Vintage Pottery Marks Resellers Should Recognize

FREE RESELLER GUIDE | Reseller Traffic Lab

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Read the web guide for current information

Quick answer: Begin with McCoy, Roseville, Hull and Frankoma for practical sourcing recognition. Add Rookwood, Van Briggle and Weller for American art pottery. A recognizable name is only the beginning: the complete piece still has to match.

Seven vintage pottery names worth recognizing

This is a reseller watchlist, not a promise that every piece is valuable. The first four are useful everyday sourcing knowledge; the final three deserve extra attention because artist, glaze, age and form can matter greatly.

Maker	Marks you may encounter	Common finds	Before you identify it
McCoy	NM, McCoy, McCoy USA or maker-specific marks; some genuine pieces are unmarked or marked only USA.	Planters, vases, cookie jars, kitchenware and decorative pieces.	The company reused forms and changed marks. A McCoy-looking mark alone is not enough, and reproductions exist.
Roseville	Roseville, Roseville USA, Rozane-related marks, paper labels, shape numbers or no permanent mark, depending on the line and period.	Floral art-pottery vases, bowls, jardinieres and planters.	Confirm the pattern, shape number, size and glaze. Reproductions and fantasy pieces make shape-level verification important.
Hull	Hull, Hull Art U.S.A., Hull Ware, a capital H in a circle or diamond, line names, numbers or labels.	Artware vases, planters, kitchenware, cookie jars and novelty pieces.	Hull used many mark systems, and some genuine lines were not marked Hull. Match mold and size numbers to a documented line.
Frankoma	Frankoma name marks, mold numbers and marks that changed across production eras.	Prairie Green and Desert Gold tableware, mugs, political mugs, planters and decorative ware. Early pieces used light beige Ada clay; around 1953-1954 production changed to a more reddish Sapulpa clay.	Collectors may call an early piece "Ada-clay Frankoma," but Ada is the clay source, not another maker. Clay color and glaze are supporting clues and do not prove the date by themselves.

Maker	Marks you may encounter	Common finds	Before you identify it
Rookwood	ROOKWOOD or the conjoined reverse R-P logo; flames, Roman numerals, shape numbers and artist ciphers can also appear.	Art-pottery vases, bowls, tiles and artist-decorated pieces.	Read the factory date system separately from the artist mark. Condition, artist, glaze and form can strongly affect desirability.
Van Briggle	The conjoined AA monogram, Van Briggle wording, Colo. Spgs., date information, shape numbers and finisher marks.	Matte-glaze art pottery, vases, bowls, figurals and decorative pieces.	Marks were often hand-incised and naturally vary. Compare clay, glaze, form and the complete underside with documented examples.
Weller	Incised or impressed Weller wording, line names, molded script marks, ink stamps or paper labels.	Art-pottery vases, jardinières, planters and molded decorative ware.	Many pieces lost paper labels or were unmarked. Attribute only when the glaze, form, clay and documented line all agree.

Seven vintage pottery names at a glance



The pottery forms are educational illustrations, not authenticated examples of a particular pattern, date or mark. Use the documented maker references below before identifying an item.

Underside mark examples

The first three examples are real, sourced underside photographs. They show why the entire base matters: a factory logo can appear beside date information, a shape number and an individual artist's mark.



Rookwood, 1930. This base includes the R-P flame logo, Roman-numeral date code, shape number 80C, a 50th-anniversary mark and Lorinda Epply's artist cipher. Learn to read those elements separately instead of treating the whole base as one logo. Photograph by Y. Paulsen, dedicated to the public domain under CC0. Source and license.



Van Briggle, 1902. The hand-incised base shows the conjoined AA monogram, Van Briggle wording and the year. Genuine hand-incised marks naturally vary, so compare the clay, glaze, form and complete inscription with documented examples. Metropolitan Museum of Art Open Access, public domain. Object record.



Roseville backstamp. This real underside shows the die-impressed Roseville U.S.A. mark; 72 is the shape number and 6 is the size in inches. Roseville used different labels and marks over time, and some authentic periods can be unmarked, so never authenticate from this one mark alone. Photograph uploaded by Kafziel, licensed CC BY-SA 3.0. Source and license.

Reference illustrations for four additional makers

The examples below are AI-created recognition aids based on documented mark descriptions. They are not photographs of authenticated pieces and they do not represent every genuine variation.



McCoy, Hull, Frankoma and Weller reference illustrations. McCoy used several incised, embossed and ink-stamped variations. Hull used multiple marks, including Hull Art U.S.A., line names and mold codes. Frankoma marks and clay colors changed over time; reddish Sapulpa clay is not the same as the earlier light Ada clay. Weller used impressed names, line marks and later script variations. Always confirm the form, clay, glaze, dimensions and complete underside against a specialist reference.

