

Premade Terra Sigillata from Clayart Center
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Terra sigillata isn't terribly complicated to make, it just takes a bit of clay, deflocculant, patience and decanting, but it sure is nice to be able to buy a pint off the shelf. Especially when it comes in so many tasty colors! Terra sig is a colloidal slip used for surface decoration primarily at low fire temperatures. Because it is made of super fine clay particles unfired terra sig can be burnished with a chamois or plastic bag to produce a high sheen. The sheen will start to fade when fired above cone 04 and most folks don't apply glaze on top of sig. It has a silky buttery feel all on it's own. Many potters use it on the bottom of terra cotta pots to help seal the surface but keep in mind it will not make a porous claybody watertight. Terra sig is also used frequently on pots that are pit fired to give the form an elegant smooth surface for smoke absorption. It can be brushed or sprayed on.

If you've wanted to experiment with terra sig surfaces without the hassle of waiting and decanting your own, these guys are an affordable and easy way out. The test pieces shown are made of Stan's Red and have 3 coats of terra sig. Each coat was applied to bone dry clay and allowed to dry to the touch before burnishing. Burnishing between each coat of terra sig produces a higher sheen. Once the terra sig was dry the pieces were bisque fired to cone 04. We also experimented with application on bisque ware with pretty good results. At higher temps, like cone 6-10, the terra sig behaves more like a vitreous slip and has a lot of potential for use in atmospheric firings. If you have any questions, please contact us at techsupport@highwaterclays.com.

