

The 2012 Laguna
Endangered Species Awareness Tile



“Mexican Spotted Owl”
Strix occidentalis lucida

The Mexican Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) is one of three subspecies of spotted owl. Though it is the smallest of the spotted owls, it is one of the largest owls in North America and lives in old-growth forests. The Gila Wilderness is home to the largest population of the Mexican Spotted Owl.

Mexican Spotted Owls are exclusively nocturnal hunters and eat wood rats, mice, voles, rabbits, gophers, bats, birds, reptiles and arthropods. In the United States, there are an estimated 2,106 Mexican Spotted Owls. Numbers in Mexico are also dangerously low. Mexican Spotted Owls have the largest geographic distribution of all spotted owl subspecies. They can be found in forested mountains and canyons from southern Utah and Colorado to the mountains of Arizona, New Mexico, West Texas and into the mountains of northern and central Mexico.

The Laguna Endangered Species Awareness Tile Series

Each year Laguna Clay Company selects a tile artist or company who has requested the honor to create a limited edition of 500 tiles, to be crafted with Laguna clays and glazes. The subject is always an endangered or threatened species and the finished tiles are given to a select group of customers and business associates as a gift of hope. Jim Kassebaum, former Laguna General Manager, started the series in 1992 and happily, over the course of almost 2 decades, conservation has helped some species repopulate, underlining our role as stewards of a healthy planet. The purpose of the series is succinctly expressed in this quote from Mr. Kassebaum.

“Let us never cease to be grateful to those who established the freedoms for which our Country stands and those who have placed themselves in harm's way to guarantee those freedoms; and let us never forget how precious life on this planet is for all of its creatures.” -Jim Kassebaum

This year, Syzygy chose a species who makes its home in the nearby Gila National Forest and in other old growth forest through the Southwest and in Mexico...

Designing the 2012 “Mexican Spotted Owl” Tile

Working with artist Ray Peelman, David del Junco provided created hand press molds for the limited edition run.

SYZYGY TILEWORKS was founded in 1993 by David del Junco and Lee Gruber. Today we are a company of 20 artisans. We are dedicated to producing a truly handmade, aesthetically pleasing product that is durable, environmentally safe and benefits the local community artistically, economically and environmentally. Our goal is to keep the handmade craftsman tradition alive in our production of this beautiful tile. We work at being good stewards in all aspects of our production. In the manufacturing area we recycle/reuse clay excess by running it through a pug mill and forming it back into tiles. Because we only glaze by hand using brushes, there is no glaze overspray. Any glaze residue is filtered and reused here or by local potters. Our seconds and overstock are sold or donated to stores specializing in recycled and reused products.

Few things are more environmentally sound than products that endure. In our community we work in a renovated 1938 industrial building which had been abandoned. Our workers are locally hired and live within close proximity to the business. We contribute to local community projects through participation, products and financial contributions. We use local sources for office and manufacturing materials and services whenever possible. Our employees are artisans and craftsmen. They are central to our operation as we strive to create a product and working environment that fosters pride and enthusiasm. SYZYGY TILEWORKS is proud of our long standing relationship with LAGUNA CLAY. We have utilized their clay body in the production of our tiles and have developed many of our fabulous glaze colors using their materials and raw ingredients.