What kind of mark did you find?

Mark type	What it may mean	Seller caution
Printed backstamp	Factory branding, trade names, pattern names or origin wording printed with ink or a transfer.	Match the complete version, not just one crown, animal or set of initials.
Impressed or stamped mark	A name, symbol or code pressed into the clay before firing.	Use side lighting because shallow impressions can vanish in a straight-on photograph.
Incised signature	Letters or a signature scratched into the clay, often on studio pottery.	Photograph the full form and clay body before guessing the artist.
Painted decorator mark	Brush-painted initials, symbols or numbers that may identify a decorator rather than the factory.	Do not automatically treat initials as the maker's signature.
Country-of-origin wording	Wording such as ENGLAND, MADE IN ENGLAND, JAPAN or MADE IN JAPAN can narrow the research period.	Origin wording is a clue, not an exact date.
Pattern, shape or registration number	A number may connect to a factory pattern book, mold, shape or registered design.	A number is not automatically a date; registration dates are not necessarily manufacture dates.

Take these five photographs before researching

1. **The entire object:** show the full shape and decoration from a level angle.
2. **The complete underside:** include the foot, clay body, glaze edge and every mark together.
3. **A close-up of the mark:** keep it sharp and square; add side lighting for impressions.
4. **Construction and texture:** photograph the unglazed foot, mold lines, handles, rim and interior.
5. **Every condition issue:** show chips, cracks, crazing, repairs, staining and glaze loss.

Useful clues that are easy to overstate

• **ENGLAND:** became common on British exports from roughly 1891, but documented exceptions exist.

• **MADE IN ENGLAND:** became widely used in the early twentieth century, especially after tighter U.S. marking practices around 1914; it is not an exact dating formula.

• **Ltd. or Limited:** cannot predate the maker's incorporation. Research that company's legal history instead of assigning a universal date.

• **British registration diamond or Rd No.:** identifies when a design was registered. The object may have been produced later.

• **Hand-painted numbers:** frequently refer to patterns, decorators or internal production rather than a date.

A repeatable reseller research workflow

1. Transcribe every visible word and number exactly, including punctuation.

2. Classify how the mark was applied: printed, impressed, incised or painted.

3. Search the clearest wording in quotation marks, adding *pottery mark*, the object type and likely country.

4. Compare multiple documented versions because logos and company wording change.

5. Confirm that the proposed maker produced that form, clay body, glaze and decoration.

6. Compare sold listings only after identification, matching form, size, pattern, condition and completeness.

Common reseller traps

Mistake	Better approach
Assuming every number is a date	Research whether it is a shape, mold, pattern, decorator or registration number.
Matching one crown, animal or set of initials	Match the complete mark: border, font, wording, placement and application method.
Ignoring an unmarked piece	Use construction, clay, glaze, form and provenance as clues.
Using an image-search result as proof	Trace it to a museum, maker archive, specialist reference or documented collector source.
Calling crazing proof of age	Crazing has several causes and can be reproduced. Evaluate the complete object.
Copying another seller's identification	Verify independently; marketplace titles often repeat earlier mistakes.

Use language that matches your evidence

When a mark is visible but the maker is not confirmed, say exactly what you can see. Cautious wording protects buyer trust and leaves room for a collector to recognize the piece.

Evidence	Safer wording	Avoid
Complete mark matches a documented maker and period	Name the maker and describe the mark; use a supported date range	An exact year without a documented date code
Signature is readable but artist is unverified	"Signed studio pottery" followed by the signature as read	Attributing it to a similarly named artist
Only numbers or symbols are present	"Marked on base" with a sharp photograph	Presenting the number as a model, year or maker without support
No mark is present	"Unmarked pottery" with form, glaze, size and condition details	"Rare unsigned [famous maker]" based only on resemblance

Reliable places to continue the research

• The Potteries: English Pottery Marks and Dating - wording, origin marks, registration systems and exceptions.

• The Potteries: British Registration Diamonds and Numbers - why registration dates are not manufacturing dates.

• The Potteries: Stoke-on-Trent Resources - marks, trade names, initials and manufacturer histories.

• Smithsonian Libraries: Public-Domain Dictionary of Pottery Marks - an 1879 historical reference.

• Metropolitan Museum of Art: Sèvres Makers and Marks - why letters, numbers and handwriting require care.

Pottery identification is specialized and exceptions are common. This guide is a research starting point, not an authentication or appraisal.

Reseller Traffic Lab
Practical help for eBay sellers.
https://resellertrafficlab.com/free-resources/pottery-marks-reseller-guide