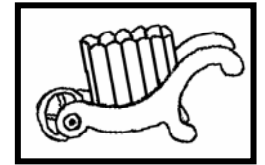


Salty Comments

Facts and Opinion about Open Salt Collecting



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Blown Glass Salts - Part 2

This is the second installment on blown or freehand glass. Salty Comments #73 covered the period into the late 1800's. This was the time that fancier handcrafted glass became popular – what we call Art Glass today. Some Art Glass was covered last time. We'll start from there with other prominent companies who made open salts like this.

Around the turn of the century, Ludwig Moser ran a highly respected glass factory in Bohemia. . He used blown dishes, and put elaborate enameled decorations on them. Figures 1 and 2 show two of these. The most elaborate, however, is the one in Figure 3. We bought this from Murel Charon who wrote one of the books on Moser glass. The salt has decorations on the decorations, which required many firings. She is certain that it must have been made for someone in the Court of the Emperor Franz Joseph before World War I, because it is one of their favorite designs and there are a number of matching pieces like goblets. We see them offered for sale now and then, which is not surprising since any table setting for the Court would have been made for 50 people or more. There are other beautiful Moser salts as well, like the one in Figure 4. We've had this one authenticated by a man who wrote one of the books on Moser glass. Not all glass salts with applied flowers can be attributed to Moser, however – Figure 5 shows one of this kind which has a RTW Czechoslovakia sticker in it.

During the 1890's, L.C. Tiffany started making tableware in the New York area. He originally made colored glass for stained glass windows, but soon branched out to making lamp shades and tableware items. His art glass became very popular, and featured iridescent colors. A lot of it was sold, including a number of open salts. Most of the books about his glass show the bigger, fancier pieces, like vases, but some of his salts like Figures 6, 7 and 8 are in our collection. Several others are shown in H&J. His iridescent gold salt like the shape in Figure 7 (round with a crimped rim) has been reproduced.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

There are a lot of these around; and how many are genuine we have no idea. If you buy one, make sure it is from a reputable dealer, and get authentication from an independent source if you can. Other Tiffany items can be faked. The “L.C.T.” mark can be easily applied with a diamond scribe. We have a friend who is a Tiffany expert, and he knows of instances where a genuine unmarked Tiffany vase was sold to a dealer who applied the mark to make it more salable. Tiffany imitations can be marked just as easily. We have seen this done to one of the 1995 National Convention salts (Figure 9) which was made by the Lundberg studios. The bottom had been polished to remove the Lundberg marks and the letters “L.C.T.” applied, along with a price tag which said, “Tiffany \$300”.

Quezal glass was made by Martin Bach Sr., a Tiffany worker who left them to open a business making copies of their glass. The copies are very good, and command a high price today. The only Quezal salt we know of is shown in Figure 10. It is marked “Quezal” on the bottom using a cutting wheel, not a diamond scribe.

In 1904, Frederick Carder opened his Steuben Glass Works in Corning, NY. The Steuben name comes from the county where Corning is located, which in turn comes from the name of a Prussian general who fought with the colonists during the Revolutionary War. The plant was originally opened to make blanks for cutting at the nearby Hawkes factory, which was already established. Carder soon branched out into art glass and tableware, and made a long list of salts in a variety of colors. Two of them are shown in Figures 11 and 12.

The latter shape comes in many colors, all beautiful to see and very expensive to buy. We found a similar shape which has ribs, Figure 13, which has been authenticated as Steuben. This one is very close to a Fostoria nut dish, Figure 14, and we once saw the Fostoria version for sale labeled Steuben. We can usually identify the Fostoria one with a magnifying glass by finding the very faint mold lines around the stem. We don't know of anyone making copies of Steuben salts, but with all expensive salts you can't be too careful when you buy one.

In 1917, Carder's work was declared non-essential to the war effort, so he was unable to buy the necessary raw materials. He sold out to the Corning Glass Company rather than shut down. Production of his art glass resumed after the War, but in 1932 Corning stopped making his designs and Carder turned to one-of-a-kind glass art objects. Today's Steuben glassware is made in a shop in the Corning Museum where the public can watch. It is prestigious and expensive stuff, often combining elaborate shapes of heavy glass with very careful engraving. Some of their one-of-a-kind designs are used as trophies for sporting events or as gifts for visiting heads of state. The only modern Steuben salts we know of are like Figure 15. We don't know when they were produced, but they are not on sale at the Museum today.

