duplicated, with the crackles and patterns from the smoke and fire.

After each Wish Keeper is fired, a special formula of glaze is applied and the piece is fired again to 2000 degrees. Then the artist, wearing a fireman's suit and a fresh air respirator, removes the bright orange glowing piece from the kiln. It is then lowered into a container of dry combustibles, that are gathered from the surrounding area. After catching fire, the container is covered and the magic begins, with the movement of the smoke and flames.

Once the firing is complete, the vessel is removed, washed and scrubbed, like a newborn infant. Each is different and emerges with its own distinct characteristics. Part of the whole experience of Raku is the acceptance and appreciation of all the variations that arrive through the spontaneous process. The procedure takes a lot of endurance and finesse to perfect and the results of excellence are measurably rewarding.

<http://www.lovein.com/wishkeeper.htm>