

PASSING THE FLAME

A BEADMAKER'S GUIDE TO DETAIL & DESIGN



REVISED 2nd EDITION

Corina
Tettinger

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BonzoBucks & Books Publishing
Friday Harbor, Washington

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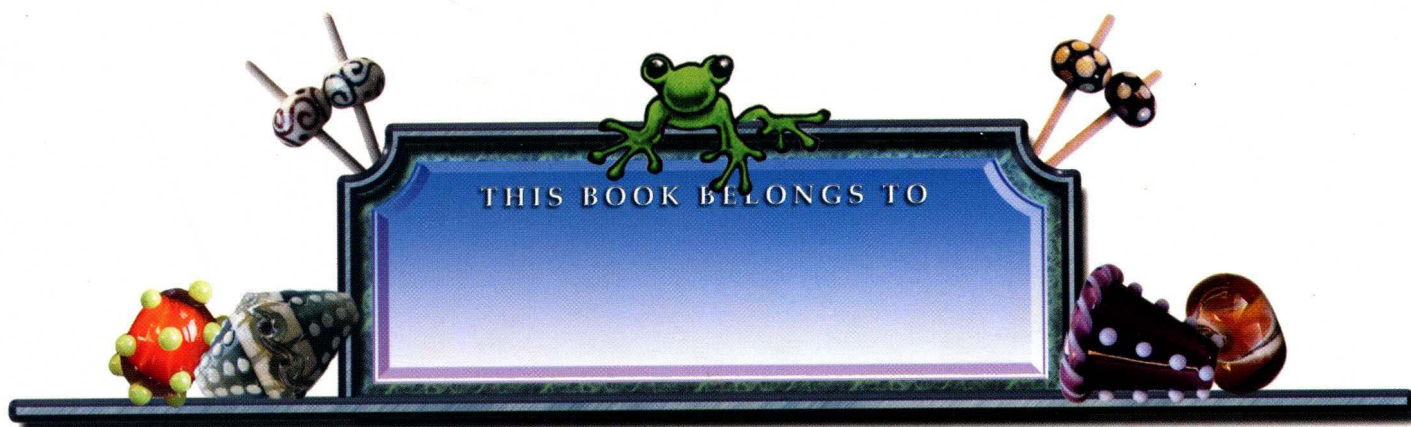
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Acknowledgements

This is the very last page of the book I am writing. As we work into the wee hours of the morning, all that is keeping me awake is a cup of Don's strong Chicory Coffee with way too much French Vanilla Creamer. In case I missed mentioning how thankful I am to *you*, it is due to the excessive amount of sugar and caffeine in my over-worked body and mind. I apologize!

Whenever an author "dedicates" a book to his or her spouse, giving thanks for all the loving support, blahblahblah, I used to think "yeah, what did *s/he* do?!" After having worked on this book for almost a year, I understand what the deal is. Spouses are the ones who make it all possible. They step back, they support, they listen, and they never (or hardly ever) say "Gee, baby, can we talk about something else for a change – like the weather maybe?" DH Steve deserves this kind of acknowledgement. And beyond suffering with me through the "gestation period" of this brain-child, I also have to thank him in other regards: if it hadn't been for him, I would never have started making beads. When I brought home Cindy Jenkins' book from the library, I showed it to him, saying "Check this out, Steve! I had no idea one could make something like this!" – and instead of reminding me of the pottery wheel, the sewing machine, and the jeweler's bench that were collecting dust in a dark corner, his immediate reaction was "Why don't you go ahead and order a torch and whatever tools are needed?" That is the kind of guy I married, the kind of guy who comes into my studio at 10 p.m., with a loving smile on his face, announcing that "Dinner is ready." Thank you Steve! I love you! I hope there is a "DH" or "DW" like this in *your* life.

Speaking of being blessed with people in your life – I hit the jackpot many times, so to speak. Don Merrifield is one of the other "guys" in my life who I just love to pieces. I don't even remember how we connected initially, but Don was the one without whom the book would never have happened. Or, if I had managed somehow, it would not have been the same book: Don's voice is there, on every page, as strong as my own, but instead of entering through your ear, it "jumps" into your eyes. His choice of colors, of fonts, of layout, is touched by genius, if I may say so. Yes, I am bragging, because I am genuinely proud of what he did. For the rest of my life I will remember fondly the long hours we spent together, hunched over our respective computers, drinking coffee and, after about eleven at night, red wine, singing "Time to Say Goodbye" along with Sarah Brightman. Thank you Don, you're the best! I love you too!