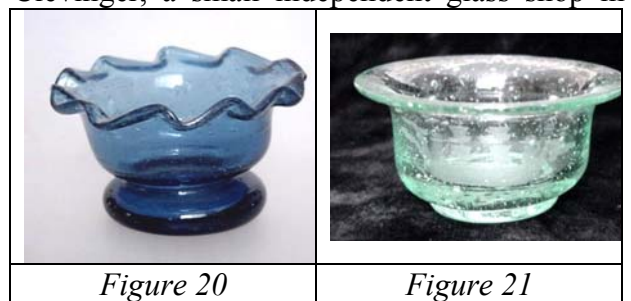


(3)

After World War I, a number of freehand glass salts were made in Europe. We have been told on good authority that the crimped-rim pedestals with two handles like Figure 16 are Venetian from this period. We also understand that the pedestals with little dots of glass around the bowl (Figure 17) are from Czechoslovakia during the same period. The ultra-light glass with thin striped bowls like Figures 18 and 19 are referred to as “Bimini Glass”, since they were made in 1920-35 by Bimini Werkstratte, a firm in Vienna. The glass is so light that some people swear it is plastic. We understand it is lamp work, which means that it was made from glass rods using the flame from a torch instead of being blown from pots of molten glass. This is the same technique that paperweight makers use to create delicate flowers and other objects they encase in clear glass.

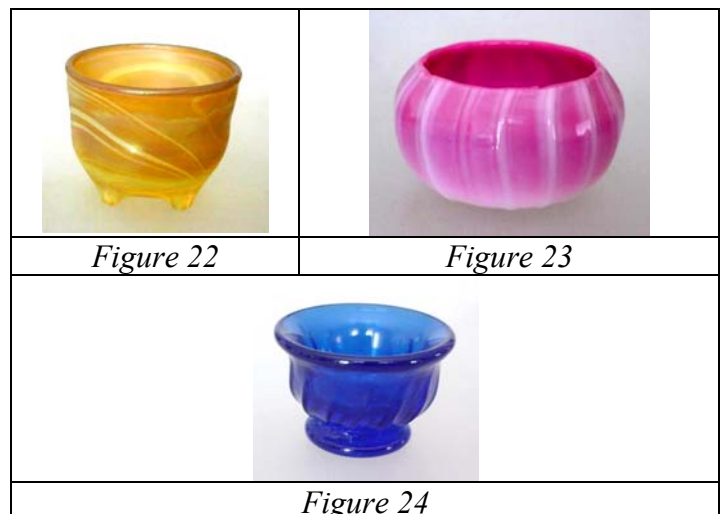


Two types of freehand glass which we see occasionally but have not traced to their source are in Figures 20 and 21. The first has been attributed to Clevinger, a small independent glass shop in southern New Jersey which has operated since the 1920's. We have seen one of their early catalogs, but it showed no freehand salts. The second is green glass with lots of bubbles in it, with a crude engraving of a sailing ship on the side. Someone told us it is Mexican. We have no way to confirm this, but it was not made by a skilled craftsman. The bottle-green color from iron in the sand and the bubbles which show the glass was not cooked long or hot enough.



About 30 years ago, a glass maker named Iorio tried his hand at art glass in Flemington, NJ. We haven't heard of anything else he made, but we do have one of his salts (Figure 22). It is marked “Iorio, Verre d'Or, 1976” on the bottom.

The modern Pairpoint Glass Co. made blown salts several times. The first one we know of was like Figure 23 which they made in two Mount Washington colors - Peachblow and Burmese.. Production was limited so the salts are not plentiful. We have seen this same shape with a matching individual cream pitcher. A second blown Pairpoint salt is shown in Figure 24. It is very small - 1-1/2 inches across, and has their P in a diamond mark as well as a paper label. It was sold as a money-making project in 1995 by the New England open salt club. Earlier the Sandwich Museum gift shop sold a similar one in a slightly larger size, marked SGM.



Ruth Darmstadt, a collector near Corning, NY, has a friend named Bill Peterson who worked for the Corning Museum. He did lamp work, making small objects from glass rods to demonstrate to Museum visitors how glass could be formed. Over the years he made several open salts for Ruth which had little animals holding a small bowl. One of these - a frog - is shown in Figure 25. We've also added a picture of Bill at work (Figure 26), taken from a rather beat-up postcard which we own.

Contemporary glass artists have made a number of different salts, some for the clubs and some on speculation. Terry Crider is one of the most prolific of these people. Figure 27 is the salt he made for the First National Open Salt Convention in 1988. Another is in Figure 28, and we have 4 more of his shapes in our collection. Someone needs to document the salts he made before too much time passes. If you have information on more of them, we would be willing to help publish it.

The 1997 Convention had a blown salt made by Lotton Art Glass, a well-known firm who has made no other small items we know of. It is shown in Figure 29. The northern California OSSTW club had David Salazar make a salt for their anniversary in 1999, shown in Figure 30.

Finally, there are several recent blown salts made in quantity by well-known glass firms. Orrefors in Sweden made Figure 31, Baccarat in France made Figure 32 and Daum in France made Figure 33.

We have omitted quite a few, but the salts we have shown give a good idea of what freehand glassmakers can do if they have the time and inclination. The fancier ones are mostly things of the past, since labor costs are so high today, but they are beautiful to see and can be found at a price. We hope you have some in your collection. If you do, take good care of them because they can't easily be replaced.

Ed Berg
401 Nottingham Rd., Newark, DE 19711

email: DEsaltbox@cs.com

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