

At Home in the Modern World

dwell

Rethink Recycling

*Why Today's Best Designers
Are Digging Through Your Trash*

HOW TO RECYCLE

Houses, Computers,
Cars, Your Body,
and More

A HOUSE MADE FROM SCRAPS

RECLAIMED
WINDOW WALL

SCRAP WOOD

dwell.com

February 2011

\$5.99 US



BACKYARD BLISS
A Really Cool Pool

Jonathan Adler

Seventeen years ago, Jonathan Adler wasn't a brand, he was a one-man full-time pottery production operation—"making, glazing, firing, packing, and shipping every single piece I made." After successfully pitching an initial order for Barneys, he expanded his empire to eponymous shops in major cities across the United States and an online catalog featuring goods that range from ceramic rhinoceros boxes to wool area rugs to lamps and candleholders. Developing his business savvy alongside his ever-expanding collection was an organic process for Adler, one that has allowed the potter to grow with his company. "Getting out from behind the wheel has enabled me to be infinitely more creative," he says.

No-access pass: I was an oddity in the small New Jersey



farm town I grew up in, which was actually great in its own way. It's important to not have access sometimes—it gives you time to think.

Eternal endurance: I've had a million setbacks along the way—from kiln fires burning down buildings to shipping disasters—that should have put me out of business, or at least left me lying in the fetal position on my bed for a few days. Luckily, though, I've never for one second thought that I had

any other option than to just keep going.

Mile-high club: I would love to rebrand an airline. It would be so fun to bring back a bit of the glamour of travel.

Rereading: *Beautiful People*, by my much-better half, Simon Doonan. I read voraciously, but I keep going back to this one by Simon.

The importance of being earnest: My design process is not necessarily kicky and optimistic, and when it comes to my work, I am deadly serious. I live, eat, and breathe what I make; I can lose sleep over the silhouette of a pot not being exactly right.

Au courant: I'm a slightly schizophrenic designer and craftsman, but everything I produce shows my hand. I'm inspired by the typical fashion-design example, where every season has a different inspiration. It just seemed to be a way to be more creatively prolific.

Appreciation: It's the nicest thing on earth if someone comes up to me and says, "Every day I drink out of a mug you designed."

Pink-slip muse: When I was first starting out, I had been fired from every job I ever had. The good thing about being unemployable is that it gives you a sink-or-swim mentality. When I began making pots, I figured someday I'd be lucky enough to hawk my wares in a rain-soaked craft fair, but I also realized if I didn't make a go of it I was really screwed.



Overstimulation: I'm a multitasking freak who needs a lot going on to get anything done. My pottery studio is in the same space as my office, and it's mayhem. I can finish a meeting then duck out to make a pot.

Making lemonade: I believe that adversity and negativity can be an amazing fuel towards personal success.

Prototypical behavior: I have a lot, a lot, a lot of products in my office. Squillions. Not to get all Pollyanna-ish, but here's the deal: The main reason I've worked so hard is because nothing makes me more excited and happy than when I get in a new sample of one of my designs and it's fantastic. That is an addictive high. It's what I strive for.

jonathanadler.com



Q & A