Anthony Kamar! What a guy! In his day job he makes wooden breadknives with DH Steve, but he took over the task of photographing the "action shots," all those pictures that had to be taken at the torch, during the process of shaping, encasing, painting with stringer, and so forth. Although Tony had no particular knowledge of digital photography, he turned out to be a natural. He was hunched over my shoulder, most of the time without a tripod, so he could quickly adjust the angle of the picture, and whenever I yelled at him "Now Tony, this is it, quickly, the glass is drooping on my lap...", he was there

to freeze the moment. He was there for me every day. And he makes the best egg muffins for breakfast, Don agrees. I don't think a "professional" photographer could have done a better job.

And Marguerite Wainio, who traveled to wherever she was needed to sit down with a clipboard and a red pen, to turn my English into English. Because she is not only an excellent editor, but also a gifted beadmaker herself, she made sure that my writing made sense, not just the wording, but also the content. She was the one who alerted me to wrong or missing information, and has thus saved me from professional criticism that would have hit me as surely as fog settles over Friday Harbor in October. Thanks so much Margi – you're a trooper. And yes, love you too!

And not to forget Steven M Schwander for drawing my first frog that you see everywhere.

Ah, the women in our lives. Carol Merrifield, Don's wife, who not only proofread the book in its final stage, but also went to bed by herself too many nights, without ever complaining. Janice Bobbs, who helped as a "stylist" in the jewelry photography, and Jill Trear as mistress of the "prop-department." Betty Devine, Diane Crockett, Pam Granger, Diane Johnson, Mari Levenson and many other jewelry designers, who not only mailed me their jewelry so I could take the pictures, but who also spent lots of money on my beads, allowing me thus to make a living and be able to put this book together. As did all my other customers and bead-friends who have supported me over the years, not only by buying my beads (often at horrendous prices on ebay), but also by expressing their pleasure upon receiving a new set. Getting this kind of feedback from people is one of the most potent "fuels" for creativity, and it makes up for stiff joints after too many hours spent at the torch.

Finally, I have to thank all the "teachers" in my life. Well, of course, *all* the teachers I ever had helped me to become "myself," and that is something I am of course grateful for, but I am referring more specifically to my "glass teachers." I have mentioned them throughout the book, and even though I might risk boring you to tears, once again I have to mention Loren Stump. He was my first lampworking teacher. My favorite. The best. He did not teach me *one* thing that was "useful" for making beads, but he taught me everything I needed to know about working with glass and a torch. Beyond giving me knowledge, he gifted me with the most valuable thing of all: confidence in myself. When I took his class, I had been at the torch for less than a month, and after the first day I felt like an idiot. After four intense days, he looked over my shoulder and said "I think you are really talented, you should stick with this." I am sure he tells that to *all* his students. Keep telling this to *yourself*, and keep smiling, even when things don't go as smoothly as you wish.

Thanks to all of you guys!

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[Online-Catalogue of Beads that can be ordered](#)
(don't expect INSTANT DELIVERY though.....only maybe)

to email me (with just about anything except complaints): corina@interisland.net

[[Home](#)] [[Online Catalog of Beads](#)] [[How to Order](#)] [[Favorite Sets with good chances to actually get!](#)]

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added again: [[How to make a Corina-style bracelet](#)]

If I had set out to write this foreword ten years ago, I wouldn't have given it much attention, since back then I thought a foreword was superfluous – just some pages the author had to throw in to pad out the book. Now, in my late thirties, the foreword is the first thing I read in a book – I often find it more interesting than the story itself.

In this book there is no “story,” but I promise you that there will be as much mystery as in a good Agatha Christie novel, as much horror as any Stephen King book can give you, and as much joy aswell, I don't know about that, but I hope this book will please your different senses somehow.

One of my “preparations” for my first publishing effort was to read William Strunk Jr.'s *The Elements of Style*. It didn't take me long to find out that I am in violation of probably every rule on writing ever established, and I had the hardest time trying to take “myself” out of the book (one of the cardinal rules of good style, as I learned).

