

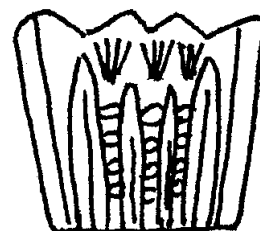
View from the Salt Box -- #29

On our Thanksgiving trip to visit our son and his family in New Orleans we spent time visiting antique malls. Unfortunately we saw a lot of garage-sale type “antiques” and very few old glass or china things. We did find one salt which was not in the book and looked like a pattern glass design that we had not seen before. When we got home to our reference books we hunted for the pattern with no results. Only then did we get out a magnifying glass and look closely. It was not pattern glass - it was cut! The blank for cutting had been pressed rather than blown, which is not uncommon, but the grooves, fans and zippers were clearly done by hand on a cutting wheel.

The characteristic that had fooled us into thinking it was pressed rather than cut was the smoothness of the design.. Evidently the finished dish had been either buffed or acid polished so it didn't have the sharp edges that most cut glass salts display. When we looked under magnification, we saw irregularities in the design that clearly said it was made by hand. The first things were the fans. When a pressed glass mold is made, cutting machines are used which make each finger of the fan exactly the right length. When you are cutting glass by hand, it is almost impossible to match this, even for an expert. The figures at the right illustrate the difference. It is the same as hand painting on china. On an open salt with hand painted roses the flowers are never exactly the same if you examine them closely. The artist can repeat the design quite accurately, but the individual brush strokes will be a little different from one flower to the next.

A second characteristic which identifies the design as cut is the wheel marks on some of the larger flat surfaces. The cutting wheels make a flat, mirror-like surface, but occasionally you can see where one pass ended and the next began. The difference between passes also shows up in the center of the star on the bottom. Ideally each arm of the star would be exactly the same depth, which is normal in a machine-made mold. It is almost impossible to achieve in a hand-held operation, so that one of the cuts almost always shows up as deeper than the rest, especially in the center.

We are surprised that our new salt is cut glass. It gave us another reminder to look carefully at what we are getting. We are a little disillusioned because we initially thought we had a pattern glass discovery. Please don't read our feelings as disappointment, however - the salt is worth at least as much as we paid, and we have nothing else like it.



*Our “Pattern Glass”
Salt*



Machine Cut



Hand Cut



Machine Cut



Hand Cut