

Northstar Colors

The last months have been exciting with regard to the continuing development and growth of the colored borosilicate market. The possibilities being explored with “hard glass” are becoming a significant alternative form of expression for the many talented artists associated not only with glass, but simply art in general. As this segment of the artistic community increases in popularity and influence, the need for consistent, reliable, and fully compatible colors is an absolute requirement. While the development of new colors on a routine basis is a very important aspect of the market, the refinement and upgrading of existing colors is of equal importance as the techniques and applications for this glass evolve over time. With this in mind, adding to the current color pallet through new releases and continuing to improve the existing colors are major initiatives of Northstar Glassworks for the New Year.

During 2002, Northstar introduced a number of new colors (Indigo Aventurine, Deep Sea Blue, Mystery Aventurine, Millennium Moss, Onyx, Glacier Blue, Ice Blue, Avocado, Parrot Green, Green Amber Purple, etc.). And, there are at least 4 new colors currently being tested with release scheduled for the first half of 2003. Equally as important, Northstar has made it a very high priority to improve most, if not all, of the current colors offered. Towards the end of last year, we introduced re-formulated versions of Forest Green, Star White, and Blackberry with outstanding results. With this success, we have had small test melts of other colors (Teal, Polaris, Jade, Millennium Moss, etc.) and are very confident of being able to introduce re-formulated versions eliminating the potential breakage issues, etc. (other colors currently under evaluation include Lava, Cherry, Midnight, Canary, Mint, and the cobalt blues).

Our objectives in re-formulating color recipes includes the following:

- Consistent color shade within a pull and from batch to batch
- Improved workability
- Reduced livering regarding the striking colors
- Improved quality (lower levels of devit, boiling, etc.)
- No cracking issues regardless of the application
- Minimal fading (wash out) of colors as they are worked and/or pulled thin

By achieving these objectives, we can continue to provide a cost effective product that is superior in quality and usable by artists of varying abilities.

An associated outcome of the re-formulation process sometimes can be a small change in the color shade. In most of the cases, Northstar is able to compensate for this by adjusting the formula. In some cases, we will adopt the new shade based on the benefits of the quality improvements. We look not only at the color of the raw rod, but also the results in a finished piece. One example is the re-formulated Rust. The raw rod color is slightly different from historical batches, but now it has a small opportunity to be struck giving the artist increased flexibility. Other colors may be more sensitive to either a reducing or oxidizing environment, but the reliability and repeatability of a given color significantly improves the ability to control the final outcome and desired results.

While it would be great to release a perfect color, time is sometimes needed to identify both the positive and negative aspects of any color. And for the most part, that input needs to come from the users as it relates to their individual style and technique. Colors essentially evolve over time with continuous improvement necessary to match the changing techniques and new applications. In all, Northstar will not only continue to develop new colors, but also strive to improve those colors already on the market.

NS- 43 Rust

NS-43, Rust has been slightly re-formulated. The color of the raw rod is very similar to the original (may be slightly lighter), but the end results are now a bit more controllable. In the past Rust had a slight ability to be struck, now the strike is more pronounced with better color consistency. By starting out a bit lighter, and striking a shade darker, Rust now gives more flexibility and options regarding the finished piece. In addition, you should notice an improvement in workability and creaminess with this color.