So be prepared to stumble over me on every single page. I am not telling you how to do things – I am telling you how *I* do things. I am not talking about beads, I am talking about *my* beads. In this book, there is only one person as important as me: YOU.

One of my goals in writing this book was to tell you everything I know. I really care about your getting my points. In order to do so, I had to be schoolmasterly, redundant, arrogant, humorous, catty, and puzzled. I had to be myself – otherwise I would have gotten bored and never finished this project.

A lot of the “regular readers” of my website will expect this, and you guys are prepared. You will smile over Bonzo and Scooter, as you would smile seeing a dear friend's pictures of her baby. Others might leaf through these pages, scratching their heads. Chances are you will never have

read a “How-To” book before that is written with such strong opinions and personal touches as this one. I have no illusions, so I am prepared to take a lot of criticism, but I hope most of you will stick with me to the end, and I also hope most of you will emerge better beadmakers somehow. Or, if you have no intention of ever making a bead of your own, at least with a better understanding of the process, and of the love and attention that goes into every bead you have admired or purchased.

Ever since I was old enough to hold a pair of scissors, paper and yarn, I was into some kind of crafts. Pottery, weaving, knitting, cross-stitch, papier-mache, silversmithing: you name it, I tried it. If I had had my choice, I would have probably become a jewelry designer after graduating from high school, but my parents and my teachers had a strong influence and managed to talk me into an “academic career.” After twenty years of studying and working all over the world as an interpreter and TV producer, I finally ended up on a small island in the Northwestern United States, where I found my “calling” – on the shelf of the local library.

I still like to leaf through Cindy Jenkins' *Making Glass Beads*, thankful for the wonderful introduction into one of the most fascinating “hobbies” I have ever encountered. Making glass beads became way more than a hobby for me – it turned into a passion, a life, an obsession (if we can believe DH Steve). What better way could there be to share this passion than writing a book myself? Why have I bothered to put this much energy into writing a book? Honestly, I don't really know. My grandmother was a bookbinder, and when I was five years old I handed her my first manuscript to bind. It was a short novel (illustrated with pencil) describing the adventures of a couple of kids who were smuggling drugs hidden in watermelons across the Sahara Desert. Obviously I had no idea what I was writing about, but the urge to write a book has stayed with

me ever since. I finally found something about which I have more expertise than the topic of my first "oeuvre." In case you are curious, the first "Corina-book" was lost in the folds of history...

Shortly after discovering the book on beads, I went to a beadstore in Seattle that also offered classes in beadmiking. I asked one of the teachers whether she thought it was possible to learn beadmiking without the help of a teacher, entirely through written instruction. She looked at me as if I had asked her whether it would be possible to become a tennis pro by reading about it. In her opinion this was entirely ridiculous and out of the question.

Even after having taken four or five classes myself, I truly believe that one can learn beadmiking through "virtual teaching" alone. This book is an attempt to bring the teacher into your house, wherever you are living. With the help of the internet and international shipping services, it is easy to order all the equipment and supplies needed – but finding a teacher to take a class from can be much more difficult. I often hear from people who have taken a class at a local art school, but the experience was anything but satisfying. Just sitting in front of someone who shows you how to make a bead, without being passionate and really knowledgeable about it, might not be enough to "spark your flame," so to speak.

My initial plan was to publish a "book-DVD-combo," with short video-clips accompanying each chapter. I honestly underestimated the amount of time and the amount of work it takes to write a book, especially when you are also taking the photographs, making beads for a living, entertaining a loving husband (the DH stands for "Darling Husband" most of the time) and having something like a "life" on the side. So, the plan didn't work out, but I have not given up on the idea – eventually I will produce one (or several) videos to go with the written instruction.

Are you going to learn everything there is to know about beadmiking in this book? Hell no. There are lots of techniques that I will not even mention – either because I don't know how to do them, or because there just wasn't enough room to talk about them. I am not going to show how to make hollow beads, or vessels, or how to use commercial millefiori and dichroic glass, how to make murrini or how to make sculptural pieces. Luckily, there are other books available (which I will mention at the end), and there is a lot of information on the internet. And after all, there are great teachers who don't mind sharing their knowledge and techniques in person. Although I am claiming you can learn all the "basics," and a whole lot beyond from this book, there is nothing as much fun as taking a class with an enthusiastic teacher and sharing your experience with

a bunch of nice like-minded people. I am already looking forward to my next class, either as a teacher or a student.

