

In This Issue

- Bullseye Special Production Glasses
- 20% off Bullseye TX Glasses
- System 96 Rods, Frits and Powders
- Oodles of Noodles ...
- System 96 Odd Sizes - Cheap!!!
- FAQ: 'Stuck' Kiln Wash
- AUSGLASS Conference
- \$9,999 Items
- Queensland Flood Appeal Donation
- Temporary closure March/April
- Feedback

Category of Links

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What's New This Month ...

Our shipment of glass has arrived at last, with all sorts of things - from some gorgeous Bullseye glasses ... to System 96 rods, to lots more frits and powders ...

Bullseye Special Production Glasses

Bullseye glass workers get to have some fun too, making experimental, special production glasses, which are not part of the normal Bullseye range.

We've been able to purchase eleven of these glasses, some of which are truly gorgeous as you'll see from the photos on the website. The Vanilla with Black Streaks and the orange Opal with Black Streaks left me drooling!

As we have only limited quantities available, it's first come, first served as usual. The Handy Sheets measure 290 mm x 240 mm.

20% off Bullseye TX Glasses

We have also been able to purchase a limited quantity of what Bullseye terms 'TX' glasses.

These glasses are fully 90 COE compatible, but do not completely meet Bullseye's exacting glass specifications. Most often, for example, this means that the colour in a particular glass batch may not be quite as it should be (such as a red being darker than normal).

Because of these minor variations, we are offering 20% off the normal price of these glasses. The Handy Sheets measure 290 mm x 240 mm.

System 96 Rods, Frits and Powders

For the first time, we are now stocking System 96 rods. We have 56 different colours available, so there is plenty of choice to be had including a Mardi Gras selection.

The rods are compatible with all System 96 sheet glass, noodle, stringer, frit and powder products, and can be fused (in the same way as stringers and noodles) to create pattern bars and murrini, and fused and then raked to great effect. The rods are approximately 5-6 mm in diameter x 50 cm long.

We now have System 96 powders in 52 colours, fine frits in 41 colours and medium frits in 39 colours. If there is sufficient interest and demand, we will continue to expand the range.

Oodles of Noodles ...

We have also expanded our range of stringers and noodles to cover 28 colours. If you want an assortment of colours, Mardi Gras packs are also available.

System 96 Odd Sizes - Cheap!!!

We are continuing to offer odd-sized pieces of all sorts of System 96 glasses at [significantly reduced prices](#). Details of the glasses are uploaded regularly. As they are mostly one-off pieces of glass, it will be a case of first in, first served.

FAQ: 'Stuck' Kiln Wash

We are often asked about kiln wash that appears to be 'stuck' to the back of the glass. Whilst we get the occasional stuck bit ourselves, it seems to be only with opals, and then with only a few of the darker colours.

In our experience, working with students over time, we think the most likely causes of kiln wash sticking to glass are:

- Re-using a shelf. We strip and recoat each shelf every firing. Sometimes you perhaps can get away with reusing a shelf, but we don't take the chance.
- The kiln wash was applied too thinly. This is evident when not only does the kiln wash stick to the glass, but the shelf itself takes a lot of effort to clean off. Kiln wash should come off with a gentle scrape (no sanding or heavy scraping). With Primo Primer, it should brush off with a dustpan brush. The manufacturer's recommendations are generally four coats – we often use six coats.
- The glass had moisture still on it from the cleaning process. This manifests itself as a narrow halo (1-3 mm) of stuck wash around the around the outside of the work.
- The shelf is highly textured. Generally, this applies to old shelves. Sanding does not tend to help as it makes the surface rougher rather than smoother.

There appear to be some glasses which stick no matter what you do, for example, System 96 Uroboros Chocolate White Streaky and Uroboros Plum Opal. Whilst there may be some chemical reaction with them, it may also be heat as they are quite dense colours. On the other hand, Black Opal (which I would have assumed was the most absorbent of heat) never has a problem ...

If the kiln wash still sticks, we soak the glass in a solution of 20% cleaning vinegar and 80% water. You will find cleaning vinegar in the cleaning section of your supermarket. Don't use your best balsamic as normal vinegar doesn't work! Using this solution, the kiln wash will come off easily (20 minutes for most pieces, 3-4 hours maximum). You can also reuse the solution. We keep the solution in a large lidded container, in which we soak our stuck pieces.

Another possibility is to modify your firing schedules. We generally fire our glass for a longer time at a lower temperature and do not flash cool. An alternative is to fire glass to a higher temperature, soak for a shorter period of time and flash cool – which is what we do with glasses which are prone to devitrification.

Our personal preference is for long soaks, low temperatures and no flash cooling - but we acknowledge that both Bullseye and Spectrum advocate higher temperatures, shorter soaks and flash cooling. Bullseye (Tip sheet 7) recommends 810 degrees for 10 minutes for instance.

The System 96 knowledgebase explains it this way:

Question:

Why do some firing instructions recommend lower full fuse temperatures and longer hold times? One teacher told me to full-fuse System 96 products at 1440 (782) for 30 minutes. I bought a computer program that says 1425 (773) for 75 minutes -- your guides suggest 1465 (797) for 10 minutes. What's the difference?

Answer:

We like the ultra-gloss top surface that results from higher temperatures. Going hotter and holding for shorter periods also soaks less heat into the kiln shelf and other refractories, allowing for quicker cooling. People that prefer lower temperatures are often using one of the high-tech kiln washes, like Primo Primer. These products get better results at lower temperatures (less sticking and fewer "blowouts").

AUSGLASS Conference

Thanks to those of you who popped in to say hello to us at the Trade Exhibition at AUSGLASS in Sydney in January. It was lovely to put a few faces to names and to say hi to some well-known faces!



\$9,999 Items

To the eagle-eyed among you, a word of explanation. You will occasionally see products advertised for somewhat exorbitant prices, such as \$9,999 for a rare earth magnet or a 5 cm square of glass.

Whilst it may look as though we've lost our grip on reality (that is always a possibility!), it allows us to upload products as they are received and before costings have been finalised. We used to leave the price field blank, but then discovered that customers had ordered items which were marked as \$0.00. Luckily for us, they were amongst our cheapest products, so no great losses there!

We'll try and get our act together to minimise the \$9,999 price tags. In the meantime, however, if you want to pay \$9,999 for an item, BE OUR GUEST!

Queensland Flood Appeal Donation

In our January E-Newsletters, we committed to donating a percentage of January's online sales to the Queensland Flood Appeal. We're proud to say that thanks to your support, a donation of an additional \$900 was made to the appeal.

If You Can, Place Your Orders Soon Please

The good news first ...

We will be visiting our suppliers in the USA at the end of March and early April – including visiting the Trade Show at the Glass Craft and Bead Expo in Las Vegas. It is one of the major glass events in the US, with exhibitors converging from all over the country to launch their new products.

When we visited the Expo three years ago we were amazed at the number of products that were available in the USA but which hadn't made their way to outlets in Australia. Hopefully, this year will be the same, only this time we'll be placing orders to be shipped to Australia and then onto our website!

The down side is that as we are a two person business, no orders will be processed between 21 March and 7 April 2011. If you are able to anticipate your needs for this period and order a little earlier, then you won't miss out on your glass. We do regret this disruption, but hopefully any inconvenience will be balanced by having a greater range of goodies to choose from!

Feedback

Thanks to those of you who've provided feedback on the newsletters or website ... it is much appreciated!

Until next month, happy fusing!

Regards

Gordon Williamson and Sally Cameron-Stephen

Divine Glass Design

Canberra