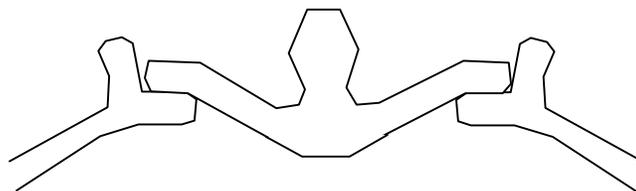
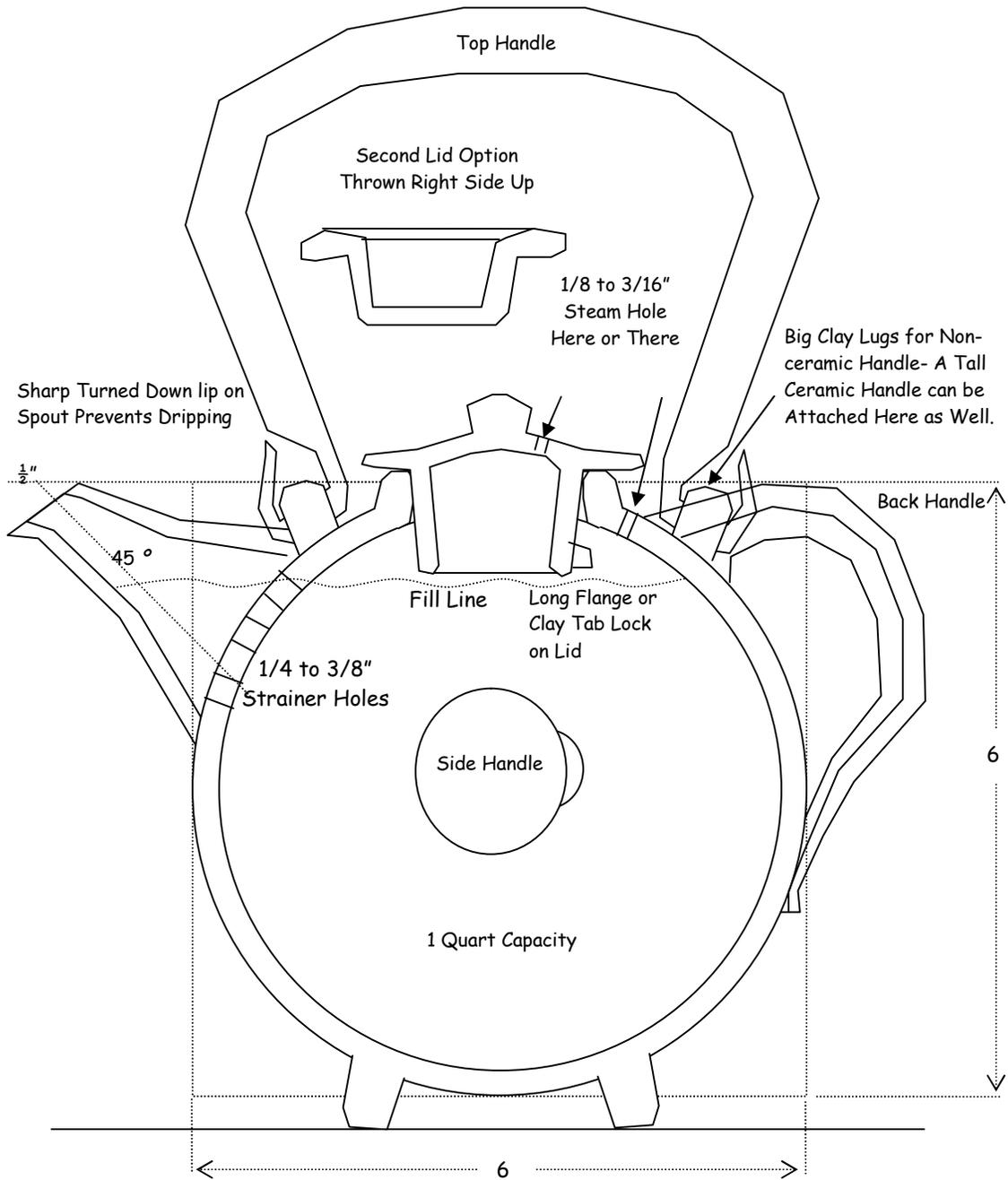


Functional Teapot Options & Rules of Thumb - CLC Ceramics/David Bolton Fall 07



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The Body

1. Size. A 5 to 6" round teapot body will hold approximately 1 quart (liter) which equals 4 cups or servings of tea. Larger pots are heavy and hard to handle. *Yixing* teapots serve only one or two servings.
2. Thin Walls. Walls must be thin for good weight and feel. 3/16" is good. Keep in mind thrown pots have stronger walls than handbuilt pots.
3. Proportions. Pot should be a basic spherical or cube shape. Tall pots are not functional due to thermal stress. Filling the pot half full heats half the form causing eventual cracking.

The Spout

4. Spout Placement. Spout should be at the same level of the top of the pot. A *Yixing* teapot spout rule is that the pot should sit flat with the spout just touching the table when placed upside down on a table with the lid off. If the spout were lower the pot cannot be filled. If the spout is too high the tea would pour out of the lid before the spout.
5. Spout Angle. The spout should also be at an approximate 45° angle to help engage and to terminate flow.
6. Spout Lip. A sharp lip will release the liquid when you stop pouring. It can be turned out to be parallel to the table to release that last drip.
7. Spout Taper and Size. Spout should taper to amplify flow, but not restrict flow. A ½" opening is good. The length should be just under half the width of the pot.
8. Spout Twist. If throwing a spout the spout will twist clockwise about 15° more or less depending on how wet you throw the spout, the circumference, the length, and clay body. You must compensate by turning or cutting the spout the opposite direction (counter-clockwise). Spouts can also be handbuilt: pulled, extruded, slab-built, etc.
9. Strainer Holes. Should not be so small that glaze clog holes or too big so that they do not strain tea. ¼ to 3/8" is normal. Smaller holes can be used if the area is resisted.

The Lid

10. Lid Size. The lid should be large enough to allow access to interior for cleaning. (Teapot should be rinsed immediately after use without soap.) Lid should be small enough to give the pot shoulders that will direct the flow to the spout.
11. Fit & Balance. It is very important that the lid have a tight fit to prevent movement. The lid should have a long flange, low center of gravity, or a tab to prevent the lid from falling out.
12. Steam Hole. Actually anti-gurgling hole. Usually very small 1/8 to 3/16". Be sure to clean glaze out of hole. It is usually in the lid or on pot hidden under lip of lid.
13. Lid Handle. Handle should be easily gripped to remove lid or the lid should be easily gripped by the rim of lid.

The Handle

14. Teapot Handle. There are many handle placement options: Back, Top, and Side. Back handles should be close to teapot body for balance. Better on taller forms. Top handles should be high and wide enough for easy lid removal. If using non-ceramic top handle, make lugs large enough to be strong and to prevent handle from swiveling, although; some potters want the handle to swing down to give easy access to the lid. ½" thick lugs are common for bamboo handles on 1 qt. teapots. Better on shorter forms. Side handles are not as common, some potters put the handles 90° from the spout, some put the side handle slightly closer to the spout and up for ergonomics of the wrist. Lefties have to be served their tea in these pots.

The Overall Composition

15. The Challenge. Now make all the parts work together in one successful composition and still function. The above will help you make a functional teapot. Plenty of these rules have been broken to make very functional and beautiful forms. Obviously there is greater freedom in composition if function is not a desired result. The choice is up to you.