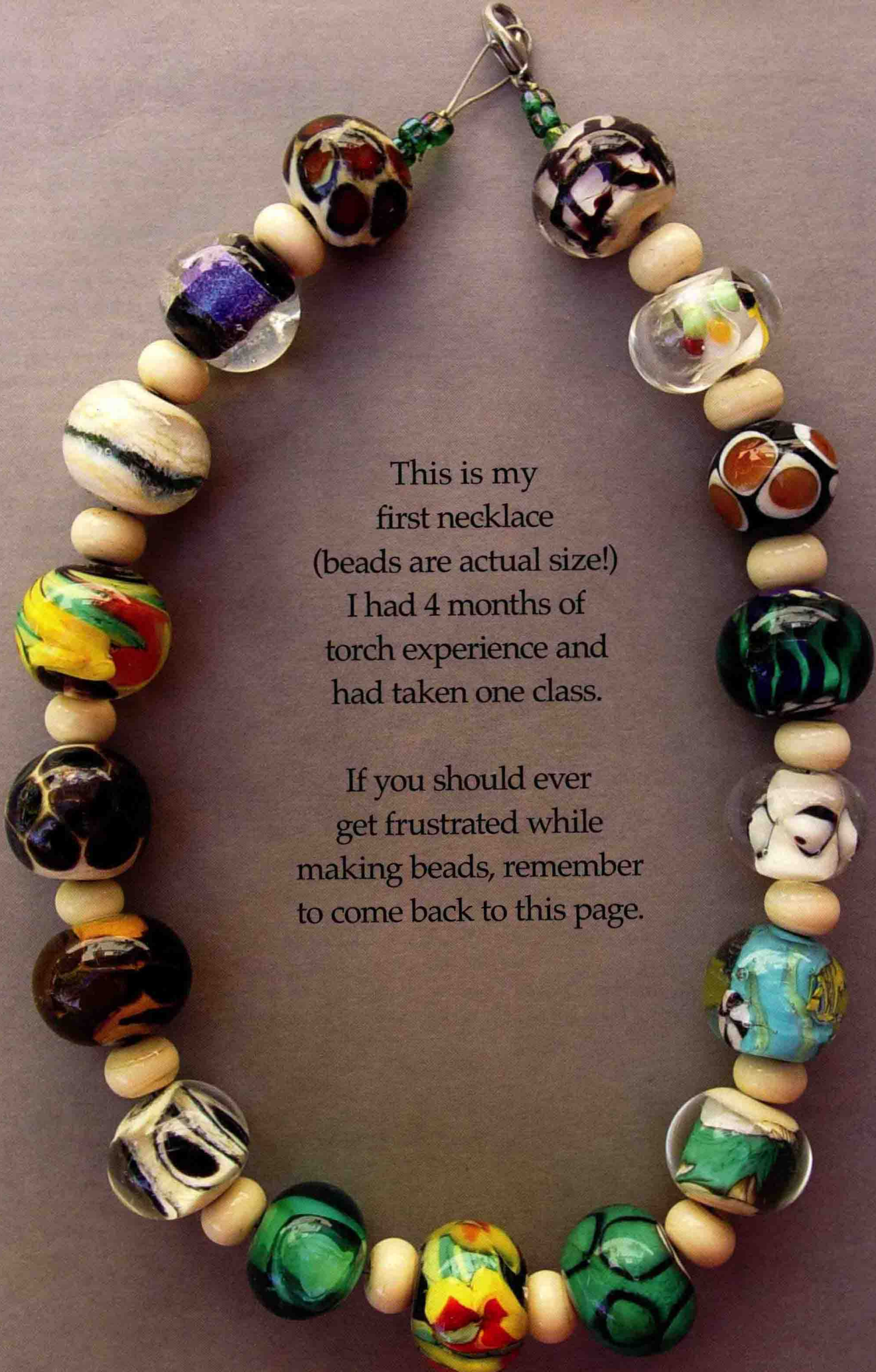
One last word before you light the torch and get going:

If you have never ever made a bead before, don't start at the "beginning;" start with the chapter on "How to Pull Stringers." This might sound a little strange, but I feel that a "bloody

beginner" really profits from pulling stringer first, before trying to make a bead and having to worry about the glass, the mandrel, the bead release, the hole, the pucker, the balance, and so forth. And once you have made your first round bead, stick with that for a while – learn how to decorate this bead before you move on to new shapes... Besides that, there is nothing (and everything) left to say – I hope you enjoy my guided tour through the jungle of beadmiking techniques.



Corina

A necklace made of various hand-painted and natural beads. The beads include large round ones with colorful abstract patterns (red, yellow, green, black, white), some with marbled or flame-like designs, and smaller, smooth, light-colored beads. The necklace is strung on a thin cord and has a simple metal clasp. The text is centered within the loop of the necklace.

This is my
first necklace
(beads are actual size!)
I had 4 months of
torch experience and
had taken one class.

If you should ever
get frustrated while
making beads, remember
to come back to this page.

IT'S NOT ALL JUST GLASS

Ah, I kept this chapter until the very end of my writing process, somehow hoping that I could miraculously wiggle myself out of the necessity of writing something about glass (and then I changed my mind). In my attempt to avoid copying information out of the books you might already have in your possession, I did some research on the internet to find a short and poignant explanation of this marvelous material we are working with, and I came up with this wonderful definition:

Glass is a mixture of various silicates solidified amorphously from the melting flow and consists mainly of alkaline and calcium silicates. Amorphous mixtures have no internal order of molecules or ions or one that is limited to very small patches only. Owing to this peculiarity they have no fixed melting point, but soften gradually.

(Quoted from "Development and History of Glass Making," www.buss-partner.com/english/glas_e.htm)

To say it with simpler words, glass is a mixture of lime, sand, and "soda," and the more you heat it, the more it melts. Technically speaking, glass is always "liquid," though it looks pretty darn stiff to me when I am holding a rod in my hands. The different colors are achieved by the addition of metal oxides like copper, iron, cobalt, gold or other oxides.

The bad news is this: I am not going to tell you much more than this.

The good news is: you don't need to know anything else. Glass beadmaking has nothing to do with chemistry; all you need is some basic knowledge, a sense of adventure, and open eyes to observe what is happening right in front of you. So, if you don't feel like getting deeper

into the chemistry or history of glass, don't feel guilty. If you *do* want to know more, please refer to the back of the book where I have listed a few books that deal with this part in more detail. And then there is always the internet for unlimited free information...so we can devote most of the space in this book to the fun part of beadmaking.

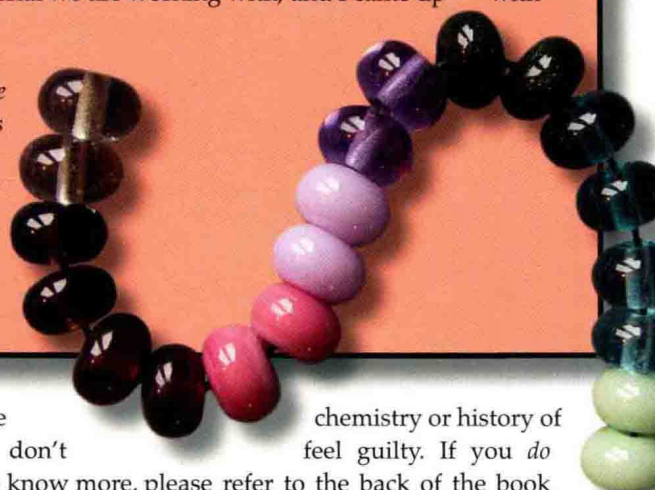
The glass I use

The glass I use for most of my beads is a "soda-lime" glass called "Effetre" or "Moretti." This is the most commonly used brand of "soft" glass. It's called "soft" because it melts at relatively low temperatures and stays "soft" for a long time, compared to other "hard" types of glass, like Pyrex for example. Soft glass has been around for hundreds of years and is meant to be worked in a torch (versus a crucible, for example), which is probably the reason it is so popular amongst beadmakers.

More types of soft glass

Other common types of soda-lime glass are Murano, Czech, American-made Bullseye, German glass like Lauscha, or the Japanese Satake. All of these have different COE's (Coefficient of Expansion) – one of those numbers that we have to deal with in the endeavor of making glass beads. The most important knowledge in this regard is that only glass types with approximately the same COE are compatible, i.e. can be used together.

Most of the time it is best to just stick with one type of glass when making one bead – though it is possible that a certain color of glass by ONE company appeals to you more than another, and you want to use these two glass types together.





CEO or COE?

Most glass suppliers have the COE's of each glass printed in their catalogs. In some cases the COE's vary even within the same type of glass - Lauscha glass colors, for example, have COE's between 95 and 105, so if you happen to combine two colors from both ends of this range, the bead might break, even though you are using colors from the same company...

As a general rule, a difference of about 2-3 points in COE is acceptable. I even remember someone coming up with a formula of how much of one type of glass you would have to use in a bead in order to "overpower" a different COE; it was something like 15% of the different color, or was it 30%? As you can tell, it was confusing enough that I didn't remember. If you like to live dangerously, mix and match, but if you are like me and prefer walking on the safe side of life, stick to one type of glass within one bead.

As I have mentioned above, I myself use mostly Moretti. In the beginning I felt that I might be missing something if I didn't try *ALL* the different types of glass available. So, I had stashes of Czech, other piles of Bullseye and a little corner for Lauscha, Murano and a few sample rods of Satake. After a few months I found something "wrong" with each glass. Bullseye was too stiff, Lauscha mixed with Moretti made a few of my bigger focals crack, the opaque rods of Czech were too big in diameter to work with, Satake was way too soft, and Murano was so similar to Moretti that I didn't know which was which.

On the other hand, there are a lot of reasons why one would *want* to use those other glass types as well. Bullseye has a wonderful array of unusual pinks, lavenders and greens, Lauscha has a nice muted purple and by far the cleanest clear, and Czech has some transparent colors that sparkle like nothing you have seen before. On top of that, the glass world is constantly changing, and the glass manufacturers seem to be responding to the needs of a growing lampworking community for new colors and better quality.

Don't hesitate to experiment with all the different types of glass, but try to label each rod carefully or keep each type in different corners so you'll be able to tell them apart. While you may be able to use Moretti, Lauscha and Czech glass in the same bead, you won't get away with using Bullseye. My point is make

sure you always know which rod is which type.

All the comments on colors in this book refer to Moretti. The techniques I describe are more or less the same for all types of soft glass, though there might be situations when a bead will look different depending on what glass is used. Some of the "trick-effects" might not happen with the particular glass you are using. Glass is like a cat: charming, but with a mind of its own. As long as you are aware of this characteristic, you'll love it, whichever type you are working with.

What about "Boro?"

Borosilicate glass (like Pyrex, Northstar, Glass Alchemy, etc.) is a whole different story. A lot of beadmakers who have been using soft glass for years are now becoming intrigued by the growing number of colors available in borosilicate glass, and are "moving over" to "boro." There is something incredibly fascinating about the way borosilicate glass changes colors, and I myself will probably succumb someday to the lure of the magic, but for now I am sticking with soft glass. People often ask me in emails what "the deal" is with the sudden boro-craze, and I have to shrug my shoulders. I have had the opportunity to play with it here and there, and while I am intrigued by the depth of colors and the "unexpected results," there are a few things about it that I didn't like. It is a lot stiffer than soft glass like Moretti, so it takes considerably longer to melt and shape into a bead, especially when you are using a torch that is typically used for soft glass and that produces a cooler flame. Most people who work with borosilicate glass on a regular basis have bigger torches. Bigger torches are hotter and noisier. There is something about the silence of a small torch that appeals to me - call me silly, but I want to relax while making beads, and a noisy torch bothers me.

My most important advice to a "novice" beadmaker would be to give it all a try, but keep in mind that each glass has a character of its own, and you should allow that character to speak. Borosilicate glass can give you incredibly beautiful effects, if you know how to let it be.

The "worst" type of beads in my mind are those made by people who have used soft glass, then discovered that "boro" sells and started making the same kind of beads they made before, just with "boro." That is like a dog owner who has successfully trained dogs for years and gets them to obey - and then he or she has a baby, and treats the baby just as he or she treated the dog, forgetting that there might be more subtle tricks needed to raise a child.

Colored borosilicate is a relatively new material, and there is not much written information about its use in beadmaking available yet. If it interests you, play with it, take a class if you can find one, and remember to use *proper* eye-protection! And who knows, maybe someone will write a book soon on the "Magic of Boro Beads."